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Editorial

Politics of Belonging and Exclusion: Nation-Building in Contemporary Asia

Carmen Brandt and Anna Julia Fiedler

Introduction

The present special issue is the outcome of a call for papers by members of the *ASIEN* editorial board. Across six contributions — four research articles and two research notes — various perspectives on and aspects of nation-building in Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam are discussed. The diversity of these countries highlights how challenging a systematic comparison would be. Additionally, each contribution focuses on a particular aspect of nation-building, nationalism, and/or national belonging. Hence, the six pieces illustrate that there are many different and at times highly contested factors crucial to the success or failure of nation-building.

The return of nationalism

Although globalization processes in the final decades of the twentieth century led to academic discourses that deemed the nation-state to be obsolete as a political model, nationalism and its accompaniments are again on the rise globally (see, for example, Mansbach and Ferguson 2021). Through nation-building, citizens — individuals without any particular personal ties — can be united, while on the other hand trusted neighbors might become excluded in being perceived as outsiders. Accompanied by a multitude of — at times violent — conflicts within and between states, the concept of the "nation" still seems to be the most appealing and mobilizing force for the masses.

This can be seen in burgeoning nationalist movements around the globe. In Asian countries, one prominent example is India, where so-called Hindu nationalists have been in power since 2014. And whereas the departure of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) in 2020, the so-called Brexit, would be feared by many to represent the beginning of the disintegration of the EU, especially in East and Southeast Europe, a number of countries remain eager to join this union — in some cases for the same reason the UK left: growing nationalism. This is the case, for example, in Kosovo, the youngest of the seven successor states to the former

Yugoslavia, which declared its independence from Serbia in 2008 (Koneska, Huskić, and Krasniqi 2022). The desired EU membership not only offers potential economic advantages but above all would help secure recognition and sovereignty as a geopolitical entity. This also seems to be one of the main reasons for Ukraine's close proximity to the EU. The Russian invasion of February 2022 is the temporary climax of a growing nationalism in the present and illustrates both its steadfastness in Europe, too, as well as its interconnectedness with resulting geopolitical claims.

Moreover, the current Russian war on Ukraine highlights other important aspects of the nexus between nation, nation-state, and nation-building. On the one hand, both countries are home to the dominant ethnic groups, Russians and Ukrainians respectively, and a large number of ethnolinguistic minorities that are more or less excluded from current processes of nation-building in these two states. On the other, the language, religion, customs, traditions, and history of Ukrainians and Russians differ so very little, especially compared to the ones of ethnolinguistic minorities in the respective countries, that the current war exemplifies Freud's remark about the narcissism of minor differences — "der Narzißmus der kleinen Differenzen" (1930a, 85). While many Russians and Ukrainians perceive themselves to be brother nations or even one nation, especially in the case of Russians (see, for example, Kuzio 2022), Ukrainian nationalists in particular strive for the recognition of their cultural differences and of the uniqueness of their identity as a nation as a way to emphasize their distinctiveness from the Russian nation and to ensure their territorial sovereignty (Kuzio 2016). According to Freud: "[P]eoples whose territories are adjacent, and are otherwise closely related, are always at feud with and ridiculing each other, as, for instance, the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the North and South Germans, the English and the Scotch, and so on" (1930b, 90). The current Russian war on Ukraine is a prominent example of how this is still true for nations and bilateral conflicts today.[1]

But this leads us to the key questions still hanging over these kinds of conflicts: What, after all, constitutes a nation? And, which processes can be considered part of nation-building? Even though the latter is a crucial element of today's politics, practiced by most states and various individual or organized actors within or beyond those states (that is, in the so-called diaspora), such practices are as diverse as definitions of the "nation" themselves.

The term "nation"

The use of the Latin term *natio*, originally meaning "birth" or "being born," was subsequently extended "to refer to a breed, stock, kind, species or race. It could also be used in a derogatory sense to refer to a tribe or race of people" (Bouchard and

1 Another conflict to which Freud's theory of the narcissism of minor (or small) differences was extensively applied would be the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Blok 1998, 42–44; Ignatieff 1998 [1997], 34–71; Kamusella 2010).

Bogdan 2015, 7). In this sense, it was for example "used by Cicero when referring to distant and barbarous people" (Bouchard and Bogdan 2015, 7). Michel Bouchard and Gheorghe Bogdan show convincingly that the term "nation" was used in the Roman Empire to distinguish between the Roman civilized "us" (*populus*) and the other barbarian "them" (*natio*), even though the term *gentes* was preferred when referring to the latter groups stemming from outside the Roman Empire (Bouchard and Bogdan 2015, 7–8). Most importantly, the term was used for foreign groups of people who were considered to form one community because of their supposedly shared geographical origins, descent, language, customs, and similar. Hence, it was an external designation ascribed to an assumed community whose members were excluded from the citizenship regime of the Roman state and its civic rights. Being a member of a *natio* in the Roman Empire had, first and foremost, negative — that is, exclusionary — consequences. Later, during the Middle Ages, *natio* was still used for groups of people sharing, for instance, a common language, origin, customs, and the like. However, these groups were not necessarily perceived as being "barbarian" or "uncivilized" by now. Moreover, at medieval universities, a new semantic meaning was added to the term, one serving particular administrative and organizational purposes.

By the thirteenth century, *natio* was used as a both internal and external designation at cosmopolitan universities in different parts of Europe where Latin was the medium of instruction and *lingua franca* among their members (Kibre 1948; Knoll 2012). University members were categorized into *nationes* in most cases, according to their geographic origins — even if they did not share the same mother tongue, customs, ancestry, and similar. At the University of Paris, for instance, the number of identified *nationes* was limited to only four: the French, Picard, Norman, and English (Bauer 2012, 122). Arts masters stemming, for example, from regions that are today part of southern France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain were lumped together as the French nation, whereas "[t]he English nation, later renamed the German nation during the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), was, either way, somewhat of a misnomer because in addition to the English and Germans, it contained scholars from Hungary and the Slavic lands" (Bauer 2012, 122). While this kind of categorization was meant to serve university members originating from across Europe by better representing their diverse interests, the meaning of the term *natio* expanded further with its adoption in modern European languages.

The emergence of modern nations and nation-building

From the sixteenth century onward, and especially during the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, today's dominant understanding of the "nation" as something applying to the entire or majority population of a geopolitical entity — namely a political state — emerged. But in contrast to what was the case with its original Latin meaning, in France those concerned were far away from speaking the same language and sharing common customs, traditions, and similar. Members of

the emerging French nation developed, first and foremost, a sense of belonging based on shared interests — for instance, in standing against feudalism and absolute monarchy. In France, the growing commitment to the nation, its ideals (*liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité*), and symbols (such as a unique flag and a distinctive national anthem) formed the beginning of what is today often referred to as "nation-building". In this case, the population of a sovereign state is assimilated into a nation by various state-initiated measures. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), for instance, already realized the importance of education to nation-building when stating in 1805 that

> [t]here cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles. If the child is not taught from infancy that he ought to be a republican or a monarchist, a Catholic or a free-thinker, the state will not constitute a nation; it will rest on uncertain and shifting foundations; and it will be constantly exposed to disorder and change. (Ramirez and Boli 1987, 8)

As with France, nation-building can constitute a deliberate strategy by which elite-led state institutions enforce their ideas of the "nation" on the concerned population in its entirety. Ideally, all territorial inhabitants come to perceive themselves sooner or later as members of the nation *and* of the state — that is, as citizens of a nation-state. But it was not until the introduction of mass education from 1833 onward — during the reign of Louis Philippe I (1773–1850), also known as the "Citizen King" — that this process of nation-building would gain particular momentum (Ramirez and Boli 1987, 8).

In the case of nineteenth-century Europe's emerging nation-states, linguistic homogenization played an important role in nation-building processes. However, in contrast to France — where the overwhelming majority of the population did not speak French at all during the time of the French Revolution and a single standardized language spread to all regions of France only with the introduction of mass education — a standardized German language had diffused much earlier to many regions of present-day Germany and beyond, even before German nationalism was born. A comparison of the role of language in the emergence of the French and German nation-states shows that in some cases the language of a state had to be homogenized to enable or strengthen the national consciousness of its citizens; in the case of Germany, a common language was one of the most important prerequisites for the emergence of the nation. There was already a shared German consciousness, at least among an elite existing far beyond the regions now consolidated as Germany. In the case of German national consciousness, however, this common language was not a given or primordial. Rather, according to Benedict Anderson (2016, 37–65), the "print capitalism" coming into existence in the wake of the invention of the movable-type printing press by Johannes Gutenberg would see, in interaction with the Protestant Reformation initiated by Martin Luther and its vast associated literary production, a specific variant of the German language arise.

Nation and ethno-symbolism

And while Anderson belongs, like Eric Hobsbawm (see for example, 1996 and 2003) and Ernest Gellner (see for example, 2006), to the so-called modernist school of scholars who do not believe in the "nation" as a premodern community but in its construction, invention, or imagination during processes of modernization, Anthony D. Smith, for instance, dedicated his work on nationalism to the *longue durée* of communities and their ethnic symbols:

> Where modernists tend to downplay ethnic ties, ethno-symbolism regards ethnic identities and communities as crucial for the formation and the persistence of nations. Although nations may be partly forged by political institutions, over the long term they require ethno-cultural resources to create a solidary community, mainly because of the critical importance for a sense of national identity of subjective dimensions. That is also the reason why nations cannot simply be seen as elite projects. We need to understand the often complex interplay between elites and various sections of the wider population whom they may seek to mobilise in terms of symbols, myths and memories that resonate with them. (Smith 2009, 21)

Whereas Smith is often criticized for overvaluing ethnic identity for the formation and persistence of nations and their *longue durée*, he accuses modernists of taking an approach to nation-building relying predominantly on cases from Europe and furthermore downplaying the factor of "ethnicity" in general. The truth lies, as usual, somewhere in between, but needs to be explored on an individual basis. Smith's approach is particularly interesting for analyzing nation-building and nationalism in Asia, where ethnicity doubtlessly plays an important role in current nationalist — that is, ethnonationalist — movements.

Cultural and political nationalism

Furthermore, the two concepts advanced by Smith's first PhD student John Hutchinson are also helpful here. He does not fully endorse Smith's idea of "ethnic nationalism," preferring instead to differentiate between "political nationalism" and "cultural nationalism." According to Hutchinson (1987, 12f.), political nationalism is a form thereof today advocated by cosmopolitan rationalists who focus on the commonalities and equality of all humans, giving these two factors far more weight than cultural or ethnic identities. This kind of nationalism refers overwhelmingly to Western European countries and is to some extent in line with the concepts of *Staatsnation* ("civic nation"), of which France is the prime example, and *Willensnation* ("voluntary nation"), of which Switzerland is a good representation. In summary, political nationalism centers around the equality of all citizens, their voluntary commitment to the nation, as well as their joint democratic participation in shaping the nation's future — regardless of their ethnic and/or religious identity.

In contrast, cultural nationalism often relies on the factors described above by Smith *vis-à-vis* ethnic nationalism. But in the case of the former, they are not taken as the result of a *longue durée* — relying instead on visions of a shared past and future by

an intellectual elite. These visions can lead to reform and revitalization efforts by shaping supposed elements of the past to serve the demands of the present and future. A prime example for cultural nationalism, according to Hutchinson (1987, 42f.), is the emerging Indian nationalism in nineteenth-century British India. Most importantly, both forms of nationalism — ethnic and cultural — do not depend on an already-existing state for these real or envisioned nations, whereas in the case of civic or political nationalism a sovereign state is what makes the nation possible in the first place.

Whether civic, cultural, ethnic, political, or voluntary nationalism, it is clear that there is no nation that ideally represents only one of these forms, and no state that relies exclusively for nation-building on only one of those variants. Moreover, the above exemplary elaborations by no means constitute a complete overview on this topic; rather, they merely serve to illustrate the complexities encountered when entering into discussion of the nation, nationalism, nation-state, nation-building, and similar. The many theories in this field, of which only a few were mentioned, might be helpful in some cases but in others completely redundant. After all, these are "only" theories intended to help us understand our complex and ever-changing realities — not the other way around. For instance, whether the "nation" is indeed a nation not only depends on the chosen definitions of scholars and the different aspirations of its architects but, first and foremost, on the people who are supposed to form it. And, how far they actually support the nation they are supposed to constitute often remains a mystery — until the next relevant conflict arises, at least. Especially in Asia — which is much larger than Europe both geographically and in terms of population size, as well as far more heterogeneous regarding ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic differences — it seems even more difficult to decipher the politics of nations, nationalism, and nation-building — and, above all, the will of the people with the help of theories shaped predominantly by cases from Europe.

Nation, nationalism, and nation-building in Asia

By drawing on examples from Asian countries, some aspects that were not yet taken into account will illustrate that, apart from the size of the continent and its heterogeneity, there are also other factors that stretch the aforementioned theories to their limits. One important difference, especially in comparison to Western European states, is the fact that many Asian countries have a colonial past, and *ipso facto* a different development trajectory in terms of industrialization, nation-building, and state formation. One result of these diverging developments and the resulting often negative attitude toward the former, in most cases European, colonial powers is in a number of instances also a different understanding or negative attitude among sections of the postcolonial populations toward elements and processes ascribed to (Western) modernity such as equality, individualism, liberalization, secularization, and the like (Utz 2005, 626). And since those elements and processes

are, according to the abovementioned theories, prerequisites for a civic or political nation, several Asian countries have been seemingly torn between this form of nationalism and ethnic or cultural variants thereof.

Another important factor here are the huge socioeconomic disparities that exist in some Asian countries, which seem to form a significant obstacle to the felt equality of all citizens. Especially in times of crisis, people tend to fall back on the group identities with which they are more familiar and that are of greater relevance for their daily lives: namely ethnic and religious ones. In countries with an ethnically and/or religiously heterogeneous population, conflicts seem, then, to be inevitable. This refers, for example, to India, which is often regarded as the world's largest democracy, and to its neighbor and constant rival Pakistan.

Nation-building in India and Pakistan

Like Russia and Ukraine, India and Pakistan are also considered by many of their respective citizens to be brother nations since they share numerous cultural and linguistic elements as well as a common past, even though their populations are ethnolinguistically and religiously highly diverse. After most of the territory of these current states came under British colonial rule, this region would witness the emergence of Indian nationalism among the new Hindu elites in the nineteenth century alongside, contrariwise, also a growing fear among its Muslim elites of their future marginalization in an independent Hindu-majority India. The two-nation theory advocated by the All-India Muslim League and especially by its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the 1940s led to the partition of British India — into secular India with a Hindu majority and Muslim-majority Pakistan respectively (Jalal 1994). The two-nation theory centered around the idea that Hindus and Muslims form two distinct nations, not only separated by different religions but also culture, customs, history, and traditions. For that reason, Jinnah vehemently demanded a country of their own for India's Muslims once the British started contemplating their withdrawal from South Asia. When India and Pakistan were established in 1947, both countries were predominantly led by politicians who had received their higher education in Great Britain and were highly influenced by (Western) modernity. The result was in both cases a state-building process based on the administrative, educational, and judicial infrastructure introduced by the British in parallel to two divergent forms of nation-building (Bose 2004).

While in the case of India the unofficial motto was "unity in diversity" and a commitment to maintaining this ethnic and religious diversity, Pakistan became — only nine years later, with its first constitution — an Islamic republic, cementing a nation-building process centered on Sunni Islam and marginalizing its religious minorities such as Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and certain Muslim minorities, such as Shia and Ahmadi Muslims (Jaffrelot 2004). Another important element herein for both countries is their antagonistic relationship, which has continued to play — especially in the case of Pakistan — a key role since the 1940s. Despite the wars and

armed conflicts between the two countries since, only from the 1980s onward would Indian politics witness the slow rise of Hindu nationalism and its specific form of nation-building. The latter has instrumentalized this antagonism, in constructing an omnipresent and omnipotent enemy (Lall 2008).

After the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed part of India's central government between 1998 and 2004 — and since 2014, in power once more — it has over the course of the last 25 years advanced a form of nationalism that has led, according to Christophe Jaffrelot (2019), to an "ethnic democracy." Herewith the dominant ethnic group is equated with the nation, in this case Hindus — whereas Christians and Muslims are perceived, and to some extent also treated, as second-class citizens. Even though India cannot (yet) be termed a Hindu nation and it must be asked whether Hindus can indeed be perceived as an ethnic group in their own right given their immense ethnolinguistic heterogeneity, the endeavors of Hindu nationalists to construct a Hindu nation and their continued electoral success have been particularly alarming for the country's religious minorities. Similar to Pakistan, nation-building by Hindu nationalists centers around the imagined majoritarian community and excludes from the process everyone who is deemed not to fit the nation. This is in stark contrast to the nation-building advocated by India's founders, as a mixture of civic, political, and inclusive cultural nationalism instead.

Even though Hindu nationalists themselves fail to give any clear definition of who a "Hindu" is exactly and construct their ideology — Hindutva (Savarkar 1969) — around imaginations of a common geographic, cultural, and only to some extent also religious past, in which they include Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism too, they have ultimately the same aim as the Pakistani state. That is, to unite the majority of the ethnolinguistically and religiously heterogeneous population as a nation to the detriment of a minority of citizens. However, after Bangladesh's independence in 1971 (between 1947 and then: East Pakistan), it became evident in the case of Pakistan that nation-building centering around Islam had failed to even integrate all Sunni Muslims and that the ethnolinguistic identity of its citizens plays an important role too (Dil and Dil 2011).

Also today, there are several (sub)nationalist movements in India and Pakistan that illustrate how neither country is (yet) a nation-state. Rather, they are both multinational states that respectively struggle to unite all of their citizens under a common vision and identity. Separatist movements illustrate the omnipresence of ethnic (sub)nationalism in both: for instance, Baluchis in western Pakistan (and in parts of Afghanistan and Iran) (Wani 2016); Baltis in northeast Pakistan (Brandt 2021); Meiteis in Northeast India (Brandt 2018); or, Punjabi Sikhs and their ethnoreligious Khalistan movement (van Dyke 2015).

In all four cases the respective activists have continued to assert that they form their own distinct nation, despite the fact that they do not have a state on their own. Hence, they can be considered to each form instead a "nation without a state" or a "stateless nation" (Chouinard 2016; Guibernau 2004). The aforementioned term

"subnationalism" (Chima 2015) seems to be a problematic one, especially in the case of these different separatists. In contrast to members of other ethnic groups — for instance Punjabis in Pakistan or Bengalis in India, for whom their ethnic (that is, subnational) identity is not a contradiction to their citizenship and so-called national identity — Khalistani militants, for instance, have repeatedly demanded a complete separation from India.

Concluding remarks on nation-building in Asia

The short excursus to South Asia illustrates that nation-building not only centers around cultural or ethnic belonging, or ideals of equal citizenship associated with (Western) modernity that have, further, led to various forms of political nationalism. Nation-building can be based on a common religion too, as would be the case with the emergence of Pakistan. Moreover, the fact that India as well as Pakistan are still home to a number of separatist movements shows that both countries are far from being nation-states in which all citizens embrace the constructed nation of which they are supposed to be members. Interestingly, in both it is, in recent times, religious rather than ethnic minorities who have become more and more estranged from their home regions and considered second-class citizens. This phenomenon can be observed in several other Asian states too.

For example, whereas in the Maldives only Muslims can be citizens, in Myanmar it is Muslims (Rohingyas) who have lost their citizenship due to their ethnic but also religious belonging. In Sri Lanka, a form of cultural nationalism centering around the ethnoreligious identity of its majority population, Sinhalese Buddhists, would lead to a decades-long civil war. In the post-Soviet states, too, religion has been gaining new momentum in identity politics and nation-building, for instance, in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. In China, meanwhile, religions — especially Christianity and Islam — are still seen critically and at times mercilessly oppressed. Elsewhere in Asia, in contrast, being an atheist can pose a threat to one's life. Particularly, autocratic Islamist regimes such as in Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia base their nation-building dominantly on the "proper" religion and its practices. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the monarch additionally holds absolute power.

In general, less attention is paid to monarchy and its role in nation-building, even though it is of relevance not only in some Asian countries but also in certain European ones too. However, there are major differences as to whether the form of government is a constitutional monarchy, one in which the monarch has absolute power, or one where they merely play a representative role. And what about other national leaders who traditionally have combined, for instance, worldly and religious power, and their own role for nation-building, as is the case with the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama? Living in exile in India and being the leader of a nation without a state, the history of authoritarian leadership under the Dalai Lamas is scarcely questioned. There is no doubt that Buddhism and the Dalai Lama together play a

central role for the present-day Tibetan independence movement (Kolås 1996), even though there are also Tibetans, of course, who adhere to other religions such as Hinduism and Islam.

The main difference between nation-building processes in countries in the so-called West and those in Asia seems to be that in the former every citizen of a state is allowed to identify with the constructed, invented, or imagined nation, whereas in the latter countries nation-building draws somewhat heavily on cultural, ethnic, and/or religious belonging in striving to create an organic nation that excludes those who belong to ethnic and/or religious minorities. However, state-initiated nation-building that seeks to include all citizens does not automatically mean the prevention of everyday discrimination and racism, but at least officially all people are by law treated equally. In summary, in some Asian countries it seems the concept of the "nation" is understood rather in its original sense from Roman times: A term then used for the "other" (barbarian) groups posing a threat to the Roman Empire is today similarly used for one's own group when its cohesion is seemingly threatened by minorities who are excluded from nation-building, even if they are citizens of the state in question. The "nation" is often constructed as something organic, a unit that has primordial roots needing only to be rediscovered and strengthened. Citizens who do not identify with or who are not identified as part of this organic unit tend to become second-class citizens — or are already. And, these measures are not infrequently enforced in an authoritarian manner. Hence, we must be cautious about equating a state with the nation by speaking carelessly of nation-states, especially when the nation is something imposed on all citizens to the detriment of ethnic and/or religious minorities.

This issue

The respective contributions to this special issue all focus on distinct features of nation-building. In "A Long-Term View of Thai Nationalisms: From Royal to Civic Nationalism?" David Malitz examines the Thai political system and the struggle within the country's constitutional monarchy over the course of the last century. While more recently young Thais in particular have come to oppose the sovereignty of the Thai king through protests and large turnouts in national elections, Malitz's piece looks at the *longue durée* of this particular monarchy. It leads the reader through the establishment of royalist nationalism as a counter to colonialism in the nineteenth century, through the phases of political stabilization and economic boom that supported the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and royal democracy, and concludes in the twenty-first century with the ongoing struggles. By ending with the contemporary civic discourse on a future republican Thailand, the article touches on a recurring aspect that presents itself in many submissions to this special issue: namely how to create a society that is egalitarian and less discriminatory toward minority cultures and ideologies.

Similar aspirations to inclusive nation-building are discussed in "Identity, Conflict, and Social Movement Activism in Nation-Building Politics in Bangladesh" by Hosna Shewly and Eva Gerharz. Even though Bangladesh, with its majority Bengali population, is ethnolinguistically the most homogenous territorial state in South Asia, it is also home to a large number of non-Bengali groups who are excluded from the typical state-initiated nation-building processes. Hence, the cultural and linguistic diversity of Bangladesh stands in contrast to a rigid local legal-constitutional framework. As cultural differences become increasingly important to identity, established national concepts like "secularity" are now being reassessed in all their facets. The impact of identity politics can also be seen in social movements wherein individuals strive for new positionalities outside of the existing national community. Their struggles aim to counter the rigorously established homogeneity and majoritarianism, seeking to empower marginalized groups and minorities in the process. The authors' empirical work expands on the existing literature on social movements and political nation-building practices, highlighting how those processes are intertwined. By researching different social-movement groups and their participants' diverse positions on national identity, Shewly and Gerharz reveal the intersectionality of inequalities and exclusion and how these play into discourses of national belonging.

In "South Korea's Domestic Contestation on 'National Role' and its Recent Foreign Policy toward Japan," Bohyun Kim contributes to the field of nation-building by applying an International Relations perspective. Examined here are how vertical national role contestation and collective memories affect foreign policy. The author looks at the example of Korea-Japan relations and the continuing dispute surrounding the 2015 comfort women deal.

As in some other contributions to this special issue, Kim's analysis expands on conflicting definitions of citizenship between civil society and the national government. But her paper goes beyond national discourses in instead looking at how such contestation affects national role conceptions, nation-building processes, and foreign policy. Following major protests by the South Korean public as well as elections, the comfort women agreement was subsequently annulled in 2019. Through the comparison of national role conceptions before and after these large-scale protests, it becomes apparent how these divergences of understanding influence both domestic and foreign politics. This helps to close a gap in research on Korea-Japan bilateral relations, as the effect of domestic politics on international relations remains understudied.

"From Arabian Nights to China's Bordeaux: Wine, Local Identity, and Ningxia's Place within the Chinese Nation" by Michael Malzer turns, meanwhile, inward, in examining how identity-formation processes affect and are affected by the local economy and developmental politics. His case study of the formation of a previously uncommon wine trade in the central Chinese and predominantly Muslim region Ningxia tackles multiple aspects of nationalism. On the one hand, there is the

political nationalism of the Communist Party of China — which has commandeered the reframing of the region as a national vineyard and stands behind the regional tourism programs. On the other, the element of ethnic nationalism is particularly visible in the shifts occurring within the branding of Ningxia. While it was previously promoted on the grounds of its exoticism and Muslim culture, there has now been a move toward a more secular framing of the region. This development shows that China is drawing on economic factors for internal identity formation and external trade. Additionally, wine has been embraced as an inherently Chinese product symbolizing a modern and urban lifestyle, one thus compatible with the image the Party wants to promote of a modern and in particular civilized country. With Malzer's case study, we gain a better understanding of the processual nature of nation-building, especially considering rapid modernization, economic development, and majoritarian top-down planning.

Franziska S. Nicolaisen, Mirjam Le, and Mandy Fox at how citizenship negotiations are affected by memories and perceptions of belonging in "Between Memories and Taboos: The Formation of Alternative Vietnamese and Myanmarese Spaces of Citizenship and Belonging Citizenship." The authors outline the recent related struggles occurring in Myanmar and Vietnam, including among the diaspora populations of these countries, showing how both states as well as their social actors are using collective memories as a tool for mobilization. On the one hand, national-identity construction by the two states is similarly dominated by ethnic and religious majorities, as in Bangladesh. On the other, the authors propose that this exclusivity also leaves some peripheral spaces for alternative memory formation and remembrance practices that in turn pose a challenge to the state. In both countries, ethnic groups have experienced a long history of conflict and marginalization. In consequence, they have sizeable diasporas — which again play into national discourses on citizenship and belonging. To examine how society's different levels intersect with nation-building processes, Nicolaisen, Le, and Fox examine three specific cases. Although these explore communities at the local, national, and international levels, they all focus on groups that have been excluded from the dominant discourses on citizenship and thus from nation-building. While the prevailing conceptualization of citizenship results in the exclusion of alternative and marginalized collective memories and identities, the authors expand on the concept of "citizenship" as a more nuanced framework via which to examine belonging at large.

The final research note in this special issue, "Authoritarian Developmentalism in Contemporary Sri Lanka," examines another country with a history of civil war (1983–2009) and conflict between different ethnic groups. But while the previous papers by Malitz, Shewly and Gerharz, and Nicolaisen, Le, and Fox focus on the role of citizens and the government in the struggle for authority, Sören Köpke's also examines the role of militarization within a post-conflict nation-building process. He thus provides a comprehensive overview of the ideological and economic attempts at nation-building by Sri Lanka's post-conflict governments. The author illustrates

how both nationalist and liberal ideologies were applied by different leading figures to promote the development of a reconciled state and to stabilize economic development. Most importantly, these attempts have been shaped by ethnoreligious majoritarian discourses on belonging articulated by the Sinhalese Buddhist majority population. After the civil war, ethnoreligious conflict between militants from the Buddhist majority and the Muslim minority broke out, further influencing citizenship discourses. Köpke outlines how some aspects of recent political developments (such as religious conflict) have their roots in both pre-war and war times.

Following a period of rapid economic growth and government-led infrastructure development, Sri Lanka has been hit by multiple crises that pose a challenge to its leadership — with respective governments increasingly responding with authoritarian developmentalist measures. This has not only increased the visibility of the already-influential security forces but also led to an erosion of governance institutions and undermined nonsectarian civil society. At the same time, the grievances of the public and marginalized groups remain unaddressed. While the security forces play an important role in post-war Sri Lanka and have been repeatedly deployed to deal with crises, Köpke highlights how the previous government was losing ground amid an existential economic crisis and growing discontent. The article thus provides the background on these recent developments, putting them into the larger context of attempted nation-building following a long period of civil war.

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Refereed article

A Long-Term View of Thai Nationalisms: From Royal to Civic Nationalism?

David M. Malitz

Abstract

This article offers a history of Thai nationalisms, drawing on primary sources as well as the secondary literature on the country's political history. Rejecting a linear evolution of Thai nationalist ideas, it traces the development of very different political imaginations of a Siamese/Thai political community from the early nineteenth century through the student protests of 2020/2021. It does not consider, therefore, these recent demands for reform of the country's monarchy to represent a radical rupture with established Thai political culture. Rather, the student protests constitute a new iteration of a long-standing trend of contesting official nationalisms in the country. This is evident in the students' own symbolic embracing of the history of the Siamese Revolution of 1932. For analytical purposes, the article employs a twofold approach. As such, it differentiates between inclusive and exclusive imaginations of the national community on the one hand and between its democratic versus autocratic political organization on the other.

Keywords: Thailand; nationalism; nation-building; monarchy; royal nation; student protests; Siamese Revolution

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Introduction

In February 2020, Thailand's supreme court dissolved the Future Forward Party that had come third in the previous year's national elections by capturing the votes of first-time and younger voters. Founded by activists known for their criticism of the kingdom's draconian *lèse-majesté* law and campaigning on a platform critical of the military, the party's success shocked the political and bureaucratic establishment. While not unexpected, the dissolution triggered immediate protests on university campuses that by summer 2020 had turned into a veritable student movement. Vocal criticism of the monarchy and the military set these protests apart from the protests that had regularly polarized Bangkok over the previous fifteen years, as did the relative lack of national flags. This was experienced as a surprising or even uncomfortable rupture with established Thai political culture by many. But such a view falsely assumes that Thai imaginations of their national community are largely static and homogenous. In fact, contesting views of the Thai nation have oscillated between vesting sovereignty in the people or in the monarch almost from the time that the Thai nation became imaginable. The embracing of the history of the Siamese revolution of 1932 by the students themselves gives testimony to this continuity. There is not a fundamentally unchanging identity rooted in a homogenous national culture, but domestic as well as international economic and political contexts have determined which interpretations of Thai nationhood were dominant at given times and how they were challenged by alternative nationalisms.

This article attempts to provide a long-term view of these developments, thereby proving a deep historical context for the recent student movement. It thus also contributes to the nationalism studies literature.

Making sense of multiple nationalisms

Nations are social constructs, sovereign "imagined political communities" as Benedict Anderson famously framed it. They are creations of the modern worldview of nationalism, which divides humanity into a number of these unique cultural communities, in which the tenet of popular sovereignty solely invests political sovereignty (Anderson 1991, 5–7; Özkırımlı 2017, 82, 167, 225). Over the course of the nineteenth century, nationalism became a global phenomenon, making the nation-state the sole legitimate form of organized political communities. But to be relevant locally, nationalism must materialize in specific forms. These combine locally available cultural resources with political ideas circulated globally (Bieber 2020, 4, 24–6, 211–2).

As nationalism defines legitimate claims to political power, the imagination of a political community is always contested, resulting in multiple and changing nationalisms in any given community claiming to be a nation (Hutchinson 2005, 3–4, 77, 121). Ideal types have long been employed in the nationalism studies literature to analyze nationalisms and make meaningful comparisons. The differentiation

between a liberal-civic, inclusive nationalism and an ethnic or ethnocultural, exclusive nationalism is one of the oldest categorizing attempts in the field of nationalism studies. While the initially descriptive use of the two categories is now rightly rejected, they remain useful as ideal-types of very different imaginations of the organization of a national community (Bieber 2020, 12–5; Coakley 2018: 267).

To make the categories more useful for the extra-European case of Siam, renamed as Thailand in 1939, however, disintegrating them is in order. This results in a two-dimensional matrix. A first axis relates to membership in the imagined community, which can be open to or inclusive of outsiders, or closed to them. They are reflected in the *jus soli* and the *jus sanguinis* principles of nationality law respectively. The second axis pertains to the internal organization of that community, which can be found on a continuum between an egalitarian, democratic and a hierarchical, authoritarian nationalism.

Chat Thai: From estate to people

In contrast to the general acceptance of the modernity of nationalism, there remains a debate about the modernity of nations. In the case of the Thai nation, however, the modernity of its "imagined community" is plainly evident

The people of the Kingdom of Siam have long referred to themselves as Thai and their country as *mueang Thai* (see e.g. de la Loubere 1691, 16–7). The exonym Siam is possibly a Portuguese rendering of the Chinese Xian (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 8). This "imagined community" differed from a modern, national one in important regards. First, the realm was ethnically very diverse. The people of the north and northeast of the kingdom, for example, were not included in the Thai population, but known as Lao. In the south, there were Malay speakers and several smaller ethnic minorities lived in the mountainous northern borderlands. And, of course, there was a sizable Chinese population (Renard 2006, 298–300, 305). Second, political legitimacy derived from the Buddhist idea of merit, not blood ties. The Thai-Buddhist cosmology, which explained all existence through different amounts of merit, was directly reflected in the social hierarchy. The king stood at the apex of the social hierarchy by virtue of his supreme merit (see Lithai 1982). In 1782, King Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok (Rama I, 1737–1809, r. 1782–1809) founded the royal capital of Rattanakosin (Bangkok) and its ruling dynasty following the destruction of the previous capital of Ayutthaya and the short intermezzo of King Taksin (1734–1782, r. 1767–1782) ruling from Thonburi. Through his title, statements, and performances he claimed to be a bodhisattva, a future Buddha, and a chakravartin, a universal emperor, by virtue of his vast merit (Malitz 2020, 4–5).

The linkage between one's social status in the kingdom and one's merit was reflected in the numerical *sakdina* ranks, which differed depending on one's estate and title (Akin 1969, 22–5, 53–69). "Ethnicity" played a minor, if any, role in this political order. Being foreign meant speaking a different language, the word being used to describe somebody as alien, as practicing a different religion (Davisakd 2003, 113–

5; Renard 2006: 301). Foreigners useful for the crown as administrators, traders, or military specialists were regularly ennobled and thus enjoyed a higher *sakdina* rank than the vast majority of the crown's Thai subjects (Nidhi 2018, 17–9).

With the idea of a "Thai nation" in the modern sense being non-existent, the word used to describe the concept today, *chat*, had a very different meaning. Stemming from the Sanskrit and Pali *jāti* for birth, it was used in the sense of an individual's "birth" or in extension "estate" as well as "caste." Kings—in Thai *kasat*, from the Sanskrit *ksatriya*—by virtue of being born in the warrior estate or caste explicitly claimed to have been born in a different *chat* than their subjects (Vajiravudh 1963, 56, also 14).

The destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767, the displacement of a large part of the population to Burma, as well as the famine and disease in its wake, set into motion a shift in political consciousness among the kingdom's elite. Historical writing that had previously written exclusively about rulers now began to use "politicized ethnic identities" to describe the conflict (Reeder 2017, 88). With foreign ships visiting Siam more frequently, missionaries arriving in Bangkok, and geographic knowledge being disseminated, *chat* became the general term for such an identity. Exemplary of this shift is a famous text written under the penname Lady Nopphamat, now dated to the reign of King Nangklao (Rama III, 1788–1851, r. 1824–1851), which combined *chat* with "language" (*phasa*) and used it to describe different peoples (Nopphamat 1914, 3; see also Pallegoix 1854: 883). It had become possible to imagine a community to which both the king and his subjects belonged.

A modern Buddhist monarchy

Being Buddhist was a crucial dimension of being Thai even before the destruction of Ayutthaya (Renard 2006, 302–3). But Buddhist practices and doctrines had always been heterogeneous and accepted as such. This changed under the influence of the development of a modern Buddhism and the colonial threat in the nineteenth century. The German Buddhologist Heinz Bechert famously coined the term "Buddhist modernism" to describe cultural revival movements that reinvented their Buddhist traditions in response to Western colonialism as rational and thus reconcilable with modern science while simultaneously making them central pillars of timeless and authentic national identities (Bechert 1966, 37–195). A similar observation can be made in Siam, where the beginning of the development of a rational Buddhism de-emphasizing animist and Brahmin influences can be traced to the late Ayutthaya period. It also underlined reforms of the monkhood under King Rama I (Baker & Pasuk 2017, 247–8, 272). Nevertheless, as a monk in the early nineteenth century before his ascension to the throne, King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1804–1868, r. 1851–1868) was greatly disillusioned with the lack of knowledge and lax discipline of the majority of the monks he encountered. His founding of the Thammayut ordination lineage in 1833 was meant to rectify these shortcomings (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 40–1). But at this time, missionaries had also begun to

proselytize in Siam. They demonstrated their scientific knowledge in an attempt to prove the superiority of Christianity. In response to this challenge, the Thammayut monks and their supporters embraced the Western sciences to explain the material world while affirming the superiority of Buddhism in moral and spiritual matters, linking it to a pure Thai identity (Thongchai 2010, 137–139; Reynolds 2006, 172–7). The creation of such a dichotomy between the material and the spiritual to allow for the adoption of Western sciences and technology while claiming a distinct, authentic identity was of course a staple strategy of nationalists around the colonial and semi-colonial world (Chatterjee 1993, 120–1; see for Japan e.g. Tipton 2008, 46–7). But in semi-colonial Siam, it also allowed for the preservation of the law of karma to explain social inequalities. As stated in a summary of their worldview published in 1867, "men are born unequally, differing from each other" (Reynolds 2006, 177).

In 1851 King Mongkut ascended the throne supported by nobles wishing to establish trade relations with Britain. The First Opium War and the subsequent unrest in China had disrupted the profitable tribute trade with China. His good relations with the missionaries, which he had met frequently, will have been seen as beneficial for the negotiation of a treaty. That he lacked an independent power base after 25 years in the monkhood must also have made him an attractive candidate. Starting with the Bowring Treaty with Britain in 1855, Siam signed a series of unequal treaties opening trade relations, but reducing Siam to a semi-colony through limits on tariffs and the extension of extraterritorial jurisdiction to the citizens and subjects of the colonial powers (Kullada 2004, 22, 26–31). To bolster his position vis-à-vis the high-ranking nobles, King Mongkut reconceptualized royal legitimacy. Adopting the idea of dynastic legitimacy, he tied his own authority to the achievements of his ancestors, who had reestablished the kingdom after the destruction of Ayutthaya and brought peace and prosperity to it through their reigns as virtuous Buddhist kings while rejecting claims of bodhisattva-ship (Malitz 2020, 8–9).

Nationalizing the realm

His son and successor King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1853–1910, r. 1868–1910) initially also found himself in a weak position. Far from being an absolute monarch, his authority was curtailed by high-ranking nobles. Only after their deaths could the king assert his authority by appointing trusted relatives and allies to high offices and laying the foundations of an absolute monarchy ruling through a centralized bureaucracy (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 49–61). Tied to this was King Chulalongkorn's continuation of the reinvention of the Siamese monarchy. By selectively adopting European ideas and practices, he became a member of a transnational royal community. And by thus becoming "civilized," the Siamese monarchy could maintain its claim to legitimacy (Thongchai 2000, 537; Peleggi 2002).

Extraterritorial jurisdiction necessarily tied this state-building intimately to a nation-building project. Inability to arrest individuals claiming to be protégés of colonial

powers limited the state's authority while local notables in the peripheries could not be antagonized for fear that they might desert to a colonial power (Tej 1977: 139). By the late nineteenth century, extraterritoriality had become an existential threat. In 1893 French-Siamese rivalry over the Lao principalities on the eastern bank of the Mekong resulted in armed conflict. A quick French victory forced King Chulalongkorn to grant consular protection to all people who had "originally" come from the eastern bank of the river. As the people of northern and northeastern Siam were not referred to as Thai but as Lao, like the French subjects on the eastern bank of the Mekong, a major percentage of the kingdom's population could now potentially be claimed by France (Tuck 1995, 105–12). The response of King Chulalongkorn's government was multipronged. Restrictions on foreign landownership and expansion of the provincial administration made claiming extraterritoriality less attractive. British capital was also treated more favorably. By 1907, France was willing to end the registration of Asians as protégés in return for considerable territorial concessions in Cambodia (Larsson 2013: 50–60; Petersson 2000: 281–6).

Most importantly, however, the Siamese government began to officially refer to the Lao within the kingdom's borders as Thai and to invoke this identity also in census documents and official histories (Ijima 2018: 180; Grabowsky 1996: 62–3; Streckfuss 1993: 139–40). A modern system of education served to imbue the heterogenous population throughout the realm with a Thai identity (Renard 2006: 298). With many temples serving as schools, education depended heavily on the monkhood. To ensure their loyalty, a new centralized administration was initiated for them as well. It ensured the homogenizing of doctrinal practices in line with modern Thai Buddhism (Ishii 1986, 25–6, 71–7). Due to a lack of financial resources, however, these attempts remained limited. By the end of the absolute monarchy, only about half of all children went to elementary school (Pin 1975, 15). There remained also the ethnic minorities in the mountainous borderlands in the north, Malay-speaking Muslims in the south, and the urban overseas Chinese. But in theory at least, in the early twentieth century the Thai nation was largely made congruent with the population living within the borders of the Kingdom of Siam and tied to its monarchy through Buddhism.

This "royal nationalism," an imagination of a national community around the monarchy, at once made the monarchy modern and civilized, and created the Thai "royal nation" around it. This was not a uniquely Siamese project. Rather it was part of a transnational movement of established dynasties to create new roles for themselves as "national monarchies" and thereby preserve or even expend their political significance and social status against the emergence of new ideas about states and political communities (Banerjee 2017, 23; Backerra et al. 2017, 2–7)

Challenging the royal nation: Popular nationalism

From its very beginning, the official and royal nationalism was challenged. The first criticism of the new absolutism came from high-ranking princes studying or serving as diplomats in Europe. In 1885, they argued that a constitution was necessary to maintain Siam's independence. This political change would translate into good governance and mobilize the people on behalf of the state (Nares et al. 1975). Implicitly, this criticism already differentiated between crown and country, yet it neither called for a parliament nor evoked popular rights. In his response, the king rebuked the princes, arguing that only his righteous rule was acceptable to the people and therefore able to lead the country (Chulalongkorn 1975). Yet oaths were introduced for the bureaucracy and textbooks published for the new schools opened to train future bureaucrats, then not only taught loyalty to the throne, but also to the nation. Divergence in the interests of crown and country had become imaginable (Kullada 2004, 92; Murashima 1988, 83–7)

The emergence of a Siamese bourgeoisie has been traced to the late Ayutthaya period of overseas trade expansion (Baker & Pasuk 2017, 248). But with the opening of the new schools, the expansion of the bureaucracy, and the integration of the Kingdom of Siam into the global economy, this middle class grew greatly. Its members soon found themselves marginalized in the absolutist and semi-colonial society. As commoners, their career prospects in the bureaucracy and military were limited, while as Siamese they were disadvantaged vis-à-vis Europeans and colonial subjects, often overseas Chinese, who enjoyed consular jurisdiction when conducting business (Murashima 1998, 111–2).

The first critical commoner publicists, K.S.R. Kulap and Thianwan, publishing from the 1890s and 1900s respectively, were acutely aware of this. In their criticism of the kingdom's lack of political participation and semi-coloniality, they did not yet advance an alternative to the monarchy and the estate-based social order. But they did argue that a parliament and a free press would greatly contribute to overcoming the corruption and mismanagement holding kingdom and nation back (Bunphisit 2017; Reynolds 2006; Rosenberg 1980). This nascent popular nationalism critical of the monarchy received further impetus from the Chinese nationalist press publishing in both Chinese and Thai. Here, even republican arguments were permissible as long as the target was the Qing court and publishers demonstrated their loyalty to the Siamese monarchy (Wasana 2019, 50–8, 68–9).

Responding to discontent: Royal nationalism

As crown prince, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1881–1925; r. 1910–1925) had published a satire ridiculing his critics (Vajiravudh 1975). He only realized the depth of discontent in 1912 when a conspiracy in the army was discovered. Its members had planned to assassinate the king and introduce a constitution. A document recovered from them harshly criticized the king for betraying the nation by wasting

resources on his and his sycophants' amusement while the nation was in mortal danger (Rian & Netphun 2013, 246–252). The conspiracy greatly disturbed the king and the princes, but not enough to convince them to make political concessions. Rather, the conspirators' discontent was attributed to them being Chinese, as many indeed had Chinese ancestry (Siam Observer 7 March 1912). In response, King Vajiravudh disseminated through speeches and articles the official, royal nationalism that had been developed in his father's reign. Absolute kingship based on Buddhism, so the king said, was at once Siam's tradition and a necessity in the present for the kingdom to remain independent and pursue progress (e.g. Vajiravudh 1963, 44, 49–50, 56, 63–64, 74). Arguing along colonialist lines, the Oxford-educated king deemed his subjects to be too ill-disciplined and insufficiently educated to participate in their government (e.g. Asvabahu 1912, 35–8, 45, 49). The others of the nation as imagined by the king were then not the colonial powers, but the Chinese community. They had demonstrated their economic dominance in Bangkok during a three-day long strike in 1910. Now, they were also suspected of fostering criticism of the monarchy. King Vajiravudh's anti-Sinicism drew on the language of anti-Semitism to describe the Chinese as fundamental aliens and a "yellow peril" to the kingdom. Yet in contrast to anti-Semitism, it remained cultural and not racial. While Buddhism remained an important dimension of being Thai, the unquestioned core ethnicity of the kingdom, loyalty to the crown was all that was demanded in order to be accepted as a full Siamese subject (Wasana 2019, 67–73). The first Siamese nationality act of 1913 was thus based on the principle of *jus soli*.

The royal nationalism of absolutist Siam was thus at once hierarchical and undemocratic as well as expressly inclusive. It imagined Siam as a purely political, yet obviously starkly unequal community tied together by shared loyalty to the crown.

Revolution and nation-building

Frustration with the lack of political reform and economic opportunities as well as widespread corruption only grew after the failed coup of 1912. This is evident from the contemporary press, with its harsh opinion pieces and biting cartoons. These at times also targeted the monarchs directly and questioned whether Siam was truly independent (Barmé 2002, 97–131; Copeland 1993).

In the wake of the great depression, Siam's absolute monarchy came to an end when the self-declared People's Party conducted a successful a coup d'état on 24 June 1932. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII, 1893–1941, r. 1926–1935) agreed to remain on the throne as a constitutional monarch. Meanwhile, Siam's first constitution now officially declared the people and not the monarch to be sovereign. All of the People's Party's core members had studied in Europe, mostly through government scholarships. This meant that the revolutionaries, who declared that they spoke for the nation, were among the most privileged members of Siamese society. Ironically, this very privilege made them acutely aware of a twofold discrimination. As

commoners, their careers were limited despite their prestigious education in Europe and individual merit. King Prajadhipok's acknowledgment in front of soldiers in 1931 that managing the financial crisis was beyond his abilities was only the final straw of disillusionment with the system (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 115–7). Furthermore, abroad they had also been confronted with racism and the low international status of Siam, which was often not even known. The University of Frankfurt, for example, initially refused to recognize Thai as part of the requirement to speak two foreign languages when Prayoon Pamornmontri (1898–1982) studied there. Only after being informed about Sanskrit loanwords was the language accepted (Prayoon 1982, 41, 51). Reflecting on such experiences, the People's Party's five principles declared "national independence in all forms" and "equal rights" as its paramount goals (Pridi 2000, 72).

Given the kingdom's multiethnic population, a fundamental question revolved around who belonged to the Siamese nation and therefore deserved such equal rights. Opinions varied considerably. In an essay on how "nationalism" would "greatly benefit the Thai nation and the country of Siam," the diplomat and writer Wichit Wathakan defined a "Thai" patriot as somebody, who "revere[d] the constitution and the king," but who was also a devout Buddhist (Wichit 1933, 3, 6). Clearly, subjects of the crown who were not ethnic Thais and not Buddhists could not fully belong. In contrast, the liberal newspaper founded by one of the few aristocratic supporters of the constitutional regime, Prince Wan Waithayakon (1891–1976), explicitly rejected *chat* as a possible title, as it would imply a common "bloodline." By adding the Sanskrit *prajā*, "people," its title would include all Siamese citizens in the national community (Prachachat 1933, 5). A further fundamental question was the role of the monarchy in the constitutional regime and the degree to which the nation was a hierarchical community. In 1938, both questions were decided upon when the leader of the military faction, Phibun Songkhram (1897–1964), became prime minister. After the revolution, the People's Party had tried to work with the king while diminishing his political and cultural role. They worried about the support the king might receive from abroad should there be open conflict, but were also aware of the reverence the institution still enjoyed among senior members of the bureaucracy and in the countryside (Thep 2016, 283–4). A second constitution proclaimed in December 1932 had made considerable concessions to the monarch. But after a failed royalist countercoup and a prolonged conflict over the royal prerogatives and assets, the king abdicated. His nephew, Ananda Mahidol (1925–1946, r. 1935–1946), succeeded as Rama VIII despite being a minor and residing in Switzerland (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 118–20). Phibun reduced the role of the monarchy, banishing it from public view and, influenced by European fascism, established himself as the "leader" of the Thai nation. Supported by Wichit Wathakan, his government attempted to fundamentally remake Thailand and to create a homogenous Thai and Buddhist national community. Only through cultural uniformity was national unity achievable, which the military man understood to be the necessary foundation of national survival and progress at a time when a world

war seemed imminent. As a military man and politician whose power base was the military, Phibun made the army a core institution of the nation (Thep 2016, 286–7). For him and his supporters, it was the duty of the state to prescribe proper behavior and consumption through regulations to reconcile Thai authenticity with universal progress. For the daughter of a high-ranking prince returning from exile in Penang in 1942, the kingdom had become a foreign country (Phunphitmai 2016, 410). The renaming of the kingdom as Thailand in 1939 and the subsequent naming of minorities as Thai exemplified this nation-building project.[1] The sovereign body-politic and the nation's territory were made congruent, homogenous, and, as the abolishment of royal titles stressed, its members seemingly equal. Ethnic and religious minorities were pressured to assimilate to make this nationalist fiction a lived reality (Kobkua 1995, 103–108, 112–133, 141, 149).

Phibun's and Wichit's nationalism was thus in a sense the opposite of the absolutist royal nationalism. It was—in theory—radically egalitarian but ethnoculturally exclusive. Yet, intolerant as this nationalism was, it was based on a cultural and not a racial understanding of nationhood, and was therefore fundamentally different from European fascism. Closing Chinese schools and newspapers, limiting new immigration, and increasing taxes for foreign residents were aimed at making the overseas Chinese accept Thai citizenship and assimilate culturally, not to exclude them from the national community or even expel them physically (Murashima 1998, 228–9; Kobkua 1995, 106–108, 149). This nationalism was also not hostile towards neighboring peoples, who were regarded as ethnic brothers (Thongchai 2009, 789).

From World War to Cold War

The anticipated global conflict arrived in Thailand on 8 December 1941, when Japanese forces invaded the kingdom to enter British Malaya and Burma. Impressed by early Japanese victories, Phibun aligned Thailand with the empire. Shared belief in an ultimate defeat of Japan and opposition to the military dominance of the government allowed the civilian members of the People's Party under their leader Pridi Banomyong, elected members of parliament, and royalists to find common ground, leading to the foundation of the Allied-supported Free Thai network. They were able to force Phibun from power in 1944, allowing for a smooth transition from the alliance with Imperial Japan to Thailand becoming a US-supported democratic state recognized as having been occupied by Japan (Sorasak 2010, 21–6).

The civic nationalism of the progressive wing of the Free Thais was institutionalized with an amendment to the 1932 constitution that introduced universal suffrage and an indirectly elected upper house. For a brief moment the nation became a community of equal citizens. It was also more inclusive, as Phibun's ordinances regarding everyday life were rescinded. Royalists and other conservatives, in contrast, thought of the nation as an organic and hierarchical community, in which

1 Likewise, semi-colonial Persia was renamed "Iran" in 1935.

political authority naturally accrued to the royal family and those close to them. The popular support for the left-leaning policies of Pridi Banomyong convinced them that their political and economic interests were better served by joining forces with the military, whose members had become disgruntled by the loss of political power and the mismanagement of the postwar demobilization. A military coup in 1947 was justified by the unresolved death of King Ananda, as well as widespread corruption, and was legitimized by King Bhumipol (1927–2016, reigned 1946–2016) through his recognition of the coup group as the nation's leaders (Sorasak 2010, 172–87; Suchin 2012, 130–1). For the former revolutionary leader Phibun, this was a complete reversal and his acceptance of this recognition implied that the crown and not the people were sovereign.

Royalist constitutions in 1947 and 1949 introduced an upper house with members appointed by the king and a powerful privy council. After the recognition of the coup government by the Allied powers, however, Phibun returned to the premiership in 1948, leading in 1951 to the reintroduction of the 1932 constitution with an unicameral parliament to which officers were largely appointed. Having lost direct command over military units during his enforced retirement, however, Phibun's authority was much weaker than during the war. He therefore had to play high-ranking officers off against each other to remain in power. For this, he also depended on support and recognition from the United States, with their cornucopia of military and financial assistance. Anti-communism brought the wartime enemies together, while also explaining the need for the military's continuing political role (Fineman 1997, 38–62; Kobkua 1995, 137–144). It also allowed for the continuation of discriminatory policies aimed at Chinese immigrants (Stanton 1956, 221–222). The goal remained their assimilation, which continued, including in the upper class. As a US diplomat observed in the early 1950s, generals "tended to marry the rich daughters" of Chinese merchants (ADST 2012, 34).

Buddhism remained a central pillar of Thai identity and Phibun's legitimacy. But in stark contrast to his wartime government, joining the "free world" again necessitated embracing religious tolerance. While Catholics in particular had been targets of chauvinistic sentiment during his first government, which fought a border war with French Indochina, both Christianity and Islam were now supported by the state as anti-communist institutions and to demonstrate the liberalism of the government (Strate 2011, 86; Kobkua 1995, 140). In contrast, under the influence of American anti-communism, foreigners from neighboring countries began to be seen not as brothers but as potential threats to national security (Attachak 2006, 48–50).

The starkest difference between the two Phibun governments concerns the role of the monarchy. Having been instrumental in the suppression of a royalist rebellion in 1933, Phibun's first government had been hostile to the monarchy and its public role was reduced to a bare minimum. After returning to power in the 1950s, however, Phibun cautiously allowed King Bhumipol (1927–2016, r. 1946–2016) a public role (Thep 2022, 239–40). The United States had embraced the institution as crucial in

the defense against communist subversion (Natthaphon 2013, 328). But the prime minister also hoped to support himself against domestic opponents. Phibun therefore attempted to shore up public support by presenting himself as the main patron of Buddhism. Most prominently he did so by organizing a grand celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the death of the Buddha, thereby infringing on traditional royal prerogatives (Thak 2007, 66–8, 205; Keyes 1992, 332). This and mutual distrust prevented a symbiotic relationship. At the same time, Phibun's cautious attempt to shift to the left and use a more neutral foreign policy to gain popular support damaged his relationship with the US (Fineman 1997, 242).

The return of royal nationalism

Having fallen out with Phibun, army chief Sarit Thanarat (1908–1963) launched a successful coup d'état in 1957. Initially, Sarit attempted to govern constitutionally, but he and the United States were concerned by the increasing influence of the left. A second coup in 1958 established Thailand's most repressive and sternly anti-communist dictatorship, thereby gaining continued US support (Fineman 1997, 239–57). He then secured control over the armed forces and invited King Bhumipol to play a central role in public life, deriving his own legitimacy from this arrangement (Thep 2016, 300; Thak 2007). Through visits to the countryside, state visits abroad, and religious and social functions, the monarchy once again became the symbolic center uniting the nation. King Bhumipol was a powerful symbol of the organic and hierarchic national community imagined by conservatives, as he was able to represent its different aspects in personal union. As a patron of Buddhism he stood for authenticity, while as a modern, jazz-playing and athletic family man he simultaneously stood for modernity. Through the initiation of development projects, the king demonstrated his concern for his subjects, reconciling traditional royal duties with a demonstration of modern, scientific knowledge. While the unequal treaties had been renegotiated just before World War II, it was the king's official visits in the capitals of the West that shored up national pride by demonstrating the recognition of his kingdom as an equal member of the Free World (Thak 2007, 204–18).

Under Sarit, assimilation remained the goal of the policy towards the overseas Chinese, which was supported by the United States (Eaksittipong 2021, 103–104). They always remained, however, at risk of being singled out as criminals, or worse, communists. As an academic remarked based upon personal experience, being not ethnically Thai in an education system that remained invested in an ethnocentric vision of the Thai and a hostile view of China led to a constant sense of insecurity regarding one's belonging (Kasian 2009, 271). In the famous novel *Letters from Thailand*, becoming Thai meant accepting Thai citizenship, going to Thai schools, and being loyal to the king (Botan 2002, 379). The last point was most easily demonstrated by the economically successful immigrants. They donated generously to royal charities, had their children receive their university degrees from members

of the royal family, and received royal blessings for their children's weddings (Baker & Pasuk 1995, 282–283; Gray 1986, 528–530.).

Ethnic minorities in the mountainous borders in the north had been traditionally known as *kha*, a term also denoting servants. Illiterate and non-Buddhist, living in the forest, they had always been relegated to a lower status than the Thais (Renard 2006, 304). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were described as the uncivilized others in the periphery of the civilized Thai nobility (Thongchai 2000, 535). But until the 1950s, Bangkok showed little interest in them. Their collective classification "hill tribes" was only introduced in 1959. At that time, their living in border regions and the perceived uncertainty of their loyalties came to be seen as a potential threat. Through royal patronage in the form of development aid, they were supposed to be assimilated into the Thai nation. The newly founded paramilitary Border Patrol Police, which enjoyed close relations with the royal family, was tasked with policing the border as well as supporting the study and development of these ethnic minorities. This shows that the underlying assumption that they were a danger to the nation remained and is also reflected in their negative depiction in the press until the present, as is denial of citizenship despite the nationality act promising it to people born in Thailand (Toyota 2005, 115–129).

The nationalism of Sarit, influenced heavily by his adviser Wichit Wathakan, was thus a hybrid. It took from the royal nationalism of absolutist Siam the image of the nation as a hierarchical community with the monarchy at its apex. But it now situated the military just below it, claiming a special and close relationship between the two institutions. Additionally, the exclusiveness and latent hostility towards outsiders was inherited from Phibun's nationalisms. Arguably, the influence of Sarit's nationalism proved to be enduring because only from the 1950s onward did the national community became imaginable far from the capital. Generous support from the United States allowed for the building of infrastructure connecting the capital to the provinces, building schools and clinics, but also handing out pictures of the king and showing films about the perils of communism. To paraphrase the title of a historical work on these processes, Thailand was only "born" during the Sarit years (Phinyonphan 2015).

Radicalism left and right

The postwar period saw the expansion of tertiary education as well as rapid economic growth, which by the late 1960s could not keep up with the number of graduates and their expectations. Students became vocal critics of the military regime and widespread corruption, as well as the lack of political opportunities. The king, who had developed a relationship with the students, echoed these concerns, while critical intellectuals narrated the history of Thai democracy as one driven forward by the nation's kings (Prajak 2013, 468–486). Mass protests against the dictatorship in the early 1970s were thus democratic in their demand for a constitution, but also driven by an illiberal economic and cultural nationalism. A

boycott of Japanese goods in 1972 was motivated not only by economic concerns but also because foreign consumer goods had become a part of everyday life despite not being necessary in the students' opinion. Their imagined community clearly remained a hierarchical one. Criticism of the king was limited to the far left and was not tolerated by the majority of the students and their supporters, as a rally against a newspaper that had published a critical letter showed (Prizzia & Sinsawasdi 1974, 28–33, 39, 52, 54, 78, 161–162; Khorapin 2018, 365).

The demonstration of royal support for the students after violent clashes in October 1973 finally forced then dictator Thanom Kittikachorn (1911–2004) to step down. But in the following three years, the cautious support for the students among Bangkok's middle class and the royal family eroded quickly. Political liberalization led to an influx of new ideas and the radicalization of parts of the student movement. Alliance building between student activists, labor unions, and farmers threatened the economic interests of the conservatives, while the military failed to defeat a communist insurgency supported from abroad. As all of this occurred while Laos and Cambodia fell to the communists and their monarchies vanished, these developments greatly frightened the palace and conservatives, who responded with the foundation of paramilitary organizations such as the Village Scouts, while the royal family became leaders in the fight against communism as a threat to the nation and its identity. The nationalism of the right became "hyper-royalist, it made loyalty to the crown the only dimension of the Thai national identity of significance" (Thongchai 2016, 14; see also Khorapin 2008, 385). The insurgents' Thai identity as well as that of students, labor, or peasant activists was denied due to their alleged hostility towards the king, but also toward Buddhism. They were labeled either Vietnamese communists or their agents, if not vampires. Their grievances, on the other hand, were dismissed with the claim that the nation was a harmonious family in which all inequalities due to regional, religious, or economic differences were of little importance (Prajak 2006, 19; Bowie 1997, 14–30, 190–3, 223, 230). The culmination of the radicalization of the right was the massacre at Thammasat University of students accused of being Vietnamese communists in October 1976 (Thongchai 2020, 108, 208).

After the massacre, a coup made the former supreme court justice and fanatical anti-communist Thanin Kraivichien (b. 1927) prime minister. He promulgated his own hyper-royalist imagination of the Thai nation, which was of course hierarchical and undemocratic (Thanin 1976). In theory, however, it was and is inclusive, as loyalty to the monarchy alone determines one's belonging. The resulting inclusivity is, however, always contingent, as one's loyalty has to be continuously proven.

The establishment of royal democracy

Thanin's dictatorship was so repressive that he lost even the military's support within a year. A Thai-Chinese rapprochement ending Chinese support for Thai communists led to a period of political liberalization. An amnesty followed in 1980,

which, paired with promises of political participation, broke the insurgency. Under Prem Tinsulanonda (1920–2019, in office 1980–1988) Thailand became a "stable semi-democratic regime," in which elected politicians shared power with the bureaucracy (Samudavanija 1987). The government began to encourage foreign direct investment, leading to an economic boom, meaning businessmen rivalled bureaucrats in income and status. The end of the insurgency and political stabilization turned neighboring countries from enemies to promising markets (Suehiro 2014, 69–70). Against this backdrop, the narrative of a pure and homogenous Thai culture defined by the culture of Bangkok and central Thailand began to be challenged. Historians and popular writers embraced local traditions and pointed to the various influences which have shaped Thai cultural traditions and linked them to those of neighboring countries without rejecting the idea of a cultural core defining a Thai identity. Often former student activists and insurgents, the intellectuals were deeply skeptical of capitalist development and cultural change (Hong 2000). Closely related was the rewriting of the history of Chinese-Thai relations and the role of the Sino-Thai in this period. New scholarship with active support from Chinese academic diplomacy explored Chinese-Thai relations as a long history of friendly exchange and stressed the contributions of the overseas Chinese to the Thai nation (Sittithep 2021, 108–117).

Against the backdrop of political stabilization, King Bhumipol's public image also changed. He was first of all the "developer in chief," working tirelessly for the sake of the national community (Suehiro 2014, 219). In 1992, mass protests erupted in Bangkok against a government installed by a military coup. Only a royal admonishment of both sides' leaders ended a bloody crackdown and forced the military to withdraw from politics. A popular and largely inclusive nationalism seemed to have been established. The king was now perceived by many—as he had been in 1973—as Thai democracy's main patron (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 249–51). Yet the king was thereby seen has having the legitimate authority to intervene in exceptional circumstances. Following Carl Schmitt, this made him the de facto sovereign within royal democracy despite all constitutions since 1932 having declared the people as sovereign (Schmitt 1985, 5).

The Thaksin Shinawatra government and a political polarization

Drafted with unprecedented popular input, Thailand's most democratic constitution was enacted in 1997. The very same year, Thailand was hit by the Asian Financial Crisis. Businesses went bankrupt, while unemployment and poverty rose starkly. The painful reforms and privatizations prescribed by the IMF as the conditions for a rescue package gave birth to an economic nationalism. The former policeman turned entrepreneur and politician, Thaksin Shinawatra (b. 1949), capitalized on the 1997 constitution's aim to create strong governments with a clear majority in parliament for his "Thais love Thais" party by embracing post-crisis economic nationalism and combining it with Thai cultural nationalism (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 257–68). Once

elected, however, he leveraged control over the senate to neutralize independent organizations created to keep the government in check (Kuhonta 2008).

In line with the developments since the 1980s, Thaksin assumed a Thai identity based on a "unified cultural core," which allowed cultural difference to be seen as not threatening to the existing social order, national identity, or territorial integrity. Consciously preferring English "nationalism" to the Thai translation, he presented his nationalism as benign and inclusive. It nevertheless remained the state's duty to police the borders between the acceptable and the subversive. This is maybe best exemplified by the attempt by both Thaksin and his sister Yingluck to control and standardize Thai food served abroad (Baker & Pasuk 2004, 76–80, 140–151, 167–170, 280; Ichijo & Ranta 2016, 111–112). Against the backdrop of a global movement for the recognition of indigenous rights, as well as royal exhortation to that effect, his government oversaw the extension of citizenship to parts of the hill tribe community, whose formal inclusion in the Thai nation was also of benefit for the promotion of tourism (Toyota 2005, 124). In contrast, the distinct cultural identity of the Malay-Muslim minority in the southernmost provinces bordering on Malaysia had long been seen as a threat and their loyalty was questioned despite their citizenship. When a harsh response to protests against Thailand's support for the invasion of Iraq and political centralization triggered a full-blown insurgency, a state of emergency was declared, suspending civil rights for the local population, thereby making them what has been described as "informal citizens" (McCargo 2011). Kidnappings, torture, and forced disappearances followed (Thanet 2007, 1–7). Exclusion from the national community through the de facto revocation of civil rights was not limited to cultural others. The Thaksin government identified drugs as a threat to social order and thus drug dealers as mortal enemies of the nation. In a "war on drugs," the extrajudicial killing of dealers was encouraged and the murders were never prosecuted (Baker & Pasuk 2004, 157–66).

Thaksin was re-elected in 2005 in a landslide. But by this time, his authoritarian leadership style, denigration of political opponents and the press, as well as his abuse of authority for personal gain, had brought together a heterogeneous assembly of oppositional forces centered on the bureaucracy, whom he had antagonized by criticizing it as inefficient and backward while relocating policy decisions to his party. They were joined by members of the Bangkok middle class, NGOs, the relatively richer southern region, and the large conglomerates. They all saw Thaksin's embrace of neoliberal globalization in combination with the welfare policies enacted by his government as a threat to their economic and social status. Thaksin's opponents' diverse grievances were brought under the umbrella of conspiratorial narration that the premier was planning to overthrow the monarchy. The protestors wore yellow shirts, the king's birthday color, to indicate their loyalty to the throne (Suehiro 2014, 142–176; Hewison 2007, 239–43).

Their boycotting of elections called for early 2006 created a stalemate that was ended by a military coup in September of that year. This in turn triggered the formation of

the Red Shirts network. Underlying the conflict between the two networks, which remains unresolved in the present, are two fundamentally different imaginations of the national community. The yellow shirts see the nation as a strictly hierarchical community with the king at its apex. Military coups as a measure of last resort are therefore legitimate if approved by the king. They embrace a guided democracy in which voting by the poorer and allegedly less competent demographics is to be checked by "good people," who are necessarily more educated in their worldview, from independent organizations, the bureaucracy, and appointed upper houses, while not rejecting parliamentarian democracy per se. Ultimately, of course, making royal intervention the arbiter of the last resort makes the monarch the de facto sovereign. As middle- and upper-class protestors' confident embrace of their Chinese heritage demonstrate, yellow shirt nationalism is much more inclusive than the authoritarian nationalisms of the past. It remains, however, heavily prejudiced against the ethnic Lao of northeastern Thailand and the northern Thai, who have largely voted for Thaksin-affiliated parties, as well as the "Hill Tribe" minorities. Profoundly shaped in their economic views by the experience of the 1997 currency crisis, they embrace the Sufficiency Economy approach developed by King Bhumipol. It stresses social harmony, the preservation of Thai cultural traditions—as interpreted by them—and economic stability both on the individual and national levels over growth. This translates into a rejection of a more comprehensive welfare state as populist and financially irresponsible (Dulyaphab 2021, 3–7; Wasana 2017, 50; Hewison 2007, 245; Baker & Pasuk 2014, 268–79; Suehiro 2014, 133–9, 219).

Like the yellow shirts, the red shirts, who assembled after the 2006 coup d'état, are a heterogeneous network. Numerically, their main contingents are lower middle-class individuals stemming mainly from the country's north and northeast. They had benefited from Thakin's policies and therefore opposed their overthrow. While embracing the elected government, they have largely not rejected the authoritarian tendencies of the former prime minister. This distinguishes them from the more progressive "red" academics, who share with them a belief in free elections as the only legitimate way to select a government (Dulyaphab 2021, 7–12; Baker & Pasuk 2014, 273–7).

The following years saw competing mass demonstrations and the removal of Thaksin-aligned prime ministers and parties through the courts. Protests in Bangkok from March to May 2010 by Red shirts demanding a new election escalated to violent confrontations until the army violently cleared the protest site in central Bangkok, leaving 80 people—mostly protestors—dead (Baker & Pasuk 2014, 271–7). In the elections in late 2010, Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra (b. 1967) emerged victorious, having campaigned as her brother's proxy. By 2013, however, an expensive policy to shore up rice prices as well as a proposed wide-ranging amnesty that would have allowed her brother to return from exile, triggered a new protest movement. Like its immediate predecessor, the People's Committee for Absolute Democracy with the King as Head of State, better known under its self-chosen English name the People's Democratic Reform Committee, was an alliance

of various conservative groups. All of them had become disillusioned with electoral democracy due to their inability to defeat Thaksin at the ballot box. They thus embraced the idea of a People's Council of unelected, and thus ultimately royally appointed, "good people." Their embrace of their Chinese heritage while collecting cash donations for impoverished farmers demonstrated their inclusive yet hierarchical imagination of the nation. Simultaneously, their demonizing of their political opponents as stupid, corrupt, or disloyal showed that, just as in the 1970s, belonging to the national community was contingent (Prajak 2016, 473–5; Bangkok Post 30 January 2014 & 11 February 2014; The Nation 21 January 2014). Both red and yellow shirts count monks of different factions and with different grievances among their ranks (Dubus 2018).

The dissolution of parliament was answered once again with a boycott of the election, creating a stalemate that presented army chief Prayuth Chan-ocha (b. 1954) with a pretense to launch a coup. The junta that ruled until elections in 2019 was the most repressive since the days of Thanin. Its reform program aimed to realize through a new constitution a political system as envisaged by the PDRC by having electoral democracy kept in check by institutions controlled by the bureaucratic-military elites. And in ultimate accordance with these ideas, Prayuth declared that sovereignty rested with the king and not the people (Arjun 2020, 93; Khorapin 2018, 363–4; Prajak 2016, 483).

When repression was finally relaxed and a new election was called in 2019 under the new constitution, it became evident that political polarization had not been overcome. The newly founded Future Forward Party, running on a progressive platform, came third with 17% of the vote. Founded by known critics of the lèse-majesté law and criticizing the military, the party's success revealed a generational cleavage. Its voters, too young to have meaningful memories of the Cold War or King Bhumipol, had grown up as digital natives in a cosmopolitan Thailand shaped by international tourism and foreign investment. Future Forward's last rally presented a truly multicultural imagined community, with candidates ranging across ethnic and sexual minorities, disabled and labor activists, thus reflecting the true diversity of the country and going beyond the tokenism of having representatives of these communities join parties or protests (McCargo & Anyarat 2020, 35, 58, 88–89, 99–104, 161; Piyabutr 2019, 83). This imagination of the Thai nation is reflected in a definition by the party's co-founder Piyabutr Saengkanokkul (b. 1979), a former law professor and known critic of Thailand's lèse-majesté law. *Chat*—the nation—according to him refers simply to the citizens, while Thai-ness can only be that which at once is held dear by Thais and does not contradict universal values (Piyabutr 2019, 81–2).

The New People's Party

The party's dissolution (it was later re-founded as Move Forward) over alleged violations of party financing regulations immediately triggered student protests

across the country. These were interrupted by restrictions introduced to curb the first wave of Covid-19 infections. Protests resumed on 24 June 2020, the anniversary of the Siamese Revolution of 1932. Initially, secondary and tertiary students made headlines with their creative use of international pop cultural references to criticize the government. But protests soon began to greatly concern the government and conservatives with their vocal criticism of the monarchy and demands for its reform to make it truly constitutional, void of any political influence and thereby going further than the banned Future Forward Party. Closely connected to this criticism was their embrace of the Siamese Revolution of 1932 as a central memory site in a people-centered Thai history. On 19 September 2020, protest leaders officially took on the mantle of the revolutionaries of 1932 by symbolically founding a "new People's Party," declaring the people sovereign (Kanokrat 2021: 206–9; Bangkok Post 20 September 2020).

But as shown above, there had been periods of open and harsh criticism of the monarchy before. According to Khorapin (2018), the latest such wave began not immediately after the 2006 coup, but in 2008, when the queen attended the funeral of a yellow shirt protester, thereby revealing a political partiality. The lack of a royal response to the killings in 2010 intensified this emergent anti-royalism, giving rise to indirect criticism and satire in private and online. Red shirt leaders cautioned, however, against direct criticism of the monarchy (370–389). Politically socialized by the turmoil since 2005, the student protestors of 2020 were privy to these developments and as digital natives were also familiar with international reporting about Thailand and its monarchy. Their criticism of the institution was further galvanized after the ascension of King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X, b. 1952) in 2016 and the subsequent strengthening of royal powers, by the wealth of the royal family, and the forced disappearances of critics (Kanokrat 2021, 214–5; Khorapin 2020).

The Siamese Revolution had already been rediscovered by historians during the early 1980s against the backdrop of a cautious political liberalization, and the twin events of the 50th anniversary of the revolution and Pridi Banomyong's death in exile in Paris the following year.[2] But it was only after the coup in 2006 that this rediscovery acquired political significance. Red shirt activists now discovered the revolution as a historical event directly related to their own struggle and used a plaque in central Bangkok marking the site of the revolution for demonstrations. After the coup of 2014, the military government attempted to erase this history. The historical plaque was removed in 2017 (Subrahmanyan 2020, 74, 89–92). The student protestors' subsequent embrace of the revolution demonstrates that this attempt has clearly backfired. Online and on merchandise, the plaque is even more present now than it was before its removal.

The protests themselves were organized by a network of protest groups often also taking aim at specific grievances in Thailand's unequal society. Protests by ethnic

2 Personal conversation with Professor Charnvit Kasetsiri on 4 May 2021.

and sexual minorities were incorporated into the protest movement and their causes promoted, as were various local demonstrations. Protest leaders with northeastern roots identified as people from the region through their language (Saowanee 2021, 224–226). In stark contrast to all the previous protest movements, students largely saw no need to demonstrate their loyalty through ubiquitous national flags. But as with prior protests, they were supported by monastic demonstrators critical of the undemocratic organization of the monkhood (TLHR 2021).

Individual red shirt activists have joined protests (McCargo 2021, 178, 182, 184) but demands to reform the monarchy have proven too extreme for the main opposition party Phuea Thai, aligned with Thaksin. Thus a larger oppositional alliance remained out of reach and with the state cracking down on student leaders and Covid-19 cases increasing, protest participation began to wither from late 2020 (Chalida 2020).

What has become clear in the course of the younger protests and the social media usage surrounding them is that protestors imagine the Thai national community as truly inclusive and egalitarian, and sovereign. Theirs is indeed a civic nationalism.

Conclusion

A history of Thai nationalisms concluding with the emergence of a civic nationalism invokes the specter of classical modernization theory, as a reviewer of this article has pointed out. But far from the straight trajectory of universal progress assumed by the theory, Thai nationalisms have long oscillated between two very different imaginations of the Thai nation. One firmly vests national sovereignty in the monarchy and one imagines the people to be sovereign. In both cases the people are at times defined in more or less inclusive or exclusive terms. Thailand has also not become a secular society, as the active participation of monks in all major twenty-first century movements shows.

A royal nationalism was first propagated to counter the colonial threat in the late nineteenth century. It was hierarchical but inclusive. But the introduction of the new idea of the political community of the Thai nation allowed the delegitimization of the absolute monarchy by claiming popular sovereignty, leading to the Siamese Revolution of 1932. Revolutionary nationalisms differed between the factions of the People's Party. The most influential ideology was that of wartime leader Phibun Songkhram, who together with his supporters imagined the nation as egalitarian but culturally homogenous and therefore exclusive. Royal nationalism returned during the Cold War, when the monarchy was seen in both Thailand and the United States as a bulwark against communism. The nation became a hierarchal community again but also inherited some of the exclusiveness of wartime nationalism. The hyper-royalism of the 1970s in particular made inclusion contingent on sufficient loyalty to the monarchy.

Political stabilization and the economic boom enabled the compromise of royal democracy. It declared the people sovereign and imagined the nation in more

egalitarian and inclusive ways. But at the same time, it allowed the king to act as a de facto sovereign in states of exception. Socio-economic change since the 1980s, the 1997 economic crisis, and the conflict over former prime minister Thaksin all contributed to the end of this compromise and the ongoing political polarization. At the end of the day, however, it is based on fundamentally different imaginations of the imagined community and the question of where its sovereignty is to be found.

The students, whose protests started after the dissolution of the Future Forward Party in 2020, have not only been shaped by the socio-economic change within Thailand in the twenty-first century, but also by this political conflict. Their protests are thus not a radical rupture with the past. But they still differ from previous incarnations of popular nationalism due to their truly egalitarian and inclusive vision of the Thai national community and rejection of all discrimination against minorities. While this nationalism certainly appears to benefit from generational change, its ultimate success in becoming dominant remains to be seen.

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Refereed article

Identity, Conflict, and Social Movement Activism in Bangladesh's Nation-Building Politics

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Abstract
In the last half a century, the search for a Bangladeshi national identity has been driven and contested by different forces and political imageries. This paper looks at the interrelations between nation-building policies and social-movement activism. Since its independence in 1971, the country has been caught up in debates surrounding Bengali, Bangladeshi, and Muslim identities and activism in its nation-building process, leading to multiple exclusions along ethnic, religious, gender, and class lines. Identity formation in postcolonial society has mainly relied on constructing majority populations with shared commonalities, such as religion, language, heritage, or social traditions. We show how state initiatives in crafting a so-called natural identity and homogeneity in the name of nation-building have turned into counterproductive and politically profit-oriented projects, masking inequalities and persecution. We propose that achieving a sophisticated understanding of the nation-building process requires paying attention to the causes, outcomes, and influences of social and political movements. We also posit that nation-building is a protracted process of political integration that often remains unfinished, even decades after a nation has gained its independence.

Keywords: intersectional movement, postcolonial state, nation-building, indigenous activism, secularism, conflict

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Introduction

"Nation-building" may be defined as the process through which the boundaries of the modern state and those of the national community become congruent (Mylonas 2012). It is often thought that nation-building constitutes a challenge wherever modernity has brought previously smaller, self-contained social units into closer contact with one another. In this context, political integration and national identification form two sides of the same coin: nation-building (Talentino 2004). To achieve political integration and national identity, states forge ties between citizens and the state that serve to integrate ethnic both minorities and majorities into an inclusive power arrangement. As part of this process, cultural pluralities are viewed anew in numerical terms and, as such, perceived as "minorities" and "majorities." Consequently, they are required to be pacified, contained, held, subjugated, or "transformed" through the symbolism of the majoritarian culture, which the state itself often articulates through its social and cultural policies (Sheth 1992). Yet nation" and "national identity" remain contentious topics and unattainable visions in many postcolonial countries, mainly ones where society is deeply divided along sociocultural lines.

Bangladesh has a long history of contestation related to national belonging, and the subject of nationhood continues to be part of struggles and negotiations in the postcolonial nation-state. Since independence in 1971, the advancement of Bengali, Bangladeshi, and Muslim nationalisms has led to various exclusions along ethnic, religious, gender, and class lines. While the dominant nationalist model promoted by the more secular faction with East Bengal's political leadership reinforced the unity of Bengalis based on language, culture, and heritage, those protagonists embracing more religious ideals have sought to highlight a national unity based on Islamism. Rather more invisible, however, have been forms of activism denouncing intersectional inequalities, such as the exclusion of religious and indigenous [1] minorities or of diverse gendere identities.

Against this background, this paper investigates the intersection between nation-building policies and social-movement activism.[2] It shows, first, how the crafting of a threat to national security has been employed as a political strategy to mask the exclusions enshrined in nation-building. Second, nation-building seen as a continuous process can be strongly linked to both violent and nonviolent social movements, ones that relate to the state as the primary but not the only force behind particular nation-building projects (Sheth 1992). Political and social movements also seek to contribute to nation-building by pursuing processes of social transformation.

1 The term "indigenous" refers to the population covered by the definition "indigenous people" coined by the United Nations.

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Methodologically, this article is based on extensive empirical research undertaken in various phases in Dhaka and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The first author conducted ethnographic research, including participant observation in multiple protests and political meetings, group discussions, and interviews over six months in Dhaka between 2018 and 2020. Interviews were conducted with four key figures of the Shahbag movement, persons who were particularly visible in the movement's slogans, statements, speeches, media interviews, or talk shows, plus with 31 movement participants as well as 13 "supporters."[3] She also conducted three group discussions (six to a group) and four in-depth interviews with indigenous activists in Dhaka who participated in the Shahbag movement. Although access to leaders or activists from Hefazat-e-Islam (HEI) proved difficult, interviews were conducted with two leaders of HEI, six Long-March participants, as well as 13 supporters. Beyond the movement's participation circle, five group discussions (six to a group) were further conducted with current university students on the topics of national identity and social movements.

The second author has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the CHT since the late 1990s in various phases, with a focus on ethnicity and nationalism, indigeneity, social-movement activism, and development. She has also worked with activists from indigenous communities both in academia and more practical fields. This has occurred in various on-site fieldwork missions and collaborative projects with local organizations, as well as part of engagement in transnational activism for human and particularly indigenous people's rights.

The paper is structured as follows. We begin by exploring academic discourses on nation-building and their connection to social movements, then examine nation-building agendas and strategies in Bangladesh. We focus thereafter on the indigenous movement in rural southeastern CHT and its connectivities to activist spaces in urban areas. We subsequently draw on our findings concerning the different positionalities of national identity and their connections to Shahbag and its countermovement led by HEI. Next, we establish parallels between the indigenous and the Shahbag movements by showing how intersecting social categories structure the multiple inequalities enshrined in opposing ideas of national belonging and exclusion. The final section sums up the paper's findings and briefly discusses its broader implications.

Nation-building and social movement activism

How have scholars engaged with the concept of nation-building? How are social-movement activism and nation-building processes interlinked? We address these questions on the basis of two key arguments: first, that nation-building is a

3 These are individuals who support the cause but did not directly participate in related activities, or did so but only on one or two occasions.

continuous process and, second, that nation-building and social movements are mutually constitutive.

Nation-building combines two objectives: state-building, which involves creating and developing formal political institutions, and identity-building, which refers to creating an overarching communal identity (Talentino 2004; Fukuyama 2007; Allen 2010; Barr 2012). National-identity formation or contestation are considered central to a nation-state's ability to realize these objectives. National identity, however, is constituted from particularistic ethnic cores, myths, memories, religious beliefs, language(s), territorial connections, and political values (Smith 1991). Thus, an essential feature of nation-building lies in its attempts to create loyalty to that communal identity. And it is considered one of the key sources for solidarity (Moran 2011) as well as for achieving the goals of resolution and rehabilitation, particularly in post-conflict contexts (Talentino 2004; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2005). In this way, the nation-building process is a form of integration that involves shifting sovereignties from kinship or ethnic allegiances to fealty to the nation-state (Sutherland 2009). Importantly, national identity is not about individuals per se but refers to a personal identity arising from membership in a national political community, and an identity vis-à-vis said political community that renders it distinct from those of other nations (Parekh 2008, 56). At the same time, structure and political process are the core elements of nation-building. Thus, state-building and identity formation are not separate spheres; instead, they influence each other (as demonstrated later empirically).

Existing theories do not specify who pursues nation-building policies and in what fashion (Mylonas 2016). There is a need to examine policy outputs, the process of selecting policies, as well as specific ones regarding assimilation, accommodation, or exclusion (Mylonas 2016). Nation-building is the interaction between various groups within a state, wherein foreign policy and international actors/interests are also involved. Quite often, nation-building is the contingent outcome of a strategic response by politicians to the modern conditions of geopolitical competition or of power plays within the state. The formation of national identity in the postcolonial era has primarily relied on the construction of majority populations sharing commonalities such as religion, language, heritage, or social traditions. These common denominators encompass decisive factors for the perceived unity and solidarity needed to construct a national community. How these majorities are established is what tends to exclude those perceived as minorities (Talentino 2002; Mylonas 2012;). For nationalists, populations threatening the purity of the national community constitute a potential danger. This fuels tensions in heterogeneous societies where high degrees of ethnic, linguistic, or other forms of diversity are present. Scholars often tend to analyze nation-building discrepancies through an inclusion/exclusion binary (Wimmer 2010). In contrast, we adhere to Mylonas's (2012) argument that nation-building policies must be viewed as more than dichotomous conceptualizations such as "inclusion/exclusion" or "violent/non-violent."

For nation builders, the acceptance of state-building processes is essential for the creation of the desired overarching identity. This acceptance includes a belief in the state's legitimacy and an internal sense of ownership of its policies. Legitimacy, thus, is linked to identity — as the process of identity-building aims to bind citizens to the state through the nation (Talentino 2004). Struggles over participation in decision-making procedures, equal access to social institutions, or the recognition of cultural differences can perpetuate social movement activism. As will be seen in the subsequent analysis, social movements representing the claims of minorities challenge the hegemony of the state by positioning themselves in opposition to it.

While understanding nation-building according to the above framework is practical, it also offers only a fragmented picture of the nation-building process. We propose that to obtain a sophisticated temporal understanding of the assimilation, accommodation, and exclusion enshrined in nation-building requires close attention being paid to the causes, outcomes, and influences of social and political movements in that nation-building process. Assimilation, accommodation, and exclusion are not static but rather require an awareness of how various groups react to and shape that process, and how they interact and negotiate with other state- and non-state actors — both nationally as well as internationally.

The existing scholarship on nation-building and social movements has largely been carried out in isolation, although many overlapping notions do exist. As discussed above, nation-building engages in a variety of different processes to unite people and ensure (social) justice through a consensual state apparatus. On the other hand, social movements strongly influence states in manifold ways: they might contribute to overthrowing dictatorships and monarchies, to establishing democracies, to triggering local policy transformations, or to instigating changes in people's views on particular social and political realms (Shewly and Gerharz 2023). Although a popular uprising may not always successfully overthrow a regime, it can still alter media discourses, public opinion, or scientific and intellectual communities, thereby creating a pathway for future achievements in this regard (Jenkins and Form 2013). The so-called Arab Spring, the revolutionary movement in Sudan, or contemporary anti-monarchy or anti-military-rule movements in Southeast Asia constitute cases of social-movement activism par excellence that later shook or shaped particular forms of nation-building. In South Asia, social movements have broader both political and social implications. As Amenta (2006) rightfully argues, political contexts matter, as they shape social movements' scope for action.

Social movements typically prefer to promote a unified and homogenous collective identity to minimize internal division and avoid related factions (Lichterman 1999; Armstrong 2002; Pulido 2006; Ward 2008). In doing so, social movements often fail to respond to the fact that their participants possess individual identities that might structure the types of challenges or opportunities they encounter in their lives. Moreover, identity-based movements tend to devote limited attention to the interests of subgroups marginalized in multiple ways (Cohen 1999; Strolovitch 2007).

Individual activists, however, are sometimes quite conscious of how their own identities affect their experiences and may draw on more than one identity to spur their activism (Greenwood 2008; Blackwell 2011; Clay 2012; Milkman and Terriquez 2012). They may also attempt to build bridges between the various communities they are a part of (Mische 2008). Looking specifically at what they call "movement intersectionality," Roberts and Jesudason conclude that "attention to intersecting identities has the potential to create solidarity and cohesion [across identity categories]" (2013, 313). Thus, intersectionality can foster alliances and act as a means for movements to embrace diversity (Crenshaw 1991). Such understanding can encourage the development of connections within social movements and thus make them more inclusive (Terriquez, Brenes, and Lopez 2018).

We argue that adopting an intersectional lens can help us to better grasp a social movement's construction of exclusionary social and cultural policies in nation-building, as they operate within the social spaces available to them. This does not imply that we claim to perform a systematic intersectional analysis of the field. Our aim is more humble, intimating the need to look beyond dominant identity categories and therefore reveal how coalitions are being formed and identity politics configured. Social movements and the state often do not work together. On the contrary, through the political and social mobilization of certain sections of the population, often on rights-related issues, movements seek to compel the state to adopt policies and enact legislation that it would otherwise not be inclined to pursue (Sheth 1992). However, we also posit that social-movement activists' influence on state-making is no less problematic or hegemonic.

A general limitation of the nation-building literature is that it emphasizes more the struggles that have constituted a nation rather than looking at changes in nation-building from a temporal perspective. Here, rather, we take the view that nation-building is a protracted and ongoing process of political integration that requires continuous negotiation between state and society. Consequently, the evolvement of a political consciousness that helps contain internal conflicts does not result from a unilineal process but is rather a disjointed series of reverses and delays, and ultimately remains elusive. In the following, we illustrate this with the case of the Bangladeshi nation.

Nation-building in Bangladesh: Changes, contestations, and exclusions

Bangladesh is relatively homogeneous in cultural, linguistic, and ethnic terms. It has a small (slightly over 10 percent) but declining and politically weak Hindu minority, as well as a modest indigenous population. Together with a form of economically

driven colonialism from West Pakistan, Bengali ethnonationalism[4] was at the core of East Pakistan's independence movement and the subsequent birth of "Bangladesh" (Jahan 1973; Riaz 2020).

The newly crafted Bangladeshi Constitution adopted nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism as its fundamental nation-building principles. Secularism[5] in Bangladesh was largely conceived of as an instrument to prevent communal forces from capitalizing on Islam for political benefit. Scholars consider this a result of the experiences of rancorous religious nationalism during the Pakistan era (O'Connell 1976; Guhathakurta 2012). As part of its secularism, the Constitution declared religion a personal choice, banned religious-based political parties, chose a national anthem composed by Rabindranath Tagore, and designed a national flag devoid of Islamic symbolism (Kabeer 1991). This echoes Talentino's (2004) reflection on the aftermath of war being a time to reinforce the fledgling spirit of community and commitment to a shared vision of unity. In subsequent years, however, the practice of secularism remained vague, with an array of religious activities taking place in public spaces — including religious broadcasts on state-controlled media or allowing the madrasahs (Islamic seminaries), particularly those of a Deobandi persuasion, to impart Islamic instruction despite the nationalization of the education system (Riaz 2020).

To establish unity on the basis of language and culture, the Constitution declared Bangladeshi citizens "Bengalis." This, however, eventually led to ethnolinguistic fragmentation by alienating the non-Bengali populations, the largest of which lives in the CHT located on Bangladesh's southeastern border.[6] In response, the local

4 Although formed on the basis of religious commonality, Muslim identity did not unite the two demographic segments of Pakistan for long. The connection between religion and politics in the region has a long history. Although the partition of Bengal in 1947 was not the result of a long political mobilization or of a shared national ideology regarding the creation of a homeland for the Muslims of Bengal, Punjab, and other areas (Khan 2010, 5), the idea of a Muslim nation was indeed present at the time — as was Muslim religious nationalism. Three major historical movements — the Faraizi Movement, the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiya Movement, and the pan-Islamic Khilafat Movement — were indicative of the rise of political Islam in colonial Bengal. However, there was no one particular movement that campaigned for an Islamic territorial nationalism in colonial India. In 1933, Rahmat Ali, a University of Cambridge student, coined the name "Pakistan" and first proposed a Muslim state separate from India. The notion of Pakistan appeared in the Muslim League's political agenda in 1937. According to the 3rd June Plan, the Bengal Legislative Assembly divided itself into two parts, where representatives of both the Hindu and the Muslim majority districts conducted separate votes to determine whether a majority wished to divide the province. The representatives of the Hindu majority districts voted in favor of religious segregation, while representatives of the Muslim majority districts voted against it. For more details, (see: Moore 1983; Chatterji 1999; Shewly 2008, 2013).

5 It is important to mention here that the context, meaning, and appeal of secularism in Bangladesh are different than in its Western manifestation. In Bengali, the term *dharmanirapekṣatābād* is used for "secularism." It translates as "neutrality in religion," or, to use O'Connell's (1976) term, "tolerance."

6 Historically, the CHT was a distinct geopolitical entity with its own social and political system and remained outside the sphere of colonial administration. In the 1935 Government of India Act, the CHT was declared a "totally excluded area." When the postcolonial states of Pakistan and

political leadership, seeking to represent the interests of the Pahari population,[7] took a strong stand against the assimilationist politics pursued by the first Bangladeshi government. This led to the formation of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati (PCJSS) in 1972, a political organization that advocates for the recognition of cultural differences and strongly opposes exclusion and discrimination. The situation in the CHT worsened from 1975, as the Bangladeshi military seized power in a bloody coup and reversed the nation's trajectory in its attempt to define national identity anew. The PCJSS's demands for the recognition of cultural differences and regional autonomy were suppressed by increasingly violent means. Heavy militarization resulted in an open and violent conflict between the Bangladeshi army and the PCJSS's armed wing.

The military-dominated governments of General Ziaur (Zia) Rahman (1975–1981) and General Hossain Muhammad Ershad (1982–1990) not only shaped political developments in the CHT but had far-reaching consequences for Bangladesh in general. Both promoted Islamization as part of seeking to earn a veneer of legitimacy (Hakim 1998). Secularism was replaced with the phrase "Absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah," while a new clause was included in the Constitution: "The state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve, and strengthen friendly relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity" (Kabeer 1991; Jahan 2003; Riaz 2013).[8]

President Zia legitimized the return of religiously-based political parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI), and declared the slogan "Joy Bangla" (Bengali: *jaẏ bāṃlā*; i.e. "Victory to Bengal") as un-Islamic, to be replaced with "Bangladesh zindabad" (Bengali: *bāṃlālādeś jindābād*; i.e. "Long live Bangladesh!"). Attempts to blur the lines between state and religion continued unabashed during the regime of President Ershad: Islam became the state religion in 1988, and un-Islamic practices and expressions were discouraged. What could be remembered in public spaces was strictly regulated by the then government (D'Costa 2013). Although a signatory to the World Plan of Action for the UN Decade for Women, the Bangladesh government refused to ratify a number of clauses (related to inheritance, marriage,

subsequently Bangladesh attempted military, bureaucratic, political, and economic encroachment into the CHT's indigenous territories strong counterreactions ensued.

7 "Pahari" (Bengali: *pāhāṙi*) literally means "hill people." The term is commonly used to denote the CHT's indigenous population.

8 In the area of foreign policy, Bangladesh initially opted for nonalignment, negotiating mainly with India and socialist countries on aid and assistance, which negatively affected the building of relations with the United States. After the 1975 coup, President Zia set the country firmly on its still-present pro-Islamic and pro-US course, where aid from the developed capitalist countries became much more important, as did that from OPEC states — particularly Saudi Arabia. For example, during the devastating famine of 1974, the US decided to withhold food shipments (due to Bangladesh's trade relations with Cuba) at a time when the population was suffering from one of the country's worst disasters to date. It should also be noted that Saudi Arabia refused to recognize the new state of Bangladesh until the assassination of Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib and the subsequent appointment of President Zia. For detail see (Sobhan 1982).

child custody, and divorce) listed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, on the grounds that they conflicted with Sharia law (Kabeer 1991). Despite the strict control of information and banning of any commemorative rituals other than those sanctioned by the authoritarian state, public resentment grew (Hossain 2015). In January 1983, President Ershad reneged on his plan to turn Bangladesh into an Islamic state after massive protests.[9] Such ongoing resistance has helped moderate the extent to which official Islamization has a direct effect on women's rights in Bangladesh. Military rule ended with a popular democratic uprising in 1990.

The period of parliamentary democracy from 1991 to 2013 was marked by the fierce rivalry between the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). This resulted in a polarized political landscape vis-à-vis national identity and nation-building: the AL continues to embrace Bengali nationalism, the BNP supports a Bangladeshi-Muslim form thereof, while JEI promotes an overtly political Islam. In the preceding years, Islamist groups in general and JEI in particular had not only gained recognition as legitimate political actors but also emerged as kingmakers, both electorally as well as ideologically, having formed a coalition with the BNP (Riaz 2004, 7).

This notwithstanding, during the new era of democracy the victims of the 1971 war organized and led the Gono Adalot movement, which, on January 19, 1992, formed the 101-member Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (EGDNC) ("Committee for Eradicating the Killers and Collaborators of [19]71"). This nonviolent movement, as well as the leadership of JEI, appealed to all segments of society (De 2015; Mookherjee 2009). The Committee's demands developed into a slogan taken up by urban youth. The AL enjoyed a landslide election victory in 2008 with the mandate of establishing an "International Crime Tribunal" to punish the war criminals. In 2011, it also passed a National Women's Development Policy that was fiercely opposed by Islamists in reinstating secularism to the Constitution. During this period, the AL overtly supported the Shahbag movement and instructed the state security apparatus to be extremely heavy-handed in its response to the countermovement organized by HEI.

After 2014, however, the AL would reverse its position on secularism. It has since pursued an increasing Islamization of Bangladesh's political culture in official speeches,[10] has passed blasphemy laws, and has overseen the revision of school

9 Twenty-three opposition leaders also issued a statement warning that the declaration of an Islamic state would lead to civil war and communal strife. Various women's groups led this opposition, with a popular newspaper headline reading: "This time the women have taken the lead" (Kabeer 1991, 55).

10 On March 23, 2014, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared that the country would be governed as per the Medina Charter, a 622 CE document that lays out the principles of Islamic governance — representing a significant shift as part of Bangladesh's journey from its promise to banish religion from the public sphere to bringing religion into the heart of state ideology (Riaz 2020).

texts.[11] An increasingly authoritarian style of rule has seen the AL make greater concessions to HEI. Lorch (2019) interprets these developments as part of a top-down process of state-led Islamization and a strategy to contain the rise of Islamic social movements, fierce political competition, and to legitimize semi-authoritarian rule.

"Cultural engineering" — that is, the attempt to create a sense of national identity in cultural terms — occurs particularly in the areas of education and communication (Breuilly 1985). Since independence, there have been vast changes in Bangladesh's political culture, social practices, and most importantly in its national identity and integration. Public culture in Bangladesh has seen a transition in terms of the acceptance of Islam, due to state patronization. This reflects Gellner's (1983) argument that national identity is supported by national institutions and reinforced through the education system in line with the narratives promoted by state elites. Nation-building policies in Bangladesh — whether upheld via language criteria, the promotion of national history, or school textbooks — are all devoted to implementing elites' preferred nation-state project. While Bengali identity advocates excluded ethnic minorities, the promoters of a Bangladeshi-Muslim identity have additionally excluded not only ethnic but also religious minorities. In the years since independence, national-identity formation and nation-building measures have seen periods of secularism and religiosity, with associated resistance emerging through various forms of activism. As a result, in Bangladesh today two ideologically divided camps exist, while politics, culture, and grassroots activism continue to shape constitutional, institutional, and educational perspectives in the country (as well as their various contestations).

Forced assimilation, conflict, and indigenous movements

In the 1970s, as the country's military rulers discontinued negotiations and instead violently repressed demands for regional autonomy, insurgents in the CHT began to fight back for their right to self-determination. The military attacked local villages, taking part in massacres, acts of torture, and disappearances — which contributed to massive internal and international displacement (to India) during the 1980s and 1990s (Chakma and D'Costa 2013). Quite often, the vacated lands were taken over by Bengalis, who were relocated under a scheme named the "Settlement of landless non-tribal families in the CHT" between 1979 and 1985 (Adnan and Dastidar 2011, 42). [12]

11 The government launched new editions of schoolbooks in 2017, which featured more references to religious symbols and from which 17 poems that Islamic conservatives had condemned as "atheist" were removed (Lorch 2019).

12 Officially, approximately 400,000 Bengalis (mostly Muslims) took part in this program, but it is estimated that the number settled in the hills is actually much higher. Before agreeing to settle in the CHT, each migrant family was promised 5 acres of hilly land, 4 acres of "mixed" land, and 2.5 acres of paddy land in addition to access to bank loans. The government organized the logistics of their

This scheme also involved the forcible eviction of indigenous people from their homes and their regrouping in "cluster villages." Because of the traditional system of collective land ownership in the CHT, where oftentimes no officially accepted land titles exist, allegedly ownerless land was distributed to Bengali settlers — thus depriving the previous occupants access to the lands they had recently lived on and farmed. The scheme was ultimately designed to suppress the armed resistance of the PCJSS rebels (Dewan 1990, 243; Adnan and Dastidar 2011, 42). It has also been argued that the government's real motive behind the relocation program was to "colonize" the CHT by bringing about a demographic shift (Mohsin 2003). The initiatives, taken in the name of development, ultimately marginalized Paharis and alienated them from their lands – a process that Levene (1999) defines as a case of "creeping genocide." Since independence, all regimes and governments have denied the demands for self-determination or regional autonomy by the CHT and legitimized the exclusion of minorities there and violence toward them. This was achieved by labeling them a serious threat to the security and territorial integrity of Bangladesh (Mohsin 1997, 2003; Guhathakurta 2002; Gardner and Gerharz 2016; Bal and Siraj 2017; Gerharz and Pfaff-Czarnecka 2017). As various scholars have pointed out, defining the minority as a danger to the greater community constitutes an essential strategy in the building of national unity — one rooted in colonial, administrative, and political measures (Appadurai 2006; Riaz 2020).

In 1997 a Peace Accord was signed in the CHT, following negotiations between the AL government and the PCJSS's leadership. From the point of view of activism, the peace process implied a transition from a militant to a civil social movement. The peace process was accompanied by the institutionalization of an indigenous-rights regime — a comprehensive transition that fostered the reinterpretation of questions of identity and brought to the fore indigeneity as a new unifying category of identification (Gerharz 2015). In the realm of social-movement activism in the CHT, the post-Accord period has seen a split into various factions amid party politics, military interference, diverse economic interests, and intragroup animosities.

Beyond these internal divisions, contemporary activism in the CHT occurs on two fronts: namely regarding indigenous issues and participation in general movements respectively. An ongoing clampdown by state forces starting around 2017 has forced many indigenous political activists to flee, with many of them still on the run (Chakma and Chakma 2021). Research participants mentioned in interviews that activists located in the CHT need to be extremely cautious, and that there is always the risk they will be deemed insurgents by the security forces. In response to these increasingly repressive government strategies, the members of respective social

transportation to the CHT with different reception points along the way. The state also provided incentives like cash allowances, military protection in their new locations, and food rations. The transmigration program officially ended in 1985, but research shows that settlement continued "albeit in disguise" into the second decade of the twenty-first century (Chakma 2010, 42).

movements have been forced to either quit, go underground, or take refuge in other countries; those who choose to stay and remain active are subject to extensive surveillance.

Thus, regional activism can be classified as extremely risky and relatively unsuccessful vis-à-vis attracting media attention to its cause. Interlocutors shared their frustrations over mainstream media: "Our news only appears (though partially) in the newspaper if an incident goes viral on social media." All research participants unanimously argued that the CHT sees a much higher prevalence of human rights violations because it is de facto ruled by the military. Although the Peace Accord included a clause on demilitarization and specifically the withdrawal of all army camps from the region, currently there still exist over 400 military or paramilitary camps (*Hill Voice* 2021) in major strategic locations. The government employs a variety of means to conceal the deteriorating human rights situation: denying access to human rights observers, restricting the movement of foreigners, or openly threatening human rights activists. Despite a number of attempts to make human rights violations in the CHT public, the military has never been held accountable for the violence perpetrated there, and such news is seldom heard in the mainstream media.

One of the few opportunities for activists to reach a wider audience is coordinated activism via social media. Indigenous youth activism in this space lobbies against military oppression, land grabs in the name of development, tensions with Bengali settlers, and gender-based violence. Tourism, commercial plantations, resource extraction, and external — as well as, to a limited extent, internal — corporate actors have caused further loss of lands, of livelihoods, not to mention forced displacements (Adnan and Dastidar 2011; Ahmed 2017). Commercially driven land grabs have become the central issue afflicting the CHT. Alongside a commitment to upholding human rights, devolving power to regional bodies, and demilitarizing the region, the Peace Accord also includes provisions for speeding up "development," the settlement of land disputes, and for the rehabilitation of indigenous refugees and internally displaced persons. However, the non-implementation of most of the Accord's provisions continues to be a source of stark disappointment and contention. Due to the massive ongoing migration of Bengalis from the country's plains to the CHT, the indigenous population has become a minority in demographic terms. Moreover, the domination of Bengalis in virtually every social, political, and economic space in the region, observed by scholars during the early post-Accord years (e.g. Gerharz 2002; Adnan 2008), continues to the present day. Despite the Accord, the years of terror imposed on the local population (Uddin and Gerharz 2017) have instilled acute feelings of alienation from successive ruling Bengali regimes (Mohsin 2003).

In addition to online activism, CHT youth have strengthened their networks and participation vis-à-vis various nationwide social movements to bring the injustices experienced locally onto other organizations' agendas. One example is the women's

movement, which has actively supported activist initiatives against gender-based violence in the CHT (D'Costa 2014; Gerharz 2014). To change the enduring stigmas resulting from racist prejudices against the indigenous population in the national mainstream media, activists often visualize that which might help break social and political stereotypes.

Such initiatives reveal that contrary to established forms of nationalist exclusion, ethnicity is being juxtaposed with other categories such as age and gender. Such activism, located in as well as strategically addressing intersecting categories of identification, can inspire commitment in multiple subordinate groups (Frederick 2010), and serves the call for a more holistic form of social justice and social change (Pastrana 2006, 2010). In October 2020, for example, Bengali and indigenous activists formed a coalition in which they marched and occupied city spaces together in a week-long protest against rape and the culture of impunity around it in Bangladesh. Their slogan "In hills and plains, the battle will persist uniformly" is an essential step toward the bringing together of diverse voices speaking out against violence against women (Shewly and Gerharz 2021). Such intersectional activism reflects the importance of overlapping memberships in social-movement spillover (Meyer and Whittier 1994) and demonstrates the ultimate permeability of the nationalist imaginary.

Besides being represented as a security threat, indigenous people are also constructed — particularly by the media but also in some textbooks — as an "exotic" other (CHT Commission 1991, 91; Gerharz 2015). The popularity of such images of the backward, primitive, yet beautiful and interesting "tribals" is embedded in colonial and postcolonial notions of civilization and development (Schendel 1992, 103). Since independence, Bangladesh's indigenous peoples have challenged the degrading imagination of "tribals" as "backward" and "primitive" and sought recognition as equal citizens. Reflecting on such representations, our research participants highlighted how different dimensions of discrimination and power relations impacted their lives. In line with such viewpoints, indigenous activists across the country use social media to publicly counter the twin stigma associated with their intersectional marginalities and identities (Zimmerman et al. 2012) through visual art and storytelling — both individually and collectively.

State-making policies and practices in the CHT are, therefore, not only discriminatory but also instruments of internal colonization. While local activists try to resist acts of land grabbing and forced displacement, their concerns rarely occupy a place in policy discourses or make headlines in popular or state media. However, their involvement in national collectives such as the women's movement demonstrates progress is being made regarding the interconnection of identity processes on multiple levels.

Shahbag and its counter-movement: A redux of competing identities

The Shahbag movement emerging in 2013 was first sparked by the verdict delivered in one of Bangladesh's war-criminal trials.[13] Research participants consistently stressed that the movement was galvanized not merely because of Kader Mullah's V sign after being sentenced to life imprisonment for being a collaborator during the war of independence, but also because of increasing suspicions and frustrations over the decades-old political culture of "hidden negotiations" between the government and opposition politicians (see also, *The Daily Star* 2013). Initially it was young people and students who engaged in online activism, so-called bloggers who helped drive the ultimate engagement of the masses (De 2015). As articulated by one of its leading organizers during the field research: "We called the event and thought only a few would turn up […] but people were making it bigger every minute."

This unprecedented participation of ordinary people is a sign both of popular support and public acceptance, essential aspects of a social movement's potential for genuinely transforming state and society. Shahbag activists and supporters shared how in its early days the movement reflected the desire to undo three decades of nation-building policies wherein war criminals had played a significant role. The new collective reinvigorated the latent emotions and memories of the independence movement and 1971 war through their various symbolic and peaceful performative acts.

Which exact issues motivated people to participate in Shahbag events (Tarrow 1998)? Several key aspects appeared in their answers to our related questions, such as reforming the justice system to prevent corruption in politics, emotions and memories surrounding the war, participating in a peaceful movement beyond otherwise contentious political-party mandates, or bringing closure to the sad chapter of the "collaboration" by some locals in Pakistan's repressive actions pre-independence. Like in many other countries, particularly those in the Global South, a large number of younger Bangladeshis distrust political parties completely (Shewly and Gerharz 2021).

Indigenous research participants recalled their motivations in joining the movement: namely inclusivity, and the hope that the fulfillment of the promises made during the declaration of independence[14] might bring some changes to their less-than-citizen status. Jointly, they amended one of the 1971 slogans '*tumi ke? āmi ke? bāṅāli,*

13 Individual online activists used blogging platforms to showcase their particular agendas and ideological motivations. Young, urban bloggers had been active since around 2005, demanding that war criminals face trial, bringing to the fore various historical facts, and offering narratives of genocide and JEI's involvement with Pakistan that had either been forgotten or buried by those in power.

14 The elected political leadership formed a provisional government and issued the proclamation of the independence of Bangladesh on April 10, 1971. The government pledged to establish "equality, human dignity, and social justice" as fundamental guiding principles.

bāṅāli', by changing it to '*tumi ke? āmi ke? bāṅāli, pāhāṙī*' ("Who are you? Who am I? Bengali, Pahari"). In questions of identity, thus, the slogan reflects a recognition of ethnocultural plurality.

Shahbag leaders initially followed a strategy of not aligning themselves with any politicians. Although this helped it become a people's movement, this impression was not sustained (Roy 2018). Many research participants, both those who actively took part in the protests as well as supporters, noted that they lost interest in Shahbag once "the people's movement had been hijacked by the ruling party." One of the participants shared that the "AL is not only capable of organizing successful movements, but [also] of negating a popular movement." The movement suffered its biggest blow when a self-proclaimed atheist blogger and Shahbag activist, Rajib, was stabbed to death for his antireligious writings in Bengali. On top of this, his blogposts were published in a right-wing newspaper, which branded Shahbag a *nāstik* ("atheist") movement (Chowdhury 2019). Worth mentioning here is that the print media was also highly polarized and active in discursive "Othering" (Parvez 2022). Secularist positions were subsequently denounced by the countermovement as atheist, the government distanced itself from Shahbag, and the participation of ordinary people fell markedly (Sajjad and Härdig 2016). More importantly, however, the accusation of promoting atheism provoked a discussion at a general level about the role of Islam in Bangladesh and raised questions of how far the faith belonged to "national culture."

A few weeks after the instigation of the Shahbag movement, a strongly religious orthodox group, HEI,[15] emerged in campaigning against these activists (Chowdhury 2019). The organization served notice to the governing AL by gathering over half a million supporters in Dhaka on April 6, 2013, for a protest where the main slogan was: "Hang the atheist bloggers" (Mustafa 2013). HEI put forward a total of 13 demands, criticizing the government for not taking action against what it called "atheist bloggers." Among these was the call for a new blasphemy law, with the death penalty for those who insulted Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. On May 5, HEI arranged another rally ("long march") in Dhaka to again demand the acceptance of their 13 conditions. During a violent encounter between HEI supporters and police, 27 people (including two policemen) were killed and many more injured and arrested (BBC 2013).[16]

15 HEI has traditionally not sought power through electoral processes, but instead has looked to use its "street muscle" to change Bangladesh's secular culture and politics through the enforcement of what it believes are proper Islamic ways. The organizations belonging to the HEI coalition are based in more than 25,000 madrasahs across Bangladesh.

16 HEI supporters reportedly vandalized and torched 50 vehicles, a number of buildings and political offices, as well as assaulted journalists during their rally. In the early hours of May 6, security forces — drawn from the police, the elite Rapid Action Battalion, and from the paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh — jointly launched an operation and used stun grenades and rubber bullets to disperse protesters and end their sit-in. The government has filed charges against 12 of HEI's top leaders for murder, vandalism, arson, the destruction of property, and other crimes (BBC 2013).

While the polarization between two movements exemplifies the contestation over the significance of religion versus secularism in the Bangladeshi nationalist imaginary, it also reveals other significant facets in play here such as class dynamics, the switching of public support from one movement to another, the influence of the education system, and similar. The Shahbag movement, for example, is generally considered to be spearheaded by predominantly secularist middle-class urban youth, and the HEI countermovement by a younger generation of an opposing mold: namely rural, lower class, predominantly male madrasah students. Some research participants expressed similar frustrations with the perceived divisions along class rather than ideological lines. One interviewee complained that: "Rich people's sons (Shahbag activists) were allowed to stay on the street for weeks, but the government was brutal with our sons (HEI supporters) when they occupied the streets only for a day."

Our own field research reveals a more complex picture beyond mere differences of class, however. Although it could be said that Qawmi madrasah students come from a middle-class background, and many participated in both movements, religious identity nevertheless played a big role in people's alignment choices. As one activist shared: "I joined Shahbag because I wanted punishment for the war criminals, but I care about my religion too." Another felt that: "It was a question of your belief part of my education in the madrasah — later I joined the long march to Dhaka. Ordinary people on the way to Shapla Square offered us food, water, and showed solidarity! It was not Qawmi madrasah – only movement." Some participants expressed their disappointment over HEI's political strategy to try and remove the government: "We all marched on their call to save Islam, but it was shocking to find out their political wishes — they were discussing who will take over the president's and the prime minister's positions." Internal divisions within the network of Qawmi madrasahs also deterred many members of other madrasahs from joining the long march.

A decade on from the original Shahbag protests, the topic of Bengali and Muslim identity continues to consume Bangladesh's social and political spheres to such an extent that many of the ongoing injustices and structural inequalities in the country are not strongly contested for fear of taking sides. University students involved in our research, irrespective of their religious or ethnic identities, expressed their frustrations over the fugitive politics surrounding national identity. In group discussions, they shared that they do not have the luxury of thinking about a national identity in the current situation where their employment prospects are bleak, daily living expenses rising, student accommodation is politically explosive and unsafe, and the streets are dangerous for girls and women. Others remarked that they do not belong to either of these groups. As a student in a public university noted: "I want to solve my everyday problems, for example, corruption or oppression by the ruling party's student wing but there is no way to form a crowd. The coalition breaks apart mostly on identity lines." People coming together *en masse* is vital to popular politics because doing so provides a highly visible, physically present, and embodied form of contestation (Chowdhury 2019).

A diverse paradoxical assortment of factions currently paralyzes Bangladeshi politics, with competing nationalisms, grievances, and movements all falling into the trap of binary politics. These movements — parallel, contentious, and continuous — have not only instrumentalized many of the institutional and public policy changes seen in recent decades but also revealed deep-seated divisions within Bangladeshi society. One example is the split among the younger generation and people in general over national identity, the result of contested nation-building strategies since independence. Significantly, however, a rising trend among students of placing more importance on everyday practicalities than on visions of an overarching national identity might suggest a new driving force being at work in the near future.

Conclusion

The paper showed how political discourses and ruling elites' nation-building policies have taken capricious paths since Bangladesh's birth in 1971. We were also able to draw on our research findings in illuminating the different positionalities as well as the significant role that religion and language play in Bangladeshi political culture. Despite cultural and linguistic diversity, there has been a "systematic reluctance" to recognize the "plural and heterogeneous nature" of the country's ethnic minorities within the legal framework of modern Bangladesh's Constitution (Adnan 2008, 27). Similarly, the analysis revealed that the construction of a Bengali versus Bangladeshi nationalism is so powerful that it supersedes (visions of) everyday reality. Meanwhile, the increased visibility of religion in political and public life does not mean the death of secularization; instead, it highlights that secularization is a complex, multifaceted process that encompasses a number of different dimensions of individual and collective life (Riaz 2020, 10). Bangladesh's social movements are at a crossroads in terms of their coordinated responses to state hegemony because of these divisions along identity lines. While social-movement actors struggle to overcome these binary nationalisms, many ordinary students are striving to find new ways to position themselves beyond such divides in Bangladesh. These contested identity politics and subsequent movements overshadow the general aspiration of nation-building: namely community formation.

We made three important theoretical contributions to the discussion of nation-building policies and politics in the Bangladeshi context. First, nation-building is a contentious, complex, and continuous process that necessitates a temporal approach being taken to fully fathom its multifaceted nature. Second, the goal of developing a so-called natural homogeneity under the guise of nation-building is a political project, one that masks intersectional inequalities, enforces majoritarianism, and, ultimately, thus remains ineffective. The goal of nation-building should not be to develop a single nation in the sense of shared ethos but to build a common commitment to a single state (Talentino 2004). It is about consultation, negotiation, and compromise.

Third and finally, nation-building is not linear, but an occurrence regarding which we need to take into account the complex interaction of various resistances (social movements) that alter, pause, complicate, or shape that (top-down) process. At the same time, social movements are in perpetual motion, they have their ups and downs, they exist as mobilizations and uprisings but also in latent states — at once shaping and at the same time being shaped by political culture. We, thus, brought together two literature strands that normally work in isolation, therewith calling also for more empirically informed work on the intersection between social movements and nation-building policies as well as practices.

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Refereed article

South Korea's Partial Withdrawal from the 2015 Korea–Japan Comfort Women Agreement: Changed National Role Conceptions via Increased Social Influence (2015–2018)

Bohyun Kim

Abstract
Why did Moon Jae-in's South Korean government (2017–2022) show highly ambivalent foreign policy behavior around the 2015 comfort women deal with Japan, one of its most important economic and political partners in the East Asian region? This paper pays attention to the possibility of increased social influence on South Korea's foreign policy around the period of the candlelight movement in 2017, investigating whether this social influence affected South Korea's national role conceptions. By doing this, the research delivers an empirical contribution to the academic discussion of domestic influence on Korea-Japan historical conflicts. The analysis identifies how the national role conception of South Korea has changed between Park Geun-hye and Moon Jae-in administrations and analyzes which national roles were vertically addressed during the period after the agreement until its de facto withdrawal. To conclude, it demonstrates that domestic contestation had influence on the change of the Moon government's national role conception as "civil collaborator" and "diplomatic position re-shaper" simultaneously, which eventually led to South Korea's ambiguous diplomatic position.

Keywords: 2015 Korea-Japan comfort women agreement, South Korea, state-society relations, national role conception, vertical role contestation

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Introduction

"Comfort women" is an official term from imperial Japan (1868–1945), referring to young women and girls who were forced to become sexual laborers for Japanese troops during the Asian and Pacific War (1937–1945). The number of comfort women is estimated from as few as 20,000 to as many as 400,000, about 80% of whom were Korean (Soh 1996; 2000; Kim 2014). Being unresolved following the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea (hereafter "Korea"), the comfort women issue finally broke through the long silence and became a serious diplomatic matter for the two countries, driven by their comfort women deal on December 28, 2015 (Glosserman and Snyder 2015; Kim 2015; Deacon 2021; Seo 2021).[1]

The comfort women agreement was jointly announced by then Korean President Park Geun-hye and then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as "final and irreversible". According to the agreement, the Japanese government pledged to provide 1 billion Yen (8.3 million USD) for the establishment of the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation by the Korean government to support comfort women victims. In return, the Korean government "would strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner through taking measures such as consulting with related organizations about possible ways of addressing this issue [the comfort women statue in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul, South Korea]" (Glosserman, 2019, 126).

Moon Jae-in of the liberal Minju Party in Korea harshly criticized the deal at that time. He vigorously took the issue as one of his major presidential campaigns and eventually won the presidential election in May 2017. "I, as the President of Republic of Korea, together with the Korean citizens, clearly re-confirm that the comfort women issue cannot be resolved with the 2015 agreement" said Moon, formally recognizing that the agreement contained "significant flaws" after the announcement of the official report by the state's Special Taskforce examination of the 2015 comfort women agreement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea 2017).

1 While acknowledging the issue of comfort women as a highly relevant topic in history and gender studies, this paper discusses the topic as a diplomatic issue between Korea and Japan in the realm of International Relations, a sub-discipline of political science. The so-called Korea-Japan "history problem" generally describes the two countries' diplomatic conflicts over the comfort women issue, the forced labor issue and Yasukuni Shrine, the Dokdo/Takeshima territorial dispute and history textbooks from the two countries. It is driven by the two countries' different perceptions of the history of Japan's wartime and colonial conduct from 1910-45. While Japan sees the colonial rule over the Korean peninsula in the past as normative and legal, Korea does not agree on this (See Deacon 2021; Kang 2015; Hasegawa and Togo 2008). The number of comfort women victims registered in South Korea is 238, among which only 9 victims are alive as of May 2023 (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea).

Despite this clear and firm stance on the diplomatic conflict over comfort women at the beginning of Moon's presidential term, Korea's further handling of the issue has developed in a highly self-contradictory manner. Moon officially admitted in his 2018 new year's address that the comfort women agreement with Japan was "an official bilateral agreement," and thus the Korean government would not re-negotiate it with Japan, which surprised the public in general as well as his supporters (Moon 2018). However, at the Korea–Japan bilateral summit in New York on September 25, 2018, Moon notified Abe of Korea's plan to dissolve the "Reconciliation and Healing Foundation"(RHF), which de facto meant nullifying the bilateral agreement. This discordance between the government's words and actions has not only been strongly criticized by the Korean public, but has also resulted in a deeper chasm between the two countries in their trade relations.[2] Why did the Korean government come to take such an inconsistent diplomatic strategy over the comfort women agreement?

Previous studies have mainly analyzed Korea–Japan relations at either the international or state levels. These existing approaches can elucidate the continuity of the comfort women agreement despite the different political leadership backgrounds of Park and Moon and the two countries' constant historical conflicts respectively. However, they fail to provide a full explanation for the inconsistency of Moon's diplomatic decisions on the de facto withdrawal from the comfort women deal. Thus, the current paper tries to fill the gap based on the assumption of Korea's changed national role conception via public contestation at the domestic level. Since the end of 2016, Korea has undergone an enormous corruption scandal that generated huge protests, the so-called candlelight protests, and eventually resulted in the impeachment of then President Park (Moon's predecessor) (BBC News 2018). Given that social influence was considerably increased to an unprecedented level due to the candlelight protests, it was significant enough to affect the state's foreign policy decisions, the area of the state's "secret garden" in Korea (Jang 2006; Rhyu 2018; Yi 2020; Shin 2021). Put differently, Moon's self-contradictory position on the comfort women agreement was rooted in the change of national role conceptions addressed at the domestic level, when the role of the state in democratic governance and the rights of comfort women victims was fiercely questioned.

To demonstrate this assumption, this research constructs an analytical framework by employing national role conceptions and vertical role contestation (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012; 2016). The question that the research tries to answer is: *To what extent did vertical role contestation affect the South Korean state's changed national role conceptions in regard of the partial withdrawal from the 2015 comfort women agreement?* While answering the question, the paper aims to 1) identify South Korea's changing role conception between the Park and Moon administrations, and

2 On August 2, 2019, the Japanese government decided to remove South Korea from its "whitelist" of countries entitled to preferential treatment in trade, criticizing the Korean government for "severely damaging mutual trust" (Japan Press Weekly 2019; Kyodonews 2019).

2) demonstrate the significance of social influence on the changed national role conception of the South Korean state through a qualitative content analysis of the collected documents.

The next section reviews the existing literature on Korea-Japan relations and comfort women conflicts. Afterwards, the theoretical foundation of the argument and analytical framework will be introduced, followed by the selected research method and data. The last section provides the main analysis results, discussion, and conclusion.

Existing literature

The existing studies on Korea–Japan relations in the field of political science and regional/Korean studies can be divided roughly into four categories: 1) Studies using International Relations' (IR) realist approaches, 2) studies using IR constructivist/post-structuralist approaches, 3) domestic politics and society's role in Korea-Japan relations, and 4) political elites' preferences and perceptions of history.

Realist IR scholars have attributed the regional security structure surrounding Korea and Japan to their volatile bilateral relations. Cha developed the concept of "quasi-alliances" for Korea-Japan relations based on democratic peace theory and neo-classical realist thinking: remaining unallied but sharing democratic values and systems as well as a third power as a common ally, the United States (Takano 1967; Cha 2000; Kim 2011, 115-121). The "US-Japan-Korea security triangle" as an essential defense order in East Asia during the postwar and post-Cold War eras anticipated more cooperative Korea-Japan relations in the future due to the common threat of a rising China (Takano 1967; Cha 2000; Hinata-Yamaguchi 2016). Although this expectation does not fit into the current conflictual status of the two countries, recent scholarly work in the realist vein has explained the hasty comfort women deal in 2015 in the same vein. For example, after analyzing their diplomatic security policies, Shin contended that the different national interests and views toward China between Park's Korean government and the Abe Cabinet of Japan brought about the two countries' current conflictual situation (Shin 2016). She pointed out the role of the US and North Korea's 4th nuclear missile test as external factors that led Korea and Japan to negotiate the 2015 comfort women agreement and strengthen their military cooperation together with the US. This realist approach indeed accounts for Korea-Japan relations when they were on good terms, like when the two countries made the comfort women agreement. But it is not able to explain why the two countries repeatedly fall into discord, or why they perceive external threats so differently despite their common values and economic interests as liberal democratic partners in the region. In other words, the realist view is ineffective for understanding their conflicting relations driven by "historical problems" (Deacon 2021; Cha 2000; Seo 2021).

To tackle this gap, constructivist IR scholars included the historical perspective of the two countries on the matters, connecting the Korea-Japan conflict to their national identity problems. Deacon traced the producing and re-producing process of the "historical problem" of Korea-Japan diplomatic relations, focusing on the recent trade dispute in 2019. Starting from the classical constructivist assumption that memories and identities shape international politics and foreign policies, he further theorized the role of historical memory as the discursive language spoken in national identity formation processes in foreign policy practices (Deacon 2021, 7–9). He pointed out that the clashing characteristics of the two countries' national identities in their foreign policy practices are due to the "relational" aspect of the two as defined in opposition to (an) other(s). In a similar vein, Glosserman even described the comfort women issue as an "avatar of South Korean national identity," because "Japan is 'the other' that shapes and influences Korean conceptions of who they are" (Glosserman 2019, 122). The role of domestic politics in South Korean foreign policy toward Japan is thus to be further examined as ideological battles between conservatives and progressives over the country's foreign relations (Glosserman 2019, 127–128). In sum, the constructivist approach explains why history has such a huge impact on their bilateral relations, linking national identity formation and history as a discursive means of nation-building in foreign policy practices. Nevertheless, the domestic aspect of national identity formation is largely assumed as unitary in this view.

This limited scholarly attention to domestic politics in relation to the Korea-Japan comfort women conflict, despite its significance in each country's foreign policy practices, has been already addressed. It is only recently that domestic political aspects have been considered as crucial factors in determining Korea-Japan diplomatic relations (Glosserman 2019; Shin 2019; Kim and Sohn 2017; Cho 2014). Shin argues that the dissolution of the RHF by the South Korean government in 2018 clearly shows how "intergovernmental negotiation without reflecting [the nation's] ideology and domestic politics failed and caused a deterioration in bilateral relations" (Shin 2019, 151). Kim and Sohn similarly pointed out in their research that "the 2015 Japan-South Korea settlement abundantly shows that intergovernmental agreements without domestic consensus are no more than a house of cards" (Kim and Sohn 2017, 98). Cho also implied that this pattern of dissonance between civil society and the state around the comfort women issue is not new (Cho 2014). In his analysis on both the Korean and the Japanese governments' countermeasures on the comfort women issue from 1990–2000, he concluded that any bilateral consensus becomes meaningless in Korea-Japan relations without consensus between the state and civil society at the domestic level, as South Korea's foreign policy toward Japan is an extension of domestic politics (Cho 2014, 73). Moreover, he argued that the role of the Korean government in resolving the comfort women conflict with Japan has become even bigger since 2011 due to the 2011 Korean constitutional decision (Constitutional Court of Korea 2011). The verdict set

the legal ground to criticize the South Korean state's passive diplomatic attitude in dealing with the comfort women issue as "unconstitutional" (Cho 2014, 71).

Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of domestic politics in South Korea's comfort women policy toward Japan, the related empirical studies have been conducted in a separate manner, which is not necessarily linked to the discussion of Korea-Japan relations. With regard to societal impact on Korea-Japan relations, the globality of the comfort women issue and the role of civil society as "global civil society" have been the main focus. For example, Jung examined the role of civil society in Korea-Japan relations using the concept of new governance (Jung 2011). Yang analyzed the spreading of the comfort women issue from a bilateral conflict to an international issue (Yang 2015), whereas Shin, Ki-Young divided different levels of "comfort women" politics, namely "civil society," "state," "Asian', and "global" (Shin 2016). Lee studied the comfort women movement as a women's rights movement from the broader perspective of global governance (Lee 2017). Ku employed the concept of "transnational advocacy networks" to examine the influence of civil society networks over the Korea-Japan comfort women conflict (Ku 2015).

Foreign policy negotiators' individual perceptions of national interests or personal preferences in Korea-Japan relations has been another main analytical interest in previous studies (Kim 2011; Ku 2015; Lee 2016; Cho 2019). Kim paid attention to the role of political leadership in the formation of Korea-Japan relations. He followed the scholarly tradition of foreign policy analysis, considering political leaders' charisma as the most crucial factor in determining foreign policy content. After examining both Korean and Japanese political leaders from 2000–2005, he found that political leadership is influential in the short term, that political leaders are not always rational, and that they make decisions against national interests when it comes to historical issues (Kim 2011, 130). Meanwhile, Lee studied and assessed the historical perception of the former Japanese foreign policy elites Kono, Murayama, and Abe, on the comfort women issue and concluded that Korea-Japan conflicts have been dependent on the political orientations of Japanese prime ministers (Lee 2016). Cho (2019), on the other hand, examined the special Task Force report published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2017 to identify the Moon Jae-in government's comfort women foreign policy and its positioning toward Japan. In both studies, the South Korean government's "victim-centered approach" was assumed to be supported by both the state and the public.

Through the literature review, it becomes clear that the domestic level of foreign policy must be more widely investigated to understand conflictual Korea-Japan relations. Scholarly attempts to examine Korea-Japan conflicts have so far, however, lacked both empirical attention to Korean domestic politics and a conceptual link to combine both the domestic- and international levels of international relations. To fill this gap, the next section therefore presents relevant theoretical concepts and

suggests an alternative angle to focus on the domestic level of international politics and foreign policy.

Theoretical foundation of the argument

As observed in the previous literature review, the scholarly custom in researching Korea-Japan relations largely comes from the "rational" tradition of international studies which considers national politics as "unitary," encapsulating different actors and happenings on the domestic level in one box (Lumsdaine 1996; Risse-Kappen 1991, Putnam 1988). To tackle this limitation in previous studies, the current paper differentiates two levels of international negotiations, the domestic and international levels, from the IR liberalist account.

Increased social influence: domestic politics of international relations

In the early discussion of the "two-level game" (Putnam 1988; Moravscik 1993), the differentiation between "self" (internal) and "others" (external) is key to studying the foreign policy behavior of states. Being exposed to both "domestic" and "international" levels, state negotiators make a compromise between the domestic conflict about national interest while simultaneously interacting with other negotiators to make international agreements. With this assumption, the approach analytically separates the domestic and international spheres, which allows for the identification of "structural constraint and autonomy surrounding the statesmen." (Moravscik 1993, 17). Unlike the strongly state-centered thinking in IR realism, this liberalist thinking admits the possible assumptions of non-state actors, including domestic groups as strategic players in the negotiation game at the international level.

In line with this, Risse paid attention to the significance of "various combinations of state-society relations" in liberal democracies on different foreign policy outcomes (Risse-Kappen 1991, 479–484; Risse 2017). In his view, "domestic structures" and "coalition-building processes" are the missing link between societal demand and elite decisions in foreign policy (Risse-Kappen 1991). Domestic structure approaches are interested in the institutional arrangements linking the state and society and how political institutions respond to societal demands within a political system. On the other hand, focusing on the coalition-building processes leads to analyzing "policy networks, as the coalition mechanism and processes of interest representation by political parties and interest groups links the societal environment to the political systems." (Risse 2017). Risse argued that a combined approach encompassing both institutional structures and coalition-building processes could supplement each approach's limitations. That is, only examining state institutions and structures does not offer detailed explanations of the specific content or direction of policies, whereas one should at the same time consider that "coalition building takes place in the framework of political and societal institutions" (Risse 2017, 28-29).

So, what makes the unique patterns of state-society relations in different countries? According to Risse's assumption, the nature of the coalition-building processes in the policy networks linking state and society depends on the societal characteristics of a country, which was initially suggested by Gourevitch (1986) and Katzenstein (1978). This line of argument is developed from the definition of the capacity of the state, for which the dynamic of "relative" force between the state and society is crucial in defining which state is strong or weak (Risse 2017; Migdal 1988; Acemoglu and Robinson 2017). Likewise, whether societal influence can play a role in a state's foreign policy is also determined by this relational force dynamic in the policy network.

The core assumption of this paper is aligned with the theoretical thought on state-society relations. It argues that the relational state-society dynamic was different between the Park and Moon governments, which eventually brought about the sudden change of South Korea's diplomatic position over the comfort women agreement. In addition to Moon's liberal leadership style with a progressive political orientation, Moon and his government owed their victory in the presidential election in May 2017 to the citizens' candlelight protests that occurred from October 2016–March 2017, and had ousted Park from the government (Rhyu 2018; Yi, 2020, 253). Accordingly, a high degree of societal mobilization coincided with the period of contestation over the comfort women agreement.

Furthermore, resentment among the public regarding Park's administration, as well as the ambivalent political situation during the impeachment process from December 3, 2016 to March 10, 2017, put the South Korean government's democratic legitimacy into question. This paper argues that this societal instability undermined the state's relational power regarding Korean society. That is, the state was temporarily weaker than usual at the time, although some scholars might argue that the Korean state is generally considered a "strong state" (Shin 2020, 242; Jang 2009; Koo 1993). Based on this assumption of the weakened state during the time of the impeachment process and the early period of Moon's administration, social influence was able to play a major role in the state's foreign policy behavior, which includes comfort women-related foreign policies.

Vertically contested national role conceptions

The formation of an issue-based policy network or possible channels for societal actors to exert their influence over foreign policy decisions is considered as given in the current paper. This is because the main objective of the research is to confirm the presence of social influence on the foreign policy behavior of the Korean state. To achieve this simplification of the state-society relations approach, the concept of "national role conception" and "vertical role contestation" will be used as the analytical means.

Paying attention to "national role" rather than "national identity" guides us to systematically approach the societal dynamic of the domestic politics of

international relations (Thies and Breuning 2012; Barnett 1993). Aggestam suggested using "national role conception" as an operationalizing tool to bridge national identity and foreign policy behavior in the appearance of role conflict (Aggestam 1999; 2006). According to Aggestam, conflict appears "when dominant role conceptions in the set of many roles are incompatible with one another," caused by different domestic and international institutional contexts, or "when the conditions and context within which they were originally formulated change" (Aggestam 2006, 23).

Role, as a set of norms, makes the role performer develop his/her orientations before taking actions to fulfill the expected behaviors in a specific situation. There can be more than one role depending on the situation. It is made by the role performer's own role conception and others' prescriptions of the role (Holsti 1970, 238). Considering the different aspects of the state's role behavior in international politics, Holsti defined four concepts to analyze foreign policy: (1) role performance (attitudes, decisions, and actions), (2) their self-defined national role conceptions, (3) role prescriptions, and (4) a position, a system of role prescriptions (Holsti 1970, 240). This paper focuses on domestic role contestation as a process of self-defining national role conception in South Korea.

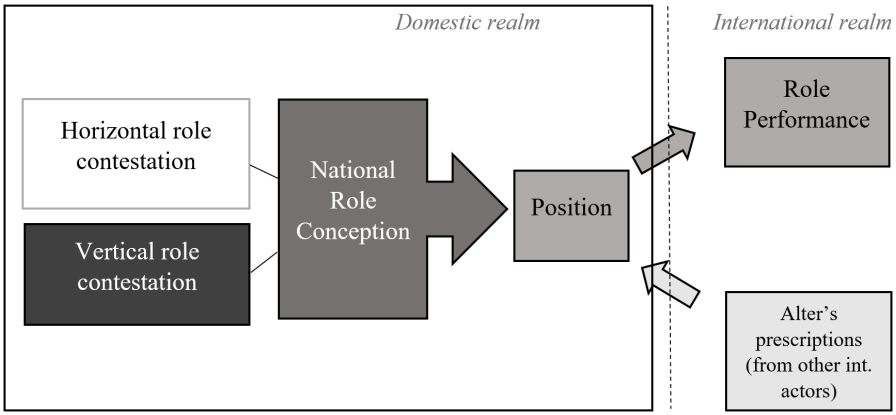
When a new government self-defines its national roles, domestic contestation around the national roles as a set of norms in a certain domestic context presents by default in political practice, because norms mean "different things to different people" (Niemann and Schillinger 2017, 33, 39). Even though "how much of an impact public opinion has on foreign policy" is still unclear in IR, the vertical role contestation scholarship asks whether elites are constrained by the public and whether the public has a different foreign policy orientation or attitude from those of the elites (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 11–12). In this regard, the concept of vertical role contestation encompasses societal actors' influence and contesting public opinion, whereas horizontal role contestation concentrates on disagreement among foreign policy elites.

With this vertical role contestation, it can also be assumed that the strong public discontent regarding the comfort women deal and the comfort women advocacy movement in Korea, extended to Korea's comfort women foreign policy behavior via vertical role contestation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015; Jang and Kim 2018). With this, one can concentrate on the vertical role contestation addressed by social influence on Korea's national role conception "instead of focusing on explaining individual diplomatic decisions" (Holsti 1970, 234–5).

Cantir and Kaarbo developed a framework to analyze "domestic role contestation" to examine the process by which domestic actors with various role conceptions interact in foreign policymaking (Cantir and Kaarbo 2016, 6). They divided the level of domestic role contestation into: 1) vertical role contestation indicating a contested role conception between the public and political elites (elite-masses nexus), and 2) horizontal role contestation (intra-elite disagreements), which means role

contestation between governing elites and political opposition (Cantir and Kaarbo 2016, 8–12). This research particularly concentrates on vertical role contestation around the comfort women agreement to empirically observe social influence over foreign policy decisions. An analytical framework for the research was created as per *Figure I*. Due to the limited scope of the paper, the current analysis will only deal with the relation between vertical role contestation and national role conception. The parts like horizontal role contestation and others' prescriptions will be addressed in the discussion and conclusion for future research.

Figure 1: Domestic role contestation and national role conception



Source: Constructed by author, combining Cantir and Kaarbo's (2016) and Holsti's frameworks (1970, 240).

Research scope, data collection and method

With the framework in *Figure I* above as a conceptual tool for systematic document analysis, this research defines the scope of social influence in Korea as "vertical national role contestation driven by civil contestation." The scope covers the period following the comfort women agreement (December 28, 2015) until Moon notified Abe of the plan to dissolve the RHF (September 25, 2018). Within the scope, the research aims to investigate: 1) The changed national role conceptions from the Park administration to that of Moon, given that social influence became significant in the presidency transition period, and 2) the extent of the social influence that vertically contested Korea's national roles in dealing with the comfort women agreement conflict.

Regarding societal disagreement with the comfort women agreement during this period, the "Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan" (the Korean Council) was a highly visible actor, based on its long history of

activities and advocacy for the rights of the survivors.[3] In the Report on the Review of the Korea-Japan Agreement on "Comfort Women" Victims by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Korean Council was mentioned as one of the "concerned organizations" to be persuaded to support the implementation of the agreement. This means that the organization was clearly acknowledged as important for the Korean government, especially in implementing the "non-disclosed part" of the comfort women agreement, together with the removal of the "comfort women" memorial statue and the term "sexual slavery" as issues of concern for Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea 2015).

The national role conceptions of each side, –the state's and that of society– will be identified and compared with each other to analyze differences in their perceptions of the Korean state's national roles. For this, 12 public releases published by the Korean Council criticizing the National Assembly bills, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Ministry of Gender and Family (MoGF), and legal court rulings were used, collected with the search keywords "the Korean Council," "civil organizations," and "comfort women" within the scope of December 28, 2015–September 25, 2018. In addition to this, 40 news articles from Hangyoreh were collected with the same search keywords within the same timeframe. Due to the limited time and scope of the research, only Hangyoreh's news coverage was analyzed, as a center-left liberal daily newspaper in South Korea. Nevertheless, the paper believes that data collected from the Korean Council and Hangyoreh are sufficient for the sake of the research aim to confirm the presence of social influence in the making of national role conceptions. This is because the Korean state's diplomatic standpoint regarding the comfort women agreement was mostly contested by the organization and the newspaper at the domestic level (Gil et al. 2015; Kim 2015). That is, if the analysis demonstrates that most disagreeing societal actors' perceptions influenced the state's changed national role conception, the hypothesis of this research will be proved.

For the analysis of the state's national role conceptions, presidential speeches, which mentioned "comfort women," including the New Year addresses, but also press releases, documents and the ministerial speeches of the MoFA during the full period of Park's and Moon's incumbencies (Park: 2013–2017, Moon: 2017–present) were collected: 41 and 22 documents, respectively.

I chose qualitative content analysis to examine different national role conceptions with MAXQDA 2020 software assistance. As there is no unified database of keywords that would identify roles in the process of content analysis, as Cantir and Kaarbo also noticed in their book (2016, 19), I identified roles inductively based on close readings of the collected textual data. Consequently, 7 codes are defined and named as follows: "civil collaborator," "victim's rights protector," "diplomatic

3 The official full name of the organization changed to the "Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan" on July 11, 2018. (https://womenandwar.net/kr/?ckattempt=1)

position re-shaper," "Korea-Japan friendly relation keeper," "international norm keeper," "negotiator," and "historical truth keeper." In total, 319 codes including sub-codes were identified from all collected documents.

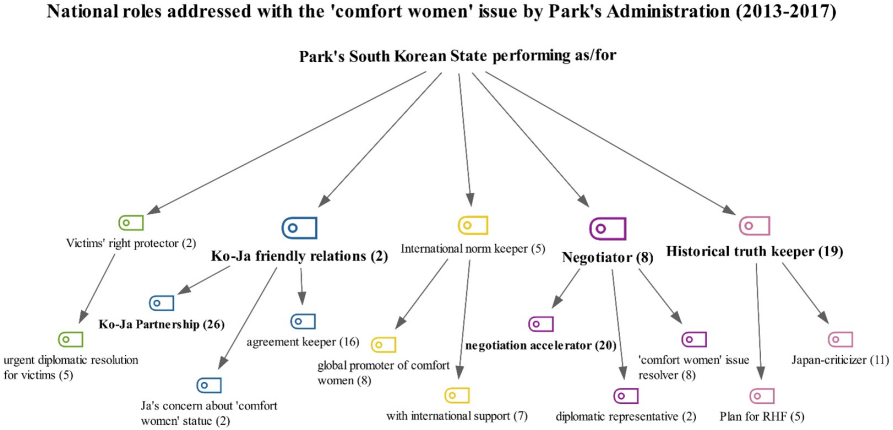
Analysis

Considering the event sequence of the domestic contestation—the comfort women agreement (2015); civil contestation and candlelight protest against Park's government (2016–2017); the new government and its decision to dissolve RHF (2017–2018)—the national role conception of Park's administration will be examined first. In the second part of the analysis, national roles suggested during the civil contestation will be identified and compared with the national role conception of Moon's administration.

National role conceptions of Park's administration

After analyzing the collected 41 documents of presidential and ministerial speeches and official documents searched for with the keyword "comfort women," 149 entries were coded and categorized into different national roles. The result is visualized as *Figure 2* below. Among the five most frequent national roles as seen in Figure 2, the state's national role as "friendly bilateral relations keeper," "negotiator" and "historical truth keeper" were the most prevalent codes under Park's administration.

Figure 2: National roles emphasized during Park's administration



Source: MAXQDA MAXmap: Single-case model (code hierarchy).

"Korea-Japan friendly relations" was highly emphasized during Park's presidential period: 46 codes found, including the relevant sub-codes. Amongst all, Korea-Japan partnership was frequently mentioned together with historical conflict as a hurdle to overcome for a new partnership: "Next year, Korea and Japan will welcome the 50th

anniversary of the Basic Relations Treaty […] Now, both countries must look ahead to the next 50 years of the future and establish a forward-looking cooperative partnership. For this, Korea and Japan must put forth the necessary effort to heal [overcome] the wound between the two from the past" (Presidential Speech 2014).

Given the perceived diplomatic task of commemorating the year of 2015, Park's administration keenly pushed forward the resolution of the "comfort women" issue to with Japan, which brought about the quick diplomatic action of the bilateral agreement with Japan in 2015. As MoFA put it, it "accelerated" the negotiation processes of 11 Korea-Japan ministerial meetings to settle the controversial issues around comfort women victims with Japan (Ministerial Speech 2016). In this regard, the role of "agreement negotiator" was stressed: "[…] the Korean government made a meaningful diplomatic outcome coming down on a common resolution of the comfort women issue with the current Japanese counterpart led by Prime Minister Abe, who is much more conservative than his predecessors when dealing with historical conflicts" (Ministerial Speech 2015a). The necessity of the swift negotiation with Japan was explained and justified regarding the state's role as the protector of the victims' rights. "Considering the old age of the comfort women victims," Park's administration considered that an urgent diplomatic resolution was essential to bring substantial results for them, namely "compensation and an apology from the Japanese government" (Presidential Speech 2015b).

Meanwhile, from the early-middle part of Park's incumbency, the national roles of "historical truth keeper" and "international norm keeper" were conspicuously emphasized, too. While stating that the comfort women issue was a "crime against humanity" a conclusion reached "by the UN human rights mechanism and the international community," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially and strongly stressed the "necessity of accurate historical education," "apology and accountable measures at Japanese governmental level" (Ministerial Speech 2014).

In relation to this role of international norm keeper, the Korean government harshly and constantly criticized the Japanese government for denying the existence of comfort stations during World War II. For instance, Park criticized Japan, stating that "[…] history does not mean cherry-picking what to remember as a country wishes […] admitting [wrongdoings in] history is the only way to progress" (Presidential Speech 2015a).

This firm diplomatic position as a "Japan-criticizer," however, faded from the national roles set by Park's administration after completion of the comfort women agreement with Japan. In the joint announcement on the comfort women agreement, the South Korean government still perceived itself as a historical truth keeper who thus set a plan together with Japan to "establish the RHF to support the recovery of the victims and their rehabilitation with the 1 billion Yen of Japanese government funding" (Ministerial Speech 2015b). Moreover, while perceiving the president as the diplomatic representative of Korean citizens, including the victims, it later announced that Park had received an apology from Abe over the phone, but only

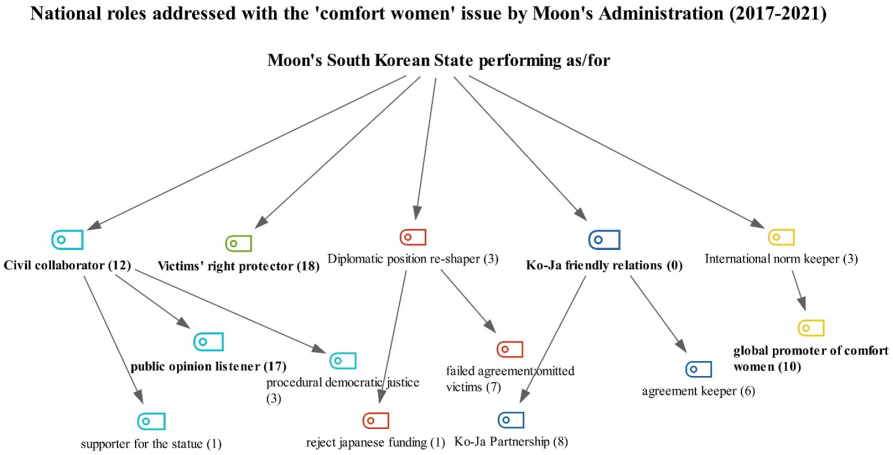
after the growth of strong public sentiment against the agreement (Ministerial Speech 2015a).

In sum, Park and her administration presented themselves mostly as history problem-solvers and diplomatic negotiators who must resolve the historical conflict with Japan by the year 2015. However, by changing their national role from Japan critic to the highest diplomatic representative, especially in the negotiation phase, they negotiated an agreement with the Japanese counterpart that led to domestic backlash.

National role conceptions of Moon's administration

To analyze the Moon administration's national role conception, 95 entries from 22 documents were coded and categorized using the same standard applied to the previous analysis. Unlike his predecessor, Moon's administration defined the state's role mostly as a "civil collaborator" and "victims' rights protector." The detailed picture of the frequency of national roles is illustrated in *Figure 3* below.

Figure 3: National roles emphasized during Moon's administration



Source: MAXQDA MAXmap: Single-case model (code hierarchy)

"Civil collaborator" and "diplomatic position re-shaper" are two new roles found in the national roles set by the Moon administration, compared to the Park administration's national roles. In describing its diplomatic style as "diplomacy with Korean citizens," Moon and his administration put emphasis on working together and communicating with the public in handling the comfort women agreement conflict (Presidential Speech 2017). In line with this, the state role of "civil collaborator" was highly emphasized and displayed amongst other national roles. For example, it stated that "the government would collect extensive opinion from the victims, related civil organizations and public opinion to search for a relevant

solution with a victim-centered approach as well as the management of RHF" (Ministerial Speech 2017).

By positioning itself as a re-shaper of the diplomatic position at the same time, MoFA organized different meetings with the victims, the related civil organizations, and experts to listen to their opinions (Press release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017a; 2017b; Ministerial Speech 2017). Moreover, it repeated at both the domestic and international levels that "the comfort women issue had not been resolved with the 2015 agreement and that the government position must be re-set because the comfort women agreement was not a real solution" (Ministerial Speech 2017; 2018; Presidential Speech 2017).

The official government position of Moon's administration, however, also set clear that "it will not ask Japan for re-negotiation or annulment of the agreement" (Ministerial Speech 2017). Instead, it would make no use of the Japanese funding of 1 billion Yen apportioned to the management and operation of RHF and would consult with Japan on the future use of the money (Ministerial Speech 2017). This tells us that the state role for Korea-Japan friendly relations also remained important for the Moon administration's national role conception, which was the role that conflicted with the role of civil collaborator, especially in the context of the opposing civil influence against the comfort women agreement as well as the state's legitimacy in general.

In terms of the role of "'victims' rights protector," Moon mentioned and implied that the state exists to protect the victims as its citizens (Presidential Speech 2018). Moreover, the "victim-centered approach" has been strongly stressed under Moon's administration, much more than the previous government. This approach has been repeatedly suggested and chosen in different documents as the core guideline in dealing with the comfort women agreement conflict and also as a core international principle to follow (Ministerial Speech 2019).

Consequently, Moon's administration conceptualized its national role conception as a facilitator between its citizens, including the victims, and the Japanese counterpart, considering its role as a civil collaborator, diplomatic position re-shaper, and protector of the victims and their rights. According to its role conception, the state must engage the citizens and the victims in the new resolution process, while not withdrawing from the comfort women agreement to keep its diplomatic promise to Japan. In other words, the contradictory diplomatic position of the state in dealing with the comfort women conflict was born from these different national roles.

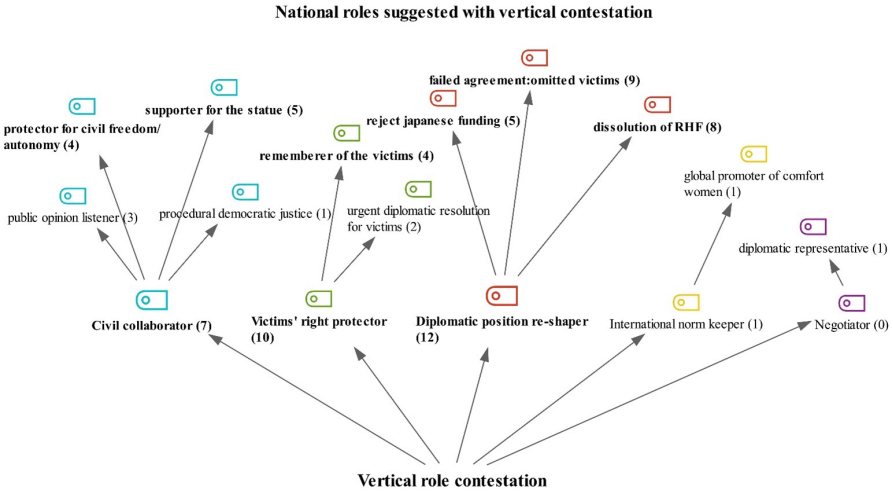
To sum up, the Moon administration's national roles except—for civil collaborator and diplomatic re-shaper—were mostly taken from the previous Park administration. They seem to share similar diplomatic orientation in terms of the importance of historical conflicts and the partnership with Japan as well as protection of victims' rights as an international norm. Nevertheless, how they perceived the domestic actors, citizens and victims, as well as the role of the state in taking diplomatic action was considerably different. This actually confirms one of the paper's assumptions

that Moon's and Park's different political backgrounds influenced state-civil society relations and their influence on the foreign policy arena. Clearly, Moon's administration was more active in engaging with social influence in the arena of its foreign policy than Park's administration.

National role contestation after the comfort women agreement

In this sub-section, the analysis will show the differences in the national role conceptions suggested during the civil contestation from December 28, 2015–September 25, 2018, and those of Moon's administration. There were 75 codes found of national roles that appeared during the civil contestation regarding the comfort women agreement. How they are distributed across different national roles and frequencies is visualized in *Figure 4* below.

Figure 4: National roles via vertical contestation by Hankyoreh and the Korea Council



Source: MAXQDA MAXmap: Single-case model (code hierarchy)

The national roles of "civil collaborator," "victims' rights protector" and "diplomatic position re-shaper" were addressed in the discourse of the civil contestation, which coincided with the new national roles of Moon's administration.

The role of "diplomatic position re-shaper" has been suggested for the civil contestation as demanding the "complete withdrawal of the comfort women agreement," "immediate dissolution of RHF" and the "rejection of the Japanese funding" (Kim et al. 2015; Yonhap News 2016; Kim, 2017). The agreement was regarded by the public, including civil organizations, comfort women victims and National Assembly members of the Democratic Party as a "total diplomatic failure since the comfort women victims' wishes were omitted during the agreement

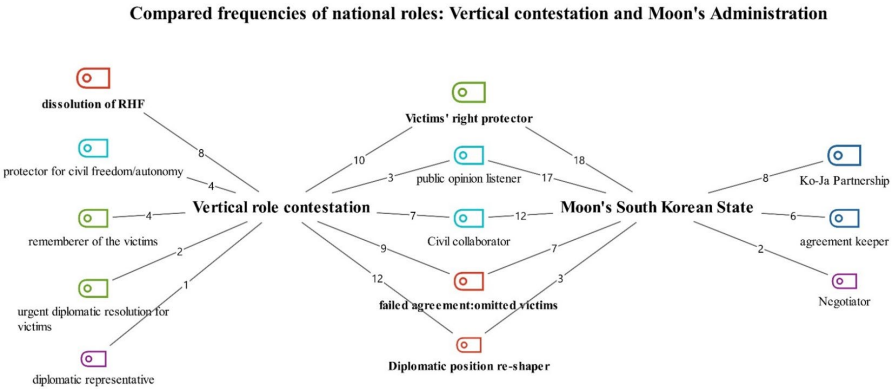
negotiations" (Kim 2018; Kim 2016). Park's government was strongly criticized because "it did not communicate with the victims in the negotiation phase" (Kim 2016).

The state as the victims' rights protector was also often suggested in the civil contestation discourse. The public and civil organizations pointed out that the negotiation procedure did not include any "democratic process" to put the victims' demands and decisions at the center of the negotiations (Goh et al. 2017). Moreover, the victims' recovery of their damaged reputations was more important than being compensated with money (Park 2016). This can be interpreted as the Korean state being urged to concentrate on what the victims really want and to do this, it would be unavoidable to re-negotiate the agreement, which had already been agreed as the final and irreversible bilateral agreement. The imperativeness of the "urgent diplomatic action considering the victims' old age" was utilized as an argument to urge the Korean government to play a role as the protector of the victims' rights (the Korean Council 2018; Goh et al. 2017).

Regarding the state role of "civil collaborator," any governmental intervention against the installation of the comfort women memorial statues was criticized, considering the role of the state as a civil collaborator who must support civil rights (Kim 2017; 2018; Goh 2018). The argument went that the role of a democratic state is to protect its citizens' rights and freedom of assembly and to install the memorial statues including the comfort women victims' statue and act to promote the issue in the international community as the Korean citizens' state (Goh 2016).

To confirm the influence of civil contestation on the national role conceptions of Moon's administration and its extent, the overlapping codes of national roles found across what Moon's administration displayed and what the civil contestation addressed are visualized in *Figure 5*.

Figure 5: Commonly suggested national roles by vertical role contestation and Moon's administration



Source: MAXQDA MAXmap: Two-case model

Figure 5 shows that the three categories, namely "victims' rights protector," "civil collaborator" and "diplomatic position re-shaper" mostly appeared in both state national role conceptions and at the civil contestation level. All three of these national roles were completely absent (civil collaborator and diplomatic position re-shaper) or less visible (victims' rights protector) in the previous national role conception of Park's administration. Hence it can be argued that vertical influence contested the national roles and consequently brought up new roles that the public expected the state to fulfill in dealing with the comfort women conflict.

However, when observing the different frequencies of the suggested national roles between the state and civil actors, it is clear that the state did not reflect every public opinion espoused during the contestation. For example, national roles like "public opinion listener," "victims' rights protector" and "civil collaborator" have been relatively more accepted in the Moon administration compared to the role of diplomatic position re-shaper. The extent of re-negotiation appears to have been different from both sides as well. Whereas complete withdrawal from the comfort women agreement was demanded by non-state domestic actors, the state's position reflected this demand only to the extent that it dissolved the RHF, not destroying the bilateral agreement with Japan.

The findings thus suggest that Moon's administration has been under social influence and pressure to the extent that it dissolved the RHF. This can explain why Moon eventually notified Abe of the dissolution of the RHF in September 2018, instead of requesting a complete re-negotiation of the comfort women agreement. In other words, Moon's administration chose the degree of diplomatic measures based on national role conceptions that were already self-conflicting. Consequently, it presented itself as a diplomatic position re-shaper in relation to the comfort women agreement in that it accepted the agreement as failed and defective, but officially kept the agreement as valid.

Discussion

As conceptualized in *Figure 1* in this paper, a country's diplomatic position is affected not only by its national role conception, but also by "others' prescriptions" (Holsti 1970). This means that the view of other countries and international actors regarding the state's international role must be examined, too. In the context of South Korean foreign policy toward Japan, other international actors including the US must be further studied to provide a full picture of Moon's foreign policy decision on maintaining the bilateral agreement status of the comfort women agreement with Japan (Sohn 2020; Lynn 2021).

While acknowledging the limitations, the current analysis focused on the relation of social contestation and the changed national role conception of South Korea around the comfort women agreement conflict. The result indicates a high probability that social influence led to the state's decision on the partial withdrawal from the comfort women agreement, particularly to the extent of the dissolution of the RHF. With this,

the paper has empirically demonstrated that non-state domestic actors could influence the conceptualization of national roles that ultimately decide the state's foreign policy behavior, the area usually considered as a "secret garden of the state" in South Korea's political context, where citizens have little access to the policymaking process (Jang 2006). In addition, the result sheds light on the necessity of further examination of the domestic aspect of international relations, by showing the possible path of national role contestation where domestic-societal actors take part in the formulation of the state's diplomatic orientation.

The result also confirms the relevance of domestic structure and policy networks in foreign policy, such as in explaining different patterns of foreign policy outcomes (Risse-Kappen 1991; Risse 2017). Even though the current research only borrowed the core assumption of the domestic politics of international relations, it could explore different societal and state actors engaging in the phase of national role conception. To provide a more in-depth analysis and deliver a concrete result, further studies on policy networks among different societal and state actors at the domestic level regarding comfort women politics would be the next step.

Lastly, the research has demonstrated the different level of public engagement in foreign policy between the Park and Moon administrations. In relation to this, the increased social influence during the period can be confirmed because the public was more actively engaged in foreign policymaking under Moon's liberal government than the previous conservative one. In the analysis, Moon's government was shown as more open to engaging with related civil organizations and actively displayed its national role as a civil collaborator. This can also explain South Korea's foreign relations as "the ideological battles between conservatives and progressives," as Glosserman recently suggested (Glosserman 2019, 127–128). Moon and his government seem to utilize the comfort women agreement issue to consolidate the state's legitimacy as a democratic state. It provided more room for civil organizations and the public to participate in foreign policy to differentiate itself from Park's administration, which had been impeached following the public candlelight protest. However, how exactly the candlelight movement and enhanced civil influence affect South Korea's comfort women foreign policy also requires further studies to prove the assumption.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to explore social influence on Korea's partial withdrawal from the Korea-Japan comfort women agreement. First, it analyzed the change of national role conception between the Park and Moon administrations in handling the comfort women issue. As for the second part of the analysis, the paper examined national role contestation as vertically addressed by the Korean public against the comfort women agreement. It then compared the result with the national role conception of Moon's administration to observe how social influence was reflected in the state's national role conception.

The main contribution of the current research is to provide an empirical analysis of domestic politics and social influence on foreign policy in the case of the Korea-Japan comfort women agreement conflict. After spotting the research gap relating to domestic influence in foreign policymaking in the context of Korea-Japan historical conflicts, the paper suggested a conceptual framework to analyze domestic role contestation and conducted a qualitative content analysis of the collected data. It also defined and compared different national roles in the Park and Moon administrations, as well as the vertically addressed national roles for dealing with the comfort women agreement conflict.

Moreover, it suggested an analytical framework by combining national role conception and vertical role contestation to observe the formation of national role conceptions and societal actors' influence on the role contestation stage. By doing this, light has been shed on the domestic level of international relations that is unusual for Korea-Japan bilateral relations studies. The paper clearly confirms the usefulness of the framework instead of a national identity approach which is one of the usual practices in Korea-Japan relations research.

The research, however, contains several constraints. Despite the above-mentioned research contributions, it did not identify the exact extent of domestic influence due to the limited scope. The constrained data collection in terms of public opinion could be further extended to diversified sources combining other newspapers, other civil organizations, and media sources to secure more plausibility and objectivity. Moreover, the research was designed to concentrate on vertical role contestation, not including the impact of horizontal role contestation that would happen among state elites. However, one should keep in mind that there are different types and competences of state authorities and institutions involved in handling the comfort women issue in South Korea, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the National Assembly, court rulings, and the comfort women research institute and remembrance museum founded by the government. Thus, contestation and discourses among state elites as well as vertical contestation by citizens and civil organizations addressing/lobbying those state organizations must be combined for an in-depth analysis.

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Refereed article

From Arabian Nights to China's Bordeaux: Wine, Local Identity, and Ningxia's Place within the Chinese Nation

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Abstract
Ningxia, a comparatively small and underdeveloped autonomous region for China's Muslim Hui minority in the country's northwest, has increasingly received attention as the home of Chinese grape wine in both domestic and international media. This image of Ningxia as a home of wine is comparatively recent, and significant in several regards: first, wine fills a void in Ningxia's local image-building strategy for tourism and trade, which had emerged from the abrupt abandoning of an earlier strategy of stressing Ningxia's identity as a Muslim region. Second, wine is an agricultural product that is highly compatible with an urban, modern, and middle-class lifestyle as conceptualized by the dominant party-state discourse. Third, this framing lays claim to a new self-confidence in China's domestic wine market, which is expected to be able to compete internationally in terms of both quantity and quality. Ningxia wines have been winning a number of international awards in recent years, and the region at the eastern foot of the Helan Mountains, belonging to its capital Yinchuan, is aspiring to become an equivalent to France's Bordeaux, while also building up a distinct Chinese wine identity. As such, Ningxia wine is linked to Chinese nationalism: wine serves as both a global marker of taste and prosperity and source of local identity. Building on theories of nationalism and globalization, this paper traces the discourses surrounding Ningxia wine via ethnographic observations and several interviews conducted during a six-month field stay in Yinchuan in 2019, as well as through analysis of academic discussions, news items, and social media posts.

Keywords: Ningxia, wine, food nationalism, agricultural modernization, cultivation and taste, regional image-building, Chinese lower-tier cities

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Introduction

When the People's Republic of China celebrated its 70th anniversary on October 1, 2019, with its traditional parade at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, all provincial-level administrative units were represented by colorful floats ornamented with objects symbolizing the country's different regions. The float of Ningxia, a comparatively small and underdeveloped autonomous region for China's Muslim Hui minority in the country's northwest, was prominently decorated with wine grapes. This framing of Ningxia as a home of wine is comparatively recent (no such grapes were present at the 60th anniversary in 2009) and received symbolic backing from General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Xi Jinping choosing to visit a vineyard there in June 2020.

The leading role of Ningxia in building China's domestic and international wine reputation has been established at least since 2011, when a wine by Château Helan Qingxue (贺兰晴雪酒庄) won "Best Bordeaux Varietal over £10" at the 2011 Decanter World Wine Awards, the first of several international prizes for a variety of wines from Ningxia châteaux (Howson and Ly 2020, 3). The *World Atlas of Wine*, one of the seminal guides to the field since 1971, included China for the first time in its 7th edition in 2013. Its current 8th edition maps the country on three of its 416 pages, with Yinchuan's Helan Mountain region the only one being depicted as a close-up (Johnson and Robinson 2019, 388–90). In addition to the specialized press, Ningxia as a wine region has featured in various international-media outlets over the last few years: the *New York Times* (Sasseen 2015), the Netflix Series *Rotten* (Harper 2019), the BBC (McDonald 2020), or the German *Zeit Magazin* (Yang 2021), to name just a few examples.

Ningxia wine's recently received domestic emphasis and international attention hint at its significance going beyond the local economy and the interest of sommeliers. Research by Rytkönen et al. (2021) in the context of Georgia, one of the oldest wine-producing countries worldwide, has shown that wineries use storytelling to relate their products to national identities. Moreover, as Kjellgren contends, wine might be a product for the elite, but it is produced "not only for those who actually drink it" (2004, 27). In other words, discourses around wine have implications beyond the world of enology. Ichijo and Ranta investigate the relationship between food culture and nationalism, arguing that food is "fundamentally political in many ways" (2016, 1). They maintain that regional and ethnic differences in the culinary world have been incorporated into national identities, and that the latter are constructed in both a bottom-up and top-down manner (2016, 4ff).

Callahan posits that the "China Dream," a concept linked to "national rejuvenation" that was first advocated by Xi in 2013, "is able to encompass both individual dreams of happiness and collective dreams of national strength" (2017, 256). The party-state discourse is thus not only laying claim to the proper form of nationalism but also channels individual aspirations into the directions it considers appropriate. Following the above authors, I argue that Ningxia wine relates to a number of aspects

relevant in the construction of Chinese national identity (secularization, modernization, cultivation, and globalization), ones that are reflected both in the current party-state discourse as well as in the bottom-up practices of producers and consumers.

In this paper I will show that this newly strengthened role of Ningxia wine is significant in several regards: on the local level, first, wine fills a void in Ningxia's image-building strategy for tourism and trade, which had emerged from the abrupt abandoning of an earlier strategy of stressing Ningxia's identity as a Muslim region. With the country's recent drive to Sinicize religions, Islam has been marginalized and no longer plays a part in representing Ningxia to the outside. That it is an alcoholic beverage replacing Islam in Ningxia's image-building can be interpreted as symbolically stressing a Han-centric form of secular modernity. Second, it will be illustrated that wine is an agricultural product that is highly compatible with the urban middle-class lifestyle conceptualized by the party-state discourse, more so than the much more widely consumed *baijiu* (白酒) grain liquors. Agriculture has long lost its once dominant role within China's economy, and the countryside has been largely portrayed as backward and in need of modernization, yet wine manages to frame the rural within an urban logic.

Third, I argue that Ningxia wine lays claim to a new self-confidence in China's domestic wine market, which is expected to be able to compete internationally in terms of both quantity and quality. Wines from Ningxia have been winning a number of international awards in recent years, and the region at the eastern foot of the Helan Mountains, belonging to its capital Yinchuan, is aspiring to become an equivalent to France's Bordeaux, while also stressing a distinct Chinese wine identity. As such, Ningxia wine is linked to Chinese nationalism: wine serves as both a global marker of taste and prosperity and source of local identity. Building on theories of nationalism and globalization, I use an interpretive approach to analyze the multiple layers of meaning in the discourses around Ningxia wine. The aim is to contribute to our understanding of the way food production and consumption practices are linked to idealized class aspirations, as well as of the relationship between local identities and nationalism under the conditions of globalization.

Core data include recorded in-depths interviews with a winemaker (I1), a wine trader (I2), and a person aspiring to become a wine expert (I3). A number of ethnographic observations and informal conversations conducted during a six-month field stay in Yinchuan in 2019 and two shorter stays in the years before also contribute here. In addition, social media posts by the above informants are also drawn on, complementing the recorded interviews and informal conversations. The individuals I select in this paper for their connection to wine constitute a convenience sample within a larger pool of interviews I conducted during my fieldwork on urbanization and social change in Yinchuan. Following Keller (2011, 80f, 92f) and Alpermann and Fröhlich (2020, 124), I use interview data as discourse statements, buttressing them with an analysis of textual resources such as Chinese academic literature, news

items, and wine-related websites. These provide a link to the larger discursive field on these matters, which is structured according to the logic of the party-state (see Alpermann and Fröhlich 2020, 112) and which should be seen as interacting with, rather than isolated from, the situation on the ground.

After a brief overview of the history of wine in China and the development of Ningxia wine, the transition between Ningxia's image-building strategies from flagship Muslim city to China's Bordeaux will be illustrated. Then, the role of wine within China's view of a modernized agriculture and its symbolic role as an aspirational product for the middle class will be discussed. In closing I link these discussions to aspects of globalization and nationalism.

The history of wine in China and Ningxia

Chinese wine history from antiquity to modernity

For many Chinese, even those with an interest in wine tasting, grape wine is still widely perceived as a Western import (Zhang 2020, 638; Kupfer 2021, 34). While the Chinese word *jiu* 酒 often gets (mis)translated into "wine," it usually refers to alcohol obtained from grain, rice, honey, or milk. Grape wine is usually portrayed as at best marginal to Chinese culture and history, even though China has more than 40 native grape varieties[1] (Kupfer 2021, 31). As Kjellgren (2004, 11ff) suggests, the history of grape wine (葡萄酒) in China can be told from three starting points: (1) Han dynasty historiography depicting wine as a Eurasian import in the first century BC; (2) the introduction of modern winemaking to China in the late nineteenth century; and, (3) the development of the contemporary wine industry after 1978. While acknowledging that some authors speculate that Chinese winemaking may have existed as far back as three to seven millennia ago, Kjellgren largely dismisses these claims as mere attempts to find native roots of Western phenomena, summed up by the phrase "it was there already in antiquity" (古已有之) (2004, 14).

In contrast, Kupfer (2021, 29) rejects the narrative of wine being an import to China as a "Western cliché," one that he believes is becoming increasingly cemented by the rejection of Chinese nationalistic tendencies. He argues instead that in China, like elsewhere, the earliest forms of alcohol fermentation did in fact involve grapes. In 2004, archeological evidence for wine production dating back 9000 years was unearthed in Jiahu (贾湖), Henan province, making it the earliest evidence for grape wine in the world so far (Kupfer 2021, 33f). Kupfer compellingly claims that grape-wine culture had been native to certain parts of China far longer than conventionally presented.

Nevertheless, Sima Qian's account in the *Shiji* 史记 (Records of the Historian) of *vitis vinifera* entering Han dynasty China between 138 and 119 BC via Central Asia

1 These grapes are distinct from *vitis vinifera*, the plant from which most wine is produced worldwide.

following an expedition by General Zhang Qian serves as the generally cited starting point in the historiography (Kjellgren 2004, 15; Li 2011, 49). According to Löwenstein (1991, 14ff), it is questionable whether wine in China was produced on any significant scale in Han-Chinese areas before the seventh-century Tang dynasty; he believes that only from AD 640 did wine production spread from what is present-day Xinjiang via Gansu to the capital Chang'an and further to the east. Kupfer sees this trend as having already started earlier, identifying Persian and Sogdian traders as key actors in establishing flourishing viticulture. The latter had its center around Taiyuan in Shanxi province at the time, a region still recognized for its wine by Marco Polo in the thirteenth century (Kupfer 2021, 134, 146).

In any case, the history of wine in China is certainly linked to the country's northwest, where winemaking predates the introduction of Islam in the eleventh century and is frequently associated with non-Han people. While the Tang dynasty saw a peak in Chinese grape-wine popularity throughout the empire — as reflected in, but not confined to, the world of the literati — production in the Han-Chinese heartlands declined during the Song dynasty, when instead tea and distilled liquors (such as *baijiu*) were on the rise (Kupfer 2021, 152, 186). Although some references to grape-wine production and consumption can be found for subsequent dynasties in the historical records (Löwenstein 1991, 18ff), there is little doubt its importance would later pale in comparison to that of grain liquor and other spirits. Grape wine became an almost exotic product during the Ming and Qing dynasties, with it largely restricted to the country's elite and often associated with Western missionaries (Kupfer 2021, 214f). This is quite different from large parts of Europe, where in antiquity and in medieval times wine was seen as a daily necessity by all classes (Lukacs 2012, 34).

The beginning of a new phase in China's viticulture is attributed to "patriotic returned Overseas Chinese" Zhang Bishi (1841–1916), a successful business owner in Southeast Asia who in 1892 founded China's first modern winery, Changyu (张裕), in Yantai, Shandong. Zhang imported various European grape varieties as well as European technology, and his wine won a gold medal at the 1915 Pacific-Panama International Exhibition in San Francisco (Kjellgren 2004, 18). Despite Changyu's early success, the history of wine in China remained sketchy and fragmented during the troubled twentieth century. While attempts were made to expand winemaking after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the large social and economic upheavals of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution hindered these developments (Löwenstein 1991, 33).

Chinese wine since the reform era

From the 1970s winemaking started to slowly recover, but it was not before China's reform and opening-up era from 1978 onward that the contemporary wine industry was able to emerge (Kjellgren 2004, 22). The early 1980s saw the establishment of large joint ventures with foreign expertise, resulting in industrial wineries such as

Great Wall Wine (长城葡萄酒), Dynasty Wine (王朝葡萄酒), and the aforementioned Changyu — the winery with the longest history in China, and today again the largest in the country. Wine production in the early reform period was very limited, though numbers are not always reliable and differ depending on one's sources (see Löwenstein 1991, 64ff).

According to the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization, wine production in China amounted to just 15,000 tons in 1978, 128 times lower than the 1,922,148 tons that would eventually be produced in 2018 — which now ranks the country as the fifth-largest wine-producing country worldwide after Italy, France, Spain, and the United States. It should be noted that the production numbers of the traditional winemaking European countries (as well as the world's total production) actually decreased over this 40-year period (FAO 2021). Such vast growth to China's wine industry was not linear. Production first started slow and steady in the 1980s, saw a minor slump after 1989, but received a massive boost in 1996 when Premier Li Peng publicly advocated for more grape-wine consumption in order to reduce *baijiu* drinking. He saw the latter not only as unhealthy but also as wasting too much of the country's grain harvest (Kjellgren 2004, 17). Drinking wine thus received the blessing of the state and became connected to its development.

From the late 1990s and throughout the first decade of the new century, China's vineyard area, wine production, and wine imports all increased significantly (Anderson 2018, 471). As China was entering the World Trade Organization in 2001, an article in the *People's Daily* reflected on the steps needed to make Chinese wine compatible with the world wine market. Examples were to integrate it into international rules and regulations but also to abandon large-scale factories in favor of smaller wineries (酒庄) supposed to combine Chinese and Western cultural elements (Feng 2001). The term *jiuzhuang* is often translated to the French *château* ("castle"), which refers to a particular form of winery originating in the Bordeaux region and serves as a model for Chinese wine development, as will be illustrated below.

In subsequent years, many smaller vineyards and châteaux were developed across the main wine regions of the country, which include eastern ones like Shandong, Hebei, and Beijing as well as Western regions like Ningxia and Xinjiang (Li 2011, 57). Ruffle (2015) provides a firsthand account of the difficulties involved with setting up such a château in the middle of the first century of the new millennium, including dealing with competing interests on land usage among various local government actors, quality issues vis-à-vis construction work, finding the right grapes for local climatic conditions, and marketing the finished products — which for most of the population remain luxury items.

Within this luxury-goods sector, China experienced a boom in expensive wine imports in the later part of the first decade of the new century, particularly involving certain prestigious Bordeaux brands such as Château Lafite, which fetched astronomical sums at auction (Maguire and Lim 2015, 231). However, after Xi's

anti-corruption crackdown in 2013, the sale of expensive wines — both domestic (Ruffle 2015, 132) and imported (Howson and Ly 2020, 10) — fell sharply. This disruption is credited with a shift in market behavior away from buying wine as prestige objects and gifts and toward a more taste-driven consumption (Howson and Ly 2020, 10), the implications of which will be discussed in due course. Wine imports subsequently were dominated by cheaper Australian wine, which profited from a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries until punitive tariffs of up to 218 percent effectively shut it out again in 2021 (Bagshaw 2021). Meanwhile, the quality of Chinese wine itself had begun to increase and received recognition both within the country and abroad.

Still, more than 90 percent of the alcohol consumed in China consists of *baijiu* and beer, a trend that appears to be continuing (Wang 2021). Since the mid-2010s, Chinese vineyard expansion has slowed, and overall wine production and consumption have been shrinking. In 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, production dropped by 16 percent and consumption by 17.4 percent compared to the year before (OIV 2021, 3ff). It is in this context that the ostensive state backing of Ningxia wine — as indicated by the early-mentioned grape-based decoration of the Ningxia float at the 2019 Tiananmen Square parade as well as by the high-profile visit of Xi to a Ningxia winery in June 2020 — needs to be analyzed.

The development of Ningxia wine

Ningxia, one of China's smallest provincial-level units, offers ideal conditions for viticulture in its northern Yinchuan plain — an oasis receiving shelter from the Helan Mountains against the sands of the nearby Tengger Desert to the west and irrigation via a network of canals linked to the Yellow River to the east. As Zhang et al. (2020) recount, a wine industry slowly emerged in Ningxia from the 1980s — but only when domestic demand for dry wine grew from the mid-1990s did it eventually find a market. However, the few larger companies active here struggled with the cold winters and insufficient growing techniques, and, as late as 2003, Ningxia wine did not seem a sound investment. To improve production quality and craft a more sophisticated image for the wine region, the Ningxia government under Party Secretary Chen Jianguo 陈建国 pushed for a strategy called "Small châteaux, large production region" (小酒庄、大产区), which, in line with the national development goals, no longer relied on large industrial companies but on many individual wineries. Large-scale private investment (mostly from business owners with no connection to wine) and public subsidies were combined to build up a château-based wine region from the midpoint of the twenty-first century's first decade.

The Helan Mountain region became a protected geographical appellation in 2003, officially marking it as what the wine world calls "terroir," while provincial-level wine regulations followed in 2012 (Zhang et al. 2020). According to my informants (I1, I2), there were 80 to 100 châteaux operational in the region by 2019, though one wine trader (I2) told me only around 30 might in fact be fully so. Zhang et al. (2020)

speak of 86 wineries in 2020. In any case, within a comparatively short space of time Ningxia has become China's most recognized wine region — an unlikely development when one takes into account its demographic setting.

Ningxia wine's relationship to local identities and Chinese nationalism

Secularization: From a Muslim flagship region to a wine mecca

Ningxia is officially designated an autonomous region for the Hui people, a Muslim minority that makes up around one-third of the region's population. Unlike China's nine other recognized Muslim minorities, such as the Turkic Uyghurs in far-western Xinjiang, the Hui are not linguistically distinct from the Han. Instead, the Hui have been categorized as one of China's 55 ethnic minorities (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族) by the PRC solely on account of their religion, making their *minzu* status de facto an umbrella term that comprises communities of various different Islamic schools, identities, and degrees of piety (Gladney 1996, 262ff).

While Hui can be found across all of China, and many communities in the east are almost indistinguishable from their Han neighbors, Ningxia Hui generally have a strong ethnoreligious identity, while the region itself is one of the main centers of Islamic life in the country. The latter saw strengthened transnational ties to the Muslim world as China's reform and opening-up era gathered pace in the 1980s. As I have described elsewhere (Malzer 2020), Ningxia's capital Yinchuan had in fact been branded and ornamented as China's de facto flagship Muslim city until 2018, when Xi's Sinicization of religions campaign abruptly ended this image-building strategy. A strengthening of ideological control and surveillance can be witnessed in the whole of the country, but nowhere as radical as in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which since 2017 has witnessed an unprecedented crackdown not only on Muslim religious life but on the ethnic-minority population itself, and on any form of dissent or deviation from the Han-Chinese standard (see Alpermann 2021). The situation in Ningxia has not reached similar levels of state intervention, but the Hui's religious life, local identity, and the branding of the region have all been severely impacted hereby too.

When I first visited Yinchuan in 2017, Arabian-style architectural elements were decorating public space, a China-Arab Axis celebrated the region's relations with the Middle East, street signs and other public texts were bilingual in Chinese and Arabic (most Hui would largely not have been able to read them, unless they studied the language for liturgical or economic purposes), while museum exhibitions and a somewhat Disneyfied "Hui Culture Park" depicted Hui culture and Islam in a largely positive though somewhat orientalist fashion. In 2018, however, all Arabic architectural elements were removed from public space, Arabic signage was replaced or taped over, the China-Arab Axis only kept the Chinese ornamentation, while the museum exhibitions were completely restructured and next to all

references to Islam practically eradicated. The Hui Culture Park was renamed the "Folk Customs Park," defunded, and became largely derelict. During my stay in Yinchuan through summer 2019 mosques were still left untouched, but the historic Nanguan Mosque has since been "remodeled" into a "nondescript structure covered completely with dark, greyish paint" (Xu 2021). These changes have enormous implications for the religious life and ethnic identity of many Hui, who had seen themselves as a "model minority" acting as "ambassadors to the Islamic world" (Stroup 2021, 6).

This abrupt change in strategy also posed a problem for the local tourism industry. A local guide I interviewed in April 2019 told me that the region faced a dearth of tourists, which she attributed to Ningxia's perceived lack of uniqueness — for instance it competes with neighboring Inner Mongolia and Gansu for trips to the desert. Wine tourism, she mused, was occasionally of interest for foreigners but only rarely so for domestic tourists. But in terms of culture, she argued, Ningxia can mainly offer the remains of the historical Xixia dynasty (1038–1227) as well as Hui culture – yet the latter was now no longer a factor that could be used to advertise the region. The new, secular image of the region is reflected in a short 70-second video called "Where is Ningxia?" (宁夏在哪里) posted on several video platforms by a tourism channel (See Ningxia 2021), which lightheartedly attempts to help viewers unfamiliar with the region to place it within China. "Ningxia," it begins in the style of a geography lesson, is neither part of Gansu, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, or Shaanxi nor do its inhabitants ride around on camels (a common stereotype many Ningxia people I know have encountered). Instead, Ningxia is described as lying in the geographical center of the nation and featuring diverse landscapes beyond the stereotypical deserts. Local specialties presented include wolfberries (枸杞), mutton, jujubes, and of course wine — the latter visualized by an impressive wine cellar. The video neither mentions nor depicts the Hui minority or Islam, and even refrains from using the official name "Hui Autonomous Region" despite its otherwise mockingly strict emphasis on correct geographical knowledge. By stressing its central location within the nation, Ningxia is thus conceptually repositioned from the northwestern Muslim periphery to now being a centrally located oasis with high-quality food and wine.

Even the 5th edition of the biannual China-Arab Expo, held in September 2021, lacks any reference to Islam on its website and in digital showrooms (not even in those of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates, the only two foreign countries with exhibitions). Previous editions of the Expo or its predecessor the China-Arab Trade Forum used to fit in with Yinchuan's image as a Muslim city at the time, and strongly emphasized the development of the halal (*qingzhen* 清真) food industry for the Chinese and international markets (Ho 2013, 216f). The halal aspect is no longer advertised (though some mutton companies with no or almost no reference to *qingzhen* remain). However, multiple wineries prominently promote their products in those digital showrooms (China-Arab Expo 2021).

While the development of the Ningxia wine region had been ongoing well before its Muslim elements were deemphasized, and one therefore should not assume that these strategies were ever intended to be related,[2] I argue that the current emphasis on Ningxia as a wine region certainly helps fill a certain void left behind by the Sinicization of religions. Even if wine's presence in Ningxia may be coincidental, it fits well regardless with the party-state's narrative of secularization and (Han-Chinese) modernity, as it stands in contrast to Islamic customs. While attitudes toward alcohol are not homogenous across Hui communities, and tolerance of it is certainly higher than for pork (Gillette 2000, 167ff; Stroup 2017, 169), most Hui Muslims in the northwest (including most of my contacts in Yinchuan) do not consume alcohol. In her fieldwork from the mid-1990s, Gillette (2000, 184) found alcohol abstention among Xi'an Hui depicted as "civilized" — thus appropriating and challenging the state discourse of civility. Stroup (2017, 170) describes different approaches to alcohol by restaurant owners: while some refrain from selling it in order to attract more devout Hui, many others are pragmatic so as to cater to Han clients too.

In comparison with the strict Islamic *qingzhen* regulations regarding food, which forbid Hui to even enter Han restaurants, there does seem to be a more flexible attitude toward places of alcohol production and consumption — as seen in the fact that many of the vineyard laborers in Ningxia are Hui from the countryside (Wang 2019, 80). In June 2019, I even was invited by a group of local Hui — together with some Uyghur and Kazakh students from Xinjiang — to celebrate the Feast of Breaking the Fast at the end of Ramadan (开斋节) at a Ningxia wine château, about an hour's drive from the city. The garden of the French-style château, decorated with British telephone booths and other London-themed artefacts that proved popular photo backgrounds for the group, could be rented for picnics. Our group brought barbecue food, nonalcoholic drinks, and Uyghur music, to which the Xinjiang students danced.

The château was chosen for convenience and to provide an aesthetic background for this day trip, with wine playing no part in their considerations — but clearly also not acting as a deterrent for the group either. One can argue that the space was thus unconsciously appropriated in ways that undermined its intended symbolism: the culture (food, abstinence, and Uyghur music) that was practiced was a Muslim one, while the globalized Western elements adapted to a Han-Chinese wine location merely served as a decontextualized background (ironically, on a previous trip I attended with the same group we went to a rural retreat styled like a People's Commune from the 1950s!). In fact, following Kjellgren's (2004, 27) contention that wine is not only produced for those who drink it, one can say that wine is not

2 In a nonrepresentative online survey I conducted among young Yinchuaners in 2017, one respondent even answered a question on which aspects the region should stress more with "*qingzhen* food and wine."

primarily seen as an alcoholic beverage but as a product symbolizing distinction and modernity.

Modernization and cultivation: Transforming agriculture, transforming one's self

Wine as an idea manages to impose an urban, modern, and cultivated veneer on its production and consumption, essentially veiling the fact that it is by nature still an agricultural product. Wang and Liu (2020, 8) stress the wine industry's relation to all three economic sectors (viticulture as the primary one, wine making second, wine tourism third) and thus see it as a means to help solve the "three rural problems" (三农问题) of agriculture, the countryside, and farmers. Zhang L. et al. (2021) argue that the wine industry in Ningxia brings ecological and economic benefits, such as combating desertification and poverty alleviation. In this context, Zhang H. et al. (2021, 5) stress the importance of the wine-tourism industry in Ningxia to poverty alleviation by providing stable employment opportunities for the region's resettled eco-migrants (生态移民) — their surplus labor is supposed to be turned into wine-related expertise by means of education.[3]

This ties into the findings of Trappel (2021), who links the various national policies on modernization of the countryside — some of which are framed within the Chinese Dream rhetoric and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation — to the emergence of "new agricultural subjects" within the party-state discourse who are supposed to replace traditional smallholders as the primary agricultural actors, helping the latter to eventually bring the whole countryside to modernity (Trappel 2021, 10, 16). The examples Zhang H. et al. (2021, 5) give here are eco-migrants in Minning town (闽宁镇) in Yinchuan's Yongning County, the most famous eco-migrant settlement in Ningxia. It originated in 1997 under a cooperation scheme with Fujian province and following Xi's direct involvement (then the deputy secretary of the Fujian provincial party committee) (Xinhua 2021).

The location would become known nationally through its depiction in a 2021 TV series called *Minning Town* (original title: 山海情) and is generally portrayed as a successful model project for ecological relocation/migration. The town's official Exhibition Hall depicts farming tools used "in the early stages of its development" (开发初期) behind glass showcases, and thus musealizes smallholder-farming technologies as objects assigned to previous lifestyles (field observations, 2018). By evoking Minning town (incidentally a predominantly Hui settlement!) as an example of agricultural transformation through viticulture and wine tourism, Zhang H. et al. (2021) thus relate this to national discourses on the modernization of the countryside.

3 Eco-migrants in the context of Ningxia are former peasants from the southern arid and inhospitable parts of the autonomous region named Xihaigu (西海固) who have been resettled through various government programs since the 1980s (Shu 2016).

However, while eco-migrants might tend the vineyards, the new "agrarian elite," to apply Trappel's (2021) term, are mostly young, urban, and university-educated specialists who work for wine châteaux owned by rich individuals or by shareholders. Unlike their (frequently absent) employers[4] and rural migrant workers, they are the ones in charge of the technical aspects of viticulture and wine making. One of my informants (I1), having completed a BA in Agriculture from Ningxia University, had been traveling around the country for three years, working for a large international company selling and promoting agricultural pesticides and training local peasants in using them. He then returned to Yinchuan in 2015; now he manages a winery[5] with five permanent employees and around 30 contracted manual workers at the foot of the Helan Mountains. This château was founded in 2014, a year before he joined, and is collectively owned by seven shareholders from Shenzhen and Jiangsu with "no understanding of wine."

Personal networks are crucial within the winemaker scene in the region — my informant has visited more than 30 neighboring châteaux and is in close personal contact with many of their personnel. Giving and receiving mutual assistance is common practice. When I visited his location three times in 2019, the slow progress on the château's construction was apparent (in contrast to many other more prestigious châteaux), but the wine cellar had been operating for two years already, using imported Italian machinery and French oak barrels. Annual production was expected to increase, with approximately 70,000 bottles a year being the final target once output hits full capacity. While my informant described the shareholders as "patient" and not needing an immediate return on their investment, the low production numbers necessarily lead to the comparatively high cost of a bottle of their wine, as sold not via supermarkets but mostly through personal networks (I1, 2019).

Despite the château's construction taking longer than expected, their wines won several high-profile international awards between 2019 and 2021. Yet, despite the fact that my informant appears to be a prime example of the party-state's envisioned agrarian elite he himself still expressed uneasiness about his overall understanding of wine. While enthusiastic and clearly competent in his trade, during an informal tasting in their wine cellar he described himself as being more comfortable drinking *baijiu*, whose quality can be easily be assessed by "not having a headache the next day." In contrast, he sees wine as an "imported good" (舶来品) "not native to China" (不是中国自古以来的), therefore he "doesn't understand it, does not dare to talk about it" (不懂，不敢说话), and "wishes to understand it better" (想多理解一点) (I1, 2019).

4 Some château owners are wine experts themselves, such as Emma Gao of Silver Heights (Howson and Ly 2020, 65). They frequently appear in international-media stories and reports.

5 I refrain from using the name of the operation to protect my informant's identity.

This not only reinforces the enduring narrative of wine being a foreign import; the claim of "not understanding wine" also seems to be surprising out of the mouth of a winemaker who I would otherwise describe as very self-confident. I argue that this statement reflects no personal insecurities, but rather deeply held societal beliefs on the necessity of self-improvement. Despite having ostensibly succeeded in playing his part in the state's modernization project, my interlocutor still perceives himself to be lacking sufficient cultivation to talk about wine.

A short clip by Ningxia TV (2021) shows three wine makers from different châteaux gathering for the last time before the harvest season. The three young women in elegant dresses are sitting down for drinks and cake in a warmly lit cellar stocked with various wine bottles, as they toast each other with the host's 2019 Marselan. All of them are expecting a busy harvest ahead. They explain that wine making is their trade and their family, and they will grow old with it. The clip depicts a lifestyle that still hints at a traditional farming cycle, yet instead of appearing rustic or agricultural certain markers of class and distinction are foregrounded. These three wine makers appear to embody notions of worldliness and connoisseurship (or at least they pretend to do so). Wine is a product that not only relies on skills during its production but also its consumption. As my wine-maker informant (I1) proceeded to recount, while ten years earlier the wine craze was still concerned with expensive Bordeaux wines — snubbed as "vulgar consumption" by the Western press, as Maguire and Lim (2015, 234) examine — people had then started to fear "not understanding" (不懂) these matters, leading to the growing popularity of wine education and tastings.

A wine trader in her mid-20s (I2) regularly hosts such wine-tasting sessions in her downtown Yinchuan facilities — part shop, part bar. The shop's interior and her fashion style display a similar elegance to the women in the aforementioned clip, but her life story is in fact one of struggle and instability. Having grown up in a troubled family in the countryside and various urban villages, she experienced alcohol-induced domestic violence by her father, ran away from home twice, quit high school prematurely, and hopped between low-paid service jobs in different cities until she got into various wine-related businesses and eventually returned to Yinchuan. Her attitude toward alcohol is ambivalent, as she links it to her father's violence (though he consumed *baijiu*) as well as to unsuccessfully drowning her own sorrows in times of depression. Yet wine is also the business that allowed her to buy her own car and flat, and thus to become a self-employed and independent businesswoman. She founded her company in 2017 with a business partner, first started bottling acquired bulk wine, then turned to regularly hosting wine tours and tastings.

One post on her WeChat moments (2019) that advertised one of these events (to prepare for the London-based Wine & Spirit Education Trust's [wset] wine exams) read "study well, drink wine every day" (好好学习、天天喝酒). Remarkably, the daily drinking of wine is here (with a slight touch of irony) linked to education and self-improvement by an individual who has first-hand experience of what daily

consumption can lead to. The dual role of alcohol as both a threat to one's civility and an object through which cultivation of the self is signaled has been addressed in both Greco-Roman (Lukacs 2012, 24) and Confucian (Kupfer 2021, 101) traditions of self-restraint.

For my informant, the wine business has given her a way out of her previously precarious existence and a new confidence in her own abilities for the future. Wine thus acts as a transformative aspect in her life, reflecting aspirations of social mobility and personal cultivation rather than affinity to the product. Another informant (I3), who had recently quit his job as an accountant at a local beer company when I met him, spent much of his newly found free time drinking and learning about wine (as well as Fujianese tea, for which similar growing practices exist; see also, Zhang 2020). A few months later, he advertised on his WeChat that he had tasted more than 200 wines that year already and was willing to give out recommendations, since buying wine "if one does not understand it" is not easy — yet good wine, he stressed, does not have to be expensive. While he was not in the wine business at the time (and noted this explicitly), a year later he passed his wset exams and was subsequently preparing to become a wine instructor.

Connections to Bourdieu's (1984) theory on distinction and taste are apparent here: studying wine leads to the acquisition of cultural capital — something that cannot directly be bought by financial means, only indirectly through free time and social recommendations. As an advertising executive living in Paris told him in 1974: "Hardly anyone knows how to choose wine, so as soon as you know a little about it, you look like someone who knows how to live" (Bourdieu 1984, 300). This is a sentiment somewhat similar to what my informant expressed on WeChat. However, as Meinhof (2018, 32) points out, consumption processes in contemporary China revolve around objects that did not yet play a role in the early habitus-forming socialization periods of the actors involved. Indeed, all my informants cited above have a rural or semi-urban background, and none of their parents have any connection to wine or urban middle-class living.

Recognizing this deviation from Bourdieu's theory, Zhang views wine (and tea) tasting less as "class-defined" but more as "class-driven": what is aspired to is "an imagined middle-class prototype existing both beyond China's national boundary as well as beyond the present time," with the place being a "Western other" (in relation to wine) and the time being an "ancient other" (in relation to tea) (Zhang 2020, 644). Maguire and Lim, who also evoke Bourdieu's theory vis-à-vis the case of Bordeaux wine imports to China, suggest that one should speak of "grades of capital, strata of prestige, and logics of discernment that overlay one another and operate in complex ways" (2015, 237). Moreover, these two authors point out that complex forms of cultural taste are interlinked with local, national, and global consumption practices and identities. Thus, they acknowledge that the rise of Chinese high-quality wine might still add another dimension to this emerging picture (Maguire and Lim 2015, 239). Building on these readings, I argue that these individual aspirations toward

wine expertise are linked to social mobility as well as an imagined ideal of personal cultivation, as connected ultimately to a Sinicized version of globalization.

Sinicized globalization: Domestic wine with a worldly touch

As Ichijo and Ranta (2016, 25) posit, the choices that people make in their everyday lives regarding what to cook and eat relate to their national identities, and by adding or removing ingredients they can transform the meanings associated herewith. As shown above, wine is still largely linked to an (imagined) Western lifestyle in China. The wine trader I interviewed also argued that people usually see wine as a "high-end" (高大上) product that is always paired to Western food — a notion she wants to overcome with her company by hosting a new food-and-wine event series tackling the "complex" question of how to pair the beverage with different Chinese cuisines. In other words, the inherent connection between wine and Western food is now being challenged — Chinese wine is supposed, after all, to be incorporated into Chinese identity.

Such a trend does not run counter to globalization. The opposite is the case indeed, as globalization not only increases the availability of products and ideas around the world, leading to the formation of cultural hybrids, but also involves the reemergence of local and national identities as a reaction to these enhanced global connections (see Eriksen 2014, 11f). This kind of integration of wine into Chinese identity can also be seen in the architecture of some of the Yinchuan châteaux. While many of them are built in faux-French style[6], some adopt Chinese architectural patterns — for instance Château Yuanshi (原石酒庄), the location Xi visited in 2020. Built by a local entrepreneur who made his money in construction material, the stone château is one of the flagships in the region and "a must visit" according to all of my informants. The website of the winery (Yuanshi 2021) explicitly mentions that "there are no continental European sentiments" (欧陆风情) and "no aristocratic manners" (贵族气质) to be found here, only Chinese mores (中国气质). These include "hard farm work" (辛苦耕耘) as well as artisan skills based on the ancient Chinese 24 solar terms (二十四节气). This is the place, the text continues, where Chinese civilization and wine civilization appropriately meet (恰如其分的结合).

Interestingly, even this description — while rejecting alleged European feudalism and stressing idealized Chinese agrarian values — still falls short of claiming wine culture as inherently Chinese, since it only speaks of its appropriate combination with Chinese civilization — the result is a Sinicized château that claims to incorporate Chinese values. However, even in rejecting it, the West still acts as the

6 Incidentally, the Bordeaux originals they are based on are themselves an invented tradition of the mid-nineteenth century built to give their wineries a façade of age and heritage (Lukacs 2012, 142). Therefore, Ningxia wineries set in the Bordeaux château style can be argued to be in keeping with, rather than merely copying, the original.

reference point — or the "clock is set [there]" as Meinhof (2017, 65) describes it in his work on "colonial temporality," a concept that assumes China to be in the constant process of catching up to an imagined West. In our specific context, France thus remains the place in the West where the clock of the wine world is set. This view seems to have been reinforced, rather than challenged, ever since California wines beat the French benchmarks in a seminal 1976 Paris tasting, as Lukacs (2012, 261f) points out — though he also recounts how Bordeaux wines have throughout history always been intimately linked to the English market, and the London wine scene has set the standards of taste for centuries now (Lukacs 2012, 61, 110). Standardization is a key element of globalization (Erikson 2014, 11), and the leading role of Great Britain in the wine world is still reflected in the fact that London-based wset exams set standards for sommeliers (see also, Howson and Ly 2020, 12f).

Hence, somewhat ironically, the British-style château garden I visited, as noted, with a group of Muslims might be less inappropriate than it appears. One set of standards that did however originate in Bordeaux is their 1855 classification of châteaux into a five-tier ranking, which until now has only seen two changes since it was first published (Lukacs 2012, 143). The classification fossilized Bordeaux wines' relative merits according to prestige and supposed tradition, rather than according to terroir alone — therefore elevating certain châteaux wines into extremely prestigious (and expensive) dimensions. In 2013 the Ningxia Wine Bureau published its initial ranking of wineries, which at first glance appears to be a copy of the Bordeaux tiers. However, unlike its role model, the ranking continues to be reevaluated in two-year intervals according to a set of specific criteria (ones going beyond wine quality alone in also evaluating, for example, tourism facilities). Operations can rise or fall in the rankings. In the beginning, châteaux were only assigned to lower tiers; higher ones were added later in the course of time. As of 2021, no operation had been assigned to the first tier yet (Xie 2017; Wang et al. 2021).

The Ningxia ranking thus draws on the prestige of Bordeaux and combines it with similar evaluation mechanisms already existing in China, such as the "Civilized City" (文明城市) rankings (see Cartier 2020). Nevertheless, the Bordeaux-inspired châteaux model has also been called into question by academics: Li (2017, 193) argues that the foreign (外来) "Small châteaux, large production region" strategy does not suit Ningxia, as the region relies too much on small wineries and would be better off with larger collective operations and following a region-wide branding strategy. Calling the châteaux "'playthings' for the rich" (有钱人的'游戏'), Li (2017, 195f) argues that the sustainable development of wine in Ningxia is hampered by the current approach in advocating for greater investment in quality and increased production.

Li's argument reflects a wider discourse in circulation. My wine-trader informant (I2) also spoke of confusion as to what strategy the government was to follow, as the idea of the region-wide branding instead of the small-wineries strategy had increasingly gained traction in the last few years, though she disapproved of this

"fluctuating" (三年河东、三年河西) approach. My wine-maker informant (I1) agreed, meanwhile, that each château making many different wines in modest quantities was causing problems for their marketing without a larger branding framework in place, speaking here of the government's wish to ultimately develop a more recognizable brand (interviews I1, I2 2019).

As of now, the small-wineries approach still seems to be ongoing, and the fact that it is explicitly presented as a successful model by three Peking University professors (Zhang et al. 2020) might indicate that this is only likely to continue going forward. These professors argue that while the châteaux owners indeed do not know much about wine, they are solving the investment problem for the region and furthermore that even under these conditions local wine quality still holds up well internationally. They also stress that in comparison to the Bordeaux ranking, the above-described Ningxia scheme was "stricter" (严格得多) and "more Sinicized" (中国化得多) (Zhang et al. 2020, 4f). Still, Liu et al. (2021), coming from a design background, see problems in the current lack of incorporation of Ningxia wine into Chinese culture. For instance, they argue (Liu et al. 2021, 112) that Ningxia wine bottles use standard Bordeaux styles (ironically, a bottle by Châteaux Yuanshi, the place so proud of being Chinese, is depicted as an example) rather than a more "humanized" (人性化) design that is in their view better adapted to people's needs (an Austrian liquor bottle in the form of a violin is depicted as a positive example here). More interesting than their concrete suggestions is their general tone on what the relationship between wine, society, and nationhood should be. Arguing that wine design should be more localized and reflect the taste of the common people, they call for Ningxia's identity as a frontier region and Silk Road location to be highlighted more, or to use Zhang Qian — the Han dynasty general who introduced wine from Eurasia — as part of the branding (Liu et al. 2021, 115). In other words, they imagine Ningxia wine as national (Chinese), local (frontier region), and yet global too (Silk Road, wine as import).

In May 2021 the PRC's State Council established a so-called comprehensive experimental zone for Ningxia wine. An expert roundtable convened two months later discussed the implications of this policy, which included the wording "wine capital of the world" (世界葡萄酒之都) and called for the improvement of quality production, put emphasis on a uniquely Chinese wine culture (让中国葡萄酒具有中国特色), and sought the development of an "intrinsic quality" (品质) helping Ningxia wine to improve its "discursive power" (话语权) both domestically and abroad (Wen 2021). While Chinese wine exports do not yet play a major role internationally, Ningxia wine has recently received significant recognition on the international wine scene. At the same time, one of its largest international competitors on the domestic market has essentially been eliminated: Australian wine — which, as noted, under a bilateral FTA had entered China at scale from 2015 (and even tariff-free from 2019) — was a major rival to its Ningxia counterpart (interview with wine maker I1, 2019). However, as relations between the two countries

deteriorated in 2020 amid Australian calls for an independent investigation of the Covid-19 origins, punitive tariffs on wine imports (officially labeled "anti-dumping duties") have essentially since shut Australian wine out of the Chinese market (Boyce 2021). Economic and political considerations most likely intersect in this case, but with the rise of high-quality Ningxia wine a compelling narrative of wine patriotism seems to be now in the making. As the motto of a Shenzhen tasting event for Ningxia wine in October 2020 put it: "Chinese people drink domestic wine" (国人喝国酒) (Ningxia News Network 2020).

Conclusion

Ningxia wine is increasingly being recognized both in China and abroad. In this paper, I have shown that the discourses around Ningxia wine relate to certain aspects of local identity as well as to Chinese nationalism. Wine is helping Ningxia as a peripheral Chinese region to be repositioned within the nation and to develop a recognizable image that helps fill the void left by the abandoning of the earlier Islam strategy related to promoting the Muslim Hui minority, whose identity no longer plays a role in this new, secular branding. Wine has taken on an urban, modern, and cultivated veneer, essentially veiling the fact that it is by nature still an agricultural product. It is therefore being framed as a solution to wide-ranging problems, such as the three rural ones, desertification, or the sluggish local tourism industry. Drinking and learning about wine is in line with the country's civilizing mission: wine expertise and taste are aspirational goals that can have a transformative function in fostering both individuals' and the whole population's developmental levels.

Ningxia wine is being promoted also in relation to France's Bordeaux region, a discourse that implicitly accepts the standard for wine is still set in the West. Yet, the wine is also undergoing a process of Sinicization, reflected in the architecture of some of Ningxia's wineries as well as in academic discussions on setting Chinese standards or in attempts to also pair wine with Chinese cuisines. Ningxia wine thus relies on the international, globalized wine discourse, while simultaneously attempting to overcome it. It is as much an object of individual aspiration as it is a projection screen for an imagined secular, modern, and cultivated nation.

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Research note

Between Memories and Taboos: The Formation of Alternative Vietnamese and Myanmarese Spaces of Citizenship and Belonging

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Abstract
In the postcolonial states of Southeast Asia, governments weaponize their histories to create spaces of legitimate memories for nation-building processes. Local identities that do not conform to the official historiography are silenced. Beyond these state-sanctioned boundaries, however, alternative practices of remembrance are upheld that can challenge the state to produce different forms of belonging, identity, and citizenship. This paper analyzes the creation of opposing spaces of memory and belonging. The case studies include the struggle for meaning and identity between the State of Myanmar and the local population in Rakhine State as well as the inclusion and exclusion of the memory of war in Vietnam and the Vietnamese diaspora in Germany. Governments in Myanmar and Vietnam use their respective histories to create patterns of continuity and exclude those defined as outsiders. Memories of local struggles are maintained, practiced, and even celebrated in local communities and the diaspora. Hereby, we point to practices that maintain excluded memories and enable alternative forms of belonging and citizenship to endure.

Keywords: Myanmar, Vietnam, citizenship, memories, belonging, nation-building, Rhakine, Rohingya, diaspora, Sino-Vietnamese war

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Introduction

From the 2014 China-Vietnam oil rig crisis to the 2021 coup in Myanmar, past conflicts over ethnicity, autonomy, and identity still haunt the countries of Southeast Asia. In the context of current tensions in the region, questions of memories, belonging, and citizenship come to the fore. Spaces of memories are weaponized by states and social actors alike to mobilize communities. These spaces are materialized and reproduced locally to create official histories and identities. Historical narratives and practices of remembrance are thus used to either include or exclude citizens.

From these official landscapes, nationalized forms of citizenship are disputed. According to Berenschot et al. (2018), citizenship is the underlying narrative of state-society relations in Southeast Asia. The rights and obligations inherent in this relationship are continuously negotiated. These negotiations employ local needs, interests, and memories to establish a national identity. In Vietnam and Myanmar, this identity is monopolized by the centralized state — as controlled by their respective dominant ethnic and religious groups. The construction of citizenship in both countries is shaped by dominant historical interpretations, ethnicity and political affiliations. Everyday practices of citizenship negotiation are intertwined with legalized definitions of citizenship often employed in practices of inclusion and exclusion.

As memories and their materiality become national boundaries of belonging translated into the establishment of official citizenship, these negotiations exclude alternative identities based on marginalized memories. However, outside of these state-sanctioned boundaries, alternative practices of remembrance are maintained on the spatial, temporal, and social periphery. They can challenge the state and produce alternative forms of belonging, identity, and citizenship (Kwok and Waterson 2012; McCormick 2014; Scott 2009). We argue that these alternative forms of citizenship and belonging emerge and indeed endure at the interface between that spatial-social periphery and local memory practices in Vietnam and Myanmar.

Methodology

Based on three case studies — in Vietnam, among the latter's diaspora, and in Myanmar — we analyze practices of remembrance and how these play a role in maintaining alternative forms of citizenship. To this end, we use qualitative interviews, participatory observation, and visual data from field research in Vietnam, Myanmar, and Germany. We aim to reconstruct in an emic manner the local landscapes of social and cultural meanings, aspirations, and relations from the analysis of observed, local everyday practices (Evers and Korff 2003, 11). Because aspirations and practices are rooted in localities, their analysis helps us to understand local space, knowledge, and social organization and their relationship to concepts of belonging — and hence citizenship.

We start by defining state practices regarding memories and nation-building in the context of citizenship in Vietnam and Myanmar,[1] based on taking an ethnographic approach in both countries. Our case studies include: (1) the commemoration of the victims of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War; (2) practices of remembrance in the Vietnamese Catholic diaspora in Germany; and (3) the struggle for identity between the state of Myanmar and the local population in Rakhine state.

We chose our three case studies because these are our fields of expertise and also a step toward moving beyond a mere country focus in academic work on Southeast Asia. We argue that both states use their respective histories to create patterns of continuity and to exclude those defined as outsiders. The existing literature talks of a "memory machine" in the case of Vietnam (Grossheim 2020) and a "truth regime" in that of Myanmar (Cheesman 2017). At the same time, decades of conflict, war, and ethnic marginalization have created a localized, fragmented society, including significant diaspora communities from both countries. We argue that this led to opposing spaces of memory and belonging in Vietnam and Myanmar, and hence our chosen analytical focus.

All three cases are geographically located on the periphery and among the historically marginalized. As they call into question official narratives, memories of struggles are maintained, practiced, and even celebrated in local communities — whether privately or in the diaspora. We also chose our cases to point toward the diverging levels — local, national, and international — at which practices of remembrance and belonging are negotiated and established. We look at practices that maintain excluded memories, and therewith enable alternative forms of belonging and citizenship to take hold in both countries and among their diasporas too.

Literature

The localization of citizenship in Southeast Asia

This paper aims to expand the emerging academic work on citizenship in Southeast Asia by including discussions on memorialization and belonging (Le and Nicolaisen 2021; Berenschot et al. 2018; South and Lall 2018; Kuan and Lam 2013). Broadly speaking, "citizenship" defines the membership of an individual person in an ordered community (Kuan and Lam 2013, 49). Citizenship hence mediates a sociopolitical identity and enforces one's civic integration into society. Starting with Western classical theory, Tilly (1995) defines "citizenship" as a contract between the state and its people, which leads to transactions of enforceable rights and obligations

1 We are particularly aware that the developments in Myanmar since the coup on February 1, 2021, pose a major challenge for this work. There are dynamic changes, ongoing and new conflicts on different levels, with various actors involved. Therefore, we chose a descriptive-analysis approach to focus on the topic at hand. To work out persistent fault lines that have come into play in the current situation, the case study is embedded in the historical context.

independent of personal considerations. The liberal model of citizenship focuses on the formal, legal dimensions hereof and employs a universal rights-based approach (Berenschot at al. 2018; Kuan and Lam 2013). Contrariwise, the republican model defines active participation in the community for the common good as a fundamental duty of each citizen ("duty-based approach"). Individual political participation allows for a sense of identity and belonging (Kuan and Lam 2013). Finally, in the communitarian tradition (Schinkel and Houdt 2010; Kuan and Lam 2013) the focus is on the creation of a shared identity rooted in the acceptance of plurality, as expressed by means of an unofficial, moral citizenship based on the shared norms of a given community.

Most of the work on Southeast Asia recognizes the need to move beyond the classical work on citizenship (Tilly 1995; Schinkel and Houdt 2010; Rawls 1993). Instead, citizenship is framed as being based on practices that are inherently local expressions of state-society relations, creating diverse patterns of duties and rights, state responsiveness, and legitimacy (Berenschot et al. 2018; Suriyadinata 2014; South and Lall 2018; Le and Nicolaisen 2021). According to Berenschot et al. (2018), citizenship negotiations in Southeast Asia are geared toward more inclusive governance rather than the universal implementation of rights. Changing interpretations and expressions of religious and ethnic identities generate new understandings of rights. However, political violence, underlying narratives of morality and nationalism provide tools of control and exclusion.

Citizenship thus combines one's legal, social, and/or cultural position in a community and its associated civil, political, and social rights with a sense of belonging. Hereby, citizenship also includes those lacking formal status or experiencing "second-class" citizenship. It is to those on the margins that we now turn.

Citizenship on the periphery: Remoteness as a means of resistance

At its core, citizenship is most generally discussed in connection with the nation-state. Citizens negotiate their relationship with the center. As the latter expands its reach, it redefines its own relationship with the periphery. Remote areas, in particular borderlands and mountainous highlands, are contested spaces in the context of the nation-state (Scott 2009). [2] Due to their politically sensitive nature, spatial remoteness, and often violent history, frontier spaces are of high interest to the state and yet at the same time difficult to fully integrate into the nation. Frontiers are both remote in relation to urban centers and central in the context of national sovereignty. They also offer ample opportunities for those able to access the key resources, like

2 Scott (2009) describes "Zomia" as a precolonial periphery in Southeast Asia that offers a counterpoint to the power of the central elite. On this periphery, alternative forms of living could be maintained by organizing in ways that made people's integration into the centralizing states of the region difficult.

financial support, consumer goods, social relations, political power, state services, and land.

This duality of the periphery leads to "social edginess," as rooted in a given person's social, economic, political, and temporal location (Harms 2011). Social edginess points to the risk of marginalization on the periphery for those without access to such vital resources. For many local residents, this results in exclusion from full citizenship — in particular for ethnic minorities. As remoteness is politicized, local strongmen can become the focal points of power, create alternative centers of belonging, and thus challenge the understanding of citizenship promoted by the state (Berenschot et al. 2018).

However, remoteness can also be a choice to challenge the central authorities. We argue that because remoteness is often socially constructed, it is not always rooted in marginalization but can in fact provide social countermeasures thereto. While the state has a monopoly over national identity at the center, alternative identities based on marginalized memories and practices can emerge and prevail on the periphery in consequence.

Practices of remembrance: Aspirations and belonging

If remoteness is used as a countermeasure to the state's aspiration to control, it needs to produce an alternative narrative of belonging. The latter needs to be defined as based on sociocultural aspirations that are rooted in related practices (Appadurai 2004; Holston and Appadurai 1996). The capacity to aspire grows from a set of norms, values, and collective experiences, and leads to the imagination of a possible future worth striving for (Appadurai 2004; Holston and Appadurai 1996). Aspirations are, hence, future-oriented but locally rooted, with the past serving as a frame of reference here.

Belonging expresses the aspiration for security, individual rights, and shared norms and values. The nation-state is the ultimate form of such belonging, institutionalized via the concept of citizenship. However, for those living on the margins of the state, the aspiration to belong can be embedded in alternative forms of citizenship connected to separatist movements or to local/transnational communities.

This aspiration is embedded in memories of a forgone community that contradict the formal state interpretation of the past. Here, aspirations are closely linked to nostalgia for an idealized past — something also common among state institutions (Edwards 2016). Nostalgia centers on the imaginations embedded in this past. For this purpose, memories are shared to pass this idealized past onto other members of the community — thus providing a vision of the future rather than conveying objective truth. From these alternative memories, local communities will derive practices, narratives, and meanings which are used to produce alternative spaces of belonging that can challenge the state space of citizenship. Nostalgia hence becomes a political tool to unify communities.

Citizenship negotiations in practice

The struggle for identity between the State of Myanmar and the local population in Rakhine State

In 2012, conflicts between Muslims and Buddhists, framed as intercommunal, broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine State. In August 2017, more than 700,000 Muslims, including members of the Rohingya community, fled the fighting into neighboring Bangladesh, where they have since been staying in refugee camps.[3] In 2019, another armed actor, the Arakan Army, composed mainly of Buddhist Rakhine fighting for increased autonomy for their state, engaged in armed conflicts with the Myanmar army.

When the Myanmar military staged a coup on February 1, 2021, it interrupted a process aimed at establishing a democratic system in the country that pushed the so-called Rohingya question into the background as the coup faced public resistance, primarily from the emerging Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).[4] The military resorted to violence against its own population, leading to civil war. These events have since paralyzed the country's economy and caused the collapse of its education and public-health systems.[5]

Fox et al. (2021) argue that the crisis in Rakhine State is a local conflict between the Muslim minority and the Buddhist Rakhine. However, there is a larger underlying conflict here between the Bamar-dominated unitary Myanmar state, the Buddhist Rakhine, and the Muslim Rohingya: the prerogative of interpretation and implementation of citizenship laws as well as highly problematic identity politics practiced by different Myanmar governments have resulted in numerous conflicts in this multiethnic state. With a court case at the International Court of Justice in The Hague brought by The Gambia in November 2019, the conflict gained an international dimension (Fox et al. 2021). In Myanmar, the explanation for these circumstances is clearly articulated: according to the government, the Rohingya are not genuinely Myanmarese, they entered the country illegally, and as such cannot be citizens (Kyaw 2017). Only after the coup in 2021 would the question of belonging be renegotiated by various actors, while the military is once again using violence — thus sticking to its core ideology and mindset.

3 The flight was triggered by coordinated attacks on Myanmar border posts in the north of Rakhine State carried out by a rebel group that calls itself the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and claims to be committed to the rights of the Muslim Rohingya. The Myanmar military responded with heavy offensives that not only resulted in waves of Muslims fleeing to Bangladesh but also affected Hindus, Rakhine Buddhists, and other groups, who fled to Rakhine State's southern regions (Fox 2017).

4 This is still ongoing at the time of writing.

5 UNHCR (2021) reports that more than 200,000 people have fled Myanmar since the coup. The United Nations fears that by 2022 half of the population, up to 25 million people, will have been thrown into poverty by the twin impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis triggered by the coup (Fox 2022).

Ethnicity and religion are instrumentalized and politicized in Myanmar. The term *thaingyintha,* understood as "national races" in political readings, became part of the state-building program and its rituals of national unity (Cheesman 2017, 463, 465). The Burmese *taingyintha* concept conceives of a relationship existing between people and soil: only those living in a given place since the dawn of time came to be seen to really belong "[as] *taing-yin-tha* took on new importance as the primary identifier of belonging" (Brett and Hlaing 2020, 3). Myanmar's 2008 Constitution "establishes a conceptual relation between national races and citizenship" (Cheesman 2017, 470). Consequently, while the government recognizes 135 indigenous groups based on obscure data, the Rohingya are not included in the concept, since they allegedly immigrated during the British colonial period (Cheesman 2017, 468). This leads to the state-induced exclusion and inclusion of certain ethnic and religious groups. The 1982 Citizenship Law follows the same logic, making people first-, second-, and third-class citizens. Belonging to one of the national races becomes herewith the "gold standard" for citizenship (Cheesman 2017; Kyaw 2017).

When General Ne Win staged his coup in 1962, referencing the colonial-era nationalist slogan "to be Burmese is to be Buddhist," xenophobia and racism were on the rise (Gravers 1999, 69). Different groups of people — Chinese and Indian, including also Muslims, Hindus, and the Rohingya — had been accused of being illegal immigrants who only settled in Burma under British rule (Fox et al. 2021). This resulted in a nationwide immigration and residence check — known as Na Ga Min ("Dragon King") — aimed at registering every resident of Burma as a citizen or alien (Kyaw 2017, 274). Two military operations aimed at rooting out illegal migrants in Rakhine State in 1978 and 1991 led to nearly half a million Muslims fleeing to Bangladesh.

After the coup in 1962, the military, lacking legitimacy among the population, resorted to history in an attempt to position itself within the tradition of successful Bamar kings — specifically as a good and just ruler. They portrayed the British colonial period as a break in continuity and the Anglo-Burmese wars as having been lost only due to the lack of a strong, modern army (Tatmadaw) at that time. This rhetoric was recycled during the transition phase (2011–2021), when the military presented itself as the guardian of the democratic process, national unity, and the constitution. The 2021 coup maintains this interpretation of their political role.

Since the 1960s, the military has sought to create a national identity that evokes an unprecedented, mystical unity between the different ethnic groups in drawing on an imagined historic community, as a way "to legitimize a centralized regime as a base for a unitary state" (Gravers 1999, 58). One of the three national causes of the military is the "non-disintegration of national solidarity" — even though there had never been a national solidarity. The threat hereto was framed as an external one: the army protects the social order and Buddhism from interference by foreign politics. Slogans invoking national unity and emphasizing the military's role as a state-

builder appeared regularly in the *New Light of Myanmar*, the state's propaganda newspaper. The reality, however, was characterized by a forced assimilation policy and conflicts with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) fighting for autonomy and self-determination as counter identities and -movements emerged.

Practices of remembrance between the state and the local: The Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979

In Vietnam, the state conceives citizenship to be an idealized cooperative partnership between the government and all Vietnamese people (Le and Nicolaisen 2021; Binh Trinh 2021). The aim of this partnership, from a state perspective, is to generate legitimacy for the rule of the socialist party and its nation-building efforts. In reality, this idealized form of citizenship is challenged by localized conflicts (Le and Nicolaisen 2021). To minimize challenges, the Vietnamese party-state combines violence against the political opposition, narratives of moral expectation, social pressure (Binh Trinh 2021; Kerkvliet 2010), and a "memory machine" (Grossheim 2020) that instrumentalizes Vietnamese history and remembrance to induce social conformity (Grossheim 2021c).

The use of historical narratives as means of nationalist mobilization is found at all levels of government, from decisions on textbook content at the national one to local campaigns (Grossheim 2018). This leads to selective remembrance of Vietnam's past. This is most obvious concerning memories of the Republic of South Vietnam and its material remains, like old Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) cemeteries (Grossheim 2021b). Political memorialization excludes all those from full membership in the Vietnamese nation who do not uphold the same interpretation of the past as the state. Forms of political remembrance outside of government-sanctioned narratives are pushed to the margins of society or into the diaspora. The Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979 stands out here, because interpretation of it is now shifting and linked to current policy decisions regarding China (Grossheim 2021a). The ambiguity of state remembrance practices regarding this conflict opens up space for local appropriations.

The Sino-Vietnamese War was fought on the border between China and Vietnam from February 17 to March 16, 1979, after the former's forces invaded the latter's territory. The Chinese offensive was a response to the Vietnamese-led overthrow of the Chinese-supported Khmer Rouge regime (Yin and Path 2021, 13). This short-lived fighting led to the death of tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians on both sides, mostly natives of the region (Nguyen 2017). Before retreating, Chinese soldiers destroyed local infrastructure and houses. Both China and Vietnam maintain that they won the war. Meanwhile, conflicts along the border would continue until 1989 (Nguyen 2017).

Since the conflict was a direct altercation with China, it has affected relations between the two countries and forms a common point of reference for actors mobilizing against China. When the conflict in the South China Sea erupted in 2014,

protestors compared China's actions to the border invasion of 1979. Additionally, due to the link with Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia (Vincent 2022), increased attention being paid to these events also opens the Vietnamese Communist Party up to scrutiny. State-level commemoration of the war is thus politically motivated and embedded in geopolitics.

Generally speaking, there are four groups of actors who participate in practices of remembrance and commemoration. First, there are the government officials involved in overseeing education, tourism, and museum exhibitions. They come from the local, regional, or national level and support state narratives on official memories. Increasing interest in Vietnamese history and museum exhibitions necessitates a discourse about how historical events are to be portrayed to national and international audiences. How the Sino-Vietnamese War's presentation in museum exhibitions has shifted is representative of changing values regarding international relations with China (Grossheim 2021a).

Second, there are veterans and their families. They have no formal support network but are members of informal circles and engage in similar interactions. Third, there is also the broader group of residents of the northern border region, including ethnic minorities who are not active participants in externally produced narratives — rather, they are mostly recipients and consumers thereof. According to Tuong Vu (2014, 41) there is, fourth and finally, another group of actors here: the "political civil society" involved in challenging official state narratives and policies, especially regarding Vietnam-China relations.

Citizenship narratives in a transnational community: The Vietnamese Catholic diaspora in Germany

Moving beyond the local and national, people will also negotiate practices of remembrance and belonging at the transnational level too, in particular in cases of a larger diaspora originating out of a common historical event. Memory practices among the Vietnamese Catholic diaspora in Germany illustrate this. The Vietnamese community in Germany is diverse, with a small group arriving in both East and West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s. Later, guest workers in the former and boat people in the latter were added. Since the 2010s, a new wave of Vietnamese migrants has arrived — often illegally. As part of this larger Vietnamese-German diaspora, the community of Vietnamese Catholics was estimated at around 16,000 people strong in 2014 (Ninh 2021).

This Catholic community emerged in large part out of the South Vietnamese boat people leaving post-1975, in fear of the new socialist government and due to postwar economic hardship. Being on the losing side after the Second Indochina War (from the late 1950s to 1975), the Catholic diaspora is embedded in the latter's history, in the former Republic of Vietnam (RVN),[6] and in their shared experience as refugees

6 Previously, South Vietnam from 1954 to 1975.

coming to Germany. Many of these refugees, including Vietnamese Catholics, not only identified (and still do) with the former RVN but also shared their fear of persecution and the nature of their escape and arrival in reception centers in Germany (Beuchling 2003). Due to these shared experiences, they have created a close-knit community that maintains many practices, memories, and traditions more than 40 years after arrival.

As South Vietnamese refugees, the community is also home to alternative processes of memorialization. Contrary to memories of the First (1946–1954) and Second Indochina Wars, which are dominated by state narratives,[7] the Catholic diaspora maintains an alternative form of commemoration of both these wars. Instead of the socialist victory, the focus herein is on the loss of one's homeland and belonging. In this memory, the socialist state is not the glorious victor but a brutal occupying force.

The personal networks forged during these experiences were maintained while establishing new lives in Germany. Furthermore, these Catholic refugees, often deeply devout and perceiving their faith to be the reason for their erstwhile persecution in Vietnam, have held onto their religion — which is infused with Vietnamese rituals and symbols. Central to this is the worshiping of Our Lady of Lavang, which became established practice in Vietnam following the supposed apparition of the Virgin Mary to a group of persecuted Catholics there in 1798 (Ninh 2021).

Generally, the Vietnamese Catholic community in Germany can be divided into a Vietnamese-speaking clergy, with direct roots in Vietnam, and into a diaspora community, with its members often having been educated in Western countries (Ninh 2021). Priests, monks, and nuns often play central roles as spiritual leaders in the community and are well-connected — including internationally. Besides the clergy, the community has a large number of grassroots laity organizations, including youth clubs like Thanh Nien Cong Giao VN tai Duc," (TNCG), choirs, and similar (Ninh 2021). There also exist publications, both print and digital, and radio programs which are distributed (Ninh 2021). These organizations are internationally connected to diaspora bodies in Australia, the United States, and back in Vietnam through family ties. Some of these groups are also politically active, mostly in support of democratization, anticommunist endeavors, and the pursuit of religious freedom in Vietnam. Finally, many of those involved in events organized by the Catholic community are either Catholics without any organizational affiliations or non-Catholic Vietnamese who participate due to cultural and social aspects beyond religion.

7 While many lost family members fighting for the former South Vietnamese state, practices of remembrance are a political taboo. Places of memories, like old cemeteries, can be found embedded in the modernizing landscape of Vietnamese cities and villages, but they are often closed, abandoned, and forgotten — sometimes by force (Grossheim 2021b).

Maintaining alternative forms of belonging or shifting ideas of citizenship?

The localization of citizenship: Different levels of negotiation

In all three case studies, negotiations of citizenship take place at three diverging levels — local, national, international — to establish practices of remembrance and belonging. Legalistic, state-centered, and localized, community-based citizenship is intertwined. This leads to a complex interface, with state and social actors intervening therein to varying degrees.

The Myanmar state defines the narratives that are then reproduced by local communities to demarcate themselves from perceived others, like in Rakhine State. While Buddhists can easily use these narratives to establish their sense of belonging, they are less accessible for Muslims. While today's Rakhine State is characterized by a cultural and religious diversity rooted in historical trade networks with Bengal, ones that can be traced back to the ninth century, with the first Muslim settlements emerging in the 15th century, the military government of Myanmar views this diversity as a threat to its Buddhist-Burmese conceptualization of the state (Fox 2010, 7, 56; South 2008).

Local historiography by Rakhine Buddhists claims that Rakhine State is historically Buddhist. According to this narrative, Rohingya people are not native to the region — rather they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, who supposedly aim to Islamize Rakhine State and the whole of Myanmar (Fox 2017). This widespread fear in Burmese society is fueled by political activists organized in Buddhist nationalist organizations, such as the Association for the Protection of Race and Religion (MaBaTha), made up of monks, nuns, and lay people. It has historical roots, with the Bamar — as noted, the country's majority ethnic group — feeling doubly colonized (Taylor 2015): first, by the British and, second, by South Asians, as Burma was established as a province of India until 1937 leading to extensive South Asian immigration. As the use of social media spreads hate speech and nationalist narratives (ICG 2017), this rhetoric still in use today (Taylor 2015), influences citizenship narratives.

The question of identity is immensely complex. The political identity of today's Rohingya only developed recently, in the 1940s (Tonkin 2014; Leider 2013; Chan 2005). The 2012 conflict and the collective experience of increasing exclusion transformed the Rohingya identity. While Muslims in central Rakhine State inter alia referred to themselves as "Rakhine Muslims" (Fox interviews 2008–2020), they refer to themselves as "Rohingya" after experiencing violence and heavy segregation.

From a formal standpoint, in order to receive full citizenship, recognition as an ethnic group or proof that one's family lived in Burma prior to 1823 — that is, before the First Anglo-Burmese War — is required. Thus, Rohingya spokespersons try to

provide evidence that the Rohingya had already lived in Burma before that year. Thereby, the Rohingya rehearse the state's own logic and reproduce its truth regime (Cheesman 2017, 475). For the Buddhist Rakhine and Bamar, the claim that the Rohingya are an ethnic group in Myanmar with historical roots is not accepted, nor is the demand that the "Rohingya" be known under this name as a way to demand citizenship (Fox 2017).

The case of Rakhine State shows how collective negotiations of citizenship and belonging are often framed and dominated by narratives conceived and promoted by the central state. Local actors and communities are forced to engage with these narratives to be able to define their own identities — not always successfully. In other cases, local interpretations are used to push the state to reevaluate identities and narratives — as in the earlier-mentioned case of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War's remembrance. The shift in the state's handling of commemoration of this conflict was influenced by continued pressure from local veterans (Vincent 2022). The practices of remembrance upheld by local veterans and civilians mourning for family and community members who fell in this war stem from the local population's need for validation of their lived experiences — regardless of state aspirations to appease China.

In the 1990s, due to the normalization of relations with the latter, the Vietnamese government aimed to curtail commemoration of the 1979 War and downplay the role of China as aggressor. Both the Vietnamese and Chinese governments remained largely silent and kept commemoration of the event low-key so as to not endanger their newly established official relations (Nguyen 2017). In the current state version of the war, the Vietnamese government also omits connected events that might portray their country in a negative light: namely its treatment of ethnic Chinese and military failures (Yin and Path 2021, 25). Contrary to the usual patterns of state practice, which use military success in the past to legitimize current power, in the case of remembering the Sino-Vietnamese War the government takes current and future relations with China into consideration. It aims to balance economic interest, territorial sovereignty, and its role in the international arena here. The Vietnamese state wants to demonstrate both power and secure lasting peace by simultaneously highlighting the successful defense of its northern border — but without emphasizing China's role as aggressor.

However, in academia and Vietnamese society, memories of the conflict have survived (Yin and Path 2021, 13). Young academics and some high-ranking public and military figures have voiced concern about the lack of representation of the conflict in school textbooks and the silencing of the individual sacrifices made by civilians and soldiers alike. They argue that the availability of accurate information regarding the conflict is necessary to counter Chinese narratives, which portray Vietnam as the aggressor in the war. One example is the 2021 Chinese television drama *Ace Troops*, which led to outrage by Vietnamese netizens (Nghinh Xuan 2021) criticizing its recasting of local history. To counter the silencing of the war in

official textbooks, meanwhile, history teachers and professors have since turned to discussing it informally with their students outside of the classroom (Vincent 2022).

Non-state actors are, hence, increasingly taking commemoration of the war into their own hands (Grossheim 2021a). With heightened tensions in the South China Sea, civilians in Vietnam took to social media to criticize the government's perceived silence regarding the latest conflict with China (Nguyen 2017). Anniversaries are observed in cemeteries, where civilians and soldiers who died in the conflict are buried (Sullivan 2015). The intention behind these local memory practices is predominantly to recognize individual sacrifices and local losses of life independent of official state narratives. Thereby, veterans have successfully opened up new spaces of discussion and remembrance on the state level. In 2016, President Trương Tấn Sang visited sites of the conflict; Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính followed suit in 2022 (Vincent 2022).

Finally, citizenship narratives can also emerge in spaces completely detached from legalistic models and state territory, like in the case of the Vietnamese Catholic diaspora in Germany. The latter use symbols, narratives, and religious practices as framework for a Vietnamese community outside of the formally existing state structures — one transcending international borders. Activities organized by different actors within the community combine religious, cultural, and social interactions and forms of exchange. These activities include the Holy Mass as well as individual religious celebrations like weddings and funerals in the Vietnamese language, following native customs. Laity organizations, as noted, also host youth events and group meetings.

The most important of these activities is the annual gathering Đại Hội Công Giáo (Ninh 2021). For this, up to 6,000 Vietnamese meet over the long Pentecost weekend from Saturday until Monday in the city of Aschaffenburg, sleeping in hotels or at the venue itself (Ninh 2021). The event combines deeply religious celebrations, like the Pentecost Mass on Sunday and a procession on Monday morning, with social activities like meetings of laity groups, religious gatherings, and daily prayer circles. Beyond the religious dimension, the event thus creates a community space for communication and interaction, to share customs and traditions, to promote the Vietnamese language, and to maintain personal networks. Vietnamese food trucks sell traditional meals, with families and friends gathering together on Sunday for picnics on the school grounds. Vietnamese traders sell produce like herbs, rice, and vegetables, while Vietnamese women share homemade native specialties. The youth group TNCG organizes a cocktail bar for the younger generations and an evening event "Show Your Talent," with karaoke and dance performances in the Vietnamese language.

Some laity groups use the gathering for their political platform, often framed as anticommunist. Organizations sell religious, language, popular, and political books in Vietnamese. In 2009, they also organized an exhibition on boat people and their experience to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the arrival of the first group of

Vietnamese in West Germany. Activism also includes rallying support for political and religious prisoners in Vietnam, like the dissident priest Thadeus Nguyễn Văn Lý.

To summarize, in all three cases, global interests intermingle with local-community practices and national narratives, helping to create the landscape in which negotiations over citizenship at the national and subnational levels are embedded.

In Rakhine State, international media coverage was perceived by Buddhist groups as biased and international sanctions imposed on the Myanmar government actually increased public support for the military action in Rakhine state in August 2017 among certain segments of society. This has gradually changed as Myanmar collectively experiences the military's actions since the coup of 2021. In Vietnam, the local experience of war is embedded in geopolitics concerning Sino-Vietnamese relations. The continuous downplaying of China's role and of the scale of the conflict by the Vietnamese government demonstrates the highly sensitive nature of historiography in their country, where the state's legitimacy hinges on the public perception that the government is fulfilling its self-proclaimed role of protector of the national interest.

However, as seen in the case of the Vietnamese Catholic diaspora, the global dimension can dominate narratives too. Citizenship rooted in transnational practices and memories creates a global interface of interaction beyond the Vietnamese state, as characterized by the mobility of ideas, goods, and people. Due to their identity as overseas Vietnamese, a new localization of belonging rooted in transnational networks and local communities provides an alternative perspective on "being Vietnamese."

Citizenship on the periphery: Different forms of remoteness

The location at the periphery as spatial or socially constructed remoteness is a catalyst for conflicts over belonging and identity in all three of our presented case studies. Remote communities can be easily silenced and ignored. However, due to their unique circumstances on the periphery, they are also in the position to use their location to maintain alternative practices of remembrance and create localized communities of belonging. Because these communities are not isolated, they can engage with those state-sanctioned narratives and thus challenge official practices of remembrance.

Spatial remoteness defines Rakhine State as a border area, a historical space of mobility and exchange — one that leads to the contestation of its position within the State of Myanmar. Today, the past is still used to legitimize present narratives of belonging. However, local groups contest the formal interpretation of history by the state.

Contrary to the spatial periphery of Rakhine State, for the Vietnamese Catholic diaspora in Germany spaces of belonging are primarily temporal and social, as their

spatial counterpart no longer exists. This includes spaces helping uphold nostalgia for the past as well as the social networks and interfaces in which memories are embedded and shared. Being both Vietnamese but also not is the central experience of this periphery. This spatial and temporal marginalization of memories and belonging is thus a defining aspect of the community. Their geographical remoteness allows them to maintain and even celebrate a different perspective on Vietnamese history.

This finds its symbolic expression in the prominent placement of the RVN flag during the gathering in Aschaffenburg, including during Mass, creating a nostalgic link to a lost homeland. The use of the flag frames the event in terms of political orientation and loyalty. It gives voice to an older generation, one often still identifying with the RVN (Carruthers 2007) — leading to an underlying anticommunist narrative in the community's storytelling. At the same time, many diaspora members in Germany, including the Catholic communities, still have familial links to modern-day Vietnam, often travel to the country, send money and gifts, or invest in Vietnamese businesses, therewith softening the anticommunist narrative of the past (Lauser 2007).

The example of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War illustrates the paradoxical remoteness, in a figurative and a geographical sense, which emerges for social groups located in border areas: being both important for national security and at the same time removed from the political center. As local memories are instrumentalized by the state, local actors lose the prerogative of interpreting and representing their own history. They are moved to a symbolic periphery, where their voices become silenced. The attempt to isolate the event and those involved in it by excluding it from official historiography has opened up space for local actors to share their version of events through informal personal networks and in ways that do not directly challenge the state. So while the 1979 War is geographically and temporally remote, local actors have been able to influence official narratives and public perceptions of China and the Vietnamese government beyond the northern border area. Symbolically remote spaces can thus offer opportunities to push back against state narratives, precisely because their inhabitants are often overlooked.

Meanwhile, ethnic minorities residing in the border region between Vietnam and China have different perspectives on national politics and local geography. While the fighting occurred in territory inhabited largely by different such groups, they are not part of the official narrative regarding the conflict. One main reason for this is the erstwhile insurgencies by different ethnic groups and a history of support for them by China or France in their respective struggles against the Vietnamese. Their perspective on citizenship is connected to their own ethnic affiliation, with a shared language, culture, and history. To them, the mountainous regions of northern Vietnam and southern China do not constitute a border but a region of connectivity and mobility.

However, remoteness also emerges as a social alienation experienced in everyday life. This is most obvious in the case of Rakhine State, where questions of belonging are intertwined with practices of violence, discrimination, and centralized power. An event that Buddhists and Muslims alike recall as a collective memory or trauma is the 1942 communal riots in Arakan Province (today Rakhine State) (Leider 2020). As Leider states: "[T]he 1942 atrocities in Arakan may be considered as an example of the academic marginalization of the borderlands of Bengal/East Pakistan/Bangladesh and Arakan/Rakhine State in modern times" (2018, 194).

Similar to those in Rakhine State, social alienation for the Vietnamese diaspora is rooted in feelings of loss concerning personal connections, language, and possessions — which can be viewed as a loss of both past and future. This sentiment leads to alienation, as intensified by intergenerational conflicts within the diaspora. To address this, many older Vietnamese maintain close networks in Germany, therewith creating a distinct community of belonging that is not rooted in the real State of Vietnam.

Practices of remembrance: Narratives and storytelling on the periphery

Memories play an important role in the construction of landscapes of belonging in all of our three case studies, where local actors reproduce diverse narratives and practices of remembrance in their quest for belonging.

In the case of Rakhine State, Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya engage in storytelling practices to claim citizenship and negotiate questions of identity and belonging. The remembrance of conflicts is not only of concern for state-led endeavors here but also for social groups. Rakhine Buddhist and Muslim political parties use concepts such as "indigeneity" (Ardeth Maung Thawnghmung 2016) or the idea of a "fearsome Other" (Schissler et al. 2017) for practices of othering: namely to claim citizenship, discredit other narratives, and justify discrimination (Schissler et al. 2017).

Being less antagonistic, veterans of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War as well as the Vietnamese Catholic diaspora in Germany respectively commemorate their individual sacrifices and shared struggles to create communities of memories. Victims of the 1979 War are predominantly remembered on the individual-family level. Practices of remembrance focus on the individual sacrifices of civilians and soldiers for the protection of national sovereignty. By keeping the memory of family members alive and sharing individual experiences of the conflict, veterans have been able to preserve information and share it with the local community and interested visitors. These practices reproduce individual and collective memories via storytelling.

Furthermore, as commemoration takes place at physical conflict sites, that storytelling is embedded in the material, mountainous landscape of Vietnam's northern border region. These sites are intertwined with the lived memories of those

who either fought in the conflict, were civilian victims, or lost a relative. The material landscape at hand underlines the difficult conditions faced in the fight against the People's Liberation Army (PLA) for the Vietnamese soldiers — and thus their sacrifice.

Narratives of individual sacrifice and national sovereignty thus dominate local and national storytelling vis-à-vis the war in Vietnam and China alike. This finds its expression in the different names used in each language: in Chinese, the war is framed in terms of "self-defense" while in Vietnamese "Chinese expansionism" is referenced. [8] Consequently the Vietnamese government emphasizes the acts of individual veterans, reinforcing the official narrative of the party-state's key role in ensuring national protection. These frames of reference cement the border region being central to national sovereignty and security, and are aimed at creating a sense of belonging to a greater Vietnamese nation for locals. Commemoration of the event by veterans expresses similar sentiments of sacrifice and endurance. Thus, they criticize the lack of state recognition in comparison with the Second Indochina War and its hero worship (Tai 2001), which not only affects individuals' sense of belonging and pride but also the funding for cemetery maintenance or the search for remains.

This same need for validation of one's experiences and memories exists also among the diaspora community. This leads to a longing for reconciliation and a feeling of nostalgia for their homeland in the shape of stories, songs, and food — as experienced in Germany through get-togethers and accessed through media. This longing extends to the material space that still exists within the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, yet it is one becoming increasingly alien to them. Thus, the individual space, at home in Germany, needs to conserve and validate these memories via photos, religious symbols, and decorations referencing the lost home. As practices of belonging in the diaspora are increasingly less spatially fixed, an imagined Vietnamese community emerges.

Symbolic storytelling as a link between past and present, Vietnam and Germany, is hence important in the Vietnamese Catholic community. This can be seen in the prominence of Our Lady of Lavang, with its symbolism and meaning for Vietnamese Catholicism in both Germany and Vietnam. Thus in Aschaffenburg, a statue of Our Lady of Lavang, with its blue scarf, is displayed during all Masses and creates a direct connection between the Catholic communities in the two countries (Ninh 2021). Transferring localized traditions from Vietnam to Germany and maintaining them as a central anchor point provides a means of identification for the Vietnamese

8 In Chinese, the war is called *Zhōng-Yuè biānjìng zìwèi huánjí zuòzhàn* 边 卫还击 战 ("Self-defense battle on the China-Vietnam border"). This portrays the event as self-defense and a counterattack against Vietnamese aggression, locating the conflict vaguely at "the China-Vietnam border" rather than on Vietnamese territory. In Vietnamese, the war is known as *Cuộc chiến chống bè lũ bành trướng phương bắ* ("The war against the invaders of the north"), referencing the popular Party narrative of Chinese expansionism.

community distinct from European Catholics. This link to Vietnamese tradition is also seen in the wearing of áo dài, the traditional Vietnamese costume, by those active during Mass. Beyond the religious narrative, the Aschaffenburg gathering thereby helps maintain links to Vietnamese customs, language, and food. It strengthens personal networks in the diaspora community, nurtures a sense of belonging, and upholds the idea of an alternative Vietnamese space for those no longer part of the state-sanctioned one in Vietnam.

Discussion

Transforming the citizenship discourse?

References to the Rohingya situation and expressions of solidarity recently increased on social media and during public demonstrations following the 2021 coup. On August 25, 2021, marking the fourth anniversary of hostilities and the expulsion of Muslims from Rakhine State, a social media campaign titled "We Apologize" was launched. The English title of the campaign suggests it was geared toward an international audience, calling into question the underlying intentions of the campaign and its potential for the emergence of new cross-group solidarity. In the face of dissenting voices and countermovements, it is difficult to discern how far-reaching and resounding these declarations of solidarity are.

The National Unity Government (NUG), an executive body formed after the 2021 coup to oppose the military, announced its intention to replace the 1982 Citizenship Law in seeking to end discrimination against the Rohingya. Again, the question remains of whether this is just a campaign statement to ensure the international community's support or whether genuine long-term reform is envisaged (Frontier Myanmar 2021). The public use of the name "Rohingya" is a novelty. The ousted government, led by the National League for Democracy (NLD), had previously issued the directive to speak of the "Muslims living in Rakhine." While declarations of intention by the NUG provide a starting point, attitudes and beliefs regarding belonging, identity, and religion that have grown and thrived for decades will not change overnight.

In Myanmar, as questions on future citizenship emerge in a country beset by civil war, the discourse is still framed by a legalistic perspective that offers little space for negotiation and reinforces marginalization. In the wake of the 2021 coup, and with the whole country now facing an uncertain future, addressing issues of citizenship seems utopian at present.

Reaffirming the state, or reemerging spaces of memories?

In contrast, the Vietnamese state seems willing to renegotiate practices of remembrance regarding the 1979 War. While memories of war crimes committed by Chinese soldiers and the execution of members of ethnic minorities believed to have

aided the PLA are left out of official narratives, the Vietnamese state is increasingly recognizing the individual sacrifices made (Vincent 2022). New interpretations of the conflict in Chinese media have created awareness of the event and a desire within Vietnamese society to reclaim it.

The Vietnamese state is softening its approach to the local memorialization of certain events as a response to pressure from local communities. The example of memory practices concerning the 1979 War shows that the state can change its position depending on geopolitical needs. It tends to instrumentalize local memories and history, which carries the risk of alienating them from the local context and destroying local communities of belonging. Pressure to conform with state narratives, particularly vis-à-vis a moralistic perspective on citizenship, also alienates local memories of more controversial historical landscapes, creating a sense of loss for those who have lost family members, friends and their home. In the case of the 1979 War, however, continued activism from veterans and civilians has influenced state practices. Since 2019, the Vietnamese government has increasingly allowed and even supported commemoration of the conflict on the local level, while acting more cautiously on the national one. Local practices of remembrance — operating inside the national framework, and referencing state narratives of heroism, sacrifice, and protection — are, therefore, an example of the role of memories in citizenship negotiations in Vietnam.

Maintaining alternative forms of belonging, or shifting citizenship?

With regard to the diaspora communities, the Vietnamese state takes an ambivalent position (Carruthers 2007). Due to the need for remittances, investments, and financial flows from diaspora Vietnamese, the Vietnamese state tries to balance the suppression of dissidents with an open door for those returning by creating a sense of nationalistic connectedness with its diaspora communities. Vietnam's visa policy makes it easier for former citizens and their families to return for extended periods of time (Lauser 2007), with adoptees and the exiled now coming back to look for lost family members or to reconnect with their personal history. At the same time, a younger generation of diaspora Vietnamese are starting to lose interest in the country as they become fully assimilated into their new ones and no longer identify with the old fault lines. They thus no longer participate in the creation of an alternative citizenship on the periphery.

Conclusion

Based on our three cases, citizenship emerges on a continuum of belonging and contention. As pointed out in the beginning, citizenship as a framework has four dimensions to it: rights claiming; duties toward a community; belonging; and, social practices. In our context, the framework to which we attach citizenship in the West — primarily the nation-state — can evidently be contested.

First, citizenship is negotiated at different levels from the local to the transnational, where it is not always guaranteed by the state and not always requested by all communities either. Second, negotiations of citizenship all use practices of remembrance, memories, and the landscapes of historical experience and interpretation to maintain or create community cohesion. Third, citizenship is the struggle for emancipation: to claim rights (over one's past, present, and future) and fulfill duties toward the community of which one feels a part. Thus, quests for citizenship are rooted in the aspiration to belonging and in seeking validation of both individual and collective experiences.

Consequently, formal state recognition of citizenship can be a starting point to realize these aspirations but is no guarantee of access to the community of belonging. Furthermore, formal citizenship might seem unnecessary where the community of belonging in question is not congruent with an existing state structure. Overall, with an increasing authoritarian turn in the Southeast Asia region, we propose "citizenship" as a conceptual framework to move beyond the dichotomy of "democracy" and "authoritarianism," enabling a nuanced look at everyday practices of belonging. With a younger generation growing up with social media, the roles of history and memories remain contentious.

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Research note

Authoritarian Developmentalism in Contemporary Sri Lanka

Sören Köpke

Abstract
After the end of the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983–2009), the victorious Government of Sri Lanka was confronted with the need to "win the peace" and re-build the nation in both material and ideological terms. The rule of Mahinda Rajapaksa (president 2006–2015), an example of authoritarian populism in power, was characterized by an infrastructure construction frenzy and the attempt to establish national unity on the terms of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. The post-war period also saw the emergence of new tensions, namely the conflict between Sinhalese Buddhist militants and the Muslim minority, as well as the precarious human rights situation in the formerly secessionist north. Discontent with Mahinda Rajapaksa's increasingly authoritarian rule and the unsolved problems of the civil war legacy brought his rival Maithripala Sirisena into power in 2015. Sirisena's attempts to rule on a platform of liberal, more inclusive "good governance" *(yahapalana)* failed due to power struggles within his alliance and a lack of coherent policymaking. The 2019 Easter Bombings by domestic Jihadist terrorists marked the beginning of a new phase of securization and militarization. With the victory of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the 2019 presidential election and the subsequent instatement of Mahinda Rajapaksa as prime minister, a process of authoritarian consolidation was initiated. The Covid-19 pandemic opened a window of opportunity to reconfirm the leading role of the security forces in handling domestic crises. Yet the country's ongoing financial and economic crisis, aggravated by debt and the slump in global tourism connected to Covid-19, question the prospect of stability. The social and ethnopolitical contradictions in Sri Lankan society are not addressed by the current authoritarian policies. Therefore, these contradictions are prone to further undermining the long-term consolidation of governance institutions, national identity, and non-sectarian civil society.

Keywords: Authoritarianism; Sri Lanka; ethnopolitics; Sinhalese nationalism; post-conflict development

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Introduction

The Sri Lankan polity has been oscillating between more authoritarian and more democratic phases for decades. Sri Lanka's political system is late colonial in origin and therefore sometimes described as modelled after the Westminster system. However, the character of the country as a parliamentary democracy was altered with the introduction of the executive presidency in 1977, creating a hybrid or semi-presidential system. Sri Lankan politics are characterized by a number of cross-cutting and recurring cleavages: Between federalism and unitary state (Uyangoda 2013a), between (neo)liberal and socialist/interventionist economic policies (Goonewardena 2020; Bastian 2010), between pluralism and dominant-party model, between rule of law and militarization/securization (Jayasuriya 2012). These cleavages or tensions run across the ethnopolitical divisions which have garnered more attention from scholars (e.g. Kapferer 2001; Rösel 1997).

Sri Lankan leaders from S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike to J.R. Jayawardene to the Rajapaksas (Mahinda and Gotabaya) have time and again made use of majoritarian ethnopolitical sentiments to gather (electoral) support for their rule. In the nexus of ethnopolitics and the contested functioning of the nation's democratic system, questions of social and economic development have remained unresolved. Despite decisively development-oriented policies, Sri Lankan political leaders have often failed to make good on their promises to improve the wellbeing of the country's population. This contribution aims to investigate how nationalism, development and authoritarian tendencies relate to each other in Sri Lanka. It focuses on the post-conflict period from 2009 up to the 2020–2021 response to the Covid-19 pandemic, covering the presidencies of Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005–2015), Maithripala Sirisena (2015–2019) and Gotabaya Rajapaksa (since 2019). It asserts that the development the country experienced after the end of the civil war (1983–2009) was essentially a program of (sometimes less, often more) authoritarian nation-building and that this program can now be evaluated as highly problematic, given its economic, social, environmental and security implications.

Authoritarian populism, nationalism, and development

In Sri Lanka, ethnonationalist ideology, authoritarian populism, and developmentalist policies are closely interlinked. Sri Lankan politics are dominated by the hegemonic nationalism (Rampton 2011) of the Sinhala Buddhist majority, which functions as the foundational ideology for the major Sinhalese parties. These are the liberal-conservative United National Party (UNP), the welfare-statist Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP), but also the radical left-wing, formerly insurrectionary Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front, JVP), and the nationalist Jathika Hela Urumaya (National Heritage Party, JHU). The newcomer among the Sinhalese political organizations, the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), is merely a front for the Rajapaksa camp, which had previously belonged to the SLFP.

Sinhala Buddhist nationalism relies on the imagery of an ancient, continuous Sinhalese civilization as described in the *Mahavamsa*, its core text, and is based on Buddhist values and their manifestation in Sri Lankan society (Rösel 1996; DeVotta 2007). What's more, this nationalism defines Buddhism, the Sinhalese language and its history as central to the Sri Lankan state. It therefore deemphasizes other important strands of Sri Lankan national heritage, such as those of the Muslim, Tamil Hindu, and Christian communities, the colonial legacy and the close connection to the Indian subcontinent, as well as the country's long history as a maritime trade hub. In other words, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism tends to be an exclusionary ethnonationalism. It should be mentioned that the same held true for the Tamil nationalism of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Tamil Homeland ("Tamil Eelam") they aspired to. Ultimately, the spatial politics of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism (a unitary island polity) and militant Tamil nationalism (a separatist state in the Tamil-majority regions, Northern and Eastern Province) were mutually exclusive (Parasram 2012).

Both Rajapaksa presidents, although not in equal ways, combined older ethnonationalist ideology with a form of populism which can be categorized as cultural populism (Kyle & Meyer 2020), directed at the Sinhalese constituency. In addition, they relied on forms of rule that can be called authoritarian, aimed at broadening the space for authoritarianism within the framework of Sri Lanka's liberal democracy. The Rajapaksas have again and again displayed disregard for checks and balances in the political system, but in this, they are no different than some of their successors, prominently Chandrika Kumaratunga (SLFP, president 1994–2005) and J.R. Jayewardene (UNP, president 1977–1989). Among the authoritarian strategies employed were the silencing of journalists and political opponents, suppression of civil society, the excessive use of executive privileges, impunity for human rights violations by security forces, and covert promotion of hate groups (Edirisuriya 2017; HRW 2022). Yet the defining feature of Rajapaksa politics is not merely authoritarianism, but populism.

Populism has come to be defined as an approach to politics based on a thin-centered ideology (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 5). Its main feature is the positioning of a "true," "pure" or "good people" against an evil or corrupt elite. Usually rallied around a charismatic populist leader, populist movements are focused on a confrontational and antagonistic assault on (actual or imagined) powerful groups. Recourse to other political ideologies is a consistent feature of populism, so the merger of populist and ethnonationalist elements in the Rajapaksa political project is not unusual.

Mahinda Rajapaksa, following his successful campaign for the presidency in 2005, presented a public image as an agrarian, as a staunch supporter of the Sinhalese rural population, and as a pious Buddhist (Wickramsinghe 2009, 1050–52). In this way, his symbols and appearances spoke to majoritarian sentiment in the Sinhalese Buddhist population.

Stuart Hall (2018) has coined the term "authoritarian populism," by which he meant nationalist and jingoistic politics within the framework of neoliberal economics. It could be said that Mahinda Rajapaksa embodied a Sri Lankan variety of authoritarian populism comparable with Modi's Hindu-nationalist project in India (Chacko & Jayasurika 2017). I would like to explain how this authoritarian populist nationalism is also founded on a certain developmentalist political economy.

Development is a contested and highly politically charged concept, which has undergone transformation over the decades since 1949, when it was first used by Truman to delineate a post-war order (Ziai 2016). Developmentalism historically describes a set of policies and ideological commitments that imply strong involvement of the state in economic matters, especially in so-called developing countries (Wallerstein 2005), with the goal of increasing public welfare, combatting hunger, poverty and upscaling education: all with the goal of reaching a higher stage of development. Developmentalism has a strong tradition in Sri Lanka since independence; in its first "socialist" phase, it was associated with classic, state-led economic development. From the late 1970s, under J.R. Jayewardene's opening policy, the state lifted some restrictions and encouraged foreign investment in some sectors of industry, most remarkably textile manufacturing. Yet the state still upheld a leading role in the national economy, e.g. through its involvement in large infrastructure construction projects such as the accelerated Mahaweli Development Program (MDP) (Withanachchi et al. 2014). Of particular interest to this contribution is the developmentalist character of nation-building in the post-war period since 2009. It has to be acknowledged that the newer phase of developmentalist activities, since Jayewardene, has remained neoliberal and assigned importance to the private sector, despite Rajapaksa's often social-democratic rhetoric (Jayasuriya 2012). In a number of cases, the developmentalist program included the appropriation of national assets by representatives of the regime, its leadership clientele, and political allies.

War's end

In order to understand the authoritarian-developmentalist moment of post-war Sri Lanka, one has to look at the way the conflict came to an end. From 1983 to 2009, the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) waged a war against the separatist Tamil nationalist guerrilla, the LTTE—a bloody civil war that at times seemed to be unwinnable for either side. The SLA as the army of the national government could make use of significant portions of the national resources and was backed by the Sinhalese majority. In comparison, the LTTE was supported by a global Tamil diaspora, parts of the Sri Lankan Tamil ethnicity at home, and financed by a network of illicit activities. The insurgents temporarily controlled the country's Northern and Eastern provinces, employed their own navy and air force, and thus managed to hold the government in check for more than two decades (Rösel 1997; Winslow & Woost 2004). What is more, LTTE militancy was characterized by its equally brutal and

innovative strategies—most notably frequent suicide bombings. The last phase of the civil war (2006—2009) was called Eelam War IV and emerged after several failed attempts to broker a peaceful solution, and a ceasefire agreement undermined by both sides (Sørbø et al. 2012; Weiss 2012).

The civil war's final phase was linked to the manifestation of a revitalized form of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism within Sri Lanka's public debate from the 1980s, a political ideology known as *Jathika Chinthanaya* (National Thought or National Consciousness) and associated with Sinhalese intellectuals such as Nalin da Silva and Gunadasa Amarasekera (Dewasiri 2018). It superseded older, left-leaning forms of ethnonationalism embodied by the JVP (Goonewardena 2020). Jathika Chinthanaya had emerged from Marxist-dominated debates in the universities of the Sri Lankan South, but shed the neo-Marxist, revolutionary theory while retaining a criticism of Western imperialism and cultural neo-colonialism. Proponents of Jathika Chinthanaya also shared with the JVP a staunch rejection of a negotiated peace with the LTTE, which would have resulted in forms of autonomy or federated state (Uyangoda 2013b).

Jathika Chinthanaya's ideology united hardline bellicists in fora like the National Movement Against Terrorism (NMAT). They managed to change the framing of the Sri Lankan Civil War from the previous paradigm of ethnocultural conflict: they emulated Bush's "War on Terror" in their own country, following a trend seen in other national conflicts of the time (Dodds 2021, xi). Hence the LTTE, a militant nationalist-separatist organization, was framed in a wider context that positioned national security against terrorism. Similar to the fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Naxalites in Central India, the war with the LTTE was narrated as a South Asian counterinsurgency against a terrorist enemy. This communicative strategy, when taken up by the Sri Lankan government under Rajapaksa, left no room for a negotiated peace. Indeed, the Norway-led peacebuilding efforts, which would have given Tamil nationalists a relatively large degree of autonomy, was poised to fail, as a Norwegian study details (Sørbø et al. 2011). The Sri Lankan civil war came to an end with what has been described as an "illiberal peace" (Piccolino 2015)—not a negotiated peace, but the complete military annihilation of one conflict party, the insurgent side.

Under Mahinda Rajapaksa, from 2006 Sri Lanka's government worked towards a military victory against the LTTE. In the final episode of the war, LTTE cadres, alongside tens of thousands of Tamil civilians they used as "human shields," were encircled in a small area in the northeast, in Mullaitivu district, and overcome by the SLA in April and May 2009 (Weiss, 2012). According to observers, Chinese weaponry was crucial to the SLA's military success (Popham 2010).

As reported by the UN (2011), up to 40,000 civilians lost their lives during the last two months of the conflict. The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka states that 22,247 LTTE cadres were killed in the last phase of the civil war, and 5,556 among the SLA (2011, 37);

the commission refrains from giving an estimate of civilian casualties. The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, insisted that the armed forces had taken every possible step to ensure that harm to civilians was avoided, and that any "collateral damage" among the Tamil population was to be blamed on the LTTE (LLRC, 115–136).

Post-conflict rebuilding

The immediate post-war phase allowed Mahinda Rajapaksa to further consolidate his authoritarian power. Internally, he relied on a network of clientelism and employed nepotist practices, with close family members taking important offices in the government. His position within the SLFP appeared to be unquestioned. Outside the corridors of power, Mahinda rode on a wave of support due to the victory in the civil war. However, his intention to proclaim an inclusive "new patriotism" (Wickremasinghe 2009) on the terms of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority could be seen as rather half-hearted; the needs and rights of minorities, most prominently Tamil IDPs, were continuously violated by security forces (UN 2011).

The modernization/development drive appeared to aim at producing legitimacy and glorifying the leader's person. Despite different ideological outlooks, Rajapaksa's policies mirrored the program brought forth by his UNP predecessor J.R. Jayewardene in several ways. Among these were the fostering of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, the tendency to implement magnificent infrastructure projects, and the sidelining of the opposition within the boundaries of the constitutional framework. Jayewardene's key ambition in infrastructure renewal was to establish a new capital at Kotte. In a similar vein, Rajapaksa left his mark on the country's built environment. Examples can be found in the Hambantota Port project; Colombo Port city; the new airport in Mattala (Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport), built in defiance of environmental regulations; and in the new roads constructed during his presidency. It is notable that many of these projects were established in the rural south, a core constituency and of the place from which the president's family originated. Also, these development projects were largely financed through Chinese debt (Wignaraja et al. 2020), creating what would later be described as a debt trap (Behuria 2018).

In combination with consolidating his personal, charismatic power and embedding his family members and political allies in government (Edirisuriya 2017), Mahinda Rajapaksa embarked on a large-scale project of national renewal which was called "Mahinda Chintanaya," or "Vision of Mahinda." The program states (Rajapaksa 2010, 8):

> The people of our country are now awaiting the victory in the "economic war," in a manner similar to our victory in the war against terrorism. I am well prepared and ready to face this challenge. I also truly believe that our economy should be independent, resilient and disciplined, with a strong growth focus, operating as per international standards, whilst maintaining our local identity. [1] SEP

The 2010 version of the program, designed as the manifesto for Rajapaksa's re-election on a developmentalist-populist platform, contains a vast number of promises. Sri Lanka was to be developed as a "maritime, aviation, energy, commerce and knowledge hub" in a five-fold strategy (FT 2013).

Victory in the civil war provided the armed forces with an eminent position in society. The social weight of the Sri Lankan Army, a bastion of Sinhalese Buddhist people from the mid-1960s onwards, had increased steadily since the beginning of the civil war. From a moderate strength of 21,600 men under arms in 1985, armed forces personnel numbers first rose past 200,000 in 1995. By the end of the conflict, there were 223,000 members, a number that has not decreased in peacetime (World Bank, 2018). Especially in rural areas in the Northern and Eastern provinces, the security forces showed a marked presence, officially to be vigilant against possible terrorist attacks. The massive deployment of armed forces in former LTTE-controlled regions temporarily created a military to civilian ratio estimated at roughly one soldier to five civilians (EPW 2012).

There is evidence that the Sri Lankan Army was increasingly using its political leverage to expand its economic power. This can be seen as an instance of the phenomenon that Chambers and Waitookiat (2017, 7), in the context of Southeast Asia, conceptualized as "khaki capital," defining it as

> a form of income generation whereby the military, as the state-legitimized and dominant custodian-of-violence, establishes a mode of production that enables it (a) to influence state budgets to extract open or covert financial allocations, (b) to extract, transfer and distribute financial resources; and (c) to create financial or career opportunities that allow for the direct or indirect enhancement of its dividends at both the institutional and the individual level.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the president's brother, oversaw the military as Secretary of the Ministry of Defence. A major indicator of khaki capital development was the involvement of the armed forces in economic activities in the Northern and Eastern provinces in the scope of the operations *Uthuru Wasanthaya* (Northern Spring) and *Nagenahira Udanaya* (Awakening East). Officially labelled Civilian-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), these infrastructure developments consisted of holiday resorts and agribusiness projects, so-called "government farms." For example, the SLA was engaged in building a tourist resort at Lagoon's Edge in Mullaitivu, at the very site where the final battles of the civil war took place and many lost their lives (Doyle 2013).

Reconstruction, as Bart Klem (2014) notes for Trincomalee in the Eastern Province, is a form of territorialization, of imposing a spatial order and regulating everyday lives through spatial politics. This territorialization of the Tamil-majority provinces was entwined with Rajapaksa's vision of national modernization, a process to strengthen the hegemony of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism and to underline the character of Sri Lanka as a unitary state.

This project of renewal could have been read as a deletion of the suffering of the other side. When the UN report accused the Sri Lankan government of "triumphalism" (UN 2011, 111), it hinted at this refusal to acknowledge the war crimes perpetrated.

Another example is found in Silawaputharei, Mannar District, Northern Province, where the Civil Defence Force (CDF) acquired around 2,400 hectares of land to establish a cashew plantation.

The International Crisis Group (ICG, 2012, 23) conducted research on military-led farms in Northern Province, stating: "Most of the army's agricultural activities seem to be organised at the camp commander level; while heavily subsidised by the central government, it is unclear who ultimately receives the revenues." It could be that these activities constitute a form of patrimonialism, where high-ranking army officers directly profit from economic activities; in any case, army-led developments strengthen the role of the armed forces within Sri Lankan society.

Rajapaksa's electoral program for 2010 was outspoken about the plan to redistribute agricultural land to veterans (Rajapaksa 2010, 29). What seemed to have happened was that a window of opportunity opened immediately after the civil war as there was a frontier situation in the northeast. Interested actors, mostly connected to the military and political elites, rushed in to take advantage of the situation. This spurred clientelist networks between the Rajapaksa family and the beneficiaries of military-led development.

From Mahinda Chintanaya to *Yahapalana*

In the 2010 presidential election, the joint opposition gathered behind the former army chief Sarath Fonseka, who had a large role in the SLA's victory over the LTTE and hoped to use his "war hero image" running against Mahinda Rajapaksa. After losing the election by a 17% margin to the incumbent, Fonseka was arrested and charged with military offences that critics of the government saw as fabricated. He remained in prison for a two-year period.

Mahinda Rajapaksa's second term, from 2010, saw a further deterioration of Sri Lankan democracy towards authoritarianism. The president's followers managed to push through the 18th amendment to the constitution in September 2010, which dropped the term limit, allowing Mahinda to run for re-election, and brought about even more privileges for the executive presidency (Parliament of Sri Lanka 2010).

Another sign of the authoritarian turn the country had taken was the murder of the journalist Lasantha Wickramatunga, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *The Sunday Leader*. Wickramatunga, a former ally of Rajapaksa turned critic of the government, was shot dead by armed men on motorbikes on January 8, 2009. Gotabaya Rajapaksa was later—after the case was opened again—implicated in the murder. The assassination was allegedly carried out by personnel from the military

secret service, or more specifically of a branch that was directly controlled by Gotabaya Rajapaksa (Kannangara 2017).

Ethnonationalist tensions also re-emerged as the Muslim minority was targeted by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist militants. In 2012, members of the Buddhist clergy formed a new political organization called *Bodu Bala Sena* (BBS, "Buddhist Power Force"). The declared aim of this group was to halt what they saw as a growing "Islamization" of Sri Lanka by Muslim citizens. For example, activism was directed against the *halal* label, designating food that pious Muslims are allowed to eat (Steward 2014). BBS had a large role in the outbreak of violent anti-Muslim riots in Aluthgama and a few other towns in June 2014; houses and shops belonging to Sri Lankan Muslims were set alight and four people were killed by rioters (Hannifa 2014). Gotabaya Rajapaksa allegedly gave a speech at a BBS convention, establishing a connection to the nationalist militants.

Mahinda Rajapaksa called an early election for the presidency in January 2015, yet it appeared that his appeal had dwindled. His coalition of supporters began to come undone when prominent Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists such as Athuraliye Rathana Thero switched allegiance. The opposition surprisingly chose Maithripala Sirisena, a former minister and secretary general of the ruling SLFP, as a common candidate against Rajapaksa. The national minorities, parts of the educated Sinhalese middle class, and other constituencies Rajapaksa had alienated united behind the opposition candidate. Sirisena won the 2015 election with 51.28% of the vote and Rajapaksa, closely following with 47.58%, had to concede. The newly elected president, allied with the UNP and parts of the SLFP in a "unity government," promised more accountability, combatting corruption, and a liberal opening towards the West. UNP leader Ranil Wickremasighe was appointed prime minister of what was called the "*yahapalana*," the "good governance" government.

Resurgence of the Rajapaksa camp

The heyday of the new coalition was short-lived as the government faced a number of challenges it was unable or unwilling to manage. Among these challenges were the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and human rights violations in the last years of the civil war; the re-ordering of the national treasury; foreign debt; and national reconciliation between the ethnic groups (Goodhand & Walton 2017). A series of smaller and larger societal conflicts kept the government occupied. For instance, a political conflict over the resettlement of Muslim IDPs in a region bordering Wilpattu National Park stirred public opinion and became entangled in ethnopolitics, not least through the involvement of the BBS. Sirisena found a solution which accommodated some of the demands of environmentalist NGOs, but irritated parts of the Muslim constituency (Köpke 2021).

At first, it looked as if the turn towards authoritarianism had been averted. The executive presidency was limited in its power when the 18th amendment was revoked

through the 19th amendment in 2015. Sirisena (2018) made a statement before the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018:

> When I was elected by the people of Sri Lanka as Head of State in January 2015, the Executive Office that I hold today, had excessive powers, which were comparable to those of a king, or even an emperor. I am pleased to state that I was able to relinquish these emperor-like excessive powers and transfer them to the Parliament of Sri Lanka, fulfilling the utmost duty of an elected leader.

However, Mahinda Rajapaksa remained a player to reckon with in Sri Lankan politics. He was elected as an MP in the 2015 general election and quickly became leader of the joint opposition, which included parts of the SLFP (leading to a curious situation where one party was simultaneously in power and in opposition). When Rajapaksa's camp initiated the SLPP as a new platform for their political activities, it was clear that a reconfiguration of the Sinhalese majoritarian political landscape was underway (Köpke 2018). The SLPP's sweeping victory in the 2018 local elections emphasized Mahinda Rajapaksa's ongoing popularity among voters.

Under the pressure of these political developments, relations between the incumbent president and prime minister were increasingly marred by rivalry. This rivalry escalated when in October 2018, Sirisena attempted to liberate himself from his dependence on Wickremasinghe and appointed Mahinda Rajapaksa the new prime minister, while dismissing the former from office. The subsequent constitutional crisis raised questions over the constitutional roles of president and parliament, and ended with the reinstatement of Wickremasinghe as prime minister by decree of the Supreme Court after seven weeks. The episode highlighted the inefficiency and divisions in the so-called *yahapalana* government.

On April 21, 2019, domestic jihadi groups loosely connected to the so-called Islamic State perpetrated terror attacks on three churches and three luxury hotels in Colombo, Negombo and in Batticaloa, killing more than 250 people (Bastian et al. 2019). The fact that the terrorists and their supporters were Sri Lankan Muslims, and that they targeted the small Christian minority in Sri Lanka, weighed heavily on already fragile interethnic relations. What is more, security forces had been warned of the strikes by a foreign intelligence service, but had failed to act pre-emptively on this intelligence (Constable & Perera 2019). The large-scale and coordinated attack appeared to illustrate the government's neglect of security concerns and angered many citizens. It marked the beginning of a new phase of securization and militarization, as it paved the way to the election of Mahinda's brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President of Sri Lanka in November 2019. He was mainly elected for his credentials as a strongman in the face of renewed national security challenges. He also profited from evident power struggles in the UNP, namely between Ranil Wickremasinghe and Sajith Premadasa. The latter, son of the former president Ranasinghe Premadasa (in office 1989–1993) ended up running against, and losing to, Gotabaya, who received 52.25% of the vote. Three days after his inauguration, Gotabaya appointed his brother Mahinda as prime minister of the country. In the

2020 parliamentary election, held during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Rajapaksa-affiliated Sri Lankan People's Freedom Alliance (SLPFA) ran as a political front comprised of SLPP, SLFP and several other left-leaning/nationalist parties. It won 145 out of 225 seats, securing a clear parliamentary majority.

The authoritarian character of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's politics further came to light in the context of the One Country One Law Taskforce, an advisory committee for legal reform, led by the Venerable Gnanasara Thero, a founding figure of the BBS. With this highly controversial figure as advisor, the strategy of ethnonationalist securization pursued by the Rajapaksa regime could hardly be denied anymore. The appointment especially posed a threat to Muslim constituencies (Jeyaraj 2021; FT 2021; Usuf 2022).

Multiple crises

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic saw a moment in Sri Lanka when, much like in other Asian countries, the executive found it necessary to instate numerous emergency health measures. Sri Lanka was closed to foreigners from a number of European countries in March 2020. At first, army-led efforts to handle the pandemic appeared to be very successful, but a strong wave of infections hit the country in April to October 2021, leading to numerous Covid-related deaths.

Uvin Dissanayake (2020) alleges that Gotabaya Rajapaksa's style of government diverged from his brother's; most importantly, it relied on a technocratic privileging of competence, efficiency and expert rule, creating what Dissanayake describes as "technocratic populism." This serves to both delegitimize democratic procedures and depoliticize government decisions by portraying them as inevitable. Technocratic managerialism is particularly powerful in the face of societal crises, such as that posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which invite the implementation of essentially authoritarian measures such as curfews, enforced quarantines, travel restrictions, etc.

The Covid-19 pandemic opened a window of opportunity to reconfirm the leading role of the security forces in handling domestic crises. Yet the country's ongoing financial and economic crisis, aggravated by debt, currency devaluation and economic recession, questioned the prospect of stability (de Soysa and Ellis-Petersen 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic further damaged the tourism sector, one of the most prosperous growth industries in the country up to the Easter Bombings. In 2021, the foreign exchange crisis went from bad to worse, as the Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR) further devalued against the dollar. Gotabaya Rajapaksa was forced to ask China, Sri Lanka's fourth largest lender, to restructure Sri Lankan debt (BBC 2022).

Addressing the rapid depletion of foreign currency reserves, the government introduced an import ban on cooking oil, turmeric (a spice essential in Sri Lankan cuisine) and also, most dramatically, chemical fertilizers. Prohibiting the import of fertilizers was presented as a measure to boost organic agriculture and curtail some

of the country's worst agri-environmental problems (Köpke et al. 2018). Yet the sudden ban on chemical inputs proved to be a serious disturbance to the national agricultural sector, resulting in fears of a dismal harvest (Srinivasan 2021; Wipulasena & Mashal 2021). The government was forced to step back on the agrochemical ban, first for the important tea sector, later in 2021 for all cultivation (AFP 2021).

The combined effects of the fertilizer ban, foreign exchange crisis, and rising food prices had a dire impact on food security in the country. In August 2021, Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared a national food emergency and appointed a high-ranking general as Commissioner-General of Essential Services. At the same time, the government undertook attempts to avoid further food price squeezes by introducing penalties on the hoarding of sugar, rice, and other essential foods. Long queues for foodstuffs became common (Al Jazeera 2021). In mid-March 2022, an "angry crowd" protesting against the miserable economic conditions and inadequate government response gathered in front of the president's building (AFP 2022).[1]

As the socio-economic situation in the country worsened, it looked as though the developmentalist element of the Rajapaksa project was running out of steam due to lack of resources and external support. There was a tangible contradiction between the regime's expressed goals of improving national welfare and the dismal state the country found itself in.

Conclusion

In the course of this paper I have tried to trace the connection between authoritarianism, development, and nationalist populism in post-conflict Sri Lanka, focusing on the governments of the two Rajapaksas, but also discussing the phase of the fragile and contested *yahapalana* government under Maithripala Sirisena. I have attempted to show how nationalist ideology, ethnic confrontation, the eminent role of the armed forces in society, and government-led development programs reinforce structures of power in Sri Lankan society. Yet authoritarian developmentalism as a response to severe societal crises is prone to further undermining the long-term consolidation of governance institutions, national economy, and non-sectarian civil society.

Authoritarianism, fueled by divisive ethnonationalism, has become more and more entrenched in Sri Lankan political society. Yet none of the country's urgent problems are getting any closer to a solution. Economic shocks, nepotism, lack of attendance to popular grievances on the part of the government, and authoritarian response to protests can all create a downward spiral. The recent experiences of countries as diverse as Nicaragua, Lebanon, or Myanmar can attest to this. At the time of writing,

1 After the editorial deadline of this article, the "Gotagogama" ("Gota go home") protest movement against the Rajapaksas became a mass phenomenon. Due to the dynamic nature of current political events in the country, newer developments cannot be covered in the scope of this paper.

Sri Lanka's prospects of escaping a similar fate—slipping towards state failure—look bleak.

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Refereed article

Wofür steht die JNU und wem gehört ihr Campus? – Der symbolische Deutungskampf um den Campus der Jawaharlal Nehru Universität

Anna Schnieder-Krüger

Abstract

This article examines how the campus of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has changed since 2016 (materially and structurally) and how these developments influence everyday life on the campus. I argue that these changes represent a negotiation process around the symbolism of JNU, which links to the understanding of the idea of nationality as well as the idea of a university.

This article shows how the JNU university administration (and furthermore the government) strategically attempts to intervene in the campus space and thereby change the idea represented by JNU. Further, I look at resistant patterns of action and reinterpretation as well as transmedia memory practices used by students to sustain an inter-generational narrative of JNU as a utopian space based on the identity markers "excellent teaching" and "anti-establishment culture." In this context, I understand the university and its campus as a space that is discursively and materially constructed through narrative, collective memory practices, and everyday tactics. Starting from an apparent micro-event in campus life, I argue that the campus has become a symbolic battlefield in the ongoing fight over spaces, bodies, and memories. Everyday practices of resistance are used to counter state-directed techniques of control.

Keywords: JNU, student activism, space, everyday tactics of resistance, transmedia memory practices, idea of a university

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Einleitung

Den symbolischen Deutungskampf um den Campus der Jawaharlal Nehru Universität (JNU) in Neu-Delhi spüren Besucher*innen schon beim Betreten: Fuhr man vor 2018 durch den Haupteingang auf den Campus der JNU Richtung Administrations-Block und gelangte so über die „JNU Campus Road" auf die „JNU Ring Road", erreicht man den Administrations-Block seither über die „A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Marg" und die „Vivekananda Road". Der Blick der Ankommenden fällt nun auf die Statue eben jenes Hindugelehrten, Vivekananda. Zum Zeitpunkt meiner Forschung (Frühjahr 2019) war die Figur in safranfarbene Tücher gehüllt. Eine Abbildung des Namensgebers der Universität, Jawaharlal Nehru, steht direkt gegenüber, ist jedoch deutlich weniger sichtbar. Die Abkehr von neutralen Straßennamen zugunsten der Hinwendung zu Hindu-Symbolen kann sinnbildhaft für die aktuelle Entwicklung an der JNU interpretiert werden.[1]

Die Veränderungen auf diesem Universitätscampus in der Hauptstadt Indiens stehen in Zusammenhang mit einem auf nationaler Ebene stattfindenden Aushandlungsprozess über die Idee von Indien. Der Umgang mit öffentlichen Universitäten und ihren Hochschulangehörigen ist in Indien in den vergangenen Jahren zu einer wesentlichen Streitfrage der Gesellschaft geworden. Ein zentraler Faktor dabei ist die zunehmende öffentliche Rahmung von Widerspruch und Protest im akademischen Umfeld als „anti-national", was massive Auswirkungen auf Universitäten hat und unter anderem dazu führte, dass es vor dem pandemiebedingten Lockdown zu bewaffneten Angriffen auf mehrere Universitäten und ihre Bewohnenden kam. Zudem dringen Akteur*innen und Organisationen aus dem hindunationalistischen Umfeld immer stärker in die universitären Räume vor und verändern Rahmenbedingungen der Lehre, Forschung sowie der außercurricularen Aktivitäten grundlegend, wie ich im Folgenden darlege. Diese aktuelle Entwicklung steht im Kontext der politischen Verbreitung hindunationalistischer Ideologie durch die seit 2014 regierende Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Auch wenn es im postkolonialen Indien schon mehrfach zu Einschnitten in der akademischen Freiheit kam [2] stellen die Vorkommnisse seit der Regierungsübernahme der BJP beispiellose Angriffe auf Freiheit, Körper und Gedanken von Akademiker*innen dar (Sundar und Fazili 2020, 1; Scholars at Risk 2020, 49; Butler 2020). Durch die öffentliche Rahmung von Widerspruch und Protest im akademischen Umfeld als „anti-national" ergeben sich für die Studierenden Nachteile, da sie sich in einem Spannungsfeld verschiedener Ideenkonflikte befinden.[3]

1 Die neuen Benennungen der Straßen orientieren sich meist an Namen von Hindugelehrten. Die „A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Marg" ist die einzige Straße auf dem Campus, die nach einer Person mit muslimischem Namen benannt ist. Safran ist zudem die Farbe der Hindu-Nationalisten.

2 Beispielsweise während des Ausnahmezustands unter Indira Gandhi (1975–1977).

3 Dieser Artikel basiert auf meiner Masterarbeit, die von Prof. Dr. Nadja-Christina Schneider und Dr. Anandita Bajpai betreut wurde. Ich bedanke mich bei beiden für ihre Unterstützung und Inspiration.

Dieser Artikel knüpft an Studien von Craig Jeffrey und Sanjay Kumar zur Jugend und Ausbildung in Indien an, in denen sie die jahrelange Fortsetzung des Studiums wegen der beruflichen Perspektivlosigkeit vieler gut ausgebildeter junger Menschen in Indien als Problem identifizieren (Jeffrey 2010; Kumar 2019). Im Gegensatz zur aktuellen Literatur zu Studierendenaktivismus in Südasien, die sich vermehrt auf Studierendenpolitik und studentische Politiker*innen fokussiert (z. B. Martelli und Garalytė 2019; Martelli 2018; Kutting und Suykens 2020), konzentriert sich dieser Artikel auf den Alltag im Campusraum und auf Studierende, die sich zwar mit dem Campus identifizieren, jedoch nicht zwangsläufig eine politische Karriere anstreben.

Ich stütze meine Forschung auf die Annahme, dass der Campus für viele JNU-Studierende und Alumni von großer persönlicher Bedeutung ist. In Solidarität mit protestierenden Studierenden und Lehrenden sind seit 2016 zahlreiche Stellungnahmen erschienen, in denen eine konstante Reproduktion kollektiver Erinnerungen und geteilter Identität erkennbar ist, ebenso wie eine große Verbundenheit gegenüber dem Campus. In Interviews äußerten sich zwei Studierende wie folgt: [4]

> The campus has given so much to me and more than that, you realize the campus has given so much to so many people as well and somehow it is your responsibility to save it now.
>
> I consider myself to be very emotionally attached to the campus – too much for my own good sometimes. And I think I have not been to a place like this before. [...] I have never been so comfortable in a place. It is very open hearted in a sense that you will see the people from across the country – which you would never have met – and from the world as well. […] The place seems very inviting. […] Whoever you are this place is going to be open for you.

Dieser Artikel zeigt auf, inwieweit auf dem Campus der JNU ein mehrdimensional geführter Deutungskampf das Alltagsleben verändert. Dafür werden materielle, strukturelle und ästhetische Veränderungen zwischen 2016 und 2019 betrachtet. Jede dieser Erneuerungen brachte eine tiefgreifende symbolische Umdeutung mit sich. Die JNU und ihr Campus werden dabei als diskursiv und materiell – durch Narrative, (kollektive) Erinnerungen und alltägliche Praktiken – konstruierte Räume betrachtet. Basierend auf Material, das ich auf dem Campus gesammelt habe, lassen sich folgende Erkenntnisse zum Campusraum und zum Alltag der Studierenden im Campusraum festhalten: (1) Die Universitätsadministration und ferner die Regierung versuchen strategisch in den Campusraum einzugreifen und dadurch die Idee, welche die JNU repräsentiert, zu verändern. (2) Studierende nutzen alltägliche Widerstandspraktiken, wie Uminterpretationen und transmediale Erinnerungspraktiken, um ein Gegennarrativ der JNU zu kreieren und erhalten, das auf den

4 Um die Sicherheit meiner Interviewpartner*innen zu gewährleisten, wurden alle Personen anonymisiert. Alle Zitate in diesem Beitrag stammen, sofern nicht anders kenntlich gemacht, aus von mir geführten Interviews mit JNU Studierenden.

Identifikationsmerkmalen *exzellente Bildung* und *„anti-establishment" Kultur* basiert.[5]

Am Beispiel der JNU veranschaulicht dieser Artikel aus raumtheoretischer Perspektive, wie mehrdimensionale Machtstrukturen in Räumen wirken. Dabei verstehe ich Raum nach Doreen Massey als ständig im Wandel und sich aus sozialen Beziehungen und Interaktionen konstituierend. In Masseys prozessorientiertem Blick auf Raum ist dieser auch ein Spiegel von Machtverhältnissen (2007). Die Veränderungen im universitären Raum der JNU zeigen Parallelen mit dem nationalen Geschehen und spiegeln einen Deutungskampf um die Idee der Universität an sich. Veränderungen auf dem Campus werden nicht nur im Zusammenhang mit übergeordneten Themen wie Regierungsstrategien, widerständige Alltagspraktiken und Hypernationalismus betrachtet, sondern eine Debatte über die Bedeutung der Erhaltung von Narrativen idealisierter Orte als Hoffnungsquellen im Widerstand gegen autokratische Systeme wird angestoßen. Vor diesem Hintergrund setzt die Betrachtung der Ereignisse um die JNU zum einen an der globalen Frage nach Souveränität und Meinungsfreiheit in Universitäten an, zum anderen gliedert sich die JNU als ein weiterer Schauplatz in eine Kette nationaler Aushandlungsprozesse ein.

Politischer Hintergrund: das umkämpfte Narrativ der JNU

Seit Narendra Modis (BJP) Wahl zum Premierminister 2014 üben Hindutva-Milizen immer wieder Gewalt gegen verschiedene Personengruppen aus, zu denen neben Hochschulangehörigen und öffentlichen Intellektuellen auch Journalist*innen und religiöse Minderheiten gehören (Mohammad-Arif, Naudet und Jaoul 2020, 2; Scholars at Risk 2020, 49). Der Begriff Hindutva umfasst ein ideologisches und politisches Projekt zur Förderung eines hinduistischen ethnischen und religiösen Vorherrschaftsanspruchs. Diese Ideologie wird insbesondere von der Kaderorganisation Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) gefördert und vertreten, die eng mit der Regierungspartei BJP verknüpft ist. Für ihr Ziel mobilisiert die RSS insbesondere anhand von „Schlüsselsymbolen"[6] und schürt dadurch eine Polarisierung der Gesellschaft sowie Hass insbesondere gegen religiöse Minderheiten (Mohammad-Arif, Naudet und Jaoul 2020, 2).[7] Personen(-gruppen), die sich gegen diese Ideologie äußern, werden von Hindutva-Sympathisant*innen

5 Unter dem Begriff „Studierende" werden im weiteren Verlauf, sofern nicht näher spezifiziert, die Studierenden zusammengefasst, die sich strukturellen Veränderungen physisch oder gedanklich, in Erinnerung an die JNU als Utopie, widersetzen.

6 Als Beispiele für diese Schlüsselsymbole nennen Mohammad-Arif, Naudet und Jaoul den Bau eines Tempels an Stelle der Babri-Moschee in Ayodhya, die Abschaffung des Sonderstatus der Region Jammu und Kaschmir, das Verbot des Kuhschlachtens sowie die Kriminalisierung der Konversion vom Hinduismus zu einer anderen Religion (2020, 2).

7 Das nicht-säkulare Nationalverständnis der Hindutva Ideologie spiegelt sich in Gesetzen wie dem Citizenship Amendment Act und dem National Register of Citizens wider, die zahlreichen muslimischen Bürger*innen die Staatsbürgerschaft aberkennen.

mit dem Label „anti-national“ versehen, wodurch es zur Ausgrenzung aus der „nationalen“ Gesellschaft kommt. Herausschreibungen sind auch im materiellen Raum zu beobachten.[8]

Die Folgen des öffentlichen Infragestellens der Legitimität von Universitäten lässt sich am politischen und medialen Umgang mit der JNU seit 2016 beobachten. Ausgehend von einem vorerst „banal“ erscheinenden Ereignis wurde die JNU im Februar 2016 zum Zentrum des medialen und politischen Diskurses um die Definition von „national“ bzw. „anti-national“ (Gupta 2019, 3; Nair 2016, x; Pathania 2018, 2; Apoorvanand 2018, 8f.): Bei einem Konflikt zwischen zwei Studierendenparteien der JNU am 09.02.2016 wurden nicht identifizierte Personen gefilmt, die „anti-nationale“ Slogans riefen. Diese Videoaufnahmen und mehrere nachträglich bearbeitete Versionen dominierten daraufhin soziale und staatliche Medien. Am Folgetag bezeichnete ein Moderator die JNU in einer Fernsehdebatte als „anti-national“. Verschiedene Medien und Regierungsvertreter*innen wiederholten diesen Vorwurf, was zur Festnahme von drei Studenten führte. Als Reaktion und um ein Gegennarrativ aufzuzeigen, riefen die Studierendenunion der JNU (JNUSU) sowie der Verband der Lehrenden zu zahlreichen Protestveranstaltungen auf.[9]

Mit der öffentlichen Diskreditierung der JNU verschärfte sich die Debatte um die Position von Universitäten in der indischen Gesellschaft. Durch die Zuschreibung „anti-national“ wurden verschiedene Universitäten seit 2016 als Bedrohung markiert und Feindseligkeit gegenüber Hochschulangehörigen gefördert (Apoorvanand 2018, 7; John 2018, 113; Pathania 2018, 6; Teltumbde 2016, 10). Die Ereignisse an der JNU stehen in größerem Zusammenhang, doch bekommen im Gegensatz zu anderen Bewegungen eine besonders hohe mediale und politische Aufmerksamkeit, was sich durch ihre Lage in der Hauptstadt und der physischen Nähe zum Regierungssitz sowie dem medialen Zentrum Indiens erklären lässt. Zudem ist die JNU seit ihrer Gründung ein symbolisch aufgeladener Ort. Während sie von einigen als utopischer Ort beschrieben und für ihren hohen Forschungsstandard und Aktivismus geschätzt wird, assoziieren andere sie mit den Begriffen „unmoralisch“ und seit 2016 vermehrt auch „terroristisch“ bzw. „anti-national“ (Singh und Dasgupta 2019, 60; Nair 2016,

8 Seit der Regierungsübernahme Modis kam es auf nationaler Ebene zu verschiedenen Umbenennungen von Flughäfen, Bahnstationen und Städten. Ein BJP-Mitglied, Vinay Katiyar, äußerte gar den Vorschlag, das Taj Mahal in „Tej Mandir“ (Energetischer Tempel) umzubenennen. Er implizierte, dass es sich beim Taj Mahal nicht um ein muslimisches, sondern ein hinduistisches Gebäude handele. Diese Veränderungen können als Teile einer Strategie betrachtet werden, der eine von der Regierung angestrebte Neudefinition Indiens als „Hindu Rashtra“ (Hindu Nation) vorausgeht.

9 Die verschiedenen Veranstaltungen fanden meist am Administrations-Block des Campus statt. Neben der Entwicklung einer eigenen Protest-Rhetorik und -Ästhetik machte das „JNU resistance movement“ insbesondere durch seine Vielschichtigkeit und zahlreiche nationale wie globale Solidaritätsbekundungen auf sich aufmerksam (Singh und Dasgupta 2019, 68). Queer-Aktivist*innen, Feminist*innen und Dalit-Aktivist*innen kamen in Solidarität mit den Studierenden der JNU auf den Campus, um von ihren Kämpfen zu berichten.

x; Pathania 2018, 2; Apoorvanand 2018, 8). Die Mehrdimensionalität und Intensität des Deutungskampfes um den Campus ist daher für die breite indische Universitätslandschaft von Bedeutung und wirft die Frage auf, inwieweit Hindutva-Kräfte hier die Deutungshoheit anstreben.

Die JNU, 1969 mit dem Anspruch eröffnet, „truly 'Indian', 'relevant' and 'excellent'" (Kidway 2017) zu sein, sollte anders werden als andere Universitäten und Indien in seiner Vielfalt widerspiegeln. Geringe Studiengebühren, ein durchdachtes Quotensystem für benachteiligte Gruppen, interdisziplinäre Lehre, ein weitestgehend informelles Lehrenden-Studierenden-Verhältnis und das bewusste Durchmischen von Studierenden verschiedener sozialer Hintergründe sollten dabei einen einzigartigen Raum kreieren, in dem junge Menschen das Selbstvertrauen finden würden, mit gesellschaftlichen Normen zu brechen und soziale Hürden abzubauen (Apoorvanand 2018, 3; Batabyal 2014, 8).

Die symbolische Relevanz der JNU wird auch durch Bezugnahme in der akademischen Literatur aus Indien zur Idee von Universität unterstrichen. Seit 2016 erschienen mehrere akademische Werke, die Grundaufgaben, Potenzial und Traditionen von Universitäten kritisch diskutieren. Die beiden – bereits zuvor für Aktivismus bekannten – Universitäten JNU in Neu-Delhi und Hyderabad Central University in Hyderabad dienen oft als Fallbeispiele. Die Wichtigkeit des Erhalts eines sogenannten „Ideals der Universität" als Ort des möglichen Widerspruchs wird hervorgehoben und die JNU als Vorbild benannt (Apoorvanand 2018; Bhattacharya 2019 a/b; Pathania 2018). Dieses abstrakte Ideal sei unabhängig von nationalen und ökonomischen Strukturen (Pathania 2018, 6; Apoorvanand 2018; Nair 2019) und werde an der JNU durch die „ongoing culture of dissent and production of critiques of the establishment" (Singh und Dasgupta 2019, 62) ermöglicht. Die Kultur des Campus wird hier als ein Element gesehen, das sich der zunehmenden Polarisierung unter Modi widersetzen kann.

Auch in digitalen Räumen wird die JNU in JNU-freundlichen Kreisen als Referenz verwendet. Diese zirkulierende Idee der JNU ist abstrakt und nachverfolgbar zugleich, da sie sich in verschiedenen Medienformen materialisiert. Sie dient als Hoffnungsquelle und symbolisiert die utopische Vorstellung friedlichen Zusammenlebens durch die Wertschätzung von Pluralität, Gleichheit, Widerspruch und Meinungsfreiheit (Schnieder-Krüger 2021).

Das Erstarken hindu-nationalistischer Gruppen im universitären Raum verdeutlicht, dass der Deutungskampf um das die JNU als Symbol auch innerhalb der Universitätsgemeinschaft präsent ist. Diese regierungstreuen Kräfte sind in der Studierendenpartei Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) verkörpert, die sich mit der ideologischen Linie der RSS identifiziert, und in der Universitätsleitung. Laut Gaurav J. Pathania lässt sich an der JNU ein Spannungsverhältnis zweier Kulturen erkennen. Zum einen die langjährige liberale Campuskultur und zum anderen die des „Mainstream-Bildungssystems", repräsentiert von der Leitung und hindunationalistischen Gruppierungen auf dem Campus (Pathania 2018, 5). Da es

sich dabei nicht um homogene Gruppierungen handelt, möchte ich in diesem Artikel die Studierenden nicht anhand ihrer politischen Ausrichtung verorten, sondern anhand ihrer angestrebten Idee der JNU. Das abstrakte Bedürfnis, die JNU vor Einflüssen der Hindutva-Ideologie zu bewahren, bringt verschiedene Gruppen zusammen und führt zur Bildung einer solidarischen Gemeinschaft, auch wenn individuelle Motivationen sich unterscheiden. Dies zeigt sich im physischen Raum in Form von verschieden Gruppen, die sich an Protestaktionen beteiligen, und im digitalen Raum (Schnieder-Krüger 2021).[10]

Theoretischer Rahmen

Wie oben angerissen, verstehe ich den Campus als einen diskursiv und materiell konstruierten Raum, in dem verschiedene Machtpraktiken zu beobachten sind. Die Deutungshoheit über ihn befindet sich in Aushandlung. Nach Massey sind Räume durch Praktiken beeinflussbar, in ständiger Veränderung und mehrdimensional. Sie stehen in einer ständigen Wechselwirkung mit sozialen Beziehungen, wodurch sozialer Raum auch physisch konstruiert ist (2007). Die Konstruktion von Räumen ist daher ein stetiger Prozess der Verhandlung über die Materialität des Ortes sowie seine Nutzung und Deutung. Formelle wie informelle Strukturen erschaffen und beeinflussen Machtverhältnisse im Raum. Diese äußern sich in repressiven Machtveränderungen, Einschüchterungsmethoden sowie subtilen Formen der Machtausübung. Letztes umfasst Technologien wie Strukturierung, Reglementierung und Disziplinierung (Foucault 1976).[11] Am Beispiel der JNU adressiert der Artikel, wie der Campus gelesen und verstanden wird. Dies schlägt sich wiederum auf den Campusraum und den Alltag der Studierenden nieder.

Mithilfe von Michel de Certeaus Analyseperspektive, die eine theorisierende Beschreibung alltäglicher Vorgehensweisen und Handlungsmuster (1988, 11f.) ermöglicht, verdeutliche ich das Zusammenspiel von Materialität, Diskurs und Erinnerungen sowie die Wechselwirkung zwischen „Strategie“ und „Taktik“ (de Certeau 1988). De Certeau versteht unter Strategie „eine Berechnung von Kräfteverhältnissen“ (1988, 23), bei denen das „mit Macht und Willenskraft ausgestattete Subjekt“, beispielsweise eine wissenschaftliche Institution, die Ablösung eines Ortes von der Umgebung anstrebt, um diesen „als etwas Eigenes“ umzuschreiben. Dieser umgeschriebene (eigene) Ort wird zur Grundlage der Kommunikation mit der Außenwelt. Die Taktik wiederum „hat nur den Raum des Anderen“. De Certeau bezeichnet die Taktik als „ein Kalkül, das nicht mit etwas Eigenem rechnen kann und somit auch nicht mit einer Grenze, die das Andere als

10 Dies ist sichtbar in der Verwendung der Hashtags #savejnu, #standwithjnu und #wearejnu.

11 Laut Foucault nehmen Personen die auf sie ausgeübte subtile Macht nicht aktiv wahr, sondern disziplinieren sich selbst. Auch wenn dies hier in Teilen unpassend ist, lassen sich mit diesem Verständnis dennoch viele Handlungen der Verwaltung als Machttechnologie einordnen. Foucaults Machtverständnis wandelte sich im Verlauf seines Schaffens wiederholt, was die Interpretation erschwert.

eine sichtbare Totalität abtrennt“ (de Certeau 1988, 23). Er verweist darauf, dass Alltagspraktiken einen „taktischen Charakter“ haben und kreativ genutzt werden können, um sich der Strategie zeitweise zu entziehen (de Certeau 1988, 24).

Beide – Strategie und Taktik – stehen in einer ständigen Wechselbeziehung zum Materiellen. Verstehen wir den Campus angelehnt an de Certeau als einen „Text“ (1988, 181ff.), untersucht dieser Artikel, wie der Campus durch materialisierte und strukturierte Strategien im Sinne eines von der Universitätsleitung angestrebtem Narrativs „umgeschrieben“ wird – worauf die Studierenden dann „taktisch“ reagieren. Es entsteht ein ständiger Kreislauf, in dem die mächtigen Kräfte versuchen, den Raum weiter zu beschränken und alternative Lesarten zu unterbinden, und die Akteur*innen, auf die die Regulierungen angewendet werden, wiederum widerspenstige Taktik nutzen, um auf die Strategie zu reagieren. Macht ist somit nicht absolut, sondern erzeugt Gegenmacht. Auch Michel Foucault versteht Macht nicht nur repressiv, sondern auch produktiv und generativ für Formen des Widerstands (Foucault 1978, 95).[12]

Dieser Artikel untersucht hauptsächlich die Alltagspraktiken der Studierenden, mit denen sie auf die Strategie reagieren, um den Raum umzuschreiben und einen Gegendiskurs aufzuzeichnen. Laut de Certeau haben gerade diese Alltagspraktiken das Potenzial, sich der Strategie (zumindest zeitweise) zu widersetzen. Er sieht Individuen in einem machtstrukturierten Raum nicht als rein passiv an, da sie Alltagspraktiken entwickeln, um sich etablierten Strukturen zu entziehen, sich Freiräume zu schaffen und sich den Raum wiederum anzueignen (1988, 17). Er argumentiert, dass populärkulturelle Bedeutungsproduktionen nicht sichtbar und daher nicht lückenlos kontrollierbar sind, da diese sich auf Erzähl- und Deutungsmuster berufen, die stark mit Erinnerungen und Emotionen verknüpft sind, was für die zugrunde liegende Forschung von großer Bedeutung ist (de Certeau 1988; Krönert 2009, 49f.). Denn wir können den JNU-Campus als einen Erinnerungsort verstehen, wie ihn Pierre Nora definiert: Orte, die symbolisch aufgeladen sind und eine identitätsstiftende Funktion haben. Sie können sich, neben geografischen Orten, beispielsweise auch als mystische Gestalt oder Institution durch Riten und Symbole manifestieren (Nora 1998). Wie unten aufgezeigt, nimmt der Campus der JNU eine konstitutive Funktion in widerständigen Narrativen ein, denn durch materielle Verankerung verfestigen sich Erinnerungen durch zugeschriebene Narrative und verkörpern ihre Kontinuität. Nora und Aleida Assmann haben darauf hingewiesen, dass materielle Orte wichtige Elemente zur Konstruktion von Erinnerungsorten sind. Der materielle Raum ist ein entschiedenes Element für die Konstruktion des Erinnerungsortes, da dieser mit Medien durchzogen ist, die als materielle Stütze des kulturellen Gedächtnisses dienen (Assmann 2018; 20, 298f.). Laut Nora brauchen sich die Träger*innen eines kollektiven Gedächtnisses nicht persönlich zu kennen, um eine gemeinsame Identität

12 Trotz interpretativer Differenzen zwischen Foucault und de Certeau werden sie für diesen Artikel gemeinsam gelesen, wobei der Fokus auf letzterem liegt.

für sich zu beanspruchen. Das Gedächtnis einer Gruppe basiert auf kollektiv genutzten und verstandenen Zeichen und Symbolen, die den Individuen Zugang zum gemeinsamen Gedächtnis und zur geteilten Identität ermöglichen. Ein Gedächtnis entwächst einer Gruppe, deren Zusammenhalt es stiftet, es ist kollektiv, mehrschichtig und individualisiert (Nora 1998, 14). Auch wenn es sich bei der JNU-Gemeinschaft um eine abstrakte Gesellschaft handelt, definiert sie sich doch zeit- und raumübergreifend über Symbole und Erinnerungen und beansprucht eine gemeinsame Identität.

Die materiellen Datenträger stützen den kollektiven Wissensspeicher bzw. das Archiv. Dieses wird durch Kommunikationsmedien und Aufzeichnungstaktiken bestimmt, anhand derer Narrative konstruiert werden (Assmann 2018, 21ff.). Die Nutzung digitaler Medien deutet auf eine Verzahnung virtueller Räume mit neuen physischen Orten des urbanen Protests hin (Schneider und Richter 2015, 11). Marwan Kraidy erläutert, wie die Verknüpfung dieser Räume genutzt werden kann, indem Bilder von widerständigen Taktiken im physischen Raum zeit- und raumübergreifend zirkuliert und vervielfältigt werden können. Durch diese Praxis können kurzzeitige Aneignungen medial archiviert werden (Kraidy 2015, 321). Das Mitdenken der digitalen Dimension und der zirkulierenden Bilder ist von Bedeutung, da Materialisierung und Strukturen Narrative sowohl an Individuen im Raum kommunizieren als auch außerhalb. Zwar liegt der analytische Fokus dieser Forschung auf dem materiellen Campus, doch muss durch das Ineinandergreifen von physischen und digitalen Orten der digitale Campus konstant mitgedacht werden, da sich auch hier Taktiken im Sinne de Certeaus aufzeigen lassen.

Methodisches Vorgehen

Das in diesem Artikel betrachtete Material wurde hauptsächlich während einer Feldforschung 2019 gesammelt und stützt sich auf frühere Beobachtungen und Dokumentationen materieller Veränderungen.[13] Für die Analyse werden eine Auswahl sichtbarer und nicht-sichtbarer Veränderungen auf dem Campus im Zeitraum zwischen 9. Februar 2016 bis zur Wiederwahl Narendra Modis am 23. Mai 2019 betrachtet. Auf aktuellere Ereignisse geht dieser Artikel daher nicht ein.[14] Als Forschungsmethoden wurden teilnehmende Beobachtung und semi-strukturierte Interviews genutzt. Die Interview- und Gesprächspartner*innen waren zum Zeitpunkt der Forschung Studierende einer Geistes- oder Sozialwissenschaft an der JNU, unterscheiden sich in Fachrichtung, akademischem Grad, Geschlecht, regionaler Herkunft, Religion sowie weiteren sozio-ökonomischen Hintergründen. Neben acht problemzentrierten Einzelinterviews und einem Zweierinterview wurden zahlreiche informelle Gespräche und Diskussionen geführt. Alle Interviews

13 Februar und März 2019.

14 Beispiele: Erhöhung der Studiengebühren, gewaltvolle Angriffe auf verschiedene Universitätscampus, Einschränkungen der Rechte von Akademiker*innen, an Online-Konferenzen teilzunehmen, Auswirkungen der Corona-Pandemie usw.

und der Großteil der Gespräche wurden auf dem Campus geführt, teilweise in semi-öffentlichen Räumen (Teestände, Innenhöfe, Spaziergänge) und teilweise in semi-privaten Räumen (Zimmern in Studierendenwohnheimen). Da sich Schlüsselfiguren, durch die ich sowohl neue Kontakte als auch Informationen über bevorstehenden Veranstaltungen erhalten habe, dem politisch linken Spektrum zuordnen, war der Kontakt zu dieser Gruppe deutlich erleichtert.

Abgesehen von zwei interviewten Personen, die auch beide Mitglieder der BJP- sowie RSS-nahen ABVP sind, lehnten alle Gesprächspartner*innen die Universitätsleitung sowie die BJP-Regierung und ihre Einflüsse auf die JNU ab. Ungefähr die Hälfte der Personen war Mitglied in einer Studierendenpartei des „linken Spektrums“[15] und nahm regelmäßig an Protestaktionen teil. Die andere Hälfte gehörte keiner Partei an, bezeichnete sich teilwiese als „unpolitisch“, lehnte die Hindutva-Ideologie und die Veränderungen auf dem Campus jedoch ab. Der Fokus lag primär auf Studierenden, die sich mit dem Campus identifizieren, aber keine politische Karriere anstreben. Nur zwei der Interviewpartner (einer der ABVP und einer aus dem linken Spektrum), die beide eine hohe Position innerhalb ihrer Partei und eine starke Präsenz in sozialen Medien haben, zogen eine politische Karriere auch außerhalb des Campusgeschehens in Betracht.

Ein Campus im Wandel

Im folgenden Abschnitt wird das empirische Material vorgestellt. Veränderungen auf dem Campus werden dabei trotz Überschneidungen eingeteilt in (1) ästhetische Veränderungen und Umdeutungstaktiken, (2) strukturelle Veränderungen (repressive Machtveränderungen sowie Einschüchterungsmethoden) und (3) Reaktion und Umgang der Studierenden mit diesen Neuerungen.

Ästhetische Veränderungen

Wie bereits erläutert, hat sich der Campus der JNU ästhetisch verändert. Beispiele dafür sind die Straßenschilder, die Statue von Vivekananda sowie das Entfernen von Postern und die Veränderungen auf und um den Administrations-Block. All diese Neuerungen dienen laut Universitätsleitung der Strukturierung und Verschönerung des Campus, führten auf Seiten der Studierendenschaft jedoch auch zu Unmut und daraus folgenden Protesten.

In Interviews und Gesprächen wurden Umbenennungen von Straßen und die Statue von Vivekananda als Geldverschwendung und symbolische Aneignung empfunden. Um letzterem entgegenzuwirken, formulierte einer der Interviewpartner (der ein hohes politisches Amt auf dem Campus besetzt) sein Ziel, dass alle zukünftigen

15 Unter diesen Personen waren auch welche, die zum Zeitpunkt der Forschung noch Mitglieder einer „linken“ Partei waren, sich aber aktiv mit einem Wechsel zu der Partei BAPSA beschäftigten, die sich unter anderem gegen Diskriminierung auf Grund der Kastenzugehörigkeit einsetzt und eine Einteilung in „links“ oder „rechts“ ablehnt.

Studierenden der JNU in der Statue nur „historical memory of flounder“ sehen werden:

> Till this statue is on campus and till the time students are here, they are going to pass on this memory to the next set of students: That there was a vice-chancellor […], who got my library budget to be reduced by 80 percent, […] who reverted this money to build a statue, calling spiritual gurus, […] and instituting massive fund cuts in this campus. And this statue is the example for that.

Die offiziellen Bezeichnungen der Straßen hatten sich zum Zeitpunkt des Forschungsaufenthalts (noch) nicht im Sprachgebrauch durchgesetzt. In Gesprächen und Absprachen wurden von Personen ausschließlich die „alten Bezeichnungen“ verwendet. Insbesondere die Benennung einer der Straßen nach dem Hindutva-Gründer V. D. Savarkar führte zu großer Empörung. In den sozialen Medien zirkulierte kurz darauf ein Foto des Straßenschildes, auf dem die Originalaufschrift übersprüht und „V. D. Savarkar“ mit „B. R. Ambedkar“[16] ersetzt worden war.

Studierende hatten auch vor der Einführung der Straßenschilder Bezeichnungen für die verschiedenen Orte. Diese orientierten sich nicht an Persönlichkeiten, sondern an Erinnerungen und Stellvertreterkörpern, die an vorangegangene Proteste anknüpften, und den Wandbemalungen, die bis zum Sommer 2019 die Wände der meisten Gebäude schmückten.

Mit dem Entfernen der Poster, die Kommunikationsmedien und Wiedererkennungsmerkmale des Campus waren, kam es zu einer sehr sichtbaren Veränderung, die tief in bestehende Strukturen des Raumes eingriff. Der Raum wurde optisch standardisiert. Die Poster symbolisierten, was die JNU in den Augen vieler repräsentierte: Austausch und kritische Ideen. Um ihrem Verschwinden entgegenzuwirken, rief die JNUSU alle Studierenden und Alumni dazu auf, Fotos von den Postern hochzuladen und ein digitales Archiv zu kreieren.

Eine weitere Umdeutung auf dem Campus ist der Administrations-Block im Zentrum des Campus. 2016 wurde er zur Bühne oder Vorlesungssaal sowie zum Knotenpunkt des „JNU resistance movement“. Die temporäre Besetzung des physischen Raumes änderte auch seine Bezeichnung im Sprachgebrauch zu „Freedom Square“. Durch die physischen Gegebenheiten, die Lokalisierung auf dem Campus ebenso wie die damit verbundene Sichtbarkeit, sowohl für die Studierenden als auch die Universitätsleitung, eignete sich der Raum für öffentliche Vorlesungen, künstlerische Veranstaltungen, aber auch für Hungerstreiks. Doch die Stufen vor dem Verwaltungsgebäude, die während der Veranstaltungen tausenden Zuschauer*innen als Sitzmöglichkeiten dienten, werden mittlerweile von riesigen Blumentöpfen eingenommen, wodurch eine große Ansammlung von Körpern auf diesen Stufen unmöglich geworden ist. Außerdem umgibt den Administrations-

16 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956) war ein indischer Jurist, Wirtschaftswissenschaftler und Sozialreformer, der sich gegen die wirtschaftliche und soziale Diskriminierung der Unberührbaren (heute Dalits) in der hinduistischen Gesellschaft Indiens einsetzte. Er ist heute Symbolfigur für Bewegungen für soziale Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit.

Block nun eine 100-Meter-Sperrzone, in der jegliche Form von Versammlung und Protest verboten ist. Der einstige Knotenpunkt des Protestes ist nun still und ohne jegliche Spuren, die an den „anderen" Namen dieses Ortes erinnern. Nur noch an wenigen Stellen lassen sich alte Graffitis entdecken.

> They [administration] are capturing the space [...] There are protests but since [...] the administration made that 100-meter-thing it is not making that much effect. Earlier you used to go to ad-block and make pressure […] but nowadays you are protesting far away, you don't see them, they don't have any impact.

Aus dem Zitat lässt sich ablesen, dass diese Regulierungen neben der offensichtlichen Beschränkung der Nutzung des Raumes auch in das gängige Protestrepertoire eingreifen sowie in die über Generationen von Studierenden hinweg etablierten Handlungsweisen. Die Aussage „(t)hey are capturing the space" impliziert, dass Benanntes auf dem Wissen basiert, welche Räume in der Vergangenheit für den aktivistischen Studierendenkörper von Bedeutung waren, sodass durch die Limitierung auch eine zusätzliche symbolische Relevanz unzugänglich gemacht wird.

Die bisher dargestellten Veränderungen sind in Form von Medien bzw. materiellen Objekten wie Blumentöpfen, Gittern, der Statue, Straßen- sowie Verbotsschildern und kahlen Wänden sichtbar. Neben diesen hat der Raum in den letzten Jahren viele andere, nicht direkt sichtbare strukturelle Veränderungen durchlaufen, die die Infrastruktur des Campus eventuell noch systematischer verändern als die materielle Standardisierung, wie im nächsten Abschnitt verdeutlicht wird.

Limitierung der Räume des Austausches und des Lernens und Lehrens außerhalb der Klassenräume

Im Folgenden wird anhand verschiedener Beispiele gezeigt, wie durch strukturelle Veränderungen auf dem Campus Räume für Austausch unzugänglich gemacht werden womit sich Alltagsleben und Campuskultur verändern. Dabei sind es gerade jene Räume, die als Lernräume außerhalb des Klassenzimmers dienen, die die JNU in den Augen vieler Akademiker*innen so besonders machen (z. B. Apoorvanand 2018, 8). Auch in den Interviews wurde auf diese Veranstaltungen eingegangen:

> There are markers of JNU's identity. […] There used to be after dinner political talks by every party. […] There used to be a dhaba-culture.[17] People would claim that we had the times of the night. And then they would talk about random things. I think that's what the administration is most scared of: people communicating.

> These people [administration] are changing the whole structure of how the life was on campus. [...] Even in very little things. There used to be talks every other day, there used to be conferences, [...], public lectures in the school area and in the hostels after dinner [...]. It was always taken for granted. [...] But now it has

17 Unter „dhaba-culture" wird hier das Zusammenkommen von Personen an Dhabas (Teeständen, Imbissen) verstanden. Dhabas sind nicht nur gängige Treffpunkte von Studierenden, sondern gelegentlich auch Veranstaltungsorte oder Start- bzw. Endpunkt von Protestzügen.

> become so bureaucratic. They are constantly trying to make it sound so difficult to even book a space to have a public talk. […] It feels like you are doing something which is restricted somehow.

Die in den Zitaten geäußerten Beobachtungen tauchten in vielen meiner Gespräche auf. Seit den Ereignissen am 9. Februar 2016 hat sich die studentische Organisation jeglicher Veranstaltung deutlich verkompliziert. Sie ist mit hohem bürokratischem Aufwand verbunden und birgt ein hohes persönliches Risiko für die Verantwortlichen. Um die Genehmigung für eine Veranstaltung zu bekommen, benötigt es Unterschriften von verschiedenen Büros und Bürgschaften mehrerer verantwortlicher Studierender und Lehrender. Auch wenn diese Veränderungen für den zitierten Studenten nur ein „little thing" darstellen, sieht er die weitreichenden Folgen. Für ihn steht fest, dass es genau diese Räume und Veranstaltungen sind, „which are problematic for the administration and for the government". Professor*innen, die nach dem Abendessen in Mensen und Wohnheime kamen, um Vorlesungen zu halten oder Diskussionsrunden zu moderieren, waren ein wichtiger Bestandteil der sogenannten JNU-Kultur sowie der exzellenten Bildung. Neben dem regulären Unterricht boten diese Veranstaltungen einen Raum zur Wissensvermittlung, für Austausch und zum Fragenstellen, woraus oft kritische, interdisziplinäre Diskussionen entstanden. Das Interesse an diesen Veranstaltungen hat keineswegs abgenommen. Trotzdem oder vielleicht gerade, weil sie deutlich seltener geworden sind, werden sie nach wie vor sehr gut besucht. Während der Feldforschung wiesen alle Lehrenden bei diesen Veranstaltungen in Randbemerkungen auf die Situation der Universität seit 2014 hin, wodurch auch diese Veranstaltungen und kritische Lehre als eine Form des Widerstands verstanden werden müssen. Obwohl „after dinner talks" nicht explizit verboten sind, wird, neben dem Problem, generell Räumlichkeiten zu finden, den Studierenden das Gefühl vermittelt, etwas Unerwünschtes zu tun.

Eine vergleichbare Einschränkung des alltäglichen Lebens und der Kommunikation zwischen Bewohner*innen stellt die Beschränkung der Öffnungszeiten von Teeständen (Dhabas) dar, wo zuvor Studierende aller Geschlechter des nachts über Politik, soziale Strukturen oder das sonstige Weltgeschehen diskutierten. Die Limitierung der Öffnungszeiten der Dhabas sowie die 2018 eingeführte Anwesenheitspflicht für Studierende sind Wege, Aufenthaltsort und -dauer der Studierenden zu dokumentieren.[18] Hinzu kommt, dass an den Eingängen des Campus und der Wohnheime Bewohner*innen wie Besucher*innen aufgefordert werden, sich zu registrieren, wodurch Informationen über Mobilität und Netzwerke einzelner Personen gesammelt und gespeichert werden. Nächtliche Zimmerkontrollen machen das durchaus übliche spontane Beherbergen anderer oder

18 Die im Frühjahr 2018 für Studierende eingeführte Anwesenheitspflicht betrifft mittlerweile auch Lehrende, die somit daran gehindert werden, an internationalen Konferenzen teilzunehmen. Es kommt daher zu einer Regulierung der von der JNU repräsentierten Idee. Die internationale Bedeutung der Wissenschaftler*innen sowie deren Wissenschaftsfreiheit und Autonomie wird massiv eingeschränkt.

nächtliche Zusammenkünfte zu einer riskanten und im Zweifelsfall teuren Angelegenheit, denn hierfür sind Geldbußen zu entrichten.

> So many things have changed. Like the bureaucratic procedures and the discipline that they are trying to impose [...] effects our everyday life.
>
> Now we don't trust each other. We never used to think about which party the other belongs too. But now we censor ourselves. We think twice before saying something, because we don't know who is going to record and send an edited version of it wherever.

Diese Zitate verdeutlichen, wie tiefgreifend die Deutungskämpfe und neuen Bestimmungen auf dem Campus, neben den Auswirkungen auf Lehre, das Leben und die Interaktionen der Studierenden verändern. Misstrauen und Unsicherheit führen dazu, dass Teile der Studierenden nicht mehr miteinander reden, wodurch soziale Hürden konserviert statt aufgebrochen werden. Dies steht konträr zum Ethos dieser Universität, mit dem sie sich über Jahre identifiziert hat.

Das folgende Zitat einer Doktorandin beschreibt, welche drastischen persönlichen Auswirkungen die strukturellen Veränderungen auf das Studium und den persönlichen Werdegang von Personen haben. Während sie früher in mehreren Parteien des „linken Spektrums" aktiv war, hatte sie sich zum Zeitpunkt der Forschung schon aus vielen Protestaktivitäten herausgezogen und ihre Accounts in sozialen Medien gelöscht.

> He [Bildungsminister] knew where to hurt, but systematically. […] He first went after students, he cut the number of students coming into JNU so that there is no next generation. Next, he went after teachers. Then he made sure that students stay inside via attendance, we are not allowed to go out and teach. […] Students ask, and we talk. And our ideas got transmitted, that is a big deal for this government. They went and stopped that. They stopped funding us from going outside talking. So, they are cutting every way a JNU student can go. And then JNU students found out that in interviews for jobs they are asking 'where are you from' and there is discrimination. You are being overlooked, you are not getting funds, your jobs are being taken away, you are being insulted at job interview–. - Then a JNU student feels that maybe I should shut up. Maybe I should leave this place. Because researching here is getting tough. If I open a[n online] page I can't access. […] I can't read. What do I do? – I better leave.

Die Aussage „he knew where to hurt" impliziert, dass die Interviewpartnerin davon ausgeht, dass die Umstrukturierungen auf dem Wissen basieren, welche Ressourcen und Perspektiven wichtig für die Studierenden sind. Durch die Kürzungen im Bibliotheksbudget und dem Hindern junger Forschender am Unterrichten an Colleges wird für Studierende zugängliches Wissen eingeschränkt und jede Weitergabe ihres Wissens und ihrer Ideen unterbunden. Das Zitat der Studentin verdeutlicht zudem, wie schwierig das Studieren insgesamt an der JNU geworden ist, da der Alltag und die zur Verfügung gestellten Ressourcen limitiert werden. Wie in dem Zitat angesprochen, hat sich der kollektive Körper bzw. die Zusammensetzung des Campus über die letzten Jahre verändert. Die im Jahr 2017

eingeführte Kürzung von 80 Prozent der Studienplätze führte dazu, dass 2019 zwei Generationen M. phil.-Studierende und Doktorand*innen fehlten.[19]

Während der Interviews betonten Studierende das persönliche Risiko, sich politisch einzubringen oder Disziplinierungsmaßnahmen zu widersetzen. Strafen für nicht-konformes Verhalten umfassen Strafzahlungen, den Verlust des Zimmers im Wohnheim oder die potenziell existenzbedrohende Einstellung der Stipendiengelder.

> They [students] are scared of attendance. They are scared of their work. They are scared of their careers. And the fact that this administration goes after you and files FIRs like this.[20] And if you have a FIR against you, you can't get employment.
>
> The room for them [activists] to function is very less, very constricted, very restricted. I mean, if you have an administration that is ready to slap any kind of charges on you – even in the context of a small incident – you have a policing atmosphere basically around you that does not allow you to operate very freely. [...] The personal risk is much higher than it was like in 2014.

Die Ungewissheit bezüglich der Zukunft wirkt neben den repressiven Machtveränderungen als Einschüchterungsmethode. Beobachtungen der Unberechenbarkeit des Strafmaßes bei Verstößen führen zu Unsicherheit und Angst. Das Risiko möglicher struktureller bzw. physischer Gewalterfahrungen hat Auswirkungen auf die Studierendengemeinschaft und das Alltagsleben auf dem Campus. Während des Forschungsprozesses wurde mir wiederholt empfohlen, mit einer Person zu sprechen, die im weiteren Verlauf dieses Artikels als M. K. bezeichnet wird.

M. K. (upper-caste Hindu und „linker" Aktivist) teilt sich sein Zimmer unfreiwillig mit einem RSS-Mitglied. Seine Aussage, „It's hard to be an activist these days. You pay a huge price for it", spielt nicht nur auf die finanzielle Dimension, sondern auf die konstante Gefahr gewalttätiger Übergriffe an, der er sich als Aktivist ausgesetzt sieht. An seinem Beispiel lässt sich gut erkennen, dass einzelne Körper konstanter Überwachung ausgesetzt werden und zunehmend verstummen. Während des Interviews reflektierte M. K. mehrmals seine eigene Position und betonte, wie privilegiert er, verglichen mit Personen anderer religiöser oder sozio-ökonomischer Hintergründe, sei. M. K.s Fall sahen verschiedene Gesprächspartner*innen als Beweis an, dass eine Bestrafung jede*n treffen kann, der*die sich gegen die Administration ausspricht. Auch wenn repressive Machtveränderungen auf alle Studierenden wirken, variiert das persönliche Risiko abhängig von sozialem, politischem und ökonomischem Hintergrund.

19 Mit der Erhöhung der Gebühren 2019 kam es zu einer drastischen Veränderung, da die gute Finanzierbarkeit eines Studiums an der JNU eine diverse Studierendenschaft unabhängig von finanziellen Hintergründen ermöglichte.

20 FIR: First Information Report.

> Many Muslim students who are on campus actually really feel that the campus is unsafe – like physically unsafe. […] That's a very legitimate feeling for Muslim students as well as for a very huge number of left-wing activists, which have been threatened.

Spätestens das spurlose Verschwinden des muslimischen Studenten Najeeb Ahmed am 15.10.2016 verdeutlicht die reale Gefahr für einige Personen auf dem Campus. Der Fall Najeeb Ahmed, der nach einem Streit mit der hindu-nationalistischen Studierendenpartei ABVP über Nacht vom Campus verschwand, wurde während der Interviews wiederholt als das einschlägige Ereignis dafür benannt, dass der Campus nicht mehr sicher sei. Das Wissen über das Verschwinden eines Studenten aus ihrer Mitte, die wahrscheinliche Beteiligung von Studierenden des Campus in dieser Angelegenheit und die Gleichgültigkeit der Universitätsleitung führen bei einigen Bewohner*innen zum Versuch, „unsichtbarer" zu werden. Neben der höheren Gefahr für Studierende mit muslimischen Namen lassen sich auch unterschiedliche Handlungsspielräume je nach Geschlecht, Kaste und Klasse erkennen, auf die in diesem Artikel nicht weiter eingegangen wird.

Mittlerweile lässt sich eine von vielen nicht-regierungskonform denkenden Studierenden geteilte Praktik feststellen, die eine offensichtliche Identifizierung mit der Institution JNU außerhalb des Campus vermeidet: den JNU-Pullover im öffentlichen Raum nicht zu tragen und den Studienort zu verschweigen. Als Grund wurde die Vermeidung ständiger, frustrierender Konfrontation und Erklärungsnot genannt sowie die Angst vor physischer Gewalt.

> 1: Earlier I used to say, 'I am from JNU, I am doing PhD from JNU' with pride. But now I try to hide this thing – that I come from JNU. I don't say clearly, 'I am from JNU'. I just say, 'I am in Delhi, I am a student'. I don't say the university's name.
>
> 2: When I am travelling in a train, I will not mention that I am from JNU.
>
> 1.: Yes, there is a threat. There is a threat for every JNU person.
>
> 2.: Very right. So, to think about wearing a JNU hoodie and moving outside in the society is like calling for trouble.
>
> 1.: Yeah, you are inviting trouble.

In dem Ausschnitt aus einem Gruppeninterview mit zwei Doktoranden, die beide zum Zeitpunkt des Interviews bereits 10 Jahre auf dem Campus verbracht haben, spiegelt sich deren Wahrnehmung wider, dass sich das Ansehen einer „JNU-Person" in der breiten Öffentlichkeit verändert hat und die Identifizierung als eine solche mit einem Risiko von Gewalterfahrungen einhergeht. Unter meinen Interviewpartner*innen behaupteten nur die beiden Anhänger des rechten Studierendenflügels, die Identität weiterhin mit Stolz zu tragen. Sie betonten die Wichtigkeit, in der Öffentlichkeit zu zeigen, dass es an der JNU nicht nur „Anti-Nationale" gebe. Dies verdeutlicht, welche Körper sich das Zeichen der JNU aneignen können, ohne Gewalt zu fürchten, und das Symbol dadurch mit ihren

Vorstellungen definieren. Auch wenn es sich hierbei nicht um direkte repressive Machtveränderungen handelt, wirkt das Wissen über fehlenden Schutz vor möglicherweise gewaltsamen Mobs als Einschüchterungsmethode.[21]

Umgang der Studierenden mit den Veränderungen

> A lot has changed [on Campus]. Especially after 2016 […]. I guess every aspect has changed. From very simple things, […] to maybe infrastructure things as well [...] – but this is just the physical space of the campus. Otherwise as well the culture sort of has changed somehow but maybe it's just in my head, because I know that there is a break in 2016. […] So yes, the campus has changed a lot, but still it is somehow the same as well.

Der Zwiespalt in der Wahrnehmung des oben zitierten Studenten, es habe sich seit 2016 alles verändert und gleichzeitig sei dennoch alles gleich geblieben, findet sich alltäglich auf dem Campus der JNU wieder. Obwohl die Körper der Studierenden stetigen Einschränkungen und Veränderungen ausgesetzt sind, nutzen sie eben diese Körper, um sich dem zu entziehen und Widerstand zu leisten. Widerstandsformen orientieren sich dabei an „alten Traditionen" der JNU. Fokussiert werden in diesem Abschnitt sichtbare wie nicht-sichtbare widerständige Handlungen, die Studierende durch ihre Körper darbieten und die sich an kollektiven Erinnerungen orientieren.

Am Beispiel des Administration-Blocks bzw. Freedom Square wurde aufgezeigt, wie Studierende ihre Körper nutzen, um sich Räume anzueignen und umzugestalten. Diese Taktiken fordern von Studierenden wie Lehrenden kreative Widerstandsformen, um nicht das durch die Regierung geförderte Narrativ der „anti-nationalen, faulen Verschwender*innen von Steuergeldern" zu bedienen. Im Protest gegen die Anwesenheitspflicht entschieden sich beispielsweise einige Lehrende für Unterricht im Freien, wodurch die geforderte Handlung vollzogen und gleichzeitig die Codierung der Räume aufgebrochen wurde. Die digitale Verbreitung erzeugter Bilder erzählt eine Gegengeschichte zu dem von der Regierung verbreiteten Narrativ. Eine ähnlich kreative Protestform stellt die Guerilla-Dhaba dar, die den fehlenden Raum für Kommunikation ausgleichen soll. Der selbstorganisierte Tee-Stand war eine spontane Initiative an verschiedenen Orten, die bei ehemaligen Protesten von Bedeutung waren. Die nächtliche Dhaba organisierte sich mit sozialen Medien und wurde meist mit Reden, Konzerten und Vorführungen verknüpft. Die Betrachtung dieser Dhaba ist aus verschiedenen Gründen interessant. Zum einen widersetzte sie sich der Codierung des Raumes, indem sie sich die Straße aneignete, und zum anderen mobilisierte, erinnerte und kreierte sie neue Erinnerungen. Obwohl es der Guerilla-Dhaba kurzzeitig gelang, den Raum umzufunktionieren und sich anzueignen, verebben solche Initiativen oft auf Grund hoher psychischer und physischer Belastung. Trotz ihrer Kurzlebigkeit symbolisiert die Guerilla-Dhaba

21 Ein Beweis für die Berechtigung dieser Angst ist das Verhalten der Polizei während der Angriffe auf die Universitäten Jamia Milla Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University und JNU im Dezember 2019 und Januar 2020.

durch ihre einstige Existenz, ihre Verewigung im digitalen Raum und die nach wie vor aktive WhatsApp-Gruppe eine Taktik, auf die bei Bedarf immer wieder zurückgegriffen werden kann.[22]

Auch wenn Studierende in Gesprächen wiederholt angaben, des Protestierens müde geworden zu sein, antwortet eine Gruppe von Studierendenvertreter*innen dennoch nach wie vor auf jede Veränderung. Dabei geht es weniger um die tatsächliche Hoffnung, Neuimplementierungen rückgängig zu machen, als vielmehr darum, den Widerspruch visuell darzubieten.

> The campus is alive because it is fighting on an everyday basis. […] we are alive just because we are fighting the everyday basis. The day we will stop, the campus will die. [...] It is all about the moment, it's all about strategy, it's all about how do you fight that.

Auch wenn viele der Studierenden sich nicht mehr aktiv an performativen Protesten beteiligen, betonten mehrere deren Wichtigkeit. Ein Doktorand, der sich selbst nicht mehr an Protestaktionen gegen die Administration beteiligt, bekräftigte, es sei entscheidend zu zeigen, dass die Veränderungen nicht als gegeben wahrgenommen und akzeptiert werden. Die Tatsache, dass Kleingruppen von Studierenden nach wie vor während der Essenszeiten in Wohnheimkantinen kommen, um von einer Trommel begleitet Slogans zu rufen, Flugblätter zu verteilen und über konkrete Veränderungen, Forderungen und Veranstaltungen zu informieren, folgt einem rituellen bzw. eingeübten Verhaltensmuster. Die Aussage eines aktiven Mitglieds einer kleinen linken Studierendenpartei und Organisators verschiedener Protestaktionen, „there will be protest were nobody will come, and we don't expect anyone to come" zeigt, dass der Aufruf zum Widerstand über der tatsächlichen Durchführung steht. Dieselbe Person betont die Wichtigkeit der Sichtbarkeit der Resistenz im digitalen Raum: „Visibility has become very important. Social media visibility for political organisations has become more important than doing actual work. [...] And even in the physical space there is a lot of conversation about what is happening in the virtual space." Das Filmen bzw. Dokumentieren von Protestaktionen ist mittlerweile integraler Teil jedes Events. Insbesondere bei Veranstaltungen von Studierenden der JNU außerhalb des Campus dokumentieren die Studierenden und die Polizei das Geschehen. Die erzeugten Bilder dienen auch als Legitimierung für das eigene Handeln.

Einhergehend mit diesen sichtbaren und hörbaren Aktionen kommt es zu zahlreichen alltäglichen, nicht sichtbaren Widerstandsmethoden. Alltägliche Praktiken werden erkennbar, wenn man statt der Veränderungen auf dem Campus das betrachtet, was gleichgeblieben ist. Anhand der gut besuchten außerplanmäßigen Lehrveranstaltungen lässt sich erkennen, dass es nach wie vor ein hohes Interesse an unvorschriftsmäßiger Lehre gibt. Die Analyse der Interviews zeigt zudem, dass viele Studierende in ihren Schilderungen und Wahrnehmungen auf akademische Theorien

22 Während der Fee-must-fall-Bewegung seit November 2019 wurde die Dhaba für verschiedene Protestaktionen wieder ins Leben gerufen.

zurückgriffen. Die Rhetorik und viele Bilder symbolisieren einen „intellektuellen" Widerstand.

Trotz der tiefgreifenden Veränderungen beobachtete ich, dass die allgemeine Stimmung bei Protesten auf dem Campus als deutlich ausgelassener empfunden wurde als bei Veranstaltungen außerhalb. Dies ließ sich unter anderem an der Kleidung erkennen. Während, wie bereits erwähnt, viele Studierende es mittlerweile vermeiden, im öffentlichen Raum ihre Zugehörigkeit zur JNU sichtbar zu machen, trug bei den Veranstaltungen auf dem Campus ein Großteil der anwesenden Personen die JNU-Pullover. Auch der bei vielen Events gerufene Slogan „JNU hamara hai"[23] verdeutlicht, dass ein Teil der Studierenden nach wie vor Anspruch auf den Campus, dessen Alltag und Zukunft erhebt. Ein ähnlicher Anspruch lässt sich auch im folgenden Zitat finden:

> Who sets the memories? – The students! – How? – Through their fight that is on and because the campus is a living space. It just doesn't live today and dies tomorrow. […] There is a spirit and we have to fight for it.

Das nach wie vor sehr liberale Miteinander zwischen den Geschlechtern ist ein wichtiges Merkmal der „JNU Kultur", welches immer noch gelebt wird. Auch das nächtliche Beherbergen von campusexternen Personen ist trotz der Zimmerkontrollen nach wie vor gängige Praxis. Zusammenfassend kann festgehalten werden, dass, obwohl strukturelle und materielle Veränderungen in das Alltagsleben eingreifen, Studierende und Lehrende auf diese Neuerungen reagieren und diese ganz im Sinne eines von ihnen angestrebten Narrativs der JNU umdeuten. Dadurch knüpfen sie an Erinnerungen bzw. Traditionen an und halten einen Erinnerungsraum lebendig. Gleichzeitig wird deutlich, wie sehr sich einerseits ein Verantwortungsgefühl, die „alte JNU" zu bewahren, in die Körper der Studierenden eingeschrieben hat, und wie diese andererseits das persönliche Risiko struktureller und physischer Gewalterfahrungen wahrnehmen.

Widerständige Alltagpraktiken vs. regulierende Strategie im Deutungskampf um das Narrativ der JNU

Aus dem Material lässt sich ein Aushandlungsprozess über Idealvorstellungen der JNU ablesen, in dem informelle und formelle Strukturen ineinandergreifen. Die Veränderungen im Raum spiegeln dabei Machtstrukturen wider.

Das oben dargestellte Material zeigt die Masse der strategischen Änderungen durch die Universitätsleitung sowie deren Auswirkungen. Laut de Certeau setzt die Strategie „einen Ort voraus, der als etwas Eigenes umgeschrieben werden kann" (1988, 23). Im Falle der JNU wurde deutlich, wie die Universitätsleitung und ferner die Regierung in Strukturen eingreift, um diese in ihrem eigenen Interesse umzuschreiben. Die systematische Veränderung der Infrastruktur etabliert eine neue

23 Die JNU gehört uns! [eigene Übersetzung]. Protestslogan. Unter anderem gerufen bei einem Protest am 12.02.2019. JNU Campus.

Orientierungsstruktur, die auf ausgewählten Namen und Figuren beruht, die durch die neuen Benennungen konstant in Erinnerung gerufen werden, und diese „Fremdbezeichnungen“ in Form von konstant sichtbaren infrastrukturellen Hilfsmitteln im Alltagsgeschehen verankert. Die Neueinführung der Straßennamen stellt neben der Strukturierung der Infrastruktur auch eine Standardisierung da. Die Vorgehensweise der Universitätsverwaltung schreibt Räume wie den Administrations-Block durch die genaue Zuweisung einer Funktion um. Materielle und strukturelle Änderungen unterbinden jede weitere Aneignung des Raumes. Vergessen gemacht werden im gleichen Schritt vorherige inoffizielle Bezeichnungen, die auf einem kollektiven Gedächtnis der Studierenden beruhen, das über Generationen hinweg weitergegeben wurde. Die Umbenennung und die Etablierung neuer symbolträchtiger Medien stellen Eingriffe in gegebene Strukturen und Erinnerungen dar (Assmann 2018, 20). Damit verschwinden nach Assmanns Verständnis von Erinnerungsräumen die materiellen Stützen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses (Assmann 2018, 21–23). Die Änderungen greifen in die Geschichte des Campus ein und verändern den Diskurs. Sie können daher als Versuch der Universitätsleitung erkannt werden, die Geschichte des Campus umzuschreiben, indem Namen und Figuren verschwinden bzw. etabliert werden.

Die in den letzten Jahren eingeführten Veränderungen greifen in Strukturen und Handlungsnormen ein. Sie hindern Studierende am Reagieren, indem Räume des Austausches, der Organisation und des Widerspruchs unzugänglich gemacht werden. In der Betrachtung der strukturellen Veränderungen lässt sich der Versuch der Universitätsleitung erkennen, die Körper der Studierenden zunehmend mit Hilfe von Disziplinierung und Verboten innerhalb wie außerhalb der Klassenräume zu kontrollieren. Die Überwachung von Verhaltensweisen und Netzwerken kodiert Raum und Zeit. Das Gefühl, unter Beobachtung zu stehen, führt zu einer Selbstdisziplinierung der Studierenden vor dem Blick der Universitätsleitung. Die neuen Auflagen können als subtile Machtausübung sowie als Strategie zur Steuerung und Disziplinierung der Individuen im Sinne Foucaults (1976) angesehen werden. Die Bestrafungen einzelner Personen bzw. das Wissen über deren Situation wirken einschüchternd. M. K. beispielsweise ist durch den Blick seines Mitbewohners einer gefühlt konstanten Kontrolle ausgesetzt. Im Gegensatz zu dem Interview mit M. K., während dessen wir fünf mal den Ort wechselten, wählte ein bekanntes Mitglied der ABVP für sein Interview den belebten Gemeinschaftsraum seines Wohnheimes. Schon die Wahl des Ortes, die ich immer den Interviewpartner*innen überließ, zeigt unterschiedliche Wahrnehmungen von Zugängen zu und Sicherheitsempfindungen in Räumen. Wie von Massey erläutert, werden Räume zur gleichen Zeit unterschiedlich wahrgenommen (2007).

Gleichzeitig entwickeln Studierende Alltagspraktiken, um sich den Regeln zu entziehen und Freiräume zu erschaffen. So umgehen sie strategische Absichten der Neuerungen, indem sie diese ganz im Sinne der Taktik „umfunktionieren“ (de Certeau 1988, 78). Indem die vielfältigen Praktiken der Studierenden gezeigt wurden, lässt sich eine Taktik erkennen, die den „alltäglichen Ablauf und

unauffällige [..] Kreativität“ (de Certeau 1988, 186) verbindet. Im Gegensatz zur Strategie der Administration, welche die Definitionsmacht hat und „Realitäten“ schaffen kann, kann die von den Studierenden angewandte Taktik nur situativ auf gegebene Strukturen reagieren und bleibt daher oft unsichtbar und ohne dauerhafte Sichtbarkeit im physischen Raum (de Certeau 1988, 13). Der „Freedom Square“ beispielsweise kann durch das performative Aneignen und widerspenstige Erinnern produziert werden, hat jedoch zumindest im materiellen Raum keinen dauerhaften Bestand. Der physische Raum mit seiner Symbolik und Benennung ist mit verschiedenen Gedächtnisarchiven verknüpft. Durch die angestrebte Nichtnutzung der Infrastrukturbezeichnungen und die Umdeutung der Symbolik der Statue und der Straßennamen nutzen Studierende die Produktivität der Alltagspraktiken, die in den Fähigkeiten des Umdeutens, Weglassens und Neukombinierens des Vorhandenen liegen (de Certeau 1988, 15). Die Idee vieler Studierender, neuen, materiellen Stellvertreterkörpern auf dem Campus eine eigene Symbolik zuzuschreiben, repräsentiert das Festhalten an Erinnerungen. Sie werden durch sichtbare und hörbare Widerstandsmethoden sowie durch Alltäglichkeiten, kombiniert mit dem nostalgischen Erinnern an die Besonderheit der JNU, konstant reproduziert. Die Orientierung an älteren Erzähl- und Deutungsmustern unterstützt die Erweiterung und Erhaltung eines inoffiziellen Gedächtnisses. De Certeau verweist auf die „Funktionsrelationen zwischen räumlichen Praktiken und Signifikationspraktiken“ (1988, 200–2021), die Raumaneignung legitimiert und das Gedächtnis stützt.

Initiativen wie die Guerilla Dhaba widersetzen sich der Kodierung von Raum und Zeit, rufen Erinnerungen hervor und kreieren gleichzeitig neue Handlungsweisen. Sowohl beim Rückgriff auf akademische Theorien und nostalgische Erinnerungen als auch beim performativen Repräsentieren nach außen als eine Einheit wird aus Erinnerungen an die „alte JNU“ Kraft geschöpft, wobei diese Erinnerungen mit einer Verantwortung für die Zukunft einhergehen. Durch ihre „Umgangsweise mit dem Raum“ (de Certeau 1988, 187) geben Studierende den Orten neue Bedeutungen.

Studierende nutzen zudem die Praktik des Archivierens. Die zunehmenden Einschränkungen im physischen Raum führen zu einer Verschiebung der Proteträume, da Reproduktion und Sichtbarmachung von Protestaktionen wichtiger werden. Durch die Einbeziehung des digitalen Raums stehen den Studierenden Technologien zur Verfügung, um Ereignisse und widerständige Praktiken zeit- und ortsübergreifend zu kommunizieren und zu erinnern (Kraidy 2015).

Erinnerungen und Narrative werden durch transmediale Erinnerungspraktiken in Form von Bildern zeit- und ortsübergreifend zirkuliert. Am Beispiel der Poster kann die Erschaffung eines digitalen, generations- wie parteiübergreifenden Archivs beobachtet werden. Die Poster verschwanden von den materiellen Wänden, um sich auf digitalen Wänden zu vervielfältigen, und werden somit transmedial zur Erinnerung archiviert. Doch ist der digitale Raum nicht nur ein Speicherort des Erinnerns, sondern auch des Vergessens. Durch die Fülle an Daten geraten sie dort

in Vergessenheit, wenn sie nicht regelmäßig neu geteilt und sichtbar gemacht werden. Ich gehe davon aus, dass die dargestellten Taktiken, kombiniert mit digitaler Archivierung und einem performativen Alltagsleben, der Kreation und Aufrechterhaltung eines transmedialen Erinnerungsraumes dienen. Laut Veronika Krönert macht de Certeau's Theorie der Alltagspraktiken deutlich, „dass medien- und populärkulturelle Phänomene in ihrer Bedeutung für das Alltagsleben nicht verstanden werden können, ohne die emotionale und körperliche bzw. materiale Dimension medial vermittelten Erlebens zu berücksichtigen" (2009, 55).

Resümee

Unter Einbeziehung der theoretischen Linsen lässt sich ein Kreislauf zwischen Strategie und Taktik erkennen. Seit 2016 findet ein tiefgreifender mehrdimensionaler Deutungskampf um das Fremd- und Selbstbild der JNU auf dem Campus statt, der stark mit der Frage verknüpft ist, wer für den Campus sprechen darf bzw. wer in welchen Kontexten gehört wird. Die Neuerungen auf dem Campus werden von Seiten der Universitätsleitung als Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Sicherheit und Verschönerung des Campus dargestellt. Die Gespräche und Interviews mit den Studierenden zeigten jedoch, dass ein Teil von ihnen in diesen Veränderungen keine Verbesserungen sieht, sondern eine systematische Beschneidung ihrer Rechte, und sie als Versuch der Universitätsleitung, und ferner der Regierung, wertet, Kontrolle über den Raum zu gewinnen.

Die zu Beginn des Artikels formulierten Erkenntnisse werden durch die Auswertung des Materials unterstrichen. Während seitens der Universitätsleitung die Verbreitung von Angst und Ungewissheit sowie Regeln und Strukturen genutzt werden, um alte Strukturen und Gemeinschaften vermeintlich zu ordnen, sie aber eigentlich zu kontrollieren und zu zerstören, wird darüber hinaus in den *Memory-making*-Prozess eingegriffen. Das führt dazu, dass alte Archive gelöscht werden und ein offizielles Gedächtnis installiert wird. Kurz, es kommt zu einem strategischen Eingriff in den Raum, der das Ziel verfolgt, den Campus umzuschreiben.

Die sich diesen Veränderungen widersetzenden Studierenden und Lehrenden nutzen Alltagspraktiken und Nostalgie als entscheidende Elemente des Widerstands und als Hoffnung für die Zukunft. Dementsprechend werden Alltagstaktiken und transmediale Erinnerungspraktiken genutzt, um ein Gegennarrativ zu kreieren bzw. zu erhalten. Jegliche Form des Widerstands, bei der es um den Erhalt der Rechte von Studierenden und Lehrenden sowie um die Unabhängigkeit der Universität geht, wird kombiniert mit physischem oder gedanklichem Festhalten an erinnerten alten Traditionen.

Die Entwicklung, dass alle Proteste und Bewegungen seit 2016 mit dem seither verstärkten „Anti-national"-Narrativ in Verbindung gebracht werden, erfordert von den Studierenden weiterhin, sich von dieser Zuschreibung zu lösen. Die Frage nach dem Image der JNU ist somit zwangsläufig mit der Frage nach der Definition von „national" verknüpft. Die Frage, wofür die JNU steht und was und wen sie

repräsentiert, ist daher ein national relevanter Aushandlungsprozess. Durch die Wahrnehmung der JNU als eine Art Opposition zur Regierung bzw. zu den hindunationalistischen Gruppierungen bewegt sie sich dabei über ihren eigentlichen Kontext hinaus. Insofern wird der Campus der JNU zu einem Stellvertreterkörper, an dessen Beispiel ausgehandelt wird, auf welche Idee von Indien die Nation zusteuert. Die für den Campus der JNU dargestellten Strukturen lassen viele Parallelen zum nationalen Geschehen erkennen. Der Erhalt des Erinnerungsraumes der JNU ist somit von nationaler Bedeutung.

Die Ereignisse an der JNU verdeutlichen eine konträre Vorstellung der Grundaufgaben von Universitäten. Während die aktuelle Regierung „nationalen Nutzen" und bedingungslose Loyalität von den Universitäten fordert, betonen verschiedene Angehörige der Universitäten (meist im Kontext mit den Geschehnissen an der JNU) die Wichtigkeit kritischen Hinterfragens und unabhängigen Denkens. Die Kreativität und Flexibilität, mit denen Studierende ihren Aktivismus und Alltag aufrechterhalten, spiegeln die Werte wider, die sie als entscheidend für eine Universität erachten.

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Interviews

Einzelinterviews

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H. B.	25.02.2019	JNU Campus
H. H.	25.02.2019	JNU Campus
M. K.	23.03.2019	JNU Campus
N. B.	24.02.2019	JNU Campus
R. H.	07.03.2019	JNU Campus
S. B.	23.02.2019	JNU Campus
V. K.	11.03. 2019	JNU Campus

Gruppeninterview

D. M. & M. S.	09.03.2019	JNU Campus

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Research note

Chinese Nurses in German Nursing Homes: A Bourdieusian Perspective on Migration Motivation

Julia Trautner

Abstract
International nurse migration is a well discussed topic in the Asian context. While the Philippines, for example, is often the focus of the discourse, there is also already a profound base of literature on Chinese nurse migration. Much has been written about Chinese nurses in Australia or Singapore, but little is known about them working in Europe. Why is it that Chinese nurses can be found working in German nursing homes? What motivates them to live so far away from their home country and work in a nursing home setting? This article criticizes the fact that motivations for nurse migration have mostly been studied from an economic push-and-pull perspective with weak explanatory power when it comes to individual motivations. Thus this qualitative study conducted among nine Chinese nurses working in German nursing homes breaks new ground by employing a Bourdieusian sociological approach to researching motivations for migration. It finds that instead of economic considerations, aspects of cultural capital like mobility, working and living conditions, or education are central to the decision to migrate among those nurses. This article shows that all nine nurses leveraged their "nursing capital" to free themselves from the influence of others and so change their life trajectories.

Keywords: nurse migration, China, Bourdieu, motivations, cultural capital

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Introduction

With decreasing birth rates and higher life expectancy, many Asian societies, like Germany, are faced with aging populations. While countries like Germany and Japan have struggled with societal aging for a long time and the Philippines, for example, has a long history of sending nurses abroad, the People's Republic of China is still relatively inexperienced with issues concerning elder care and therefore the topic has sparked the interest of many China scholars.

The Chinese tradition of children taking care of their elderly parents worked in the past, but with working-age people representing a declining share of the population since 2010 (World Bank 2019, n.p.), the economic rise of China, and countryside to city migration, this form of elder care has increasingly come under pressure. According to the World Health Organization, China had 254 million seniors aged over 60 in 2019. By the year 2040 this senior population will reach up to 28% of all citizens (World Health Organization n.y. n.p.). Relying only on the children of those up to 405 million elderly will then no longer be possible. This gives rise not only to a debate on the availability of nursing home beds, but also on how Chinese nurses—generally educated for work in hospitals—can be better qualified in the field.

Against this background, going abroad and working in foreign nursing homes to gain insight could be seen as a method to bring knowledge on elder care nursing to China. That Chinese registered nurses have been found working in German nursing homes since the 2010s thus might not seem surprising. In 2020 the German newspaper *Die Zeit* wrote that Chinese nurses working in German elder care institutions are an "experiment born out of necessity" (Die Zeit 2020, 15). According to the article, Germany needs nurses and China needs Germany's knowledge about elder care. In 2020, 15% of all nursing home staff in Germany were foreigners (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2021, 9). This shows that Germany depends on the immigration of care givers to keep the elder care sector working. In this context, several laws and regulations have been passed that ease immigration to this field of labor and attract foreigners. These include simplification of visa application and options to stay in Germany (e.g. Skilled Labor Immigration Act 2019). However, filling positions with foreign workers that were empty due to low social status or payment is by no means new. Already in the 1960s, Germany had started to recruit nurses from South Korea, for example (Yonson 2022, 157). In this perspective, Chinese nurses coming to work in German nursing homes are just a continuation of a method of plugging a deficit in human capital present since the early days of the Federal Republic of Germany. But the mere fact that two countries would be advantaged by nurse migration does not automatically mean that nurses really migrate. Additionally, there is a severe nurse shortage in China as well and out-migration increases the problem. Therefore, the question of what motivates Chinese nurses to migrate to work in German nursing homes arises.

There have been several studies on international nurse migration in the Asian context, with some also looking at motivations, especially regarding Filipino nurses

working abroad. Most authors use the push-and-pull theory, which focuses on economic factors influencing migration. Although it is the most commonly employed approach and explains migration in a macro-economic context, the push-and-pull model does not allow the researcher to understand the personal motivations influencing migration decisions.

By using Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of capital, this article brings in a sociological perspective to the debate on nurse migration, making it possible to go beyond the economic framework facilitating migration and to understand nurses' decisions on an individual level. As an explanatory study, this paper employs a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews with nine Chinese registered nurses working in German nursing homes reveal that economic incentives or professional development reasons alone cannot explain Chinese nurse migration. Rather, it is evident that cultural capital has a significant role to play when talking about migration motivations.

Predominance of the Push-and-Pull Model in Asian Nurse Migration Studies

Some Asian countries, such as the Philippines, have a long history of nurse migration. Thus there is already a profound base of literature on the topic. Compared to the Philippines, China is relatively new to nurse migration but can be seen as a potential big player as it has many unemployed nurses. Much has already been researched about international nurse migration from Asia and even from China in particular. However, those studies are usually not focused on explaining motivations. Nevertheless, the papers reviewed for this article implicitly or explicitly touch upon the issue, trying to explain why nurses decide to work abroad. Just like work on global nurse migration, the pieces on Asian nurse migration show that an economic push-and-pull theory is most often employed to theorize migration. Hongyan Li, Wenbo Nie and Junxin Li, for example, state that nurses are pushed to leave their home countries by factors like insufficient healthcare policies and pulled by the economic and political strength of receiving countries. In this context they identify professional development and wage increase as the two main drivers for Asian nurse migration (Li et al. 2014, 315ff.). Ferry Efendi et al. came to a similar conclusion when researching Indonesian nursing students' intentions to migrate to Japan. Those who were motivated by professional development goals had the most definite plans to emigrate (Efendi et al. 2020, 106 ff.). In a study on Filipino nurse migration to Saudi Arabia and on to Canada, Bukola Salami et al. found that pull factors might differ depending on the recipient country. While Filipino nurses first migrated due to economic reasons as they were attracted by the high pay in Saudi Arabia, they moved on to Canada for personal development, social security or citizenship options (Salami et al. 2014, 482).

In summary, authors have identified professional development or monetary reasons as the main drivers of migration. When reviewing the Chinese case in particular, the

motivations do not seem to be much different. Several researchers have stated that professional development options and good working conditions abroad are the main pull factors for Chinese nurses. Unlike most studies mentioned before, the literature on the Chinese case is more specific on the push factors. Zhiwu Zack Fang as well as Ayaka Matsuno write that China is facing the paradoxical problem of nurse shortage and nurse unemployment at the same time. While many newly educated nurses enter the job market each year, the healthcare system is not capable of employing them all. This is not because of there being too many nurses, but because of underfunding. Consequently, there are not only many unemployed nurses, but also high workloads and stress for those nurses working in Chinese hospitals (Fang 2007, 1419f.; Matsuno 2009, 6f.). Therefore, there are two push factors, namely unemployment and bad working conditions. Experts from nursing homes and recruitment agencies in a dissertation on Chinese nurses in German nursing homes also stated that Chinese nurses working for or sent abroad migrated due to high stress levels and long working hours in China (Jiang-Siebert 2019, 92).

In accordance with what has been written on other countries of origin, professional development also seems to be a major motivation for migration among nurses from China. While it was not specified in the pieces read on nurses from other countries, it is clearly written in the literature on Chinese nurse migration that professional development in the educational systems of the developed countries of their choice is the most sought-after aim. Although Chinese nurses also seek to get better jobs through international work experience when returning to China (as described in Jiang-Siebert 2019), several papers and monographs show that they mainly want to develop in their profession by receiving university education in their destination countries (e.g. Zhang and Hon 2012, 81). A survey by Zhang, Chen, and Liu found that 60% of Chinese nurses emigrating to Australia, the US, and Singapore name further education as their main reason for migration. The authors suggest that sometimes this is not only because of interest in education but also because of easier entry to the destination country through a student visa. After one or two years, they then apply for jobs as nurses (Zhang et al.2013, 39). Furthermore, they state that education is named as motivation more often among those nurses working in the US and Australia, while nurses in Singapore mainly go there to find jobs after unemployment in China.

Though these articles show that there are a few pieces by Chinese authors on migrant nurses, none of those studies focus specifically on motivations. Moreover, no paper looks specifically at migration in the context of work in nursing homes instead of hospitals. Although there are two monographs on Chinese nurses working in German nursing homes, the authors both take a different perspective. Jiang-Siebert was interested in exploring factors influencing migration but only interviewed nursing institutions in Germany and agencies, not including nurses themselves (Jiang-Siebert 2019, 16). The second study composed by Changrong Deng was focused on the status of Chinese nurses' integration in German nursing homes. She used a quantitative survey to approach her topic and drew on findings by Jiang-Siebert to

state something on migration motivations (Deng 2021). Thus no qualitative interviews with Chinese nurses have been done so far. Directly interviewing Chinese nurses and letting them explain their motivations themselves can add an important piece to the puzzle of understanding nurse migration in general and the migration of Chinese nurses in particular.

Additionally, this article not only seeks to advocate for a qualitative approach, but also for employing a different theoretical perspective. Although the push-and-pull model has its strengths in explaining macro-economic and societal factors in migration, it is argued here that this is not sufficient to identify motivations for individual migrant nurses. If, for example, working conditions are better in the recipient country, why do most nurses still stay in the home country? How do plans for the future influence motivations for migration? This article argues that a sociological approach is needed to get a deeper understanding of personal motivations and a more individualistic picture of "the nurse migrant."

Advocating for a Bourdieusian Perspective on Nurse Migration

When studying migration in general, economic theories have gained the upper hand in research. One of the most prominent is *A theory of migration,* written in 1966 by Everett S. Lee, in which he developed the "push-and-pull" model of migration. He criticized that classical migration theory up until his time only looked at characteristics of migrants and did not study the underlying reasons for migration. He filled this research gap by introducing a simple model of why people migrate, knowing that it was very general, but that it therefore could also be used for all kinds of research on migration. Lee stated that there are factors in the country of origin and in the country of destination which influence a person's decision to migrate. "In every area, there are countless factors which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it, and there are others which tend to repel them" (Lee 1966, 50). If the positive factors in the country of destination are greater than those in the country of origin, the person will decide to migrate. He acknowledged that migration is still not a simple cost-benefit analysis as obstacles and irrational decisions also play a role. However, he found that negative factors (push) in the home country and positive factors (pull) in the country of destination are the main explanatory elements for migration, although this theoretical model would never be able to explain every individual complex case (Lee 1966, 51).

The model Lee developed is often used in migration studies today as it considers aspects in both the country of origin and the country of destination (also see Dywili et al. 2013). However, this cost-benefit macroeconomic approach to migration is insufficient for qualitatively researching very personal motivations for migration as it looks at the phenomenon from a more general perspective. Later theories developed for researching global migration also put heavy emphasis on the economic perspective. Migration is understood as demand and supply rationale (e.g. world-system theory; labor market segmentation theory) or as a personal investment in

human capital (Schwenken 2018, 78; 87; 92). According to the human capital-based theory by Gary Becker, human capital is the most important form of capital and investment in it is necessary for economic success (Becker 2006, 292). If wages are higher somewhere else, migration might be the result.

Without negating the strengths of all these approaches, however, they have weaknesses when migration is studied in more depth. As has been mentioned above, economic considerations do not seem to be the predominant factor influencing Chinese nurse migration. So why do those nurses migrate? Thus, choosing a theory like Bourdieu's sociological concepts of capital that studies people and their motivations from a more differentiated perspective seems to be more adequate.

Bourdieu's theory is no classical migration theory but rather an approach helping the researcher to understand why people are in the positions they are in and why people take the decisions they take. As his theory has explanatory power for why a person decides to do something, it is a fitting approach for studying motivations for migration.

According to Bourdieu, three forms of capital structure our social lives. Those are economic, cultural, and social capital. For him, it is important to get away from economic-centered theory building as economists fail to "take systematic account of the structure of the different chances to profit which the various markets offer these agents […] as the function of the volume and the composition of their assets" (Bourdieu 1986, 244). With this, he especially criticizes the human capital theory by Becker and states that with their focus only on economic profit, economists like Becker remain unaware of why people invest differently in human capital. They do not see that "ability or talent is itself the product of an investment of time and cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1986, 252). Economic capital is the basis of the other forms of capital as they derive from it, but the investment of it into the other forms of capital defines what people do.

The greatest emphasis in his theory is on cultural capital, which can have three different states, namely the embodied, the objectified and the institutionalized state. Embodied cultural capital can be cultivation, culture, or education, for example, and time needs to be invested in accumulating it. Embodied cultural capital becomes an essential part of a person's self and can be either acquired or inherited through socialization by the parents. The value of this state of cultural capital lies in its unequal distribution (Bourdieu 1986, 245).

Objectified cultural capital, different from the embodied state, is not inside a person's mind but takes material form (Bourdieu 1986, 247). This could be a piece of art or a machine, but also a language certificate.

The last state of cultural capital is the institutionalized state. It can be described as a specific form of objectified cultural capital that has gained institutional recognition. This is mainly qualifications and certificates authorized by an official source. Having such a certificate of qualification, the bearer does not constantly have to prove his or her ability but can be assured of its recognition through the certificate. This is what

Bourdieu calls the "magic of the power of instituting" (Bourdieu 1986, 247). Moreover, institutionalized capital makes it possible to compare cultural capital and attach economic value to it. The notion of institutionalized cultural capital is especially relevant when looking at the case of Chinese nurse migration. To receive a work permit requires certain language and education levels. If there were no official, institutionalized certificate for language levels or papers showing professional qualifications, it would hardly be possible to migrate at all.

The essential part of Bourdieu's theory is that these described forms are also convertible into each other. Economic capital can be invested in school education to achieve institutionalized cultural capital, namely degrees or certificates, and this capital can then be used to find a job and increase the initial amount of economic capital, for example. But the conversion of capital is often not direct. Time and effort need to be added to it. Thus Bourdieu suggests that cultural capital is best measured by the time invested in it (Bourdieu 1986, 253). And as time needs to be invested, the outcome of this investment becomes uncertain.

Another important part of Bourdieu's theory adding to the understanding of the phenomenon of migration is his work on habitus and the field. Habitus is the embodied cultural capital or the social in a person and the field is the "objectified social" (Bourdieu 2020, 29). The habitus can be understood as a key to a certain field. If it fits, the field can be accessed. To acquire the correct habitus, people need to develop a "feel for the game" and they have to "invest in the game" (Bourdieu 2020, 83). Which habitus it takes to access the field can be subject to change over time as "an external phenomenon is retranslated into the logic of the field" (Bourdieu 2020, 197). The entry requirements to the field or the condition of the field might change and influence the habitus needed. In the case here, nurse shortage and an aging society influence the field of elder care in Germany and potentially lower the qualifications needed to access it or for the work done in it.

According to Bourdieu, every field is structured by economic and educational capital. This structure is designed to explain "why it is that people find themselves in the place they are in, and, being where they are, why it is they do what they do" (Bourdieu 2020, 220). This is thus a fitting theory to study motivations for migration.

There are some other authors in the literature who also took this approach to researching migration. When reviewing the literature, two concepts appeared to be especially relevant in the context of Chinese nurse migration to Germany. Those concepts are "migration-facilitating capital" and "transnational habitus."

In her article, Jaeeun Kim describes that not all cultural capital has the same value for migrants as states play a central role in the migration process. According to Kim, states have symbolic power in engaging in the governance of qualifications, mobility, and identity. By introducing skilled migrant immigration policies, countries decide what capital is convertible into what value when people migrate. Thus states are the "central bank of symbolic credit" (Kim 2018, 266). Converting this for the study here, by lowering the entry barriers for educated nurses to the

German job market, the German government increases the value of "migration-facilitating capital" (Chinese nursing degrees).

Rosa-Maria Radogna adds that there is also a certain transnational form of habitus in migrants. According to her paper, the migrants' attitudes differ from those who do not migrate and the attitudes in this transnational habitus also differ among migrants, allowing them to identify different categories of migrants (Radogna 2019, 66). As an example, she states that a dominant attitude in some migrants can be mobility (Radogna 2019, 64). Thus this study includes a look at the role of mobility in Chinese nurses' migration decisions.

Motivations for Nurse Migration: the Case of Chinese Nurses Working in German Nursing Homes

Because the secondary literature basis is small, in-depth, semi-structured interview data was collected. Nine relevant interviews were chosen for the study, all done in approximately 30 minutes of Zoom or WeChat online video calls. The participants had Chinese citizenship, all but one were registered nurses— meaning that they had passed the National Nurse Qualification Examination after their education in China— and all had worked in German in-patient nursing homes after their arrival in Germany. Some no longer work there, but among those, all had worked there for a minimum time from their arrival to their job recognition by the German authorities, which is usually between one and two years. The table below shows a list of all interview participants, including some general information about them.

The participants were part of a group of 570 Chinese working in German nursing homes in total. Of those, 143 were men and 427 were women (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2021). The lower number of men fits into the picture that fewer men work in the sector in general. That said, Chinese nurse migration is different from what has been seen before. Indian nurse migration to Germany in the 1960s, for example, mainly happened among women and had significant influence on gender roles as their husbands had no opportunity to work (Goel 2019, 104). This way, the women became the breadwinners when moving to Germany. As will be discussed later, migration of Chinese nurses is connected to role expectations in China. However, in this case no gender specific pattern or "feminization of migration"—as described by Ahn Yonson for the case of Korean nurse migration to Germany (Yonson 2022, 158)—could be identified here.

The socio-economic backgrounds of the interview partners were quite diverse, ranging from a middle-aged woman from a poor village in Anhui (participant E) to the daughter of a respected professor in Hunan (participant F).

Table: General information on interview participants

	Gender	Position in Germany	Place of work	Chinese degree	Years in Germany	Marital status	Children	Province of origin
A	f	recognized nurse	Darmstadt	Bachelor of Nursing	>5	unmarried	no	Sichuan
B	m	recognized nurse	Berlin	Bachelor of Nursing	1	unmarried	no	Sichuan
C	f	trainee	Magdeburg	Higher Vocational College Graduate	1.5	unmarried	no	Gansu
D	f	recognized nurse	Potsdam	Higher Vocational College Graduate	3	unmarried	no	Shandong
E	f	elder care assistant	Braunschweig	Secondary Vocational School Graduate	1	married	yes	Anhui
F	f	recognized nurse	Hamburg	Bachelor of Arts	>5	unmarried	no	Hunan
G	f	recognized nurse	Brandenburg	Bachelor of Nursing	2	unmarried	no	Hubei
H	m	recognized nurse	Schopfheim	Bachelor of Nursing	4.5	married	yes	Jiangsu
I	m	recognized nurse	Berlin	Secondary Vocational School Graduate	>5	unmarried	no	Hebei

Source: own data (f= female, m= male).

The hands-on steps for analyzing the interview data were taken from Lyn Richards. In *Handling Qualitative Data,* she describes how analysis "up from the data" can be done (Richards 2021, 101). Richards argues that the goal of qualitative data analysis is not only to answer questions but also to give ideas for further research. The explanations derived from qualitative analysis are always generating—at least a small—theory, which can then again be tested and added to. For coding data, she suggests a method similar to what Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin use in *Grounded Theory* (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 103; 113). Richards especially refers to Strauss's and Corbin's first data coding step. "Open Coding" is a procedure through which abstracting and conceptualizing concrete actions, events, etc. can be done. Discovered concepts can then be turned into more abstract categories. Following that

method, interpretative codes focusing on the extent to which what was said was connected to nurses' motivations to migrate were generated. Codes were revised several times to make sure that their meaning was the same for any paragraph or word that was coded with them. Later, categories emerging from coding were defined to arrive at a higher-level abstraction of the interview data.

Interviewing nine nurses and analyzing their motivations can certainly not represent all Chinese nurses' motivations to work in Germany. However, it gives insight into their decision-making process and suggests patterns of motivations. Additionally, it allows the relevance of a sociological perspective on nurse migration to be shown.

Looking at Bourdieu's theory and preliminary literature on nurse migration, it could be expected that economic incentives would play a major role in Chinese nurse migration. Additionally, Bourdieu's theory suggests that economic considerations could motivate people to migrate. Cultural capital, such as a nursing degree, has value in its convertibility to economic capital. If the "exchange rate" of a nursing degree to money is higher abroad, that could cause migration. Although literature and theory suggest a central position for economic incentives in the decision to migrate, interviews among Chinese nurses in German nursing homes showed contrary findings.

Unlike what was initially assumed, economic factors were an obstacle rather than an incentive in many respects. First, nurses described that migrating to Germany involved paying for a placement agency and taking German classes full time for several months in China. During this time, they had no opportunity to earn money. Additionally, migration did not constitute an increase in economic capital for many of them, as the nurses perceived their payment in Chinese hospitals as relatively good.

> [N]urses earn pretty well for such efforts in relation to other professions in China. […] the wage here [Germany] is a bit low […]. (Participant H)

In one case, working in a German nursing home even resulted in a reduction of economic capital. The participant had a well-paid job in China's media industry and only changed to become a nurse when migrating.

Only in one of the cases did economic considerations follow the expected pattern. Nurse E was already 44 years old at the time of the interview and had a son and parents to care for in China. In the small village she came from she did not earn much compared to her pay in Germany. She used her certification as a registered nurse in China as "migration-facilitating capital," as has been described in Kim's paper, converting objectified cultural capital to economic capital.

> In China, I worked in a very small hospital in a very small town. There I earned very little money, but I have to feed my son and my parents. […] In Germany, there is more money […] I can earn more money and support my parents, and I can provide good living conditions for my son and my parents. (Participant E)

Having discovered that most of the nurses participating were not motivated to come to Germany by economic incentives—either in Germany or after return to China—this does not mean that nurses could not profit economically anyway. Participants F and I even got offers from China to work as a director of a nursing home in Shanghai and as a nurse educator in Chengdu respectively. Nevertheless, they turned these offers down as they preferred their lives in Germany over increased economic capital. This shows even more that economic considerations were not at the center of migration decisions in the cases under research. Some others also thought that working in Germany and speaking the language cannot even theoretically be leveraged. Participant E, for example, said that no German speakers were needed in Chinese nursing homes or hospitals and G added that on-site training has no cultural value in China as only university degrees matter for promotion.

The qualitative study shows that only counting economic factors when trying to understand nurse migration is not sufficient for explanation building.

The interviews instead revealed that there are two main patterns of motivation that are connected to certain groups of Chinese nurse migrants. On the one hand, nurses who were older and already had children were the ones who named economic considerations as having influenced their migration decisions. Nurse E, for example, had to care for her parents and son in China and especially emphasized the value of social security. She was already more than ten years older than the other participants and thought that she would not be able to find a job again in China if she returned there. Nurse H, who also had children, was motivated by financial and social security advantages as he had to care for his family as well. He was especially incentivized to come to Germany as insurances like unemployment and healthcare insurance made it possible for him to plan for his family without having to fear financial insecurity in case of job loss or illness. On the other hand, nurses who were relatively young, not married and whose families were not described as poor were all motivated by more cultural aspects. They only had to care for themselves and therefore they were motivated to come to Germany to travel or to be able to go to university. Nurse F is an example of this type of Chinese nurse migrant. Her parents were a college professor and a state civil servant, and she was young and unmarried. She stated that she always did what she wanted to and also independently decided to work in Germany. F had just started university in Germany and was optimistic about her work and private life in Germany.

The importance of cultural factors for most nurse migrants can be seen when looking at the different sets of motivations identified through coding. While only two nurses were incentivized by economic factors (E and H), six wanted to use their capital of being a nurse for freedom to travel, better working conditions like regulated working hours or access to free university education.

Five out of the nine nurses wanted to come to Germany for the opportunities it would open to them concerning freedom to travel. Unlike most Chinese citizens, nurses are able to get a work visa relatively easily in Germany as they are employed in a

shortage area (see German Residency Act 2004 and Professional Qualification Assessment Act 2011). Thus nurses can travel all over Europe with the Schengen Visa they receive, increasing their "mobility capital." Connected to that, it became clear during some of the interviews that nurses often had no free choice of profession in China. Either their grades only allowed them to study nursing or they were given a small variety of options to choose from, which they did not like. In this context, nurse A, for example, stated that she decided upon nursing as this area of study is transnationally convertible and "nursing professionals are needed everywhere" (Participant A). By becoming a registered nurse in China she knew that she would obtain institutionalized capital with high "convertibility value," making it relatively easy for her to fulfill her wish to work abroad.

Besides leveraging the—sometimes undesired—capital of being a nurse in order to travel and be able to go abroad, nurses also used it to gain access to education in Germany in two ways. For one, nurse H, who had children, mentioned that he was able to provide his children with German school education because he worked in the country.

> There are many factors, not only income but also education. In China now there is a tendency that you can send your children to a good school only if you have money. Here there is no such thing. (Participant H)

And secondly, those nurses who were young used their nursing degrees to gain access to free German university education through migration. This allowed them to either develop their careers in their preferred way, as opposed to their nursing education in China, or to get a university degree in general. One participant stated that university degrees are valued higher than vocational education in China and thus using their nursing degrees to come to Germany first and study at university could be seen as a way to potentially increase economic capital in China.

> If I have a bachelor's and master's degree, then I can find a good job. If I just worked in Germany for several years and then fly back to China, then I have no advantage. A friend of mine did nursing training in China and then worked in Germany for three years. When she was looking for a job in China, she also said that she had already worked abroad for 3 years. But the employer said that it doesn't matter because she doesn't have a bachelor's degree. That's a real pity. That's why I want to study first. In any case, we need to raise our status. (Participant G)

One motivation that was identified across both major patterns of motivation and that was also commonly discussed in the literature was working and living conditions in Germany. Eight out of nine participants mentioned the "slowness" or "quietness" of work and life in Germany as compared to the "hustle and bustle" (Participant H) in China. In this context, converting a Chinese nursing degree into a job and life in Germany can also be seen as an active search for a reduced pace of life. Nurses described their work or internship in a Chinese hospital as physically and mentally stressful and saw migration as an option to escape this life trajectory without having to change jobs.

> And I find the working atmosphere in Germany is very relaxed. When we've done the work, we can take a very relaxing break, eat, drink, even cook. I think that's great. In China, that's impossible. […] in China, every step of the work is checked or rechecked. If we didn't do something perfectly, we are criticized, but nobody can be perfect. This thing stressed me out a lot in China. (Participant G)

Not only did the participants feel stressed by their work as nurses in China, they also wanted to free themselves from the strong influence of others on their lives. Nurse H said that if others bought luxury products for their children then he felt forced to do so too, or if others talked about their new cars he would have to get a car too. In Germany, he did not experience this kind of peer pressure and thus improved his personal living conditions through migration. Although he as a nurse was not among the top earners in China, he found a way to use his cultural capital of being a nurse to escape this pressure of having to compete with others over status symbols not by increasing his economic capital, but by using his cultural capital as "migration-facilitating capital." H's migration was also a way of working around Chinese social constraints. He stated that it is not only that he had to compete for social status in China, but also that there are certain unwritten rules for young males who want to get married. Being a "worthy" husband involves having one's own flat, for example. Escaping social constraints is a pattern that is common to nurse migration in general. To give an example, Suin Roberts, in her study on Korean nurses who came to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s, found that marriage restrictions were among their reasons for migration (Roberts 2010, 32).

Similar to the way in which living conditions influenced nurse H to migrate, nurse F was also motivated by the perceived "quietness" in Germany. F stated that people in China constantly criticize others. In this context, "quietness" can be understood as the absence of other "voices," of others who told those nurses what to do or how to behave before they moved to Germany. This is a living condition that she appreciated, but also a "freeing" from her life trajectory.

> Chinese people don't know any limit, they always tell you that you don't look good for your age and status and so on. I don't want anything like that and I also want more freedom, both from the government and from family. Unfortunately, I can only have that in Germany. (Participant F)

Although it has been clearly shown that the Chinese nurses wanted to gain agency and to decide on their futures for themselves, this interestingly also necessitated relying on others. The nurses were not able to find workplaces and migrate alone, but rather cooperated with placement agencies. From what was stated in the interviews, some nurses had little say in the decision to go to Germany. They just wanted to go abroad and the recruitment agencies introduced Germany to them as a destination, so they went there. Not only did the recruitment agencies influence their choice of destination country, but also that of the actual workplace. Nurses' options were limited to what was offered to them. Having the opportunity to freely change jobs after gaining job recognition in Germany was a common motivation to accept

one of the nursing home offers. This made them subject to others' decisions again even though that was exactly what they wanted to get away from.

A second downside of this third-party control was that the nurses were inexperienced in work in elder care institutions and thus often felt overwhelmed with the physical work they had to do. From their perspective, the "dirty work" should have been done by assistants. Unmet expectations of this kind were a major reason for switching jobs later. Participant G, for example, no longer wanted to do that hard physical work and changed to being a nurse in a hospital in a city in Brandenburg after two years in a nursing home.

Discussion and Conclusion

As has been shown, some of the participating nurses did not decide to become nurses all by themselves. However, after they finished their training in China and became certified (institutionalizing their nursing capital), participants took decision-making power back and opted for migration. Their cultural capital of being nurses enabled them to do so.

But what motivated those Chinese nurses to work in German nursing homes? Several articles have already been written on nurse migration from Asia and even from China in particular. Although most of them do not focus on the question of why nurses decide to migrate, the papers indicate that economic considerations and professional development are the main drivers of migration. Using a push-and-pull approach, however, those motivations are very general and describe more a macro perspective on migration and factors favoring it at state level. Although this approach has its strengths in explaining why migration happens in general, it is less suitable for examining motivations for decisions on an individual level. Considering social and cultural aspects of migration decisions is only a marginal part of this economic approach. Thus Bourdieu's sociological theory was used to study motivations in more depth. To do this, nine qualitative in-depth interviews with Chinese nurses working in German nursing homes were conducted and analyzed.

It was found that cultural factors were more central to migration decisions than economic considerations. Although the two nurses who were married and had children emphasized income and financial security through the German insurance system, most nurses were still in their twenties and not concerned with these factors. These younger nurses leveraged their nursing degrees to increase their cultural capital in the form of mobility or build a perspective to increase economic capital through investment in German university education. Although younger and older nurses displayed different motivations, they all had one in common. All nine nurses used their "nursing capital" to free themselves from the influences of others and to change their life trajectories. Some exchanged their stressful and undesired jobs in Chinese hospitals for ones with better regulated working hours and a better working atmosphere in Germany, and some wanted to change their living conditions. Nurse

F, for example, no longer wanted to be criticized by others around her and nurse H escaped the competition over status symbols.

Comparing the findings from this study with what has already been explored in the literature, it can be said that the case of Chinese nurses working in German nursing homes is different from the cases of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia or Indonesian nursing students in Japan, for example. While Filipino nurses in the study by Salami et al. study initially emigrated for economic benefits and Indonesian nurses wanted to improve their career prospects through professional development in Japan, Chinese nurses migrated despite often not profiting in any economic sense. Seven out of the nine did not name economic incentives as a reason for migration. In their case, migrating to work in Germany was instead a way to escape their previous trajectory toward being nurses in Chinese hospitals for the rest of their lives. They converted their institutionalized capital and turned it into something they liked better.

Using a Bourdieusian approach to Chinese nurse migration to Germany and employing qualitative methods allowed examination of a more individual level of motivations and the conclusion that there is more to it than just economic and professional reasons. Because only nine nurses were interviewed in a qualitative manner, the list of motivations and the typologies drawn from the analysis are certainly not complete. However, this article can give a suggestion about how Chinese nurse migration to Germany is structured. More research needs to be done to build on the patterns outlined above to see whether the suggestions are correct and complete.

This study was focused on Chinese nurses as actors and specifically researched their personal motivations. However, it is not only the Chinese nurses themselves that influence whether migration takes place. In that context, the role and position of other actors should be subject to further research.

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Asien aktuell

Reaktionen auf Russlands Angriffskrieg gegen die Ukraine und Südkoreas Außenpolitik auf Abwegen

Hannes B. Mosler

Einleitung

Der russische Überfall auf die Ukraine im Februar 2022 hat neben den verheerenden Folgen vor allem für die ukrainische Bevölkerung auch zu globalen Verwerfungen geführt. Die Rivalität zwischen den Großmächten USA und China, die sich im letzten Jahrzehnt sukzessive aufgebaut hat, scheint sich durch den Ukraine-Konflikt zu einer Konfliktkonstellation zwischen den USA, der NATO, der EU und ihren Verbündeten auf der einen und Russland, China und ihren Verbündeten auf der anderen Seite zu erweitern und zu verschärfen. Südkorea gehört zu einer Reihe von Ländern, die sich in dieser Situation noch enger an den Westen binden wollen. Vor diesem Hintergrund beschäftigt sich der folgende Text damit, wie Südkorea – mit dem neuen konservativen Präsidenten Yoon Suk-yeol etwas mehr als ein Jahr im Amt – auf den Ukraine-Konflikt und die daraus resultierenden weltpolitischen Herausforderungen reagiert und was die Gründe dafür sind.

Welche Position hat die südkoreanische Regierung und Zivilgesellschaft zum russischen Überfall auf die Ukraine eingenommen?

Als der Krieg in der Ukraine ausbrach, war noch der liberale Präsident Moon Jae-in (2017–2022) im Amt, der den russischen Angriff relativ schnell offiziell verurteilte. In einer Erklärung des südkoreanischen Außenministeriums (MOFA) betonte die Regierung, dass die Souveränität, territoriale Integrität und Unabhängigkeit der Ukraine respektiert werden müsse und dass Südkorea die internationale Gemeinschaft bei der Lösung des Konflikts voll unterstütze (MOFA 2022). Diese schnelle Reaktion der südkoreanischen Regierung war bereits im Vorfeld vorbereitet worden und orientierte sich deutlich an den Reaktionen westlicher Staaten sowie Japans. Zudem hatte sich Südkorea bereits knapp zwei Wochen zuvor (12.2.) öffentlich zur Unterstützung der Ukraine bekannt. Präsident Moon hatte sich noch zwei Tage vor dem russischen Angriff in einer Kabinettssitzung zur Souveränität

und territorialen Integrität der Ukraine geäußert und erklärt, dass seine Regierung die Bemühungen der internationalen Gemeinschaft unterstütze (Pak Kyŏng-chun 2022). Schon Ende Februar (28.2.) verurteilte die südkoreanische Regierung die russische Invasion in der Ukraine erneut und beschloss, sich aktiv an den Bemühungen der internationalen Gemeinschaft um eine friedliche Lösung der Situation zu beteiligen. Diese schnelle und resolute kritische Reaktion auf die russische Aggression zeigte bereits die konservative Vorgängerregierung unter Park Geun-hye 2014, als Russland die Krim überfiel (Pak Chŏng-kyu 2014).[1] Schließlich setzt auch der konservative Yoon Suk-yeol, der seit dem 10. Mai 2022 im Präsidentenamt ist, diese klare Linie fort. Bei mehreren Treffen mit US-Präsident Joe Biden und in Interviews mit der internationalen Presse bekräftigte er wiederholt seine Unterstützung für die Ukraine (Kim Hyo-chŏng 2022). Selbst die Lieferung tödlicher Waffen schloss Yoon nicht aus (Kim et al. 2023), eine Position, die er wiederholt äußerte (Brunnstrom and Beach 2023).

Man kann also sagen, dass die generelle Haltung der südkoreanischen Regierung in der Ukraine-Frage trotz unterschiedlicher ideologischer Ausrichtungen relativ einhellig ist.[2] Im Detail gibt es jedoch Unterschiede zwischen den beiden großen politischen Lagern. Im konservativen Lager sieht man Russland als den allein verantwortlichen Aggressor und unterstützt die USA und die NATO fast uneingeschränkt. Im liberalen Lager gibt es dagegen differenziertere Stimmen, die zwar der Verurteilung Russlands als Aggressor gänzlich zustimmen, aber gleichzeitig auch einen Teil der Verantwortung bei den USA und der NATO sehen. Ein weiterer Unterschied zeigt sich in der Argumentation zur Frage der Waffenlieferungen an die Ukraine. Während die Konservativen fast uneingeschränkt für Waffenlieferungen an die Ukraine plädieren, nehmen die Liberalen eine kritische Position ein (Pak T'ae-u 2023; Segye Ilbo 2023). In der Zivilgesellschaft zeigt sich eine ähnliche Verteilung der Positionen und Argumentationsmuster (Chang 2022). Einig scheinen sich beide Lager in der Analyse, dass die militärische Schwäche der Ukraine ein Teilfaktor war, der eine russische Invasion wahrscheinlicher gemacht hatte.

1 Präsidentin Park verurteilte die Invasion der Krim und unterstützte die UN-Sanktionen gegen Russland (15.3.2014). Damit folgte sie auch einer entsprechenden Aufforderung des damaligen US-Vize-Präsidenten Joe Biden (14.3.), die der damalige US-Präsident Barack Obama später (25.3.) bei einem Treffen in Den Haag erneuerte. Die Haltung von Präsidentin Park schien zum Teil sogar deutlicher als die von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (27.3.). Sie bekräftigte diese Haltung auch beim Gipfeltreffen mit Obama (26.4.) und unterstützte weitere Sanktionen gegen Russland nach dem Abschuss des zivilen Passagierflugzeugs der Malaysia Airlines (17.7.) sowie in ihrer Rede vor der Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen (24.9.).

2 Einen ausführlichen Artikel zu den gegensätzlichen Positionen der zwei Lager während des Präsidialwahlkampfes 2022 hat Kölling (2022) geschrieben.

Welche Maßnahmen haben die Regierung und die Zivilgesellschaft ergriffen?

Die Regierung unter Präsident Moon Jae-in ergriff in den letzten Monaten ihrer Amtszeit zwischen Ende Februar und Anfang Mai 2022 bereits zahlreiche Initiativen. Sie stimmte allen internationalen Sanktionen gegen Russland zu und beteiligte sich proaktiv an ihrer Umsetzung, z. B. durch den Exportstopp von strategischen und nicht-strategischen Gütern nach Russland. Unter anderem haben Unternehmen wie Hyundai, Samsung und LG ihre Aktivitäten in Russland eingestellt (Yi Yun-jŏng 2022). Ebenso unterstützte die südkoreanische Regierung den Ausschluss Russlands aus SWIFT. Darüber hinaus beschloss Südkorea, zusätzliche strategische Ölreserven zur Stabilisierung des internationalen Energiemarktes zu fördern und den Weiterverkauf von Flüssiggas (LNG) nach Europa zu prüfen (MOFA 2022a). Neben Einzahlungen in den NATO-Ukraine-Treuhandfonds (NATO Comprehensive Assistance Package) (MOFA 2022b) unterstützte die Regierung die Internationale Atomenergiebehörde IAEA mit der Zahlung von 1,2 Millionen USD dabei, ukrainische Atommeiler zu sichern (MOFA 2022c). Südkorea hat außerdem mehrfach selbst umfangreiche Hilfslieferungen direkt in die Anrainerstaaten der Ukraine und in die Ukraine selbst gesendet. Bisher hat Südkorea die Ukraine mit zwei humanitären Hilfslieferungen im Wert von insgesamt 40 Mio. USD unterstützt, darunter Schutzhelme, kugelsichere Westen, medizinische Produkte und Fertiggerichte (Haewoemunhwa Hongbowŏn 2022).

Die Regierung unter Präsident Yoon Suk-yeol hat den USA Ende 2022 im Rahmen des Ringtausches 100.000 Artilleriegeschosse geliefert und darüber hinaus weitere 500.000 Artilleriegeschosse versprochen, damit diese ihrerseits die Ukraine beliefern können. Zwar hatte der ukrainische Präsident Wolodymyr Selenskyj Mitte April Südkorea explizit um Waffenlieferungen gebeten, ist damit aber bisher auf taube Ohren gestoßen (Yonhapnews 2022). In einem umstrittenen Zeitungsinterview sagte Präsident Yoon zwar, dass er nicht ausschließen könne, zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt auch Waffen zu liefern, dass er dies aber derzeit nicht in Erwägung ziehe (siehe oben).[3] Auch bei seinem jüngsten Besuch in der Ukraine im Juli 2023 blieb er diese Linie treu. Sein Besuch vor Ort im Kriegsgebiet war vor allem von großer symbolischer Bedeutung. Wie seine Amtskollegen westlicher Staaten und auch der

3 Ein anderer Effekt des Ukraine-Konflikts ist, dass Südkorea seinen Status als internationaler Waffenhändler stark ausbauen konnte und nach Angaben des Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Südkorea in den letzten fünf Jahren der am schnellsten wachsende Waffenexporteur der Welt war (Joongang Daily 2023; Joyce und Smith 2023; Hämäläinen 2023). Vor allem die umfangreichen Lieferungen nach Polen haben dafür gesorgt, ein Riesengeschäft, bei dem Südkorea sogar Deutschland ausgestochen hat (Yoon 2023). Polen konnte so mit neuester Waffentechnologie für die eigene Sicherheit sorgen, nachdem es viele seiner Waffensysteme an die Ukraine verkauft hatte. Aber auch Anfragen aus den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten, Kanada, Indonesien, Australien und Ägypten erreichen Südkorea, das damit seine Position als Waffenhändler weiter ausbaut.

japanische Premierminister zuvor konnte Yoon mit seinem Besuch ein Zeichen der Solidarität mit der Ukraine setzen. Auch als Bekräftigung des Schulterschlusses mit den westlichen Mächten gegen Russlands Aggressionskrieg diente der spontane (?) Abstecher vom NATO-Gipfel in Vilnius. An konkreter Unterstützung sagte Yoon der Ukraine die Lieferung von Minenräumtechnologie zu. Außerdem kündigte er an, neben weiterer humanitärer Hilfe für die Ukraine auch die Beteiligung von südkoreanischen Unternehmen am Wiederaufbau des Landes nach dem Krieg zu unterstützen.

Auch die südkoreanische Bevölkerung scheint in der Mehrheit skeptisch gegenüber der Lieferung von tödlichen Waffen an die Ukraine. Durchschnittlich 60 bis 70 Prozent geben in Umfragen regelmäßig an, gegen solche Waffenlieferungen zu sein (Yonhapnews 2022a; Kim Sang-hwan 2023; Ch'oe Ŭn-ji 2023; Kwŏn Hyŏk-ch'ŏl 2023). Alle anderen Formen der Unterstützung jedoch werden nicht nur befürwortet, sondern viele zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen initiieren eine Vielzahl von verschiedenen Hilfsaktionen. Bereits zu Beginn des Krieges entsandten südkoreanische Nichtregierungsorganisationen humanitäre bzw. medizinische Einsatzteams zur Versorgung der Kriegsflüchtlinge (z. B. nach Polen) (Kim Jan-di 2022). Andere NGOs sammeln Spenden, um Hilfslieferungen zu senden (Yang Chŏng-u 2022). Wieder andere Bürgerinitiativen sammelten Spenden, um ukrainischen Studierenden in Südkorea Stipendien zu ermöglichen (Yang Chŏng-u 2022a). In der südwestlich gelegenen Stadt Kwangju haben ortsansässige Organisationen mehrere Hundert koreastämmige Flüchtlinge (Koryŏin) aus der Ukraine aufgenommen (Chŏng Hoe-sŏng 2022).[4]

Was sind die Hintergründe dieser (ambivalenten) proaktiven Reaktionen Südkoreas auf den Ukraine-Konflikt?

Aus südkoreanischer Sicht gibt es einige historische Parallelen zur geopolitischen Konstellation der Ukraine. Ähnlich wie die koreanische Halbinsel ist die Ukraine zwischen den Großmächten bzw. zwei großen Lagern eingeklemmt und kann daher leicht zum Spielball werden. Die Besetzung durch fremde Mächte – Japan bzw. die Sowjetunion – ist eine konkrete Erfahrung, die man miteinander teilt. Entsprechend gut kann man sich in die Situation der Ukraine hineinversetzen. Vor allem aber folgen die aktuellen geopolitischen Zwänge ähnlichen Mechanismen. Denn wie im Fall der Ukraine ist es für eingeklemmte Länder wie Südkorea heikel, sich ganz auf die eine oder andere Seite zu schlagen. Nicht zuletzt haben die Entwicklungen in Osteuropa auch direkte Auswirkungen auf die Situation in Ostasien, wo Russland neben den USA und China ein ebenso zentraler Akteur ist. Politisch ist neben China vor allem auch Russland für Südkorea wichtig, um sich Nordkorea anzunähern. Dies ist auch der Grund, warum die Kritik an der russischen Aggression teilweise noch

4 Die Koryŏin sind Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts aus dem damaligen Chosŏn nach China und dann nach Russland und andere Länder der Region emigriert.

vorsichtig formuliert wird. Auch wirtschaftlich ist Russland für Südkorea von großer Bedeutung. Südkorea ist nach China Russlands zweitwichtigster Handelspartner in Asien. Vor allem Südkoreas Energieimporte liefen zu einem beträchtlichen Anteil über Russland. Und militärisch hat der russische Einmarsch in die Ukraine dazu geführt, dass in Südkorea ernsthaft über eine atomare Bewaffnung nachgedacht wird. Die Tatsache, dass die Ukraine Anfang der 1990er Jahre ihre Nuklearwaffen abgegeben hat, wird von vielen als ein wichtiger Faktor angesehen, der Russland dazu bewogen hat, die Invasion überhaupt zu wagen (Suzuki 2023). Auch Präsident Yoon hat sich öffentlich in die Debatte um die nukleare Selbstbewaffnung eingeschaltet, sehr zum Missfallen der USA. Mit der sogenannten Washingtoner Erklärung Ende April 2023 wurde diese Frage bis auf weiteres auf Eis gelegt. Südkorea hat sich darin zur Einhaltung des Atomwaffensperrvertrages (NPT) verpflichtet, während die USA Südkorea im Gegenzug die Verstärkung des amerikanischen nuklearen Schutzschildes zugesagt haben (Dreisbach und Schiller 2023).

Wie lässt sich Südkoreas Ukraine-Politik in den größeren Rahmen seiner Außenpolitik einordnen?

Generell hat die globale Außenpolitik in Südkorea bisher keine herausragende Rolle gespielt, was damit zusammenhängt, dass der außenpolitische Blickwinkel Südkoreas notgedrungen eng und auf ein starkes Bündnis mit der Schutzmacht USA ausgerichtet sein musste. Ende der 1980er Jahre wurde in Anlehnung an die westdeutsche Ostpolitik eine Nordpolitik zur Normalisierung der Beziehungen zu Nordkorea verfolgt. In den 1990er Jahren ist Südkorea Mitglied in internationalen Institutionen wie der UNO und der OECD geworden und seit Anfang der 2000er Jahre erheben südkoreanische Regierungen den Anspruch, eine Mittelmacht (*middle power*) zu sein. Die Regierung von Yoon Suk-yeol geht einen Schritt weiter und propagiert sich offiziell als globaler Schlüsselstaat (*global pivotal state*). Mit anderen Worten, Südkorea beansprucht eine stärkere Rolle auf der internationalen Bühne und die jüngsten Entwicklungen im Zuge der Ukraine-Krise scheinen – bei aller Tragik – gute Voraussetzungen dafür zu schaffen. Wirtschaftlich gehört Südkorea bereits zu den stärksten zehn Nationen und auch kulturpolitisch spielt das Land mit der weltweit immer bekannteren und beliebteren südkoreanischen Populärkultur wie Fernsehserien, Filme, Kulinarik, Musik etc., der sogenannten Koreanischen Welle (*hallyu*), bereits ganz oben mit, sodass eine allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit und Anerkennung als Soft Power gegeben sind.

Die konservative Regierung unter Präsident Yoon Suk-yeol scheint die Gunst der Stunde für eine Art Zeitenwende in der südkoreanischen Außenpolitik nutzen zu wollen. Bisher verfolgte Südkorea politisch einen Balanceakt des Ausgleichs, um nicht zwischen den China und Russland auf der einen und den USA auf der anderen Seite zerrieben zu werden. Auch frühere konservative Regierungen Südkoreas konnten sich dieser Realität nicht entziehen und pflegten daher ebenso wie liberale

Regierungen gute diplomatische Beziehungen zu beiden Seiten. Die außenpolitischen Entscheidungen im ersten Amtsjahr Yoons deuten jedoch auf eine Abkehr davon und eine Hinwendung zu einer fast bedingungslosen Allianz mit den USA und Japan hin, während Bemühungen um die Beziehungen zu China, Nordkorea und Russland bisher kaum erkennbar sind. Mit anderen Worten: Die bisherige vorsichtige und eng geführte Außenpolitik scheint zugunsten einer Außenpolitik aufgegeben zu werden, die die Yoon-Regierung selbst als „gewagt" (*tamdaehan*) bezeichnet.

Dies spiegelt sich auch darin wider, dass die Regierung unter Yoon mit der Strategie für einen freien, friedlichen und florierenden Indopazifik (*Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific*) erstmals in Südkorea eine explizit globale außenpolitische Strategie entwickelt hat, die zugleich ein deutliches Signal in Richtung Westbindung setzt. Im Kern postuliert die Strategie nicht nur Konzepte wie die Wertepartnerschaft mit liberalen Demokratien (Demokratie, Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Menschenrechte etc.) und das Eintreten für eine regelbasierte Weltordnung, sondern die Strategie selbst ist nach dem vom westlichen Bündnis dominierten Narrativ des Indopazifik benannt. Früher war es üblich, von der Region Asien-Pazifik zu sprechen, die sich auf die Nord-Süd-Achse des Globus konzentrierte und die entsprechenden Akteure auf dieser Vertikalen verortete. Mit dem Indopazifik-Konzept wird diese Perspektive durch eine horizontale ersetzt, die sich auf die für den Welthandel entscheidenden Seewege zwischen dem Suezkanal und (Japan und) den USA sowie den Ländern südlich von China, beginnend mit Taiwan, konzentriert. Mit dieser konzeptionellen Verschiebung rückt die Frage umso mehr in den Mittelpunkt, wer in dieser für den Welthandel so entscheidenden Weltregion die Vorherrschaft ausübt.

Konkret scheint Präsident Yoon die gegenwärtige Dynamik nutzen zu wollen, um eine Hardliner-Außenpolitik zu betreiben, die den Interessen der USA und Japans entgegenkommt. In einer Art sich selbst erfüllender Prophezeiung scheint er einen neuen Kalten Krieg heraufziehen zu sehen, was ihn dazu veranlasst hat, das Ruder herumzureißen und sich kompromisslos auf die Seite der so genannten liberalen Demokratien – vor allem der USA – zu stellen. Damit bricht die Regierung mit der bisherigen Tradition südkoreanischer Außenpolitik, die eine Politik des Ausgleichs verfolgte. Grundsätzlich stand Südkorea aus historischen Gründen (Befreiung, Koreakrieg) immer eng an der Seite der USA, so dass frühere Schulterschlüsse und entsprechende Entsendungen südkoreanischer Truppen in den Vietnamkrieg (1964–1973), den Golfkrieg (1991) oder den Irakkrieg (2003–2008) nicht überraschen. Die Vernachlässigung der Beziehungen zu China und Nordkorea ist jedoch neu und nicht ohne Risiko. Nicht nur die Herausforderung der Annäherung an beziehungsweise ggf. der Wiedervereinigung mit Nordkorea ist ohne die Zusammenarbeit der Anrainerstaaten kaum denkbar, sondern die friedliche Koexistenz der ganzen Region hängt von kooperativen Beziehungen ab. Und so ist eine integrative Außenpolitik Südkoreas mit einer klaren Ausrichtung auf Wertepartnerschaften mit liberalen Demokratien, die auch die Ukraine unterstützen, alternativlos. Die Regierung Yoon

scheint jedoch mit einer assimilativen Außenpolitik, die sich den nationalen Interessen der USA und Japans fast vollständig unterzuordnen scheint, über das Ziel hinauszuschießen. Selbst im konservativen Lager gibt es kritische Stimmen zu Yoons überschwänglichem Schmusekurs mit den USA (Kim SH 2023). China und Russland haben bereits mehrfach deutlich warnend auf Präsident Yoons Äußerungen zur Rolle Chinas in der Taiwan-Frage und Russlands im Ukraine-Konflikt, die in ihrer Schärfe sogar die Rhetorik von US-Präsident Joe Biden übertrafen, reagiert (vgl. Nam 2023). Yoon scheint nach wie vor die Politik der Entkoppelung (*decoupling*) von Bündnissen zu verfolgen und nicht den derzeit vom Westen verfolgten Ansatz der Risikominimierung (*de-risking*) übernehmen zu wollen.

Im Fall der auf null heruntergefahrenen Nordkorea-Politik kann das zu einer sehr riskanten Situation führen. Die sichere Variante, die auch eher im Einklang mit einer Außenpolitik ist, die auf Werten liberaler Demokratie basiert, wäre, proaktiv den Dialog zu suchen (P'yŏnghwajaedan 2023). Beide Seiten – Annäherung und Abschreckung – müssen ausgeglichen und gleichzeitig betrieben werden (vgl. Mosler 2022). Das aber wird von der jetzigen außenpolitischen Line Yoons verhindert, der alles auf eine Karte zu setzen scheint.

Diese südkoreanische Zeitenwende hat bereits extreme Züge angenommen, die sich auch in der Außenpolitik gegenüber Japan manifestieren. Um den Schulterschluss mit den USA noch enger zu gestalten, hat Yoon einen scheinbar kompromisslosen Annäherungskurs an Japan eingeschlagen. Die bisherige Zurückhaltung gegenüber Japan, die auch von fast allen konservativen Vorgängerregierungen gewahrt wurde, scheint überwunden. Yoon hat große einseitige Zugeständnisse gemacht, ohne sie innenpolitisch demokratisch abzusichern und ohne sich der Reziprozität seitens Japans zu versichern. Dies betrifft vor allem Fragen der Geschichtsaufarbeitung und die Klärung von Entschädigungszahlungen für Zwangsarbeiterinnen und Zwangsarbeiter während der japanischen Kolonialherrschaft (Hahn 2023). Dies ist umso brisanter, als es sich um genau die Werte und Prinzipien handelt, die Präsident Yoon immer wieder als Kern seiner (Außen-)Politik bezeichnet: Freiheit, Menschenrechte und Rechtsstaatlichkeit. Denn die Zwangsarbeiterinnen und Zwangsarbeiter wurden ihrer Freiheit beraubt und in ihren Menschenrechten verletzt. Und die Entscheidung Präsident Yoons, die Opfer von japanischer Zwangsarbeit aus Rücksichtnahme auf die japanische Regierung mit Geld von südkoreanischen Unternehmen zu entschädigen, widerspricht dem Urteil des südkoreanischen Obersten Gerichtshofs in der Sache (Choe Sang-Hun 2018). Die einseitige Annäherung Südkoreas an Japan betrifft darüber hinaus auch Fragen der Umweltverschmutzung und der Lebensmittelsicherheit, wie im Fall des kontaminierten Abwassers aus dem 2011 havarierten Atomkraftwerk in Fukushima (Shin 2023).

Wie hängen die abenteuerlichen außenpolitischen Entscheidungen mit innenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen zusammen?

Diese neue, gewagte Außenpolitik Yoons steht in direkter Wechselwirkung mit innenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen. Auch wenn Yoon seinen Politikstil oft euphemistisch als „pragmatisch" (*siryongjŏk*) und „zukunftsorientiert" (*miraejihyangjŏk*) bezeichnet, scheint er im Kern stark ideologisch motiviert zu sein. Darauf deuten Äußerungen des Präsidenten hin, in denen er Kritikern ideologische Motive unterstellt und seinerseits auf nationale Interessen (*kugik*) verweist, die es zu verfolgen gelte. Was dann aber tatsächlich unter dem Deckmantel des nationalen Interesses Südkoreas geschieht, ist stark ideologisiert. Das Grunddogma rekurriert dabei auf eine Art neuer Kalter-Kriegs-Logik, die zu einer entsprechend einfältigen Außenpolitik nach einem Freund-Feind-Schema führt (Sŏng Han-yong 2023). Zum einen heizt die rigorose Hardliner-Politik Präsident Yoons die ohnehin stark polarisierte innenpolitische Konfliktlage zwischen Konservativen und Liberalen weiter an. Während die Notwendigkeit der Unterstützung der Ukraine als solche kaum in Frage gestellt werden kann, sind die Art und Weise, d. h. die neuen Akzente, die mit der allgemeinen außenpolitischen Linie der Yoon-Regierung einhergehen (siehe oben), problematisch. Zum anderen werden solche außenpolitischen Fragen schnell konfliktträchtig, weil innenpolitisch eine starke Polarisierung herrscht. Das verhindert eine zielführende Diskussion über diese wichtigen Fragen. Ein wesentlicher Grund für die innenpolitischen Spannungen ist zwar die Polarisierung, an der beide politischen Lager ihren Anteil haben. Erschwerend kommt jedoch die grobe Regierungsführung von Präsident Yoon hinzu, die seit Juli 2022 auf einem konstanten Tief von durchschnittlich ca. 35% liegt (Chŏng Ch'an 2023). Die üblichen Indikatoren für Demokratiequalität wie Pressefreiheit (Medien), Versammlungsfreiheit (Demonstrationen) und Meinungsfreiheit (Zivilgesellschaft) sowie die Gewährleistung des Organisations-, Verhandlungs- und Streikrechts (Gewerkschaften) sind wie bei den konservativen Vorgängerregierungen bereits wieder rückläufig (Kang Han-dŭl 2023; Sŏ Yŏng-ji und Sin Min-jŏng; Mosler 2023). Außerdem scheint Präsident Yoon die ihrerseits streitbare Oppositionspartei, die die Mehrheit im Parlament hat, weitestgehend zu ignorieren, in innenparteiliche Entscheidungsprozesse seiner Regierungspartei einzugreifen, und übermäßigen Gebrauch von Präsidialdekreten und seinem Vetorecht zu machen. Im Resultat verschärfen sich mit Yoons „pragmatischer" Regierungsführung sowohl innenpolitische als auch außenpolitische Probleme. Im Kontext des Ukraine-Konflikts steht Südkorea der Ukraine zur Seite und ist entsprechend um Unterstützung bemüht. Gleichzeitig jedoch bedeutet der Ukraine-Konflikt für Südkorea in seinem schicksalhaften geopolitischen Kontext eine große Herausforderung, der Präsident Yoon mit fraglichen Entscheidungen entgegentritt. Dem Präsidenten bleiben noch knapp vier Jahre Amtszeit, diesen politischen (sowie wirtschaftlichen und sozialen!) Negativtrend in seinem Land umzukehren.

Nordkorea

In anderer Weise herausfordernd ist die Situation in Nordkorea, auf die hier nur kurz eingegangen werden kann. Bereits wenige Tage nach Kriegsausbruch in der Ukraine äußerte sich Nordkorea einseitig kritisch zur Rolle der USA und des Westens insgesamt (Shin 2023). Die legitimen Ansprüche Russlands seien durch die Hegemonialpolitik des Westens ignoriert worden und dies sei nun die Quittung dafür – so der Tenor. Nordkorea war auch einer von fünf Mitgliedstaaten (Russland, Weißrussland, Syrien und Nicaragua), die in der UN-Generalversammlung gegen eine Resolution gegen Russland stimmten. Dies wurde später von China und Russland honoriert, indem sie im UN-Sicherheitsrat ihr Vetorecht gegen eine Sanktionsresolution gegen Nordkorea ausübten. Zudem erkannte Nordkorea umgehend die sogenannten „Volksrepubliken" Donezk und Lugansk an, was zu diesem Zeitpunkt sonst nur Russland selbst und Syrien getan hatten (Kim TH 2022). Es ist auch durchaus denkbar, dass Nordkorea Waffen an Russland geliefert hat, auch wenn die Führung dies bestreitet (Kim H 2023). Schließlich ist der Einmarsch Russlands in die Ukraine aus nordkoreanischer Sicht zumindest implizit ein weiterer schlagender Beweis dafür, dass Nuklearwaffen die beste Versicherung sind (Hancocks 2022).

Schluss

Die „Indopazifik-Strategie" des amtierenden konservativen Präsidenten Yoon Suk-yeols betont, dass Südkorea in seiner neuen Rolle als *global pivotal state* „internationale Normen einhalten und eine regelbasierte Ordnung stärken wird, die auf universellen Werten wie Freiheit, Demokratie, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Menschenrechten aufbaut" (MOFA 2022d). Es ist natürlich kein Zufall, dass diese Grundprinzipien mit denen gleichgesinnter Länder übereinstimmen. Und es nicht überraschend, dass sich Yoon angesichts der „neuen Bedrohungslage" noch stärker an diese „Wertepartner" – vor allem die USA und Japan – binden will. Vor diesem Hintergrund erklärt sich auch die proaktive Haltung gegenüber der Ukraine. Yoon ist der erste südkoreanische Präsident, der in ein Kriegsgebiet gereist ist, ohne dass Südkorea dort direkt in die Kampfhandlungen involviert war. Das war zwar ein wichtiges und richtiges Zeichen der Solidarität mit der Ukraine und gegen die Aggression Putins. Dass die außenpolitische Strategie Yoons jedoch so einseitig ausgelegt ist, ist auf lange Sicht bedenklich, da Südkorea bei aller Freundschaft mit dem Westen seiner geopolitisch schicksalhaften Lage letztlich kaum entkommen kann. Mit anderen Worten, eine nachhaltige Außenpolitik des Landes muss auch immer die nordöstliche Nachbarschaft pflegen. Yoons Vogel-Strauß-Politik gegenüber China, Nordkorea und Russland mag auf kurze Sicht bei seiner hartgesottenen rechtskonservativen Unterstützerbasis gut ankommen – auch Japan und die USA werden froh sein, einen so überaus kooperativen Partner in der Region zu haben.

Ob dieser Ausverkaufspolitik jedoch auch von der Mehrheit der südkoreanischen Bürgerinnen und Bürger unterstützt wird, ist fraglich – seine Umfragewerte liegen seit geraumer Zeit bei etwas über 30% (Pae 2023). Ganz zu schweigen von der Frage, ob damit letztlich dem Interesse des Landes gedient ist, und Yoon seiner verfassungsrechtlichen Pflicht nachkommt, die „friedliche Vereinigung des Heimatlandes anzustreben und die Freiheit und des Wohlergehens des Volkes zu fördern" (Art. 69). Im April 2024 stehen Parlamentswahlen an, die eine erste Beurteilung der bisherigen Regierungsführung – einschließlich der Außenpolitik – erlauben werden.

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Forschung und Lehre

Vielstimmiger Nachruf auf Prof. Dr. Boike Rehbein, 18.2.1965–11.6.2022

Prof. Dr. Boike Rehbein war Mitglied im wissenschaftlichen Beirat der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Asienkunde und hat die DGA in dieser Funktion vor allem zu Südostasien-bezogenen Fragen beraten, sich bei der Vergabe der *Small Grants* eingebracht und die DGA-Nachwuchsgruppe unterstützt.

Wir werden Boike Rehbeins Engagement in guter Erinnerung behalten und sprechen seinen Angehörigen unser aufrichtiges Beileid aus.

Um den vielen persönlichen Erinnerungen an Boike Rehbein Raum zu geben, hat der DGA-Arbeitskreis Südostasien stellvertretend für die vielen bewegenden Einträge des Kondolenz-Boards „Kudoboard" den Eintrag von Daniel Bultmann (derzeit Vertretungsprofessor HU Berlin) und Auszüge aus fünf weiteren Blog-Einträgen sowie einem Beitrag der DGA-Nachwuchsgruppe zusammengestellt. Das Board ist zu finden unter: https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/iDGVMvbs.

In Erinnerung an Prof. Dr. Boike Rehbein

Das Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften trauert um Boike Rehbein, dessen plötzlicher Tod am 11. Juni 2022 eine große menschliche und fachliche Lücke hinterlässt.

Boike Rehbein wurde am 18. Februar 1965 in Berlin geboren. Er studierte Philosophie, Soziologie und Geschichte in Freiburg im Breisgau, Frankfurt am Main, Göttingen, Berlin und Paris. Seine Promotion in Philosophie schloss er 1996 mit einer Arbeit darüber ab, was es heißt, einen anderen Menschen zu verstehen (publiziert 1997 bei Metzler). In seiner soziologischen Habilitationsschrift beschäftigte er sich mit Globalisierungsprozessen in Laos (publiziert 2004 bei LIT). Als Schüler unter anderem von Pierre Bourdieu, Günter Dux, Jürgen Habermas, Jann Holl und Hermann Schwengel verfolgte er in seiner Forschung Fragen zur Struktur und Genese sozialer Ungleichheit, zu symbolischen Formen von Herrschaft, zu der Genealogie der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft als Herrschaftsform und zu einer kritischen Sozialtheorie in einer multizentrischen Welt. Er galt als Experte für Globalisierungsprozesse, für Festlandsüdostasien (vor allem Laos), für Sozialstrukturanalysen und für das Werk Pierre Bourdieus. Seine wichtigsten Publikationen in den letzten Jahren – neben Standardwerken zur Einführung in das Werk Bourdieus und die laotische Sprache – waren *Globalization and Inequality in Emerging Societies* (Palgrave 2011), *Ungleichheit in kapitalistischen Gesellschaften*

(mit Jessé de Souza: Beltz 2014), *Critical Theory after the Rise of the Global South: Kaleidoskopic Dialectic* (Routledge 2018), *Die kapitalistische Gesellschaft* (utb 2021) und *Die globalisierte Welt: Genese, Struktur und Zusammenhänge* (mit Vincent Houben: utb 2022).

Dabei lag ihm auch und vor allem ein ernstgemeinter Austausch in einer multizentrischen Welt am Herzen. Er hatte über die Jahre nicht nur Gastprofessuren in Bangkok, Santiago de Chile, Zürich, Vientiane, Buenos Aires und Neu-Delhi inne, sondern unterstützte auch den Aufbau der sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät an der National University of Laos. Zudem fungierte Boike Rehbein als Direktor des Global Studies Programmes zunächst an der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg im Breisgau und dann im Zuge seiner Professur für Gesellschaft und Transformation in Asien und Afrika am Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, das er von 2016–2018 als Geschäftsführender Direktor leitete. Gelebte Lehre fand für ihn nicht nur innerhalb etablierter Universitätsstrukturen statt. Daher arbeitete er in den letzten Jahren am Aufbau von Online-Instituten in Brasilien und Indien, die es der marginalisierten Bevölkerung ermöglichen sollten, durch Bildung ihre eigene soziale Lage besser zu verstehen und ihr Selbstwertgefühl wiederherzustellen. Er war auf dem stillen Weg vom Verstehen der Gesellschaft hin zu ihrer Veränderung mittels Bildung.

Neben seinen breitgefächerten wissenschaftlichen Leistungen bleibt Boike Rehbein seinen Studierenden, Kolleginnen und Kollegen vor allem als eine Persönlichkeit in Erinnerung, die Wissenschaft und Lehre lebte. Sein Drang danach, soziale Ungleichheiten und kapitalistische Herrschaftsformen zu verstehen, machte ihn zu einem hervorragenden Redner und Hochschullehrer. Die Suche nach dem guten Leben war sein ständiger Begleiter und zeigte sich auch im Umgang mit seinen Mitmenschen, denen er mit Aufrichtigkeit und subtilem Humor begegnete.

Er hinterlässt eine große Lücke, die sich bestenfalls bruchstückhaft mithilfe dessen, was er in seinen Mitmenschen angestoßen hat, zu schließen vermag. Unser tiefes Mitgefühl gilt seinen Angehörigen.

Daniel Bultmann

(…) I always admired how Boike Rehbein shaped constructs for their future transcendence in a dangerously adverse academia: he created havens for people and perspectives that are otherwise structurally marginalized; he built bridges between continents of critical thought; he carved out encouraging spaces for the development of difficult beauties. For me personally he had been all of this, despite there not being much personal ties, despite there not being numerous personal exchanges we had. (…) Particularly his vision of a kaleidoscopic dialectic and his search for configurations to tackle inequalities and to foster solidary human connections had been very compelling to me. They recounted a profound, a resistant kindness that would administer to the intricate and never ceasing wounds of this world.

Adrian Schlegel

(…) Prof. Rehbein waren Konventionen und Hierarchien gleichgültig. Er glaubte an die Möglichkeit der Entfaltung von individuellen Stärken und Kräften, die jedem Menschen innewohnen. In seiner akademischen Arbeit hat er soziale Mechanismen und Strukturen untersucht, die eine solche Entfaltung verhindern. Dieses humanistische Erkenntnisinteresse war ein Grundmotiv seiner Arbeit. Die Fragestellung seiner Dissertation bringt es auf den Punkt: „Was heißt es, einen anderen Menschen zu verstehen?“ (…)

Martin Schalbruch

„(…) Ich denke eine der wertvollsten Eigenschaften Prof. Rehbeins war neben all den schönen, bereits gesagten Worten seine Fähigkeit, seinen Studierenden Selbstvertrauen und Sicherheit zu geben. (…) Ich habe mich immer gefragt, wie er das gemacht hat. Er war so gefragt, aber hat trotzdem immer sofort auf Mails geantwortet, hatte immer Zeit und Rat für alle. Nach beinahe 10 Jahren als Studentin am IAAW gab es auch Momente, in denen er mich persönlich und menschlich unterstützt hat und dafür bin ich ihm sehr dankbar. Wie so viele von euch empfinde auch ich, dass mein Leben an der Uni ohne ihn ganz anders verlaufen wäre.“

Enya Christensen

“Boike inspired us to think that sociology and academia could be a place for change. With every passing day new memories emerge of his kindness, his acute guidance, his commitment to the making sociology an inclusive space. In these moments I can't help but pontificate on the impermanence of life, life may end, but our imagination and memories remain and it is difficult to come to terms with crystal clear pictures of someone in our mind only to know they aren't present in reality anymore. Prof. Rehbein inspired so many of us to give our voice in academia, to create research work no matter how dissenting, to work on topics which mattered, he made a place on his table where intellectual traditions from around the world were recognised for their contribution to make sociology a better discipline. While his contributions to the discipline are immense, his contribution to the lives of students like me are even more. His loss is deeply felt.“

Binita Kakati

„(…) Ich kenne kaum einen Akademiker, der so wenig Wert darauf legte, dass sein Gegenüber mit ihm einer Meinung war, wie Boike. Einer Meinung zu sein hieß für ihn, nichts voneinander lernen zu können. Dieses Interesse am Unterschied verband uns mehr als alles andere. Zugleich besaß er die geradezu magische Fähigkeit, seine Professorenrolle auf die denkbar umfänglichste Weise zu erfüllen und gleichzeitig zu ignorieren. Der professorale Habitus, den sich die meisten zulegen, die nach harten Karrierekämpfen den ersehnten Posten erlangen, ist allzu oft eine Mischung aus Krampf und Dünkel. Boike blieb das immer fremd; er forschte, lehrte, publizierte wie ein Wasserfall und tat das alles mit einer Nonchalance, um die ich ihn ewig

beneiden werde. Was er tat, schien ihm leicht zu fallen; vielleicht, weil es ihn nie ganz ausmachte. Es sollte mehr Akademiker geben wie Boike. Jetzt gibt es einen weniger. Ich werde ihn sehr vermissen."

Guido Sprenger

Mit dem überraschenden Tod von Herrn Prof. Dr. Boike Rehbein am 11. Juni 2022 haben wir im vergangenen Jahr auch in der DGA einen sehr geschätzten Kollegen verloren.

Boike Rehbein (*18. Februar 1965) war ein Experte für die Region Südostasien (v. a. Laos), der mit seinem sozialkritischen Ansatz zentrale Fragen von Ungleichheit, Globalisierung und Eurozentrismus in den Fokus gebracht hat, die die Regionalwissenschaften in den kommenden Jahrzehnten weiter beschäftigen werden.

Innerhalb der DGA wird er insbesondere von seinen Kolleg:innen in den Südostasienwissenschaften sehr vermisst. Boike Rehbein war aber auch für den Nachwuchs der DGA ein wichtiger Partner. So hat er mehrfach an Veranstaltungen der Nachwuchsgruppe (NWG) teilgenommen und mit seinem Aufruf zur kritischen, kontextbezogenen Analyse wichtige Denkanstöße gegeben. Als Philosoph und Soziologe mit ausgewiesener Asien-Expertise und einem klaren Fokus auf Fragen sozialer Ungleichheit hatte er einen besonderen Blick auf die Entwicklung der empirischen Regionalwissenschaften hin zu einer kritischeren, multizentrischen Arbeitsweise. Sein Engagement und seine Bereitschaft, diese Neuausrichtung offen zu diskutieren, werden langfristig in der Arbeit junger Asienwissenschaftler:innen nachwirken und ihr Verständnis verantwortungsvoller Forschung in den Regionalwissenschaften prägen.

Neben seiner fachlichen Leistung bleibt uns Boike Rehbein aber vor allem als ein sehr warmherziger Mensch in Erinnerung, der in seiner Haltung integer, offen und stets engagiert war.

Unser besonderes Mitgefühl gilt seinen Angehörigen und Freund:innen.

DGA-Nachwuchsgruppe

New Challenges in Doing Research on China, Workshop des Arbeitskreises Sozialwissenschaftliche Chinaforschung (ASC)

Digital, 8. Juli 2022

Bericht von Julia Marinaccio, H. Christoph Steinhardt, and Björn Alpermann

Die sozialwissenschaftliche Chinaforschung sieht sich seit Jahren mit neuen und immer größeren Herausforderungen sowohl in der Planung als auch Durchführung von Forschungsvorhaben in China konfrontiert. Dazu gehören u. a. die zunehmende Autoritarisierung des chinesischen politischen Systems, die mit verschärfter gesellschaftlicher Überwachung und Einschränkung der Zivilgesellschaft und Wissenschaft einhergeht; die umfassende Abschottung Chinas während der Corona-Pandemie, deren Ende bis vor kurzem noch nicht vorhersehbar war; sowie die zahlreichen gesetzlichen Änderungen im Bereich Cybersicherheit, Datenschutz und nationale Sicherheit.

Am 8. Juli 2022 befasste sich der Arbeitskreis für sozialwissenschaftliche Chinaforschung (ASC) in einem eintägigen digitalen Workshop mit einigen dieser Themen genauer. Ziel war es, den Wissensstand der TeilnehmerInnen mittels ExpertInnen-Inputs zu erweitern und die Schaffung von Strukturen innerhalb der DGA, die ihre Mitglieder gezielt unterstützen, anzudenken. Etwa 30 ASC-Mitglieder nahmen am Workshop teil. Dieser teilte sich in drei Panels.

Das erste Panel „Data security, privacy, and confidentiality“ wurde von Björn Alpermann (Universität Würzburg) moderiert und fokussierte auf das im Juni 2021 in Kraft getretene Datenschutzgesetz (Personal Information Protection Law, PIPL) und dessen mögliche Konsequenzen für ForscherInnen, InformantInnen und Forschungskooperationen. WEN Xiang (Jurist, Universität Kopenhagen) gab einen Überblick über das umfassende Regelwerk, zog einen Vergleich zur Europäischen Datenschutzgrundverordnung (DSGVO) und skizzierte seine Konsequenzen für die Planung und Durchführung von Forschungsprojekten in China. Da viele Beispiele von Wens Vortrag aus dem Bereich der Gesundheitsforschung kamen, die von den neuen Regelungen besonders stark betroffen ist, berieten die Workshop-TeilnehmerInnen in der anschließenden Q&A-Runde ihre mögliche Anwendbarkeit in der qualitativen und quantitativen Sozialforschung. Vor allem der Umgang mit Daten aus den sozialen Medien und in der Umfrageforschung wurde stark diskutiert. Wen Xiang betonte, dass dafür keine One-size-fits-all-Lösung gäbe und es daher in der Verantwortung der ForscherInnen selbst liege, sich umfassend zu informieren, um einen geeigneten Weg im Umgang mit persönlichen Daten nach den neuen gesetzlichen Vorgaben zu finden. Dafür könne die Erstellung eines Datenmanagementplans hilfreich sein.

Im Panel „Ethic committees and research“, moderiert von Christoph Steinhardt (Universität Wien), informierte zunächst Carlos Hernandez (Ethics Officer, European Research Council Executive Agency) über Neuerungen in Vorgaben von

Ethikkommissionen von (europäischen) Fördergebern und Tipps, wie diese in Forschungsanträgen umzusetzen seien. Er betonte dabei, dass AntragstellerInnen zeigen sollten, dass sie Forschungsethik und Datenschutz von Anfang an als integrale Bestandteile ihres Vorhabens ansehen und mitbedenken. Es gäbe keine Standardlösung für alle Forschungsprojekte. Maßnahmen sollten nicht auf maximale, sondern auf angemessene Sicherheit im jeweiligen Kontext abzielen. Sie müssten aber stets mit europäischem Recht übereinstimmen. Der Schutz von allen am Forschungsprozess Beteiligten genieße oberste Priorität. In der Diskussion wurde dagegen problematisiert, dass eben die strikte Einhaltung von ethischen Vorgaben nicht in allen Fällen zu einer Verbesserung der Sicherheit beiträgt. Im Gegenteil, Einwilligungserklärungen können zum Beispiel eine Rückverfolgung der Interviewten ermöglichen, sofern sie in falsche Hände gerieten. Anschließend stellte Christian Wirth (GIGA Hamburg) das Konzept des GIGA zur Sicherung eines Forschungsprozesses, der die Rechte aller Beteiligten so gut wie möglich schützt, vor. Auch bei ihm lag die Betonung darauf, durch das Prozedere das Risikobewusstsein bei den Forschenden zu erhöhen, nicht aber Forschung zu blockieren oder gar zu verhindern. Die abschließende Diskussion befasste sich u. a. mit den spezifischen Herausforderungen von Online-Interviews (etwa via WeChat oder Zoom), die aufgrund der Reisebeschränkungen während der Pandemie immer beliebter wurden. Aufgrund der potenziellen Abhörmöglichkeiten, besonders bei chinesischen Anwendungen, wurden solche Interviews als unsicherer als Face-to-face-Interviews eingestuft. Auf dieses Risiko seien Befragte eingangs hinzuweisen, auch wenn dies die Offenheit der Antworten womöglich einschränkt.

Das dritte Panel, „Research in authoritarian regimes: a comparative perspective“, versuchte einen Blick über den Tellerrand und trat mit WissenschaftlerInnen mit anderen regionalen Schwerpunkten in Dialog. Eingeladen waren Rüdiger Frank (Ökonom an der Universität Wien), Jannis Grimm (Politikwissenschaftler am Berliner Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Friedens- und Konfliktforschung der Freien Universität Berlin), Rano Turaeva (Anthropologin an der Universität München) und Meron Zeleke (Anthropologin an der Addis Ababa University). Aufgrund eines Stromausfalls in Äthiopien wurde die Verbindung zu Frau Zeleke während des Panels unterbrochen und sie konnte ihre Teilnahme nicht weiter fortsetzen. Moderatorin Julia Marinaccio (Universität Bergen) stellte den PanelistInnen drei Fragen: mit welchen Herausforderungen sie bei der Forschung in ihren jeweiligen Gebieten konfrontiert sind; was es bräuchte, um diesen Herausforderungen besser zu begegnen und Forschung zu verbessern; und welche Ratschläge sie für NachwuchswissenschaftlerInnen in ihren Feldern haben. Als Herausforderungen wurden Aspekte wie politische Sensitivitäten bei der Identifizierung von Forschungsproblemen und Veröffentlichung (Zeleke), der Verfügbarkeit und Qualität von Daten (Frank), zunehmende staatliche Repression (Grimm) und das Finden und Schützen von InformantInnen (Turaeva) genannt. Beruhend auf seiner Erfahrung aus Nordkorea war Franks Hauptvorschlag für ForscherInnen in seinem Feld mehr Ehrlichkeit und Realismus hinsichtlich der Qualität verfügbarer Daten.

Grimm kritisierte die disziplinären Anreizstrukturen unter WissenschaftlerInnen, die die MENA-Region beforschen. Diese begünstigten Datensammlung zu gefährlichen Themen, die wiederum junge WissenschaftlerInnen und InformantInnen gefährden können. Turaeva hoffte auf mehr Unterstützung von diplomatischen Vertretungen für ForscherInnen. Sie empfahl zudem, dass im Westen ansässige ForscherInnen lokale AssistentInnen als MitarbeiterInnen anstatt als "ArbeitssklavInnen" behandeln und sich mehr hin zu „epistemischer Zusammenarbeit“ mit lokalen WissenschaftlerInnen engagieren sollen.

„New Challenges in Doing Research on China“ war eine Folgeveranstaltung eines ähnlichen Workshops zum Thema Feldforschung im Juni 2020 und Teil einer neuen Strategie des ASC, die jährlichen Konferenzen mit zusätzlichen themen- und forschungspraxisorientierten Veranstaltungen zu ergänzen. Bisher wurden vier solcher Veranstaltungen durchgeführt, alle digital, die sich einer großen TeilnehmerInnenzahl erfreuten. Die digitalen Formate waren nicht nur der Pandemie geschuldet, sondern auch der Überlegung, so vielen ASC-InteressentInnen wie möglich die kostenfreundliche und unkomplizierte Teilnahme zu ermöglichen.

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China Workshop "Chinese Research and Academic Discourses in Contemporary China Studies"

Iserlohn Network, Schwerte, July 16–17, 2022

Report by Ryanne Flock, Grete Schönebeck, and Matthias Hackler

The "Iserlohn Network" is a loose circle of young social scientists working on China. After two years of spending our academic life primarily online, the network's China workshop finally took place again at Haus Villigst in Schwerte. Over the course of one and a half days, young scholars presented their work under the motto "Chinese Research and Academic Discourses in Contemporary China Studies". As in previous years, the workshop reflected the broad range of social sciences research on China conducted in Germany but also welcomed more classical sinological work and international participants.

The first panel focused on inter- and intranational relations and political discourses. Against the backdrop of the prevailing *anglophone* theories, Felix Brender (London School of Economics) examined under which conditions Chinese academic voices find recognition in the field of International Relations. Through an ontological security framework, Hassan Al-Said (University of Cologne) analyzed how Saudi Arabian authorities use different narratives to diminish the impact of the Uyghur crisis on their national identity. Vivien Markert (Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen) discussed the changing image of Islam in Chinese academic discourses and the understanding of successful sinicisation of Islam in recent years. The first panel's case studies convincingly highlighted the two trends of China's discoursive isolation on the one hand and its growing entanglements within global contexts on the other.

While the first panel was looking at the state as the dominant actor, the second panel dealt with the reciprocity between the individual and society's "superstructure", asking about (political) ideology and identity. Jian Long (Goethe University Frankfurt) discussed nationalist narratives on collaboration and resistance during the second Sino–Japanese war and their re-evaluations at the time through the diaries of Zhou Fohai. Marius Meinhof (University Bielefeld) presented his research on "*Luohou* (lagging-behind) and the impetus of self-improvement" in today's China. Afterwards, Ng Chin Fung (Goethe University Frankfurt) explained how and why the contents and aesthetics of Hong Kong cantopop are deeply rooted in sinophone and Cantonese local cultural history. The three presentations emphasized the examined actors' agency and, at the same time, showed the difficulties to find one's way in China's overarching discourse environment.

Finally, panel 3 addressed contemporary cultural trends and social activism. Based on her field work in art communities in Guangzhou, Liu Ruoxi (Cambridge University) elaborated on self-employed artists in Guangzhou. She questioned the idea of resistance and instead found various forms of alternative-seeking practices in everyday life and in art, such as decentralized socially engaged art production and

the support for cooperation among independent artists. Dai Yifan (Goethe University Frankfurt) addressed fashion politics and contemporary *Hanfu*-trends, which she placed, among other things, in a broader context of identity politics in a multi-ethnic society and emancipation from international comparisons. Last but not least, Monika Arnoštová (University of Duisburg-Essen) presented her study on overtime work and its impact on leisure time for white-collar workers in Beijing. Interestingly, one of her findings implied that their cultural life is not necessarily negatively influenced by overtime work. Looking at different social groups, the panelists demonstrated how China's younger generation is dealing with the increasing social and economic pressure to claim their own way.

As in previous years, the workshop's didactic focus was on collegial feedback and constructive criticism to further develop one's research. The participants presented completed dissertations, works-in-progress or first steps into a new field of research. In the evening session on Saturday, Josie-Marie Perkuhn (University of Trier) introduced her BMBF-funded project "Taiwan as Pioneer" and started a lively debate on the institutional standing of Taiwan Studies within Sinology. All in all, the participants' enthusiastic discussions on this and other China-related topics (e.g. post-pandemic field research options) continued in and outside the conference room, carrying on the workshop's legacy as an important event for China-related research and academic networking in Germany.

The China workshop was organized by Ryanne Flock (Julius-Maximilians-University Wuerzburg), Grete Schönebeck (Goethe University Frankfurt) and Matthias Hackler (European Parlament) and supported by the Evangelische Akademie Villigst (Institut für Kirche und Gesellschaft). The next workshop is planned for summer 2023.

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Akademischer Workshop Wissenschaftsdiplomatie Deutschland–China

Sektion Politik Ostasiens, Ruhr-Universität Bochum,
20. September 2022

Bericht von Matthias Stepan und Rosa Schmidt-Drewniok

Im Rahmen des Forschungsprojekts „Hochschulen als Akteure im Dialog mit China" (HADCh) hielten Prof. Dr. Jörn-Carsten Gottwald und sein Team der Sektion Politik Ostasiens der Ruhr-Universität Bochum am 20. September 2022 einen akademischen Workshop mit dem Thema „Wissenschaftsdiplomatie Deutschland–China" ab. Der Workshop fand in Beckmanns Hof, einer beliebten Veranstaltungslocation an der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, statt. Die rund dreißig geladenen Expert:innen und Teilnehmenden aus dem Bundesgebiet beleuchteten deutsch-chinesische Kooperationen in der Wissenschaft aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven. Das Programm war thematisch in vier Teile untergliedert.

Der erste Programmteil war dem Thema „Wissenschaftsdiplomatie: Konzept und Praxis" gewidmet. Dr. Tim Flink (Berater, Deutscher Bundestag) stellte in seinem Impulsvortrag zunächst das Konzept aus Sicht der Forschung vor und ordnete es in die aktuellen Debatten ein. Er betonte, dass die Diskussion um Wissenschaftsdiplomatie zurzeit sehr diffus sei und dringender Klärungsbedarf bestünde. Im zweiten Impuls beleuchtete Dr. Ruth Narmann (Leopoldina) das Konzept aus Sicht der Praxis am Beispiel der deutsch-chinesischen Kooperation der Leopoldina. Sie identifizierte Voraussetzungen für das Gelingen von internationaler Kooperation und stellte in Frage, ob Wissenschaftsdiplomatie in der Praxis einen Mehrwert oder eine Erschwernis darstellt.

Im zweiten Programmteil unter dem Titel „Wissenschaftsdiplomatie: Akteure, Inhalte und Ziele" stellten Wissenschaftler:innen Bezüge zwischen ihren Forschungsarbeiten und dem Konzept der Wissenschaftsdiplomatie her. Im ersten Beitrag stellte Dr. Tina Paul (FH Zwickau) ihre Erkenntnisse zu vertrauensvollen Partnerschaften auf der interpersonellen Ebene vor. Im zweiten Beitrag beleuchtete Dr. Philipp Böing (ZEW – Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research) Wissenschaftsdiplomatie aus wirtschaftswissenschaftlicher Sicht anhand der Auswirkungen von chinesischen R&D-Investitionen. Im dritten Beitrag stellte Matthias Stepan (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) die Zwischenergebnisse des HADCh-Projektes vor. Er skizzierte das Projektvorhaben und stellte die systematische Erfassung diverser Arten von Hochschulkooperation vor. In der anschließenden Diskussionsrunde wurden Fragen zur Rolle von Hochschulen und individuellen Wissenschaftler:innen sowie Spannungsfeldern von Werten und Interessen in der internationalen Kooperation aufgeworfen.

Der dritte Programmteil befasste sich mit dem Thema „Wissenschaftsdiplomatie: Umfeld im Wandel". Dr. Sabine Puch und Dr. Gerold Heinrichs (DLR-PT) stellten

Maßnahmen vor, die die Forschung in Zeiten sich wandelnder Rahmenbedingungen für Kooperation unterstützen sollen. Sie führten in bestehende Projekte und Tools ein, die Kooperationen ermöglichen und zeitgleich Risiken minimieren sollen.

In der folgenden Diskussion zeichnete sich ein Bild der Zeitenwende ab. Eine Neukalibrierung der Kooperation mit China sei notwendig, doch die konkrete Umsetzung sei noch ungewiss – so der Grundtenor.

Im vierten Programmteil wurde ein Blick in die Zukunft der Kooperation mit China im Jahr 2030 gewagt. Von den Inputs gingen die Teilnehmenden direkt in eine offene Diskussion über. Die Zeitenwende in der China-Kooperation und die zunehmende Politisierung der Kooperation wurden thematisiert. Trotz der in den vergangenen fünf Jahren angebotenen Sensibilisierungs- und Informationsrunden sei man weiterhin dabei, die Versäumnisse der vergangenen Jahre aufzuarbeiten. Für die Zukunft sei es entscheidend, die Hochschulen organisatorisch besser aufzustellen und Wissenschaftler:innen chinaspezifisch zu informieren und zu sensibilisieren. Dafür sei Koordination und Ausbau der Kommunikation auf und insbesondere zwischen Hochschul-, Landes-, Bundes- und EU-Ebene dringend notwendig. Dafür müssten Stellen geschaffen werden, die nicht von Projektmitteln abhängig sind. Identifizierte Prioritäten sind die Stärkung von China-Expertise in Deutschland sowie die bessere Vernetzung der entscheidenden Stellen. Es wurde betont, dass man sich die Motivation, die Interessen und Werte der Kooperation bewusst machen müsse. Zuletzt wurden konkrete Vorschläge zur Verbesserung und Umsetzung gemacht.

Das Projekt „Hochschulen als Akteure im Dialog mit China“ (HADCh) ist ein auf zwei Jahre angelegtes Forschungsprojekt, das mit Mitteln der Stiftung Mercator gefördert wird.

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"Modernizing Rural China" workshop and network meeting

Molslaboratry, Ebeltoft (Denmark), September 23–25, 2022

Report by Mads Vesterager Nielsen

This year's Modernizing Rural China Workshop, organized by Elena Meyer-Clement, Jesper Zeuthen, and René Trappel, was held at the Mols Laboratory in Ebeltoft, north of Aarhus in Denmark. This workshop, the third in a series of events organized by the Modernizing Rural China Research Network, sought to examine state-led rural modernization in the era of the Covid pandemic, in a framework that allows for in-depth discussion, constructive feedback, and opportunities to develop future collaboration in the network. To this end, a highly diverse group of American, Asian and European academics presented works related to rural digitization, agrarian modernization, food & trust, and local governance at the grassroots level. Paper presentations ranged from long-distance fieldwork centering on the application of drone technology in rural areas, as well as other exploratory research methods to circumvent the current limitations on travel, to qualitative studies on local cadre initiatives. The workshop consisted of nine paper presentations and discussion sessions, one monograph presentation, and two grant feedback sessions, arranged in five thematically related panels.

The first session focused on digitization and green governance, with an eye on the impact of disruptive technologies on local areas. John Donaldson (Singapore Management University) kicked off the workshop by presenting his paper "Guizhou's Big Bet on Big Data: Is the creation of "Big Data Valley" environmentally sustainable?", wherein a case study of data centers in Guiyang, the provincial capital of Guizhou province, is employed to explore the trade-off facing poorer Chinese provinces, between economic growth on the one hand and environmental sustainability on the other. It was followed by Lena Kaufmann's (University of Zurich) "The digitalization of agriculture in China: Continuities, changes and research methods", an exploratory long-distance study of how unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), commonly referred to as "drones," are revolutionizing private-plot farming in China. She argues that UAVs are disrupting traditional farming practices in rural areas, effectivizing processes, like pesticide distribution and planting of crops, while unintended side-effects of drone use, like dependencies of elderly farmers on drone pilots and farm chemical companies, remain a largely uncovered leaf in the discourse on UAVs in China.

The second session was conducted under the theme of intellectual debates and grassroots implementation, chaired by professor emeritus Jørgen Delman (University of Copenhagen). During this session, Francesco Zaratin (University of Vienna) presented his paper entitled 'From prospecting visions to selling solutions' which aims to re-assess the advocacy and local experiments by New Rural Reconstruction (NRR) intellectuals. Zaratin is primarily concerned with the evolution of the NRR from the

early 2000s onwards when the field enjoyed a period of political experimentation in the Hu-Wen era. He concludes that NRR intellectuals and their local experimentation continue to be an active part of China's rural development landscape. Mikkel Bunkenborg (University of Copenhagen) then presented a proposal for a monograph entitled "Hosting and Guesting: An Ethnography of Hospitality in Rural North China", in which he explores the everyday ritual between guest and host in rural China. The volume consists of five chapters that look at immaterial cultural heritage, descriptions of guest-host meetings, the structural logic of the temple fair as essentially that of hosting the deities as guests, individuals and cosmological powers, as well as addressing the state and how its presence impacted local practices in the Chinese countryside in the decades after de-collectivization.

The third session, chaired by Kristen Looney (Georgetown University), centered on the theme of food and trust in rural China. Trust in food sources is of vital concern to farmers, who form alternative ways of inducing trust in local foodstuffs. Anders Sybrandt Hansen (Aarhus University) explores this theme in his paper entitled "Eating with peace of mind: Benefits of distrust and selective system trust in alternative food networks" (co-authored with Mikkel Bunkenborg and Meina Jia Sandal), where one of the main findings, is that alternative systems of trust are employed in an attempt to insulate against the risks of the wider market. In turn, Hansen argues, selective trust is extended to certain exclusive systems, while other more comprehensive society-wide systems are often seen as too risky to rely on. The second panelist of the session, Yue Zhao (University of Melbourne), presented her project "Pushing organic model township: rural politics and policy implementation in China", where she focusses on local model making in China's Henan Province. The study examines the pursuit of township officials around Danjiangkou Reservoir, who are building a model township for organic production. Taking an up-and-down split perspective, this study contributes to the understanding of township politics in China and how these reach the central government's agenda in the context of strict water pollution control, and interactions of central-local governments in the authoritarian system.

The fourth session was chaired by Jesper Zeuthen (Aalborg University), under the theme of "Moralism and Local Governance". Wei Zhu (Aarhus University) presented the impending project "The End of Ethics? High-Tech State Moralism and Popular Surveillance in Contemporary China" (led by Anders Sybrandt Hansen), which is an inside study of everyday ethics in the Chinese context of state surveillance. The research project explores how state-moralist efforts and behavioural engineering shape people's way of being and interpersonal relationships. The second part of the panel was conducted with a presentation by Kristen Looney, about her project entitled "Sending Down and Lifting Up: China's College-Graduate Village Officials (CGVO)," about the modern practices of "rustification" of young officials in the countryside, as a way for young cadres to gain prospects for future promotion. She argues that the college graduate-village officials program serves two main political purposes: To bureaucratize village governance and to incorporate urban intellectuals into the party.

The fifth session was chaired by professor emeritus Stig Thøgersen (Aarhus University) under the umbrella theme of "Bubbles." During this session, Elena Meyer-Clement (University of Copenhagen) presented a project on "Urbanising and Revitalising. Governing space and people in rural China," where she examines how the evolving governance of space and people under the new regime functions, and what its consequences are for China's local political economy. The project explores rural revitalization as a theme with global implications and potential for cross-border comparative case-studies. It builds on previous research conducted by Meyer-Clement since 2012. During the second part of the session, Jesper Zeuthen presented his project on "Automated Decision Making and Exploding Village Banks," which focuses on the recent loan scandals and utilization of COVID-19 health codes in Henan province and other parts of the Chinese countryside. Zeuthen focusses on the digital infrastructure and classifications that they impose on their users, and whether or not these are ultimately regarded as legitimate. The paper concludes that the case of the village banks and changing health-codes on the one hand illustrate how the logic of an automated decision process, like the health-code, can have a very high degree of authority, because it is trusted that it, unlike other parts of Chinese society, comes without human intervention. On the other hand, even in the authoritarian Chinese state, the top leadership needs to respect the power of the algorithm, and cannot pretend that obvious manipulation is in fact part of it. As the final presenter of the session, René Trappel (University of Freiburg) presented his the cooperative project "Fighting Covid in the Chinese Countryside: Exploratory Research from Afar", where Pengpeng Guo (Gansu University of Political Science and Law, Lanzhou) and he experiments with long- distance methods of cooperation to leverage the problem of access during the COVID-19 lockdown. Trappel emphasizes local research networks and collaborations with colleagues in China, which allowed them to delve into the pandemic response of a village in Gansu province. Through long distance interviews in August of 2022, he Trappel and Guo finds that the risk of COVID-19 is rather abstract for the villagers, who could not name a single person that contracted the virus. Still, the fight against the virus was an ever present feature that has impacted both the economic and social life of the entire village. Delving further into the aspect of long-distance research, Trappel acknowledges the limitations of the method, and recognizes that his their study would not have been possible without prior succesful international cooperation with research partners.

During the final session entitled "Studying Rural China from afar?" all conference attendants discussed the current situation of limitations on in-person research, and its implications for research on rural China, as well as strategies going forward. The "Modernizing Rural China" Research Network will convene for its next meeting in spring 2024 in Singapore.

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Roundtable: Quo vadis Documenta fifteen? Between accusations of anti-Semitism, politics, German and Indonesian understanding of art – Where should the boundaries of art lie?

German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) Discussion Forum Online
4. November 2022

Report by Patrick Keilbart

This roundtable was organized by the DGA working group Southeast Asia (AK Südostasien).

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Arndt Graf (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main)

Roundtable:

Prof. Dr. Martina Padmanabhan (Universität Passau)

Dr. Amanda Rath (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main)

Dr. Susanne Rodemeier (Philipps-Universität Marburg)

Dr. Alexander Supartono (Taring Padi; Edinburgh Napier University)

Reza Aifisina (Ruang Rupa)

Even at the end of Documenta fifteen, criticism of the Indonesian curatorial team Ruangrupa had not abated. Artists, organizers, and those responsible were criticized, but also the expert commission that was appointed to examine the allegations of anti-Semitism.

Against this background, we considered it important for Southeast Asian scholars to take a clear stand against anti-Semitic works and statements on the one hand, but at the same time to seek and facilitate the open dialogue that was and is called for on many sides. To this end, a virtual roundtable discussion was organized within the framework of the "DGA-Diskussionsforum online" on the topic: "Quo vadis Documenta fifteen? Between accusations of anti-Semitism, politics, German and Indonesian understanding of art - Where should the boundaries of art lie?"

On behalf of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA), Margot Schüller represented the host of the roundtable discussion and opened the online event with warm words of welcome, before she handed over to the moderator of the discussion, Prof. Dr. Arndt Graf.

In his introductory remarks, Professor Graf referred to the recently concluded exhibition Documenta fifteen as a historical event that now required academic research and analysis, and emphasized that the collegial and cooperative spirit within Southeast Asian studies in Germany provided a fruitful ground for this endeavour. In this regard, Arndt Graf also drew attention to the very recent publication by "Stiftung Asienhaus" (https://www.asienhaus.de/aktuelles/indonesien-auf-der-

documenta-fifteen-von-der-kunst-in-dialog-zu-treten/) and to the fact that the roundtable discussion would follow up and expand on the thoughts and ideas raised by the colleagues from Bonn. After introducing all panelists, Professor Graf started the round of initial statements by the panelists with Professor Padmanabhan.

Martina Padmanabhan started by recalling the student excursion to Documenta fifteen (in August 2022) that enabled students from Passau to "meet Indonesia in Kassel" and reflect on artistic practice in participatory (sustainability) research or artist-led research in the frame of the exhibition. Based on her experiences at Documenta fifteen, Padmanabhan suggested three topics for discussion: (mis-)communication, also in terms of intercultural clashes and different cultures of communication, conflict and public discourse, including how the conflict on Taring Padi's and other pieces of art has been communicated or debated – on which platforms, by whose voices and by which means, plus the aspect of the collective and the commons, challenging European notions of the individual artist who is responsible for his or her piece of art and practice, but also emphasizing shared space and dealing with conflict in creative ways. In addition, Prof. Padmanabhan reflected on her visit of Documenta fifteen as a painful and emotional experience related to the debate on anti-Semitism that triggered deeply felt emotions of shame, guilt, and accusation, which led her to the question of what role art can play in dealing with injustice but also the ability to mourn (e.g. in the context of the Nazi genocide).

Amanda Rath took up Prof. Padmanabhan's concerns and added her perspective on the collective and the commons, on communication, and how ideas travel or transform and take different meanings as they travel, with sedimented layers of meaning – especially in the context of conflict. Dr. Rath added the question of how far we can take the concept of *lumbung*[1] and how has it translated; plus, how have processes and practices that are associated with *lumbung* been practiced elsewhere in the world, maybe under different terminologies that are specific to their locations? This was also important because words that are being used in one local context can be misinterpreted in another one, and this misinterpretation can be part of the transformation of ideas, she emphasized. Reflecting on different notions of a collective and friendship, Dr. Rath underlined the importance to take into account different meanings in German, English, Indonesian, asf. and reminded everyone that the art collectives Ruang Rupa and Taring Padi both had a history of around 20 years, and that the sense of urgency out of which they had emerged transformed into thinking about consistency and sustainability (– again interesting concepts with different meanings). Referring back to the affective dimension of the conflict and

[1] *Lumbung* is the Indonesian term for a communal rice barn where the surplus harvest is stored for the benefit of the community; as a motto or model for Documenta fifteen, *lumbung* is to be understood as a kind of collective resource fund based on the principle of communality. It gathers ideas, human work potential, time and other resources that can be shared. More information on the concept of *lumbung* and its applications at Documenta fifteen can be found at https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/easy-lumbung/.

the inability to mourn or reconcile, Dr. Rath pointed to Wulan Durgantoro's work on trauma.

Susanne Rodemeier then shared some insights and ideas from her perspective as an experienced Indonesianist and curator of the exhibition on current Jewish life organized by the Museum of Religions in Marburg in the summer of 2022 (in parallel to Documenta fifteen). Recalling an experience at the Goethe Institute in Bandung in the late 1990s, where students from the ITB University collectively painted – and in the process repeatedly changed – a picture, she wondered why Taring Padi could not change their much criticized work "Peoples Justice" or, if it was finalized and not to be changed, what were the reasons for this? Furthermore, Dr. Rodemeier drew from her research experience in Eastern Indonesia, where artistic practice is essentially tied to religious practice and, although producing works of art is often a collective endeavour, there is usually one "author" who is responsible for it. This potential difference to Java and Ruang Rupa or Taring Padi was brought up as a point for discussion. One further point that Dr. Rodemeier took up and emphasized again was the concept of *lumbung*; she compared it to the *gudang* as a creative space that allows people to get out of the confines and social control of their community (within a neighbourhood or village in the countryside). She asked whether, in contrast, art and artistic practice today were more relevant in bigger cities in Java and Bali.

Alexander Supartono directly responded to the questions raised about *lumbung* and recalled a discussion within Taring Padi about the cultivation system in Indonesia between the 1830s and 1870s. He emphasized that the only chance to survive for Indonesians who had to cultivate export-oriented crops was to rely on *lumbung* – not only as a storage place but as a working communal concept where people share and support those in need. So *lumbung* became a symbol and strategy for artists and collectives to survive under the military dictatorship of Suharto, without state support and without any markets. For Taring Padi, *lumbung* thus became the very simple principle of everybody sharing what they can spare, according to their ability, and according to peoples' needs as Dr. Supartono explained. This at least was Taring Padi's understanding of the concept of *lumbung* introduced by Ruang Rupa as the working principle for Documenta fifteen. Therefore, *lumbung* could be implemented to the struggles and undoubtedly difficult times we are in now globally, on a planetary scale. "That's the principle of Documenta fifteen: to create a space, a platform, where the dialogue between different struggles in the Global South can take place, in 'the West'!" In addition, Dr. Supartono underlined that both Ruang Rupa and Taring Padi had moved beyond ideas of "East and West" since everybody today was living under more or less the same circumstances, i.e. neoliberalism. In conclusion, the whole conflict, also about Taring Padi's work "Peoples Justice", was a clash between operational systems, as Dr. Supartono explained, which implied that there was not miscommunication but that communication was not possible at all, unfortunately.

Reza Aifisina followed up directly on the issue of communication and emphasized dialogue and having conversations as the "daily bread" of Ruang Rupa since many years. This included aspects such as trust and friendship, as a basis for open and honest dialogue but also as a resource, meaning a model of sharing and mutual support – even including non-human beings, the natural environment, as a basis for social, economic, and ecological sustainability. This ultimately led to an understanding of Documenta fifteen as a particular resource that needed to be shared. As an art collective, the essential endeavour and struggle was how to communicate certain ideas and understandings of, for example, an ecosystem or implications of the Covid19 pandemic. Reflecting on the framework of Documenta fifteen in Kassel, Reza Aifisina emphasized hope and togetherness and feeling at home as aspects of *lumbung* – which was also experienced by Ruang Rupa in Kassel, despite conflict – but at the same time feeling the constant urge to justify or establish oneself as an equal partner in conversation. As an art collective, Ruang Rupa had much experience with this, also back in Jakarta and Indonesia, and the strategy was simply to introduce and present themselves and their ideas again and again, which they had done in Kassel, too, as Reza Aifisina concluded.

After the first round of individual statements and remarks, Arndt Graf reminded everyone of the fact that the recording of this particular roundtable discussion, together with other recordings of DGA roundtable discussions, was a historical document and a library item, which could be analyzed, combined and compared with other sources as part of future research projects.

For anybody who is interested in how the discussion continued, the recording is available on the website of the DGA: http://asienforschung.de/dga-diskussionsforum-online-quo-vadis-documenta/.

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ASIEN 164/165 (Juli/Oktober 2022), S. 228–230

Cheng, Chiung-ming: Gedanken in Weiß. Gedichte aus Taiwan

München: Iudicium Verlag, 2019. 192 S., 20 EUR

Rezension von Felix Rheinfelder

Cheng Chiung-ming hat seit den 1960er Jahren einen steten Strom an Gedichten geschaffen, in denen er sich politisch mit der Kontingenzhaftigkeit des Menschen auseinandersetzt. Insgesamt umfasst sein Kanon 253 Gedichte in 7 Werken. In diesem Werk findet sich nun eine Sammlung seiner Gedichte, die sich von 1969 bis 2017 erstreckt, wobei die einzelnen Jahresangaben zwischen der Schaffenszeitangabe im Textkorpus des Buches und dem Copyrightstempel im Editorial variieren können. Die vorliegende Rezension orientiert sich dabei hier nun an den Angaben aus dem Textkorpus. Für die Übersetzung war hauptsächlich Thilo Diefenbach zuständig, der auch für die Veröffentlichung eng mit Cheng Chiung-ming zusammengearbeitet und das Vorwort verfasst hat. Einzelne Übersetzungen stammen jedoch zusätzlich von Wolf Baus, Helmut Martin und Tienchi Martin-Liao.

Cheng Chiung-ming stammt aus Taiwan und ergriff nach der obligatorischen militärischen Grundausbildung den Beruf des Arztes, den er bis zu seinem Eintritt in den Ruhestand im Alter von 66 Jahren 2014 ausübte. Zeit seines Lebens galt daneben seine andere Passion der Literatur. In den 1960er Jahren, zu Beginn von Chengs Schaffenszeit, wurde die taiwanische Literaturszene hauptsächlich von chinesischen Autor*innen bestimmt, da die Mitglieder der Kuomintang nach ihrer Ankunft viele Führungspositionen und somit auch die Kontrolle über das kulturelle Leben übernommen hatten. Diese Szene brachte zwar unterschiedliche Strömungen hervor, vom Antikommunismus der 40er und 50er Jahre über die Entdeckung der westlichen Literatur bis hin zur Verschmelzung westlicher und chinesischer Stile in den 60er Jahren, aber die Einwohner*innen Taiwans fanden sich in keiner davon repräsentiert oder in ihrer Lebenswirklichkeit angesprochen. In diesem Kontext begann Cheng sein Schaffen und widmete sich der Herausforderung, Taiwan sowohl auf sprachlicher wie auch auf inhaltlicher Ebene eine Stimme zu verleihen, was durch die Zensurbestrebungen der damaligen Zeit nicht nur erschwert wurde, sondern ebenfalls Risiken mit sich brachte.

Das vorliegende Werk nimmt es sich nun vor, Cheng Chiung-mings gesamte Schaffenszeit zu beleuchten. Dafür ist das Buch in sieben Abschnitte unterteilt und jeder Abschnitt einem der Ursprungswerke Chengs zugeordnet. Alle Gedichte sind dazu sowohl in der Ursprungssprache als auch der deutschen Übersetzung abgedruckt. Diefenbach gibt im Vorwort an, dass es nicht das Ziel gewesen sei, einen gleichmäßigen Querschnitt abzubilden, sondern die Auswahl der Gedichte sei nach literarischen Gesichtspunkten erfolgt, wobei einerseits ästhetische Aspekte und andererseits der niedrigschwellige Zugang für eine deutschsprachige Leser*innenschaft im Vordergrund gestanden hätten.

Der erste Abschnitt, genannt „Heimweg“ (1969–1970), nimmt in seinen Gedichten je eine fiktive Person in den Blick und beschreibt deren Leiden an der Zeit, worin Chengs erste Schritte in Richtung einer Gesellschaftskritik sichtbar werden. „Tragische Phantasie“ (1970–1976) wird in diesem Aspekt deutlich stärker. Cheng spricht hier erstmals explizit von Erlaubtem und Nicht-Erlaubtem und bereichert seine Sprache um metaphorische Aussagen aus der Tier- und Götterwelt. Im Abschnitt „Das Lied der Süßkartoffel“ (1977–1980) steht nun fast völlig der politische Aspekt im Vordergrund, eingebettet in Metaphern aus Natur und dem Alltagsleben der taiwanischen Bevölkerung. Dabei ist bereits der Titel programmatisch, da die Süßkartoffel ein Symbol für Taiwan ist, das auf dessen geografische Umrisse anspielt. In „Das letzte Liebeslied“ (1981–1985) vermengt Cheng nun die Bilder von Liebe, Politik und Vergänglichkeit, um das Empfinden der Menschen in seinem Heimatland vor der Aufhebung des Kriegsrechts in 1986 zu beschreiben. „Trio“ (1986–2008) behandelt daran anschließend die Zeit danach. Hier ist der Zeitraum auffällig, in dem Cheng sich bewegt. Während die vorherigen Perioden zwischen einem und sechs Jahren variieren, lässt der Autor sich hier 22 Jahre Zeit, bevor er das nächste Werk veröffentlicht. Diefenbach erklärt dies damit, dass Cheng von 1991 bis etwa 2001 keine Gedichte verfasst haben soll, sondern sich auf andere Projekte konzentrierte. Man könnte diesen Zeitabschnitt also grob in eine Zeit vor einer großen Unterbrechung und eine Zeit nach dieser unterteilen. Dies ist auch in den Gedichten des vorliegenden Werkes ersichtlich, die, im Vergleich zu den vorherigen Abschnitten, sprachlich und inhaltlich weniger stringent sind. „Der starre Blick“ (2008–2015) sieht nun eine Abkehr von politischen Themen und eine Zuwendung zu den individuellen Erfahrungen des Autors. Vom Stil her sind die Gedichte dieses Abschnittes auch beträchtlich kürzer und sprachlich kompakter. „Todesgedanken“ (2015–2017) schließlich stellt den aktuellen Standpunkt Cheng Chiung-mings dar. Er reflektiert sein bisheriges Leben und sinniert über die Kontingenzhaftigkeit menschlichen Seins. Sprachlich werden die Gedichte wieder etwas ausführlicher, wirken dabei aber von der Struktur her restriktiver als zuvor. Abgerundet wird das Buch von einer kurzen Fotoserie aus dem Leben des Autors.

Insgesamt kann man festhalten, dass der Anspruch des Buches an sich selbst, die gesamte Schaffenszeit Cheng Chiung-mings zu beleuchten, nicht ganz erfüllt wurde. Rein quantitativ liegt der Fokus auf der politischen Periode des Autors, also den ersten vier Abschnitten. Der fünfte Abschnitt ist zwar ebenfalls recht ausführlich, was aber mehr auf dessen zeitlichen Rahmen zurückzuführen sein dürfte. Im Vorwort wurde durchaus explizit gesagt, dass eine gleichmäßige Verteilung kein Kriterium gewesen sei, die endgültige Diskrepanz ist aber nichtsdestotrotz beträchtlich. Diefenbach erläutert in seinem Vorwort ebenfalls, was Cheng in der Gesamtzahl seiner Gedichte der letzten beiden Abschnitte sprachlich und inhaltlich niedergeschrieben habe, rein auf Basis der in diesem Buch abgedruckten Gedichte ist das jedoch nicht nachvollziehbar. Das vorliegende Werk ist somit, mit Blick auf Sprache und Inhalt, eine leicht zugängliche Quelle für eine deutsche Leser*innenschaft, die sich für nationalpolitisch-taiwanische Literatur interessiert.

Wer mehr an der Persönlichkeit Cheng Chiung-mings interessiert ist, müsste jedoch weitere Literatur hinzuziehen.

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Fang Fang: Weiches Begräbnis. 软埋

Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe. 2022, 442 Seiten. ISBN 978-3-455-01140-1

Rezension von Thomas Weyrauch

Prima facie könnte dieser Roman auch von Mo Yan stammen. So erinnert Fang Fangs „Weiches Begräbnis" etwa in Dramaturgie und Aufbau an Mo Yans Arbeiten, beiden ist gemeinsam, dass sie Flashbacks lieben, mit großer Mühe zeitliche Abläufe in Mosaiksteine zerschlagen, gesellschaftliche Wunden aufzeigen und oft an die Grenzen der Zensur geraten. Im Gegensatz zu Mo Yan, dem Literaturnobelpreisträger und in den Augen von Kritikern „Staatsdichter" (so etwa Liao Yiwu), ist die Schriftstellerin Fang in den Orkus der staatlich verordneten Schmähung gefallen. Ihre Eignung für internationale Preise und Anerkennung hat sie dennoch nicht verloren.

Hinter dem Künstlernamen Fang Fang steht die 1955 in Nanjing geborene und in Wuhan lebende Wang Fang (汪芳), die zu den bekanntesten Literat*innen Chinas gehört. Der Übersetzer des Werkes ist der renommierte Sinologe Michael Kahn-Ackermann. Dem Roman sind Nachworte von Fang Fang sowie Kahn-Ackermann angehängt. Letzterer geht auf die tiefere Bedeutung des Titels Ruǎn mái (软埋), wörtlich: weich begraben werden bzw. weiches Begräbnis, ein und entlarvt eine unwürdige *damnatio memoriae* durch gezielt eingesetzte Strategien autoritärer oder totalitärer Regimes durch das Auslöschen von Erinnerungen mittels Verboten oder Unterdrückung von Tatsachen: „Beide Strategien wurden und werden in der Volksrepublik China häufig und erfolgreich angewandt. Die Grausamkeiten und Absurditäten der zehnjährigen ‚Kulturrevolution' dürfen heute nicht mehr öffentlich thematisiert werden. Die blutige Niederschlagung der Studentenproteste im Juni 1989 wird aus dem öffentlichen Gedächtnis ausradiert, kein Bild, kein Text in den Medien, den Schulbüchern oder anderen Erinnerungen darf daran erinnern" (433).

Eine Preisjury hatte Fang gerade im Jahr 2017 mit dem begehrten Lu-Yao-Literaturpreis ausgezeichnet, als kurz nach der Ehrung die Exemplare des Romans aus den Buchläden – einhergehend mit öffentlicher Kritik, Hasskommentaren, Diffamierungen und Beleidigungen – verschwanden. Waren es wirklich Literaturkenner*innen, die in dieser Zeit konstatierten, Fang Fang habe den Geist des großen Literaten Lu Yao (路垚) verraten? Mit der Veröffentlichung des „Wuhan Diary: Tagebuch aus einer gesperrten Stadt" im Jahr 2020 wurde die Literatin nunmehr weltberühmt, in ihrer Heimat jedoch wiederum vom Staatsapparat diskreditiert und zur Zielscheibe des Pöbels. Tief sollte sie fallen.

„Ich will kein weiches Begräbnis" ist tatsächlich das Credo der Protagonistin des Romans, einer Frau, die zuvor leblos aus dem Yonggu-Fluss gezogen, von dem Arzt Wu geheilt und sogar geheiratet wurde, sich jedoch nicht an ihr früheres Leben erinnern konnte. Hin und wieder kommen Indizien zutage, die etwas zur

Persönlichkeit und zum Umfeld ihres früheren Lebens beitragen könnten. Ihr Gestammel „Dingzi“ führt zu einem Missverständnis „Ding“ sei ihr Familienname und „Zi“ den Teil ihres Vornamens, weshalb sie in der Folgezeit unter dem Namen „Ding Zitao“ geführt wird. Auch plötzlich aus ihr hervorbrechende Wortfetzen, wie die „Halle des dreifachen Wissens“ oder die „Strohhütte des Ertragens“, machen ihre Mitmenschen ratlos und deuten bestenfalls auf eine Örtlichkeit hin. Ständig ist Ding Zitao Angst und Panikattacken ausgesetzt, bis ihr geliebter Mann bei einem Verkehrsunfall stirbt. Wiederum ruft sie „Kein weiches Begräbnis!“ In der Folgezeit kehrt Ruhe ein, sie führt sie ein ärmliches Leben und bemüht sich, ihren Sohn Qingling großzuziehen.

Mit dem Erreichen des Erwachsenenalters und der Beendigung des Studiums nutzt Qingling die Reformpolitik und kommt zu Reichtum. Nun kann er nicht nur seine Mutter finanziell unterstützen, sondern sogar eine riesige Villa errichten, seine Mutter zu sich holen und für sie eine Dienerin anstellen. Damit gerät Ding Zitao in eine tiefe Krise, denn der Wohlstand des Sohnes ist die Ursache für tief verwurzelte Ängste, enteignet, verfolgt und getötet zu werden. Schließlich fällt sie in ein Wachkoma, in dem sie unbemerkt von den Mitmenschen in mehreren Flashbacks die tragischen Ereignisse der Vergangenheit durchlebt. Der Leser erfährt in diesen Schilderungen, wie ihr ursprünglicher Name lautet, woher sie stammt, dass sie verheiratet war und dass sie einen Sohn namens Dingzi hatte (101, 103).

Über den neuen Ausbruch der psychischen Erkrankung seiner Mutter ist Qingling tief beunruhigt, und er bemüht sich, den Grund zu finden. Eine alte Ledertasche seines Vaters, die mit anderen Utensilien von Ding Zitao weggeworfen werden sollten, enthält Dokumente, die allerdings nur die Geschichte der Eltern bis zum Zeitpunkt der Rettung seiner Mutter betreffen. Erst auf einer Reise nach Ost-Sichuan findet Qingling heraus, was mit einem weichen Begräbnis gemeint ist (352 f.). In einem Dorf unweit des Yonggu-Flusses gelangt er zu einem als „Geisterhaus“ gemiedenen Anwesen, in dem sich ein verrückter alter Mann aufhält, der einst Diener der wohlhabenden Familie Lu gewesen war. Als er nun am Haus die Zeichen „Halle des dreifachen Wissens“ entdeckt, ist er sicher, dass seine Mutter davon gesprochen hatte.

Die gesamte Familie Lu habe sich – so erfährt Qingling – vor der mit exzessiver Gewalt forcierten Bodenreform Anfang der 1950er Jahre das Leben genommen, bevor sie in einem Schauprozess gedemütigt, gefoltert und umgebracht werden sollte.

Zudem erschließen sich dem Leser die Parallelen der Schicksale beider Elternteile und weiterer Personen.

Nach Qinglings Rückkehr erwacht Ding Zitao aus ihrem zweijährigen Wachkoma und schreit wiederum, sie wolle kein weiches Begräbnis. Kurz danach verstirbt sie. Entgegen der gegenwärtigen Sitte, sie einäschern zu lassen, kauft er einen Sarg und gewährt ihr eine Erdbestattung. Die noch offenen Fragen und bereits gelüfteten

Geheimnisse behandelt er nicht weiter: „Ich habe mich für das Vergessen entschieden“ (422).

„Weiches Begräbnis“ ist eine Parabel über die Verwundungen eines Volkes, die fehlende historische Aufarbeitung politisch motivierter Gewalt, den Schleier des Vergessens und die Resignation der Suchenden.

Fang Fangs Meisterwerk geht unter die Haut. Michael Kahn-Ackermann ist in diesem Zusammenhang Respekt für die erstklassige Übersetzung zu zollen, mit der er Fang Fangs reiche, bildhafte Sprache den deutschsprachigen Leser*innen zugänglich macht.

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Udo Haase: 50 Jahre Mongolei. Mit den Nachfahren Dschingis-Khans unterwegs

Berlin: Rudower Panorama Verlag u. Medien GmbH. 2022. 247 Seiten, 24,90 EUR.
ISBN 978-3-932403-05-7

Rezension von Peter Schaller

In seinem Buch gibt Haase, ein promovierter Mongolist, ein Resümee von fünf Jahrzehnten als Brückenbauer zwischen der deutschen und der mongolischen Gesellschaft, genauer gesagt zwischen der DDR und der Mongolischen Volksrepublik (MVR) und ab 1990 zwischen dem wiedervereinten Deutschland und der durch Demokratie und Marktwirtschaft gekennzeichneten „neuen" Mongolei. Eine große Anzahl an Fotos ergänzt die Ausführungen.

Die Kontakte zur Mongolei spielten sich auf ganz unterschiedlichen beruflichen Feldern ab, was Haase im 1. Teil, „Vom Studium bis zur Wende", darstellt. Der Bogen reicht vom 1971 begonnenen Studium der Mongolistik an der Humboldt-Universität Berlin, der Fortsetzung und dem Abschluss des Studiums in der Hauptstadt Ulan Bator 1974–76, der Arbeit als Übersetzer für Mongolisch und Russisch in der DDR-Agentur Intertext sowie langjähriger Dolmetschertätigkeit bei den Begegnungen ranghoher Repräsentanten von Regierung und kommunistischer Partei beider Staaten bis zur politischen Wende, die ja in beiden Systemen zeitlich fast synchron verlief, bis hin zur Neuorientierung nach der Wiedervereinigung, die mit dem Einstieg in die Kommunalpolitik erfolgte und dann bis zum Amt des langjährigen Bürgermeisters von Schönefeld führte, dessen Name mit dem Flughafen Berlin-Brandenburg (BER) verbunden ist. Von 1981–84 war Haase Dolmetscher der DDR-Experten in dem seinerzeit wichtigsten Entwicklungsprojekt der DDR in Asien, dem Fleisch- und Konservenkombinat Ulan Bator, sowie ab 1988 Leiter der Konsulatsabteilung der DDR-Botschaft in Ulan Bator, was mit der Auflösung der DDR endete.

Im Verhältnis von zwei Staaten sind die Aktionen von Regierungen nur eine Seite. Sie schaffen den völkerrechtlichen und politischen Bezugsrahmen, aber ausgefüllt und umgesetzt in zwischenmenschliche Begegnungen werden sie durch Initiativen der Zivilgesellschaft, die dann häufig auch von gesamtstaatlichen und kommunalen Institutionen sowie politischen Einrichtungen und Privatleuten unterstützt werden. Im Falle der Mongolei spielen die rund 30.000 deutsch sprechenden Mongolinnen und Mongolen, von denen die Masse in der DDR ausbildet wurde und von denen ein Teil in Deutschland lebt, eine wichtige Rolle.

Der 2. Teil, „Begegnungen, Erlebnisse, Reisen", zeigt in 25 Kapiteln die Aktivitäten, die der Autor (mit)initiiert hat oder an denen er beteiligt war bzw. ist, denn er ist auch im Ruhestand weiter aktiv. Die Spanne reicht vom Förderverein „Die Freunde der Mongolischen Oper" über das regelmäßig veranstaltete „Deutsch-Mongolische

Volksfest“ in Waßmannsdorf bis zur Partnerschaft zwischen Schönefeld und dem Stadtbezirk Bayangol der mongolischen Hauptstadt Ulan Bator. Bei dieser Vielzahl verwundert nicht, dass Haase mit wichtigen mongolischen Orden ausgezeichnet wurde.

Der 3. Teil, „Weggefährten, Freunde und gute Bekannte“, stellt in 12 Kapiteln mongolische Persönlichkeiten vor, zu denen Haase ein besonderes Verhältnis hatte und hat.

Ein Resümee derart praller Beziehungen ist ein Ringen mit der Masse des Stoffes. Meine Erwartung war, spezielle Einblicke in die Mongolei, vor allem auch das Denken der Führung zu erhalten. So hätte ich zum Beispiel gerne genauer erfahren, wie hohe Staats- und Parteiführer beider Seiten die Politik Gorbatschows und die politische Gärung in beiden Gesellschaften beurteilten. Dem kommt der Autor nur teilweise nach, denn es überwiegt die weitgehend auf Äußerlichkeiten beschränkte Darstellung, wobei die akribische Aufzählung aller Teilnehmer an Begegnungen den Leser überfordert.

Dagegen sind die Abschnitte über den politischen Umbruch in der Mongolei lesenswert (71), zumal sie durch seltene Fotos nicht nur der Demonstrationen, sondern auch der Karikaturen von Stalin und des Machthabers Tsedenbal und dessen Gattin ergänzt werden. Schön die Anekdote des als besonders trinkfest bekannten Chefs der mongolischen Parteihochschule, der sich 1986 Gorbatschows Forderung nach Wodka-Abstinenz öffentlich zu eigen machte und damit Heiterkeit erzeugte (60), wie ja auch Gorbatschow als „Mineralsekretär“ verspottet wurde. Die durch Fotos unterlegte Schilderung von Haases Studentenunterkunft in Ulan Bator ist plastisch (13) und erinnert mich daran, wie ich als Diplomat in Peking Anfang der 1980-er Jahre mitunter die deutschen Studenten mit einer Kiste Rotwein in ihrem Heim besuchte. Eine Reihe Fotos bietet interessante Einblicke in das Leben der Nomaden und vom Reisen vor und nach der Wende. Haases Ausführungen zu Überschwemmungen in Ulan Bator (55), dem Rubinberg bei Khovd (50), der mongolischen Post (211), dem ersten Ballonflug in der Mongolei (211) und der Eurasia-Fluggesellschaft (212) verweisen auf weniger bekannte Tatsachen.

Erhellend sind die Ausführungen zum Fleischkombinat, das seinerzeit nicht nur in die DDR, sondern auch in westliche Staaten wie Frankreich, Belgien und die Niederlande exportierte – eine Tradition, an die man bis heute nicht anknüpfen konnte, was zeigt, dass die Wende auch in der Mongolei vieles zerstörte (44).

Mitunter gelingen Haase atmosphärisch und ethnografisch dichte Schilderungen, wie etwa bei der Begleitung von „Stern“-Reportern, die über eine Wolfsjagd berichten, auf der die Jäger niemals das Wort „Wolf“ in den Mund nehmen, weil sie glauben, dass der Wolf alles mithören könne, und dass sie seine Intelligenz hoch schätzen: „Dem Wolf fehlen zwei Hände, sonst wäre er ein Mensch“ (171). Die Wiederansiedlung von Przewalski-Pferden, in der Mongolei Thakis genannt, zeigt die besondere Denkweise, wenn die Mongolen das Schnuppern der Pferde am

ungewohnten Gras der Steppe damit kommentieren, dass die Tiere „ihre alte Heimat küssen“ (187).

Ich würde mir wünschen, dass Haase in einem weiteren Anlauf stärker „aus dem Nähkästchen plauderte“, denn ich bin mir sicher, dass er dies könnte.

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Deike Lautenschläger: Das Glück verkehrt herum. Homophone in Taiwan

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Rezension von Thilo Diefenbach

Dieses Buch ist eine Art Fortsetzung des Erstlings der Autorin: *Fettnäpfchenführer Taiwan. Wo Götter kuppeln und Ärzte gebrochene Herzen heilen* (2016) lautete der Titel der ebenso amüsanten wie informativen Landeskunde, die mittels einer fiktionalen Rahmenhandlung einen Querschnitt des taiwanischen Alltagslebens präsentierte. Schon hier kam Lautenschläger mehrfach auf das Phänomen zu sprechen, das sie in ihrem neuen Buch ausführlich behandelt, nämlich auf Homophone, also gleich oder sehr ähnlich klingende, aber eine unterschiedliche Bedeutung aufweisende Wörter. Das Buch besteht aus fünf thematisch organisierten Abschnitten (Alltägliches, Feierliches und Festtägliches, Zwischenmenschliches, Historisches und Politisches, Natürliches) mit insgesamt 60 Kapiteln (nebst einer Einleitung), die alle nicht länger als drei Seiten sind.

Das Buch bietet nicht nur für Einsteiger, sondern auch für Kenner der Thematik viele interessante Details – die zweite Personengruppe wird womöglich über einige Kapitel hinwegblättern, in denen die Autorin beispielsweise das titelgebende Phänomen erklärt (zu Neujahr werden Plakate mit dem Zeichen „Glück" kopfüber aufgehängt, weil 福倒了 „das Glück steht auf dem Kopf" genauso klingt wie 福到了 „das Glück kommt an"; 17) oder wo der Gleichklang von „Fisch 魚" und „Überfluss 餘" erklärt wird (84). Sehr viel spezieller sind dagegen z. B. die Homophone, die bei der jährlichen Parade zu Ehren der Göttin Matsu zum Einsatz kommen (105), wobei hier – ebenso wie an einigen anderen Stellen – nicht nur Gleichlautendes innerhalb des Mandarin, sondern auch zwischen Mandarin und Taiwanesisch (Holo) erwähnt wird.

Sachliche Fehler sind Lautenschläger kaum unterlaufen, nur zwei Stellen sind m. E. korrekturbedürftig: Auf S. 177 ist wohl kaum das hebräische „Shalom" gemeint, sondern eher das arabische „salām"; und auf S. 123 vermittelt die Autorin den Eindruck, das taiwanische Schimpfwort „Drei-Acht 三八" sei rein frauenfeindlicher Natur, aber dem ist nicht so – auch Männer können damit beschimpft werden, denn es bezeichnet allgemein unangenehme, verhaltensauffällige Personen.

Die zweite Titelzeile des Buches ist in zweifacher Hinsicht irreführend. Erstens lässt sie eine trocken-akademische Darstellung vermuten, was absolut unzutreffend ist, denn die Autorin bedient sich eines leichten, lockeren Stils (an dem nur gelegentlich ein paar unnötige Anglizismen stören). Zweitens deutet der Titel ausschließlich Beschäftigung mit Taiwan an, obwohl das Buch auch einige Passagen zu China und Hongkong enthält, die keinen Bezug zu Taiwan aufweisen – z. B. wenn es um die

zahlreichen „Tarnnamen“ für Xi Jinping geht, die Chinesen im Netz aufgrund der in ihrem Land herrschenden Überwachung anwenden müssen (191–192); die Suchmaschinen in China erweitern mittlerweile das Wort „Reagenzglas 細頸瓶 (*xijing ping*)“ immer automatisch zu *xijing changping* 細頸長瓶, um nur ja jede eventuelle Anspielung auf den Großen Führer zu unterbinden… (193) Beim Lesen solcher Passagen ist man dann doch glücklich und zufrieden, wenn man sich für Taiwan als Studienobjekt entschieden hat, das solche diktatorischen Sperenzchen schon lange hinter sich gelassen hat.

Vielleicht ließe sich der Titel sogar noch mehr präzisieren. Denn Lautenschläger geht es ja nicht einfach nur darum, einige Homophon-Paare zusammenzustellen, sondern sie will die Bedeutungszusammenhänge bestimmter Handlungen erklären. Fast alle von ihr vorgestellten Beispiele zeigen, dass die Homophonie sogar für bestimmte Verhaltensweisen verantwortlich ist. So isst man beispielsweise Seegurke (73) oder ein merkwürdiges, haarartiges Bakterium (247) nur deswegen, weil ihre Namen so glück- und reichtumverheißend klingen, und man füttert Schüler, die fürs Examen büffeln, nur deswegen mit Zwiebeln, weil deren Benennung im Mandarin so klingt wie das Wort „schlau“ (227). Wir haben es hier also mit etwas zu tun, das manche als „Aberglaube“ bezeichnen mögen, aber vielleicht sollte man es „sprachliche Symbole“ oder sogar „sprachmagische Handlungen“ nennen.

Das Buch – übrigens im Quadratformat – ist mit seinen zahlreichen Bildern und Fotografien hübsch aufgemacht, und wenngleich die Schrifttype etwas größer hätte ausfallen können, so ist es doch eine nicht nur interessante, sondern auch wichtige Lektüre für alle, die den Alltag in Taiwan oder eben auch in China besser verstehen wollen.

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Montesano, Michael J., Terence Chong und Mark Heng (Hgg).: After the Coup. The National Council for Peace and Order Era and the Future of Thailand

Singapur: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019. 465 S., 45,90 USD.
ISBN: 9789814818988

Rezension von Felix Rheinfelder

In der Aufsatzsammlung von Montesano, Chong und Heng haben die Herausgeber 15 Fachartikel über Thailand nach dem Militärcoup im Mai 2014 zusammengetragen, die anlässlich der Thailand Forum Conference in Singapur verfasst worden sind. Dabei dienen der erste und der letzte Artikel jeweils gleichzeitig als Einleitung und Konklusion des Sammelbandes und wurden beide von einem der Herausgeber verfasst. Das Ziel des vorliegenden Werkes soll es dabei sein, so die Aussage im einleitenden Artikel, die Situation in Thailand nach dem Coup 2014 zu erfassen und den Weg dorthin nachzuverfolgen. Dieser Ansatz ist besonders im kontemporären Kontext interessant, wenn man den Militärputsch im benachbarten Myanmar 2021, also nur zwei Jahre nach Erscheinen des Buches, mitberücksichtigt. Aus diesem Grund kann das vorliegende Werk also nicht nur mit dem reinen Fokus auf Thailand gelesen werden, sondern auch mit den politischen Ereignissen im Gebiet Südostasien im Hinterkopf.

Den Anfang macht Montesano mit einem Überblick über die Situation in Thailand nach dem Tode des vorherigen Königs Bhumibol und die Entwicklung dessen, was er als „kosmopolitische Dörfler“ beschreibt, also die Politisierung der Bevölkerung außerhalb der Metropolen. Montesano stellt dabei die These auf, die Zukunft Thailands werde durch den Konflikt um die „Thai-Identität“ bestimmt werden. In den folgenden Kapiteln werden dann jeweils gezielt spezifische Themen rund um die Gesellschaft Thailands angesprochen. Pitidol/Techasunthornwat analysieren die Rolle der oberen Mittelklasse als Gegnerin der Demokratisierung. Unno betrachtet den Süden in seiner Rolle als regionaler Nationalismus und stellt die These auf, Bangkok und der Süden seien die beiden Pfeiler der Monarchie.

Alexander/McCargo untersuchen Isan, den Nordosten und die Frage, warum die Unterstützung der Rothemden hier nach dem Coup aus der Öffentlichkeit verschwunden ist. Charoenmuang schließt sich der Fragestellung an, untersucht jedoch den Norden, Lanna, und stellt die These einer Isan-Lanna-Achse auf. Der Aufsatz von Chalermsripinyorat nimmt sich des malaysisch-muslimisch geprägten Südens an und zieht das Fazit einer „militärischen Dominanz in der thailändischen Politik unter dem Deckmantel einer zivilen Regierung“. Bamrungsuk geht auf den historischen Hintergrund der Militärherrschaft ein und schließt den Bogen von der Siamesischen Revolution 1932 bis heute. Kongkirati stellt den Coup von 2014 in den Kontext des Coups von 2006, und auch Nethipo nimmt eine historische Perspektive ein, wo das Fazit gezogen wird, dass vor 2014 eine

Dezentralisierungsbewegung stattgefunden habe, die sich 2014 dann in eine Rezentralisierungsbewegung umgekehrt hätte. Sinpeng/Hemtanon untersuchen anschließend die Rolle der Medien und deren Instrumentalisierung durch alle Fraktionen, gefolgt von Pawakapan und der dortigen Betrachtung der internationalen Medien. Winichakul beschreibt Thailand als „royale Demokratie", in der zwar ein Parlament existiere, die Macht aber bei der Monarchie liege. Ouyyanont nimmt sich dann der ökonomischen Entwicklung an, besonders Thailands Handeln im ASEAN-Raum. Sasiwongsaroj/Burasit analysieren die demografische Entwicklung und die Herausforderungen einer überalternden Gesellschaft. Zum Abschluss fasst Chong noch einmal einige Themen zusammen und formuliert die These, dass Thailand sich in einem Transitionsprozess befände, der durch die Fragen von Monarchie, Militär und Überalterung geprägt sei.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass das vorliegende Werk seinen eigenen Anspruch erfüllt hat. Es hat den Weg zum Coup von 2014 und den Zustand kurz nach dem Coup untersucht und veranschaulicht, wobei einige Aufsätze etwas zu kurz greifen und bei anderen Zeitmarkern vor 2014 stehenbleiben. Diese Aufsätze bieten zwar wertvolle Informationen für das Gesamtbild, lassen aber den Bezug zum eigentlichen Ankerpunkt im Jahr 2014 vermissen. Was zudem in mehreren Aufsätzen fehlt, sind vorausschauende Blicke oder Prognosen. Damit ist das Buch eine ausführliche und fundierte Bestandsaufnahme und ein guter Ausgangspunkt für weitere Forschungen, bietet aber an sich keine weiterführenden Perspektiven. Damit geht auch einher, dass die Relevanz des Buches mit Blick auf den Kontext für Südostasien zwar vorhanden ist, allerdings geringer ausfällt, als das möglich gewesen wäre. Der größte formale Pluspunkt ist das Vorhandensein von Quellenmaterial. Statistiken, Bilder und sonstige Quelleninformationen sind dort ausführlich und übersichtlich vorhanden, wo sie dem Gesamtverständnis dienlich sind. Problematisch ist dagegen inhaltlich die Diffusität von Monarchie und Militär. Mehrere Aufsätze behandeln zwar das Zusammenspiel von Militär und Monarchie an konkreten Beispielen, die eigentlichen Machtstrukturen sind dabei aber nicht in Gänze nachvollziehbar, was besonders mit Blick auf das Leitthema, einen Militärcoup, äußerst schade ist. Nichtsdestotrotz ist das Buch eine wertvolle und fundierte Literatur für die sozialen und politischen Verhältnisse Thailands zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts, die den Leser*innen den Weg zu den unterschiedlichsten Themenfeldern öffnet.

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Rongfen Wang: Steinway. Aus dem Chinesischen von Lao Men

Berlin: Matthes & Seitz 2022. 490 Seiten. ISBN 978-3-7518-0091-4

Rezension von Thomas Weyrauch

Seit zwei Dekaden erwartet der Rezensent eine Autobiografie von Wang Rongfen (王容芬), deren Leben in der Gesamtheit stürmisch, leidvoll und angsteinflößend, doch auf der anderen Seite auch glücklich, friedlich – und vor allem lehrreich ist.

Wang, geboren 1945, studierte in Beijing Germanistik und empfand zu Beginn der Kulturrevolution, dass sich der von Mao Zedong losgetretene Terror nicht sehr vom Alltag im Nationalsozialismus unterschied, über den sie viel gelesen hatte. Deshalb schrieb sie einen Protestbrief an Mao und wollte sich mit Gift das Leben nehmen. Sie wurde zwar vor dem Tod gerettet, jedoch für zwölf Jahre bei größten Misshandlungen in Haft gehalten. Nach Maos Tod rehabilitiert, konnte sie an der Chinesischen Akademie der Wissenschaften als Wissenschaftlerin bzw. Professorin arbeiten. Ihre Ausreise zum Zweck einer Kongressteilnahme führte sie nach Deutschland, wo sie ihre neue Heimat fand, zahlreiche Arbeiten publizierte und schließlich in Soziologie über Max Weber („Cäsarismus und Machtpolitik“) promovierte. Bis zu ihrer Pensionierung wirkte sie als wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin im Statistischen Bundesamt.

Wichtige literarische Arbeiten stammen aus ihrer Feder, wie etwa eine aus den Werken Suiren (燧人), Paoxi (庖牺) und Youchao (有巢) bestehende, vom Pekinger Verlag Zhongyang bianyi chuban she (Central Compilation & Translation Press) 2017 publizierte „Taigu zuyin“ (太古足音, „Trilogie der Matriarcha“), in der sie sich einer historischen Kulturbetrachtung Chinas widmet. Ihr gerade in Deutschland erschienener Roman „Steinway“ könnte sich als vorläufiger Ersatz für eine Autobiografie eignen, denn auch er thematisiert Maos grausame Serie blutiger Verfolgungskampagnen.

Der Titel lässt bereits vermuten, dass ein Flügel des Klavierbauers Steinways & Sons als allegorisches Objekt in den historischen Stationen des Romans in Erscheinung treten würde. Tatsächlich war das mit Muschelintarsien in Form von Bambushalmen, Chrysanthemenblüten oder Glücksvögeln versehene Instrument höchster Qualität einst für den Kaiserhof bestellt worden, wurde aber erst in der frühen Republik ausgeliefert, als die Monarchie ihr Ende gefunden hatte. Seine Existenz setzt sich bis in die Gegenwart des Erzählers fort. Das mehrfach gesungene Trennungslied *Heri jun zai lai* (何日君再來, Wann sehen wir uns wieder?) aus dem Kriegsjahr 1937 wird von diesem Flügel begleitet und steht für Verlusttraumata.

Bevor der Erzähler seinen Namen Shi Sun offenbart und Einzelschicksale jener Zeit darstellt, berichtet er über eine Diskussion mit seiner Großmutter um die Opferzahlen der Kulturrevolution. Die resolute und statistikfeste alte Dame belehrt ihren Enkel, entgegen der verbreiteten Ansicht, in der Kulturrevolution seien „nur“

rund zwei Millionen Menschen umgekommen, handele es sich tatsächlich um mindestens 30 Millionen. Sie belegt dies unter der Verwendung wissenschaftlicher Methoden anhand der Statistischen Jahrbücher der Volksrepublik China, die sie als ehemalige Mitarbeiterin des Staatlichen Amtes für Statistik regelmäßig frei Haus erhält.

Für Shi Sun mag es zwar eine „Gnade der späten Geburt“ (so eine ungeschickt formulierte Phrase Helmut Kohls) sein, gerade am Ende der Kulturrevolution geboren zu sein, doch jene Gnade befreit ihn nicht von der kollektiven Bürde, die aus jener Epoche resultiert. Er wird regelmäßig Zeuge von Gesprächen über das Grauen der Kulturrevolution. Während des Besuches zum Zweck des Klavierunterrichts beider Kinder muss eines mit der Lehrerin üben, das andere mit der Großmutter warten, die das Geschwisterpaar begleitet. Die alte Dame hat die Anschaffung eines sündhaft teuren Instruments finanziert, nachdem ihr verstorbener Mann als Verfolgter entschädigt worden war und sie bald darauf einen gut betuchten Militärarzt geheiratet hatte. Die Unterhaltungen seiner Oma mit einer anderen älteren Frau, der Mutter der Klavierlehrerin, interessieren Shi Sun weit mehr als die Etüden am Flügel. Der Leistungsunterschied zu seiner musikalisch erfolgreichen Schwester Shi Zhu wird zur Enttäuschung der ambitionierten Mutter schnell deutlich.

Dafür bezieht Shi Sun seinen Gewinn aus der Oral History zweiter Familien, nämlich der eigenen und der seiner Klavierlehrerin: „Alles, was nun folgt, habe ich später von meiner Oma erfahren, und die hatte es wiederum von Großmutter Cheng“.

Da tauchen immer wieder Namen auf, die oftmals eine Beziehung zueinander haben bzw. Schlüsselfiguren des Romans werden, wie etwa die erwähnte Oma Yu Lin, die als Mandschurin aus einer Bannerfamilie zur Welt gekommen war, KP-Mitglied wurde und trotz ihrer Mitgliedschaft von der Partei verfolgt wurde. Sie teilte damit das Schicksal mit ihrem Mann, dem Medizinprofessor Mei Jie, der ursprünglich als Nachschuboffizier der von der Guomindang geführten Nationalarmee angehört hatte, vor den KP-Truppen kapituliert und sich der Marionettenpartei des Demokratischen Bundes zugewandt hatte. Dadurch konnte er Berater der neuen Regierung der Volksrepublik China werden. Unter Maos Schreckensherrschaft verfolgt, wurde er nach der Kulturrevolution rehabilitiert. Mit der Verkündung seiner Freilassung geriet sein Gemüt in höchste Erregung, sodass er tot zusammenbrach.

Die zentrale Akteurin des Romans ist die Klavierlehrerin Cheng Pinzhi. Cheng Pinzhis Schwiegervater Han Siyuan, ein Phonetiker, hatte sich 1949 vor der kommunistischen Machtergreifung bemüht, mit seiner Familie nach Taiwan zu fliehen, doch nur ihn verschlug das Schicksal auf die Insel. In der kleinen Welt der Pekinger Wissenschaftler waren ihr Vater, der Französischprofessor Cheng Wendao, und ihr Schwiegervater einst Freunde gewesen. Mit dem Ausbruch der Kulturrevolution verlor Cheng Pinzhi ihren Mann Han Yuan, ihren Sohn Han Chi und ihre aus der Familie Liu stammende Schwiegermutter: „Sie [die Rotgardisten]

zerrten die alte Frau an den Haaren herum und prügelten sie bald zu Tode […] da wachte der Kleine auf, sah statt seiner Oma nur lauter fremder Gesichter und brüllte los. Der Anführer der Rotgardisten zog ihn an den Füßchen hoch und riss die beiden spindeldürren Beinchen auseinander. Da verstummte das Geschrei, das Kind war tot."

Während der gerade beginnenden Kulturrevolution verblieben somit im Umfeld Cheng Pingzhis lediglich ihre Mutter Jiang Yu („Großmutter Cheng"), ihre Tochter Han Shanshan, die bei Großmutter Cheng aufwuchs, sowie ihre Schwester Cheng Pinglan, die mit Wang Bodan verheiratet war und mit ihm zwei Kinder hatte.

Cheng Pinzhis Vater Cheng Wendao wurde gleichfalls zu Beginn der Kulturrevolution verfolgt und in Haft gehalten. Cheng Pingzhi bemühte sich deshalb, ihren Vater ausfindig zu machen und alle Hebel für seine Haftentlassung in Bewegung zu setzen. Als schließlich auch Mao Zedong die Musikerin entdeckte und ein Vertrauensverhältnis entstand, nahm Cheng Pingzhi ihren Mut zusammen und erzählte ihm von der ungerechtfertigten Verfolgung ihres Vaters. Doch Mao wich aus und nötigte sie, mit ihm zu tanzen bzw. sich ihm hinzugeben. Die angeekelte Frau nahm diese Demütigung hin, um ihren Vater zu retten.

Nachdem sie Mao von der Unterleibserkrankung ihrer Schwester Pinglan erzählt hatte, vermittelte dieser ihr die bekannteste Gynäkologin Lin Qiaozhi, die ihr die Gebärmutter entfernte, ohne ihren Ehemann Wang Bodan um Erlaubnis zu bitten.

Wenige Tage später wurde Cheng Pinzhi in ein Gefängnis eingeliefert, gedemütigt und misshandelt: „Plötzlich brach im Rücken von Cheng Pinzhi ein ohrenbetäubendes Gebrüll von Losungen aus: ‚Wer sich dem Vorsitzenden zu widersetzen wagt, dem zerschlagt den Hundekopf', ‚Zerschlagt Cheng Pinzhis Hundekopf' …"

In eine überfüllte Zelle gesperrt, lernte sie unterschiedliche Frauen kennen, die gleichfalls unschuldig festgehalten wurden. Hierzu gehörten etwa die Japanerin Tanaka Yukiko, die mit einem als Landesverräter gebrandmarkten Chinesen verheiratet war, die aufschneiderische, intrigante und denunzierende Li Renmei, die Christin Lude, die langsam zu Tode gequälte „Yuan Viertkind" („eine Frau wie eine Teichbinse, schlank, groß, biegsam, beweglich; jetzt zur leeren Hülle geworden"), die Studentin Ye Xiu, die vor ihrer Verhaftung abends mit ihrem Freund auf einer Zeitung Platz genommen hatte, ohne zu bemerken, dass sie auf Maos Konterfei saß. Schließlich war da auch noch die mit einem Chinesen verheiratete Russin Katia.

Aus Cheng Pinzhis Verhör: „„Warum bist du hier?' – ‚Das weiß ich nicht.' Sie schüttelte verwirrt den Kopf. ‚Das weißt du nicht? Wir haben dich nicht festgenommen, die Massen haben dich eingeliefert. Wie kannst du nicht wissen, was du unter den Massen für reaktionäre Reden verbreitest hast?'"

Yuan Viertkind starb infolge der Folterungen im Kreise ihrer Zellengenossinnen: „Die Gruppenwärterin nahm ihr die Fußfesseln ab. Die Handfesseln waren verrostet, ins Fleisch eingewachsen und nicht abzukriegen. ‚Spart euch die Mühe', sagte ein

Soldat, ‚wenn das im Ofen gebrannt hat, sind's neue Handschellen. Muss man dann vom Krematorium zurückverlangen. Schätze, die werden sich nicht trauen, die Dinger zu verheimlichen.' Die Hände auf dem Rücken gefesselt, verließ Yuan Viertkind diese Welt. Bis zum Tod hat man ihr die Handschellen nicht abgenommen."

Trotz der drangvollen Enge, der Mangelernährung, der Diffamierung, der Denunzierung, der Misshandlungen, der Erniedrigungen und der Angst war es Cheng Pinzhi möglich, Solidarität einiger Mitgefangener zu erfahren und zu gewähren. Von einer Gefangenen erhielt sie Informationen über die kommunistische Oberschicht und dank Katias Komik war sogar ein herzliches Lachen möglich.

Mit Maos Tod endete dessen Schreckensherrschaft. Damit wurden auch die Opfer rehabilitiert, und Cheng Pinzhi hatte ihre Freiheit wieder. Zuhause bei ihrer Mutter, Schwester und Tochter angekommen, erfuhr sie, dass es ihr Schwager Wang Bodan war, der sie denunziert und den Verfolgern ausgeliefert hatte. Die bei den Volkstribunalen vertretenen „Massen" seien lediglich aus der Nähe von Haftanstalten abkommandierte Schläger gewesen.

Nach den Jahren des Klavierunterrichts der beiden Geschwister kommt es erneut zu Unruhen, die in der Nacht vom 3. auf den 4. Juni 1989 blutig niedergeschlagen wurden. Damit geht ein dramatisches Ereignis für die Familien Shi und Han einher. Erst nach langer Zeit treffen sich Shi Sun und Cheng Pinzhis Tochter Han Shanshan in den USA und singen tränenüberströmt am Steinway-Flügel im Andenken an Shi Zhu und Cheng Pinzhi „*Heri jun zai lai*".

Wang Rongfens literarisches Werk erscheint in einer Zeit, in der die Beschäftigung mit der Phase des Übergangs von der Kulturrevolution zur Reformphase (zumindest außerhalb Chinas) Konjunktur hat. Neuere wissenschaftliche Arbeiten, wie etwa von Daniel Leese oder Felix Wemheuer, werden durch diesen Roman ergänzt, koloriert und kontrastiert.

Wie auf einem Steinway-Flügel spielt Wang situationsabhängig mit einer sensiblen oder rücksichtslosen, lauten oder leisen, feinen oder derben Sprache. Der Leser lernt hierbei Vokabeln wie „Abendliebe", Phrasen wie „vor Tau und Tag aufgestanden" oder chinatypische Wahrnehmung aufgrund unpräzise ausgesprochener Tonhöhen: „Wie er ‚vierfache Gemeinsamkeiten' – sìtóng – aussprach, klang es wie sītōng: Ehebruch." Oder: „[Er] änderte seinen Namen. Aus Sidōng, an den Osten denkend, wurde Sidòng, an Gebäude denkend." Es verwundert, dass die auf hohem Niveau Deutsch sprechende Autorin den Übersetzer Lao Men zur Seite hatte. Zweifellos gab er der Publikation den letzten Schliff. Hinter dem Pseudonym „Lao Men" verbirgt sich übrigens der bekannte Sinologe Frank Münzel, der zwei Jahre vor Erscheinen des Werkes verstarb.

Gewiss ist auch Kritik angebracht. So stolpert der Leser über Passagen mit Deutschlandbezug, etwa zu den deutschen Bundeskanzlern oder zur SS-Mitgliedschaft des Literaten Günter Grass, die in der Ich-Erzählung eines Chinesen mit Amerikakenntnissen, aber ohne besondere Kenntnisse zu Deutschland nicht

ganz schlüssig erscheinen. Zu Yu Luokes erwähnter Publikation wären zudem weitergehende Erläuterungen für ein besseres Verständnis hilfreich gewesen. Allerdings muss dieses bedeutende literarische Werk schon *per se* eine salvatorische Klausel enthalten, derartige Kleinigkeiten zu übergehen.

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NEUERE LITERATUR ÜBER ASIEN

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