



Rice Historical Review

**Vol. 8
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FORMATIONS

The land is built upon eons of history in which we are also taken up by the same fascination, of rocks and soil that we humans have used to claim and understand as a feature of that we call home. As we move forward towards the future, we must not forget our past, but study and learn from it. The sands of time were developed through breaking down the rocks of ages, just like how we break down the rocks of history. From my time at the White Sands and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks, moments like these have inspired me to reflect upon the past formations of seabeds rising above the lands. Now, it is the time to rise beyond the past and present and onto the stars.

Hong Lin Tsai, Director of Design



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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

In 2016, the first board of the Rice Historical Review published our inaugural issue to showcase the outstanding scholarship of undergraduate students of history at Rice. Since then, the publication has witnessed a deadly pandemic, the accelerating consequences of climate change, and general global unrest. Many have called our times “unprecedented,” but, as students of history, we find that returning to the roots and examining the formations of the structures that facilitate today’s struggles are the best way to understand the problems we face as people of the twenty-first century. Each of the articles in this year’s edition of the Rice Historical Review fittingly examine the formations of structures and ideas with important implications for both extant historiography and the twenty-first century world. This year’s issue will take the reader across the twentieth century world, a century of dramatic upheaval that casts a long shadow on our daily lives.

The winner of this year’s Lear Prize is “Unity in the Face of Discrimination” by Melissa Carmona. This paper integrates landmark cases in Texas and California into the history of the desegregation of schools in the American Southwest to highlight the efforts of Mexican-American activists and organizations to end de jure school segregation of Hispanic students, which played a crucial role in the formation of the post-Brown v. Board education system. Next, Nicholas Ma’s article, “Japanese Modernity in Shanghai,” discusses the lived experiences of the residents of the Japanese Concession in Shanghai and their formation of a new modernity through mass media sources. Varun Cimbadi takes us to the assembly halls of Delhi in his article “Tracking the Debate of the Indian Tariff Act of 1919,” demonstrating the intricacies of economic and political interests across the British Raj and the formations of postwar colonial power relations between the variety of interest groups represented in the Raj’s government. Carson Gilchrist’s analysis of the formation of La Corporación Mondragón in the context of the Social Catholic values of the first half of the twentieth century sheds light on the complex world of Franco’s fascist regime in Spain. Finally, Emma Yang examines the relationship between individuals and empires in “Producer and Product” to highlight the formation of the identity of the modern Taiwanese woman, drawing on a variety of ephemera from nineteenth and twentieth century Taiwan.

As the COVID-19 pandemic’s prominence in our lives fades for many of us and we take stock of the events of the past three years, we find ourselves looking further and further into the past, searching for answers in history. Though it is teleological to search for concrete beginnings and endings, understanding the ongoing historical processes of the past century that formed our twenty-first century world is crucial to make sense of our own lived experiences. History is the foundation of our experience of the present, and without it, we cannot hope to move forward

and build upon the work of the past. These sentiments served as the inspiration for this year's theme of the Rice Historical Review: formations. They also inspired previous editorial boards to adopt the mission statement of "furthering the future by promoting the past," a mission which this year's editorial board took on with immense enthusiasm. Thanks to both the knowledge of our predecessors and the fortitude of this year's editorial board, we are pleased to present readers with the eighth issue of the Rice Historical Review. We sincerely hope that it provides readers with a new perspective on both the excellent historical research at Rice and the insights which can be gained from a strong understanding of the formations of our present.

Rijuta Vallishayee and Bora Göbekli
Co-Editors-in-Chief

IN MEMORY OF DR. KATHERINE FISCHER DREW



We would like to dedicate this issue of our journal to the memory of Dr. Katherine Fischer Drew, who passed away this year at the age of 99. She spent over 80 of those years with Rice's history department, where she made invaluable contributions both to our university and historical scholarship. Dr. Drew's legacy at Rice is visible across the history department, partly through our journal. The creation of the Rice Historical Review was enabled through the Katherine Fischer Drew Endowment of the Rice History department, and it makes it possible for us to award the Lear Prize each year. Although none of us on the board had the chance to meet Dr. Drew personally, it was well-known to us that she supported the RHR wholeheartedly and sought out a copy of the RHR whenever a new issue was released.

Dr. Drew completed her B.A. in History at Rice in 1944 and finished her master's the following year after submitting her thesis, a translation of the Burgundian Law Code. This marked the beginning of a productive and influential career that contributed deeply to our understanding of the legal and social histories of early Medieval Europe. She spent 1959 traveling and conducting research across Northern Italy as a Guggenheim fellow. She continued to publish on this region's Medieval past throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Her research provided insight into the socio-economic and legal relations in the Carolingian and Lombard kingdoms and the conditions that enabled the emergence of feudalism in Northern Italy between the seventh and ninth centuries. Her rich work on the economic and administrative life in monasteries during this period is truly an excellent read. She remained remarkably productive throughout her career, publishing innumerable books and articles about the Medieval Germanic kingdoms, including an important work on Magna Carta. Many Rice students might recognize Dr. Drew's work from their classes since her translation of the Laws of the Salian Franks is usually featured in Dr. Irish's Medieval Violence class.

On top of making outstanding contributions to her field, Dr. Drew was also instrumental in turning Rice into the institution it is today. After receiving her Ph.D. in History from Cornell University in 1950, she became the fourth faculty member of Rice's then-combined History and Political Science departments, in addition to being the first female tenure-track faculty in Rice's history. During the next 73 years she spent as a Rice historian, Dr. Drew continuously worked to improve the Department of History and the School of Humanities. She was one of the most influential figures at Rice from the 1960s to 1980s, holding major roles in numerous committees and Rice administration while also chairing the History department throughout the 1970s. When she was being considered as a potential candidate for the Office of Provost in 1979, a colleague told *The Thresher*: "She is so strong-willed that the administration might choose to appoint someone less likely to raise difficult issues." This description helps us imagine the energetic and driven personality that enabled her to help carry this university into its modern form.

As students of history at Rice, we recognize how much we have inherited from Dr. Drew. Her legacy as a historian inspires us in our own work, and her contributions to our university benefit us every day. We want to thank her once again for making the RHR possible and dedicate this issue of our journal to her memory as we say goodbye to a brilliant historian and a Rice icon.

Rice Historical Review Editorial Board

THE FLOYD SEYWARD LEAR PRIZE

2023 WINNER

“UNITY IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION:
HOW MEXICAN AMERICAN ACTIVISTS CHALLENGED
THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM”

The Floyd Seyward Lear Prize for Best Essay is an annual prize awarded jointly by the Rice Historical Review (RHR) and the Rice University History Department for the best article submitted to the RHR. The award is in honor of Dr. Floyd Seyward Lear, who was a member of the faculty at the Rice Institute (later Rice University) in the Department of History from 1925 to 1975, the year of his death. He was Assistant Professor from 1927 to 1945, Professor in 1945, Harris Masterson Jr. Professor of History in 1953 (the first to hold this chair), and Trustee Distinguished Professor from 1965. He served as chairman of the Department of History from 1933 to 1960.



Dr. Floyd Seyward Lear (left) and Dr. Katherine Fischer Drew (right)
Source: Woodson Research Center

All papers submitted to the Rice Historical Review were automatically considered for this award. After submissions have been reviewed, nominated articles selected for consideration were reviewed by the RHR editorial board. Through consensus, the board narrowed down the pool to two nominees. The Department of History Undergraduate Studies Committee evaluated the final three candidates and decided the winning article. The author of the winning essay received a \$500 award.

This year, the History Department and Rice Historical Review Board have awarded the Lear Prize to Melissa Carmona, author of the “Unity In the Face of Discrimination: How Mexican American Activists Challenged the Educational System.” This article distinguishes itself for its consciousness of extant literature, its treatment of collective memory, and its ability to read sources for silences.

The Rice Historical Review would like to thank the late Dr. Katherine Fischer Drew, Lynette S. Autry Professor Emeritus, for giving us the possibility to provide this scholarship.



Raitt Street mural in Santa Ana, California. Courtesy of the O' Cadiz family. https://img.atlasobscura.com/75giJvJEDVktw7_66cgl-iADX3b9YKrlDNm7_p8zADE/rs:fill:12000:12000/q:81/sm:1/scp:1/ar:1/aHR0cHM6Ly9hdGxh/cy1kZYuczMuYW1h/em9uYXdzLnNvbS91/cGxvYWZlL2Zfc2V0/cy9kNjc5ODRIYtc2/YjlmNjdiNmFfSU1H/XzU3OTYuanBlZw.jpg

UNITY IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION: HOW MEXICAN-AMERICAN ACTIVISTS CHALLENGED THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Melissa Carmona

Written for Early 20th Century & Educational
History of the American Southwest
HIST 429
Dr. William Suárez-Potts



Brown v. Board of Education (1954), which marked the end of de jure school segregation, is believed by many scholars to be the most influential Supreme Court decision of the twentieth century and a turning point in the fight for educational equality. The landmark *Brown* ruling that ended de jure school segregation in the United States was made possible by the efforts of many individuals and organizations over a century-long struggle. This struggle featured numerous court cases that sought to end the segregation of different racial groups, including African-American, Mexican-American, and Asian-American students. While previous scholarship has largely focused on the Black-white school desegregation efforts of the 1950s-1970s, this paper specifically focuses on the series of cases that challenged Mexican-American school segregation in the Southwest before *Brown* and tracks the different legal approaches and community reactions to each case.

Specifically, this paper aims to describe how arguments for desegregation changed over time by analyzing the court opinions of *Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra* (1930), *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946), and *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* (1948) as well as interviews with community members involved in *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove* (1931). The progression of court decisions and legal strategies employed by activists will be analyzed to illustrate the dedication of Latino communities in ensuring their students received an equal education in the face of racial, ethnic, and linguistic discrimination. Additionally, this paper seeks to contribute to the reframing of the history of school desegregation by highlighting the pre-*Brown* efforts of Mexican-American activists and legal communities to end de jure school

segregation for Hispanic students through the judicial system.

Although most of the school desegregation cases described in this paper were not fully successful in ending school segregation, they were still monumental in that they presented a common cause for Mexican-American activists to unite behind. Notably, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, was founded during this string of Latino school desegregation cases and consequently centered education as one of the organization's main platforms.¹ Given the legal and social ramifications of these court cases, they must be analyzed to truly understand the legal and cultural journey that activists undertook to end racial school segregation.

This paper will outline these cases chronologically, with an emphasis on Del Rio. As the first legal challenge to Mexican-American segregation, Del Rio reflects the emerging concerns in Latino communities about the education of Mexican-American students in the early 1900s. Themes of linguistic segregation, local school board control, and a lack of resources for Mexican-Americans are introduced in Del Rio and remain present throughout all these cases. Additionally, by analyzing the court opinions of Mendez and Delgado as well as interviews with community members involved in Alvarez, the progression of court decisions and subsequent legal strategies showcase the dedication of Latino communities to ensuring their students received an equal education. This analysis is further supported by LULAC organizational records and court transcripts: even if legal challenges to Mexican-American educational segregation were unsuccessful, these injustices spurred community members to fight for their civil rights.

Mexican-American Educational Segregation: Contextualizing This Historical Era

Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra (1930) was the first state supreme court case that challenged school segregation and addressed the substandard quality of education afforded to Mexican-American children in Texas. Although Del Rio was ultimately unsuccessful in achieving school desegregation, it proved that the Mexican-American community could mobilize against perceived injustices to fight for educational equality. This section will analyze two different prongs of relevant literature: the state of Mexican-American education in Texas, and legal challenges to educational segregation in the twentieth century.

Two key pieces of literature provide context for the history of education policy in Texas. Alma Sánchez Pérez's dissertation, "Bilingual Education Policy in Texas: Pride and Prejuicio," examines the historical oppression faced by bilingual students in Texas.² Sánchez Pérez

1. "LULAC History," League of United Latin American Citizens, accessed March 23, 2023, <https://lulac.org/about/history/>.

2. Alma Sánchez Pérez, "Bilingual Education Policy in Texas: Pride and Prejuicio," PhD diss., (The University of Texas at Austin,

divides Texas educational history into three eras: the bilingual tradition era (1821-1893), the English-only education era (1918-1947), and the bilingual education era (1947-Present).³ In sum, these eras illustrate how the education of Spanish-speaking and Mexican-American students in Texas was constantly subject to political scrutiny and disenfranchisement, as policymakers constantly sought to eliminate Spanish-language education and provide these students with a worse education than English-speaking students. Second, the article "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood" by Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. and Richard Valencia outlines a more general timeline of Mexican-American educational eras: the origins of schooling for Mexican children (1848-1890s), the expansion of Mexican-American education (1890-1930), the changing character of public education (1930-1960), and the contemporary period (1960-present).⁴ Through their work, the authors provide a more expansive history of what education has looked like for Mexican-American students across public and private schools. Sánchez Pérez, San Miguel, and Valencia's works outline the social context of the Del Rio community during *Del Rio ISD v. Salviatierra*. Despite the constant ebb and flow of Texas state politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one theme remained present: Mexican-American communities, especially those that were not proficient in English, were consistently disenfranchised and discriminated against when it came to education.

Other literature details the legal challenges to educational segregation made by Mexican-American communities in the Southwest. "The Physical and Cultural Desegregation of Latinx Students in United States Public Schools" by Cassandra Vara details an extensive legal history of all the court cases and legislative bills that were relevant to challenging the segregation of Mexican-American students.⁵ Vara references qualitative studies to show the effects of segregation and unequal education facilities: according to the 1950 US Census, on average, Hispanic citizens had seven fewer years of schooling than white citizens.⁶ Additionally, Vara reveals that Latino students were often limited to vocational schools, while white students had access to formal academic curricula. This information further contextualizes the egregious educational inequalities perpetuated by segregation that *Del Rio* sought to challenge. Similarly, Rubén Donato and Jarrod Hanson's article "Legally White, Socially 'Mexican': the Politics of De Jure and De Facto School Segregation in the American Southwest" discusses the legal history of cases that challenged school segregation,

2007).

3. Alma Sánchez Pérez, "Bilingual Education Policy in Texas: Pride and Prejuicio," 145.

4. Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr and Richard Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest," *Harvard Educational Review*, 68, no. 3 (1998): 353-413.

5. Cassandra M. Vara, "The Physical and Cultural Desegregation of Latinx Students in United States Public Schools: Historical Precedents and Suggestions for Educators," *Diversity, Social Justice, and the Educational Leader*, 1, no. 1 (2017).

6. Vara, "The Physical and Cultural Desegregation of Latinx Students in United States Public Schools: Historical Precedents and Suggestions for Educators," 7.

specifically focusing on how court cases revealed the conflict between legal and social definitions of race.⁷ Donato and Hanson examine why the Del Rio Independent School District (ISD) chose to segregate students based on linguistic differences and how this set a precedent for other school districts. The authors also observe how Mexican-Americans in Del Rio were officially classified as “white” despite being treated like racial minorities.⁸ Here, educational segregation is viewed as a product of racial discrimination against Mexican-Americans whose social “otherness” was not legally recognized.

In total, the reviewed literature addresses how early twentieth-century school districts in Texas and New Mexico purposefully segregated Mexican-American students from their white counterparts. In the Del Rio case, this segregation occurred through the placement of Mexican-American students in schools with inferior facilities and less qualified teachers. There is little scholarship written specifically on Del Rio, likely because it was unsuccessful in achieving desegregation. However, it was still a trailblazing effort that helped legitimize Mexican-American activist efforts. By tying the Del Rio case to the broader timeline of Mexican-American educational segregation that followed it, this paper aims to better represent the history of Mexican-American struggles against discrimination.

In Defense of Education: LULAC Laying the Groundwork

LULAC was founded in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1929 (one year before the events of Del Rio), marking the beginning of organized civil rights efforts by Mexican-Americans in the Southwest.⁹ LULAC sought to address a multitude of problems faced by the Mexican-American community at the time, which included political disenfranchisement, exclusion from juries, and widespread poverty.¹⁰ Notably, many of LULAC’s initial goals centered focused on ending discrimination and segregation in education. The following is an excerpt from the original 1929 LULAC constitution, which articulates some of the goals and aims of the organization:

[We] assume complete responsibility for the education of our children as to their rights and duties and the language and customs of this country, in so far as they may be good customs... We shall create a fund for our mutual protection, for the defense of those of us who may be unjustly persecuted and for the education and culture of

7. Rubén Donato and Jarrod Hanson, “Legally White, Socially ‘Mexican’: The Politics of De Jure and De Facto School Segregation in the American Southwest,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 82, no. 2 (2012): 202-225.

8. Donato and Hanson, “Legally White, Socially ‘Mexican’” 218.

9. Douglas O. Weeks, “The League Of United Latin-American Citizens: a Texas-Mexican Civic Organization,” *The Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly*, 10, no. 3 (1929), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42880821> (May 02, 2022): 257–278.

10. “LULAC History,” *League of United Latin American Citizens*, accessed March 23, 2023, <https://lulac.org/about/history/>.

our people.¹¹



Original Blackwell School, 1909. Photo: Courtesy of The Blackwell School Alliance. https://images.axios.com/k53oEzUYQqCWjw9ZqAneXK0_1HU=/2021/12/07/1638901904760.jpg

The LULAC constitution's authors recognized that education was a key issue that Mexican-American families were concerned with. As such, they emphasized education as one of their main goals. LULAC stated they would "use all legal means at [its] command" to achieve its goals of equal opportunity and protection in education.¹² This intention was quickly realized through LULAC's involvement in Del Rio, Mendez, and Delgado in both legal and economic settings. Many LULAC founders including Vice President Manuel C. (MC) Gonzales and constitution writer José Tomás (JT) Canales championed court cases that challenged Mexican-American school segregation.¹³ Additionally, LULAC's wide reach across Texas (and eventually California) created a fundraising base for educational activism. LULAC chapters contributed funds to challenge segregation in these cases because they acknowledged that eliminating Mexican-American segregation would have far-reaching ramifications.¹⁴ Through advertising in local Spanish-language Texas newspapers like *La Prensa* (San Antonio), *El Popular* (Del Rio), and *El Paladin* (Corpus Christi), LULAC was able to solicit funds and keep Mexican-American communities across Texas informed about developments in the Del Rio case.¹⁵ Still, there were limits to what LULAC and other Mexican-American activists could accomplish through these court cases. Because all these cases were filed at the district level and were never appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, court mandates to end segregation were geographically limited. Also, many courts lacked sufficient power to compel school districts to follow their rulings, so de facto segregation persisted. Specifically, as seen in the Del Rio and Delgado cases, de facto segregation concerning bilingual education was difficult to challenge because educators claimed

11. Alonso S. Perales, "The draft copy of the constitution for the United Latin American Citizens ca. 1929," *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Digital Collections*, accessed March 23, 2023, <http://usldhrecovery.uh.edu/items/show/364>.

12. Perales, "The draft copy of the constitution for the United Latin American Citizens ca. 1929."

13. Carolyn Hernandez, "LULAC: The History of a Grass Roots Organization and Its Influence on Educational Policies 1929-1983" (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 1995), accessed March 24, 2023, https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3500.

14. Cynthia Orozco, "Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra," *Texas State Historical Association*, Accessed May 04, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/del-rio-isd-v-salvatierra>.

15. Orozco, "Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra."

segregation was a pedagogical choice.¹⁶ Yet, despite these setbacks, LULAC persisted in its fight against school segregation alongside a united Mexican-American community in the Southwest.

Del Rio: The Pedagogical Justification of Segregation

Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra was the first case that challenged Mexican-American school segregation in the courts.¹⁷ Del Rio ISD, as its name implies, was an independent school district located in Del Rio, Texas. The city of Del Rio is located along the Texas-Mexico border and to this day has a large Mexican population. However, during the 1920s and 1930s, the Del Rio community was highly segregated, a fact that was blatantly obvious in its education system. Del Rio ISD had four schools: one high school, two elementary schools, and a “Mexican” elementary school.¹⁸ The “Mexican” school was exclusively attended by students of Spanish or Mexican descent and consisted of two rooms constructed solely of brick and tile. Meanwhile, the Del Rio ISD de facto “white” high school was two stories tall and included several rooms and windows.

The main dispute in this case came from Del Rio ISD’s plans to renovate its schools. According to Del Rio ISD’s plans, the “Mexican” school was to be enlarged by five rooms made of brick and tile.¹⁹ Mexican-American parents feared that this expansion would legitimize racial inequality and further deprive Mexican students of educational opportunities afforded to white students. Consequently, Jesus Salvatierra, along with a group of Del Rio Mexican parents, filed suit against Del Rio ISD. The plaintiffs hired John L. Dodson as their legal counsel and enlisted the help of the newly-formed LULAC, which provided them with a fundraising base across Texas and the legal expertise of well-known LULAC members Alonso S. Perales, M.C. Gonzales, and J.T. Canales.

Del Rio ISD claimed to have a pedagogical, not racial, reason for segregating Mexican students into the lower-resourced “Mexican” school. Most Mexican-American students left Del Rio and their schooling every fall to work on farms with their families in different regions. Del Rio ISD claimed that, when these students returned, they were significantly behind students who had remained throughout the full school year. Additionally, Del Rio ISD insisted that these students did not grasp English well enough to learn alongside white English-speaking students. In his courtroom testimony, the Del

16. Steven H. Wilson, “Brown Over ‘Other White’: Mexican Americans’ Legal Arguments and Litigation Strategy in School Desegregation Lawsuits,” *Law and History Review*, 21, no. 1 (2003): 145-194.

17. *Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra*, 33 S.W.2d 790 (Tex. Civ. App. 1930).

18. *Del Rio*, 790.

19. *Del Rio*, 790.

Rio ISD superintendent asserted that this segregation was beneficial for Mexican-American students' educational achievement and morale:

I was not actuated by any motive of segregation by reason of race or color in doing what I said I did. The whole proposition was from a standpoint of instruction and a fair opportunity of all children alike. That was the only consideration I had in the matter. There are decided peculiarities of children of Mexican or Spanish descent which can be better taken care of in those elementary grades by their being placed separately from the children of Anglo-Saxon parentage, because the average Spanish speaking children know English as a foreign tongue, and consequently when you put him in a class with English speaking children and teach him according to the method of teaching English speaking children he is greatly handicapped.... The truth is that most of these Spanish speaking children, by reason of the fact that they attend school only a part of the year, are more greatly retarded, and I find from a check up we made again just yesterday that the difference in age in the given grade between the Anglo-Saxon child and the Spanish or Mexican child is anywhere from two to four years.²⁰

As evidenced by this quote, Del Rio ISD's motivations for segregating Mexican-American students were two-fold. First, they believed that non-English-speaking students should not be educated alongside fluent English speakers. Second, Del Rio ISD claimed that because many Mexican-American students missed school or started late due to farm work, they were behind academically and could not keep up with white students. However, in later testimony, the Del Rio superintendent admitted that the white students who missed school or came in late—often for the same reason as Mexican students—were not required to attend the Mexican school.²¹ Additionally, there is no record that Mexican-American students were tested on their English proficiency or would benefit from separate instruction. The thinly-veiled hypocrisy of Del Rio ISD showcased their biased assumptions that all Mexican-American students were behind in school and could not speak English.

The case was originally heard by District Judge Joseph Jones, who ruled in favor of Salvierra and granted him an injunction. Del Rio ISD appealed the decision, and it was ultimately heard by the Court of Civil Appeals of San Antonio. Here, the original decision was reversed and the injunction was dissolved, meaning that the segregation occurring in Del Rio ISD was upheld. The reasoning for this decision rested on the legal trust and autonomy granted to Del Rio ISD. Still, this trust was built on false assumptions, logical fallacies, and racist tropes that supported racial segregation in education. For example, this

20. Del Rio, 791.

21. Del Rio, 793.

was the court's reaction to the educational segregation occurring in Texas:

It is a matter of pride and gratification in our great public educational system and its administration that the question of race segregation, as between Mexicans and other white races, has not heretofore found its way into the courts of the state, and therefore the decision of no Texas court is available in the disposition of the precise question presented here.²²

The court falsely assumed that the lack of cases challenging Mexican-American segregation meant that such segregation did not occur. This implied causation between school segregation and legal challenges ignored the socioeconomic oppression Mexican-American communities faced that often limited their ability to organize around political issues. Other reasons, such as a lack of resources, funding, and an organizational base for activism, were all potential causes for why no legal challenge existed before Del Rio . This was why LULAC's formation in 1929 was so crucial for Del Rio community activists and so instrumental in future cases. Still, because teaching pedagogy was used as justification for segregating Mexican-American students, it was difficult for LULAC and Salvatierra's attorneys to reason against this legal argument. Salvatierra and LULAC attempted to appeal the decision to the United States Supreme Court, but a rehearing was denied. However, this was only the beginning of the legal effort against Mexican-American educational segregation.

Alvarez (1931): Setting the Stage for the First Successful Challenge to Segregation

Like Texas, California was a border state that had a substantial Mexican-American population that experienced educational segregation in the early twentieth century. This discrimination was worsened by a substantial growth in the Mexican-American population, especially in the counties closest to the border. A report published by California Governor C.C. Young's Mexican Fact-Finding Committee in 1930 detailed this rapid population growth. The report found that Orange County and San Diego County (the counties where the Alvarez and Mendez cases were filed) experienced a 175 and 84 percent increase in their Mexican-American populations from 1910 to 1920 respectively.²³ Both counties also had a substantial number of Mexican children: San Diego County housed 5.2 percent of the total Mexican child population in California, while Orange County housed 4.8 percent.²⁴ The growth of the Mexican-American community in Southern California meant that social

22. Del Rio, 794.

23. Mexican Fact-Finding Committee, *Mexicans in California*, by Will French, Sacramento: California State Print Office, 1930.

24. Mexican Fact-Finding Committee, *Mexicans in California*, 154.

institutions like public schools had to accommodate Mexican-American students.

Population growth popularized the idea that Mexican-American children should be educated separately. Similar to Del Rio, this separatist view of education was based on the supposed “inferiority” of Mexican-American students. Grace Stanley, a Southern California school district superintendent, published a study in 1920 that advocated for the separate education of Mexican-American students because they were “dull, shy, and stupid.”²⁵ Believing that integration could harm white students because of differences in academic ability, Stanley advocated for separate schools for Mexican-American students. Stanley’s study, which was widely circulated in academic and educational publications, reflected the popular opinion that Mexican-American students needed separate methods of learning because of their perceived deficiencies.

Widespread belief in these discriminatory views led to Mexican-American educational segregation in Lemon Grove ISD in San Diego County and Alvarez, the first successful school desegregation case. Although there is no case brief for Alvarez since the decision was filed locally at the San Diego County Superior Court and was not appealed, the 1985 PBS Documentary *The Lemon Grove Incident* provides extensive interviews conducted with former students who were involved with the case. Former Mexican-American students recalled that they attended school with white students before January 1931; however, when these students returned to school after winter break, school officials directed them to a separate school.²⁶ In the words of some former students, the school for Mexican-American students was an “old building” everyone called “La Caballeriza,” or “the stable.” The school’s poor quality prompted Mexican parents to pull their children from Lemon Grove ISD, form the *Comite de Vecinos de Lemon Grove*, and seek legal support from the Mexican Consulate.²⁷ The Mexican Consulate provided the Lemon Grove community with two lawyers: Fred C. Noon and A.C. Brinkley. Notably, this is the only legal case concerning Mexican-American educational segregation without any form of LULAC support, which was likely due to the newness of the foundation and its lack of chapters in California.

25. Darrell S. Willey, “Bilingualism: A Review of the Literature Relevant to Preparation of Teachers for Southwestern Spanish-Speaking Children and Youth” (1974), (unpublished report, ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges, Los Angeles, CA).

26. *The Lemon Grove Incident*, directed by Frank Christopher (1985; San Diego: KPBS, 2017), streaming video.

27. *The Lemon Grove Incident*.

“The district court rejected the assumption that Mexican-American students learned better separately; educational segregation was deemed unlawful in Lemon Grove ISD, and students had the right to attend integrated schools.”

Similar to Del Rio ISD, Lemon Grove ISD argued that Mexican-American students had substandard English skills and were academically behind, which meant they required a specialized education in an environment separate from white students.²⁸ Again, Mexican-American segregation was rationalized as a pedagogical choice. However, the plaintiff’s legal counsel utilized different legal strategies and achieved a different outcome. First, the plaintiff in the case was Roberto Alvarez, a current student of Lemon Grove ISD and not a group of parents like in Del Rio. Although the reasoning behind this was not explicitly stated, having Roberto Alvarez as the plaintiff disproved claims about Mexican-American students having academic and language deficiencies. When asked why Alvarez was chosen to be the plaintiff and a key witness in the case, former Lemon Grove student Anton Brunner responded, “[Roberto Alvarez] was a very intelligent boy. He was a very hard worker. He was very good in school, he always got good grades. He was a very good student.”²⁹

Because Alvarez was deemed “intelligent” and proficient in English, his existence proved that Mexican-American segregation, based on pedagogy, was not needed. Second, unlike Del Rio, the plaintiff’s argument in Alvarez was successful. The court ruled that Lemon Grove ISD’s policies were unlawful and detrimental to Mexican-American students. In his concluding statement, presiding judge Claude Chambers stated the following regarding segregation based on linguistic ability:

I understand that you can separate a few children, to improve their education they need special instruction; but to separate all the Mexicans in one group can only be done by infringing the laws of the State of California. And I do not blame the Mexican children because a few of them are behind (in school work) for this segregation. On the contrary, this is a fact in their favor. I believe that this separation denies the Mexican children the presence of the American children, which is so necessary to learn the English language.³⁰

28. The Lemon Grove Incident.

29. The Lemon Grove Incident.

30. The Lemon Grove Incident.

The district court rejected the assumption that Mexican-American students learned better separately; educational segregation was deemed unlawful in Lemon Grove ISD, and students had the right to attend integrated schools. However, while this decision was groundbreaking, Alvarez's impact was relatively limited.³¹ Since the district court's ruling was not appealed, neither the appellate nor the supreme courts could establish precedent regarding school segregation. Given the district court's limited jurisdiction, educational segregation for Mexican-Americans largely persisted in Texas and California throughout the 1930s. It would not be until Mendez when a large-scale victory against school segregation was finally achieved.

Mendez (1946): Setting a Precedent

The origins of Mendez are similar to Del Rio and Alvarez in that a Mexican-American community was motivated to legally challenge their local school district after an incident of segregation. Specifically, Sylvia Mendez, a nine-year-old Mexican and Puerto Rican student in Orange County, California, was denied admission to her local school, the all-white Westminster Elementary School, because of her ethnicity.^{32,33} This action sparked Mendez's parents to mobilize local families in similar situations and seek help from LULAC to advocate for educational integration. Once united, these parents and activists eventually sought legal help from the Mexican Consulate. The consulate appointed David C. Marcus as the lead attorney for these families, who had previously worked on legal cases concerning labor rights and housing issues for Mexican-Americans in California.³⁴ After joining the case, Marcus launched a strategic and targeted attack against Mexican-American educational segregation in California, unlike any of the Mexican-American educational segregation cases that came before. Subsequently, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California ruled in the plaintiff's favor in Mendez and declared that Mexican-American educational segregation was unlawful.³⁵ Following this, the Westminster School District and other defendants appealed the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.³⁶ Here, the original decision was affirmed and two months later, the California State Legislature and Governor Earl Warren struck down the state's segregation statutes, making

31. Mike Madrid, "The Lemon Grove Desegregation Case: A Matter of Neglected History" in *Latino Civil Rights in Education: La Lucha Sigue*, ed. Anaida Colon-Muniz and Magaly Lavadenz (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2015), 47-57.

32. Maria Blanco, "Before Brown, there Was Mendez," *The Lasting Impact of Mendez v. Westminster in the Struggle for Desegregation*. (Washington, DC, Perspectives: American Immigration Council, 2010).

33. *Mendez v. Westminster*, 64 F. Supp. 544 (S.D. Cal. 1946)

34. Blanco, "Before Brown, there Was Mendez," 5.

35. Genevieve Carpio, "Unexpected allies: David C. Marcus and His Impact on the Advancement of Civil Rights in the Mexican-American Legal Landscape of Southern California," *Beyond alliances: The Jewish Role in Reshaping the Racial Landscape of Southern California* 9 (2012): 1-32.

36. *Westminster v. Mendez*, 161 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1947)

California the first state to end school segregation.³⁷

Marcus and his colleagues took a different legal approach than the Del Rio and Alvarez plaintiffs when arguing that the segregation of Mexican-American students was unlawful. Previously, both cases before Mendez grounded their arguments in very localized and specific community events. While it was well known that Mexican-American educational segregation was widespread in Texas and California, the plaintiffs in Del Rio and Alvarez argued solely against desegregation in their respective school districts. In contrast, Mendez took a much more coalitional and community-unifying approach when arguing against Mexican-American segregation. Namely, the plaintiffs in Mendez acknowledged that educational segregation was not an isolated incident but a deliberate pattern of discrimination that affected several Mexican-American communities. The case itself was a class-action lawsuit, filed by five named plaintiffs who were fathers of Mexican-American children on behalf of “some 5,000” people of “Mexican or Latin descent” similarly affected by educational segregation.³⁸ Additionally, the plaintiffs in Mendez argued against educational segregation in not just one school district, but several. In total, four school districts were named as defendants in Mendez, as well as the respective trustees and superintendents in said school districts and in all of Orange County, California. The sheer number of people named as defendants and plaintiffs reinforced the fact that educational segregation was not just a practice that affected a few families, but a systemic form of discrimination against Mexican-American students. Lastly, the legal efforts behind Mendez were supported by a plethora of civil rights organizations. For the original case filed at the district court level, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and National Lawyers Guild (NLG) both filed *amicus curiae* briefs in support of Mendez.³⁹ When the original decision was appealed and heard at the US Circuit Court of Appeals, even more *amicus curiae* briefs in support of Mendez were filed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), American Jewish Congress, Japanese-American Citizens League, and the Attorney General of California.⁴⁰ As such, Mendez was monumental because it united several different racial and ethnic groups in the fight against segregation.

Another noteworthy approach taken by the plaintiffs in Mendez is the use of social science research to prove the negative effects of educational segregation on Mexican-American students. The plaintiffs called up several social scientists to serve as expert

37. Vicki L Ruiz, “South by southwest: Mexican Americans and segregated schooling, 1900–1950.” *OAH Magazine of History* 15, no. 2 (2001): 23–27.

38. Mendez, 545.

39. Mendez, 545.

40. Westminster, 775.

witnesses and testify regarding the negative effects of Mexican-American segregation.⁴¹ One such witness was Dr. Ralph L. Beals, professor and chairman of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. In the following excerpt taken from his initial witness examination, Dr. Beals, who had conducted extensive research on Mexican communities in the Southwest, is asked about the effects of segregation on Mexican-American students' ability to learn English and succeed academically:

Question: Is it your opinion . . . that it would be to their best interests, that is, to the best interests of the pupils of Mexican descent, and for the best interests of the English-speaking pupils that the groups be educated separately during the periods that they are in the grades [between first and eighth grade] that I have indicated to you?

Dr. Beals: In my opinion, it is not to the advantage of the pupils, regardless of their linguistic background. . . This is precisely the period when the child would get its best control in English, if it had the fullest possible exposure to it, and segregation defeats the purpose of teaching English, certainly, to the Spanish-speaking child.⁴²

Here, it is evident that the plaintiffs in Mendez are trying to avoid the same fate of the Del Rio case, which rationalized Mexican-American educational segregation on the basis of linguistic development and pedagogical preference. Dr. Beals' testimony directly disproves the prevalent notion that Mexican-American students are being segregated for their own benefit because they supposedly need specialized and separate English instruction. Instead, Dr. Beals argues that the integration of Mexican-American students in schools is the best outcome for everyone involved. In addition to the linguistic benefits of integration, Dr. Beals asserts that integration helps assimilate Mexican-American students and disproves the stereotype of Mexican-American students' inferiority. Later in his testimony, Dr. Beals stated that integrated schools helped Mexican-American students become more "Americanized" and adopt predominant white cultural traditions and customs. For white students, integrated schools were essential to expanding their understanding of different cultural backgrounds and breaking down negative Mexican-American stereotypes. Through social science-centered evidence, the plaintiffs in Mendez proved that Mexican-American segregation had quantifiable negative effects on all students and must be ended.

Lastly, Mendez set a precedent by invoking the Fourteenth Amendment to argue

41. Charles Wollenberg, "Mendez v. Westminster: Race, Nationality and Segregation in California Schools," *California Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1974): 317–32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25157525>.

42. "Trial Transcript July_11_1945," Before the Southern District of California, 677 (1945) (testimony of Dr. Ralph L. Beals, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology), accessed March 23, 2023, <https://mendezetalvwestminster.com/court-documents-2/>.

against educational segregation.⁴³ The plaintiffs alleged that the segregation policies and practices enacted by the defendants violated “the personal right which every public-school pupil has to the equal protection provision of the Fourteenth Amendment to obtain the means of education.”⁴⁴ This argument was successful at the district level, where the court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. When the case was appealed to the Ninth Circuit US Court of Appeals, this argument was again upheld. The court published an opinion affirming the district court’s decision and stated the following regarding the Fourteenth Amendment:

By enforcing the segregation of school children of Mexican descent against their will and contrary to the laws of California, respondents have violated the federal law as provided in the Fourteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution by depriving them of liberty and property without due process of law and by denying to them the equal protection of the laws.

Mendez was the first case to successfully argue that school segregation itself was unconstitutional because it violated the Equal Protection Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment. Previously, in cases like *Del Rio*, the plaintiffs alleged that inequality stemmed from unequal schooling conditions, including worse facilities and less qualified teachers. The attorneys in *Del Rio* did not invoke the Fourteenth Amendment or declare that educational segregation itself was fundamentally unjust. This allowed school districts to segregate Mexican-American students, as long as they claimed that there was a valid reason to. Throughout the early twentieth century, the reason for Mexican-American educational segregation was the students’ perceived linguistic deficiencies. However, after Mendez declared that the segregation of Mexican-American students itself was unlawful under the Fourteenth Amendment, the state of California outlawed educational segregation for Mexican-American students.⁴⁵

“After Mendez declared that the segregation of Mexican-American students itself was unlawful under the Fourteenth Amendment, the state of California outlawed educational segregation for Mexican-American students.”

43. Christopher Arriola, “Knocking on the Schoolhouse Door: Mendez v. Westminster, Equal Protection, Public Education, and Mexican Americans in the 1940’s.” *La Raza* LJ 8 (1995): 166.

44. Westminster, 777.

45. Arriola, “Knocking on the Schoolhouse Door,” 166.

Although the issue of Mexican-American segregation presented in Mendez had been argued in California and Texas courts before, the legal approaches and evidence used by the plaintiffs were not utilized in previous cases. Filing a class-action lawsuit against several defendants, using social science research to establish the harms of educational segregation, and invoking the Equal Protection Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment were all relatively new strategies that proved to be especially effective in Mendez. Later cases against educational segregation, like Delgado in Texas and Brown at the Supreme Court level, would draw upon the actions taken by the plaintiffs in Mendez to successfully desegregate schools. For example, NAACP attorneys working on Brown, including Thurgood Marshall, author of the NAACP amicus curiae brief in support of Mendez, filed the testimonies of over forty social scientists in support of school desegregation in an appendix to the plaintiff's brief.⁴⁶ Moreover, NAACP attorneys in Brown also argued that the educational segregation of African-American students violated the Fourteenth Amendment, which then ended school segregation on a federal level. Looking at the origins of this legal strategy, Mendez was a crucial stepping stone in advancing not only the desegregation of Mexican-American schools in California but also in challenging school segregation across different races on a federal level.⁴⁷

Delgado (1948): One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

In Texas, no substantive legal challenge against educational desegregation had been pursued since the failed Del Rio case. However, the success of the plaintiffs in Mendez and California's declaration that the educational segregation of Mexican-American students was unlawful inspired activists in Texas to launch their own statewide legal attack. This resulted in Delgado, which was a class action lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas. Delgado, like Mendez, was a carefully calculated case that used ambitious legal strategies and arguments, such as a long list of plaintiffs and defendants, and the Fourteenth Amendment to establish the widespread nature of educational segregation and argue against it. Being in Texas, this case also benefited from the involvement of established Mexican-American LULAC activists and community members. Notably, this case ended in an agreed-upon judgment that favored the plaintiffs, in which the Texas Educational Board instituted a policy that banned the segregation of students based on Spanish surnames.

Delgado was championed by prominent LULAC members who had been long standing community advocates for educational desegregation and were well-versed in

46. Lisa Y. Ramos, "Dismantling Segregation Together: Interconnections Between the *Méndez V. Westminster* (1946) and *Brown V. Board of Education* (1954) School Segregation Cases," *Equity & Excellence in Education* 37, no. 3 (2004): 247–254.

legal strategy and educational research. Gustavo C. Garcia, the lead attorney on the case, had previously worked for the Mexican Consulate on cases concerning school segregation. For example, in 1947 Garcia filed suit against the city of Cuero, TX to close a “Mexican” school located there. Dr. George I. Sanchez was also directly involved in Delgado. Sanchez was LULAC president from 1941-1942, a professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, and published research opposing the use of biased standardized tests, like IQ tests, as a rationale for segregating Mexican-American students.⁴⁸ Sanchez utilized his research to show the negative effects of educational segregation on Mexican-American students and was instrumental in securing a fundraising base of over \$20,000 for the legal team working on Delgado (1948).⁴⁹

Like Mendez , Delgado filed suit against four different school districts: Bastrop ISD, Elgin ISD, Martindale ISD and Colorado Common School District. Notably, lead plaintiff attorney Garcia ambitiously attempted to include the Texas State Board of Education as a defendant, but his efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. The named plaintiffs in the case were Minerva Delgado, a first grade student who was denied admission into a nearby white elementary school, and 19 other elementary school students who experienced similar instances of discrimination in Central Texas. The inclusion of several defendants and plaintiffs mirrors the approaches taken by Mendez, as does the argument used by the Delgado plaintiffs that Mexican-American educational segregation was unlawful under the Fourteenth Amendment. Again, the combination of Sanchez’s social science research, strategic acknowledgment of the widespread nature of segregation through the large plaintiff and defendant list, and use of the Fourteenth Amendment were effective in convincing the court to rule in the plaintiffs’ favor. In a published opinion, the court stated the following:

The regulations, customs, usages and practices of the defendants, Bastrop Independent School District of Bastrop County, et al, and each of them in so far as they or any of them have segregated pupils of Mexican or Latin-American descent in separate classes and schools within their respective school districts of the defendant school districts heretofore set forth are, and each of them is, arbitrarily and discriminatory and in violation of plaintiff’s constitutional rights as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and are illegal.⁵⁰

The outcome of Delgado marked an end to most forms of legally sanctioned segregation

48. Ricardo Romo, “George I. Sanchez and the civil rights movement: 1940-1960.” *La Raza* LJ 1 (1983): 342.

49. Martha Tevis, “Sanchez, George Isidore,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed May 03, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/sanchez-george-isidore>.

50. Minerva Delgado, et al., v. Bastrop Independent School District of Bastrop County, Texas, et al., Civil action no. 388.

for Mexican-American students in Texas. However, the court did leave a loophole regarding the most contentious issue in the case: English-speaking ability.

The issue of linguistic ability, like the cases that preceded it, was the primary rationale that school districts used for keeping Mexican-American students segregated in Delgado. However, during the trial, it was revealed that no standardized tests or assessments were given to determine if Mexican-American students were proficient in English. The following testimony, given by P.J. Dodson, Bastrop ISD superintendent, showcases the practice of automatically placing Mexican-American students in segregated schools, regardless of their actual language proficiency:

Question: All right, now, you said if a [Mexican-American] child can speak English, then he is allowed to go to the "White" school?

Dodson: No, you understand I don't go over there and ask them if they can speak English and bring them in; but if the kids want to go to the school and speak English, we bring them in. We haven't made a practice of giving them an examination; I recognize that we should have, but we have never thought of it. But all who want to come over, come over.⁵¹

Aside from Mexican-American students who can prove language proficiency and actively request to transfer schools, all other Mexican-American students must go to the designated "Mexican" school. Later in this testimony, Dodson states that he has denied students admission into the "white" school because of linguistic ability and gives a specific example:

Dodson: This past fall, the first day of school, one of our Latin-American students in the freshman class in high school called me and said, "Mr.Dodson," says, "Mama wants Minerva Delgado to go to the white school." I said, "Why?" He said, "She is too far from the Latin-American school." I said, "Does she speak English?" He said, "No sir." "Does your mother speak English?" He said, "No sir." I said, "She will have to go to [the segregated Mexican school] until she can speak English well enough to do the work."⁵²

The plaintiffs in the case hoped for a similar outcome to Mendez, which outlawed

51. Gene B. Preuss, "Delgado v. Bastrop," in *Texan Identities: Moving Beyond Myth, Memory, and Fallacy in Texas History*, ed. Light T. Cummins and Mary L. Scheer (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2016), 217-250.

52. Preuss, "Delgado v. Bastrop," in *Texan Identities*, 234.

all forms of educational segregation, even if they were carried out because of linguistic reasons. Mendez acknowledged that segregation was harmful to Spanish-speaking students attempting to learn English. However, the Texas courts still permitted educational segregation of Mexican-American students, provided there was a universal standardized test that could assess the English proficiency of Mexican-American students. Unfortunately, because of this provision, certain forms of educational segregation were still permitted in Texas, even after the Delgado ruling.

Conclusion: What Were the Community's Reactions and Outcomes?

Community reactions and activist efforts in response to educational segregation in Del Rio, Alvarez and Mendez, and Delgado followed similar patterns. When instances of educational segregation occurred in California and Texas, Mexican-American parents responded in community-based ways: they pulled their children from segregated schools, organized with fellow Mexican-American parents, and voiced their opinions to elected school board officials.⁵³ Across all four court cases, there was an initial resistance to school segregation: parents attempted to protest this action by refusing to send their children to school. In cases that were more localized, like Del Rio and Alvarez, this approach was more feasible than the widespread legal attacks that occurred in the 1940s. In the Lemon Grove and Del Rio communities, which were the locations of the earliest legal challenges, Mexican-American parents formed neighborhood committees to present a united front against school districts and board members. In cases with heavy LULAC involvement, there were usually dedicated fundraising efforts undertaken to provide financial support for the legal proceedings. Notably, the absence of an organized LULAC presence in California led parents to seek legal counsel from the Mexican Consulate, as opposed to Mexican-American parents in Texas who often received legal assistance from LULAC.

The most important conclusion from this legal analysis of Del Rio, Alvarez, Mendez, and Delgado is that there were constant developments taking place in the fight against the educational segregation of Mexican-American students. None of these court cases were isolated incidents. From the very beginning of the Del Rio case, Mexican-American communities embarked on a journey to advocate for their educational rights. Each case served as a learning experience for how to better organize Mexican-American communities

53. Nadine Bermudez, "Mendez et al v Westminster School District et al: Mexican American Female Activism in the age of De Jure Segregation." PhD diss., UCLA, 2014.

and more effectively argue against the unlawfulness of segregation. Through the sharing of information and community-building, legal attacks against educational segregation by activists became more successful as time went on. These communities, even if they were geographically spread out, were united in the same struggle to ensure a quality education for Mexican-American students. Whether through organized activist organizations like LULAC or by forming a group of dedicated parents, Mexican-American families in the early twentieth century rallied around a common cause: educational equality.

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Leather Tannery, https://i0.wp.com/shoegazing.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/HistoryLeatherTanning3-from-leatherpavlat.eu_

TRACKING THE DEBATE OF THE INDIAN TARIFF ACT OF 1919

Varun Cidambi

Written for How They Made Things

HIST 477

Dr. Paula Sanders

Introduction

In this paper, I track rhetorical changes in the debate of the 15 percent tariff rate on exports of hides and skins pursuant to the Indian Tariff Act of 1919 and analyze the power relations between British, Indian national, and Indian regional interests which emerged from the rhetoric in this debate. This analysis adds to a very sparse body of existing literature on the tanning industry of the British Raj. Simultaneously, this analysis challenges current understandings of how British intervention in Indian industry occurred. Finally, this analysis is timely given parallels with Western sanctions levied against Russia during the war in Ukraine: the tariff provides an important case study of what happens when economic policy is driven by national security concerns. Furthermore, given the growing partisan divide in voters who see Russia as a national security threat, this analysis may serve as a case study of what happens when these same national security concerns that drive economic policy reduce in importance.¹

At a high level, I will highlight definitions for and differences between Indian national interests, Indian regional interests, and British interests for clarity. Indian national interests were deliberately vague and fluid, as what was in India's best interests was precisely what was at stake in this debate. The conceptual malleability

1. Amina Dunn, "As Russian invasion nears one-year mark, partisans grow further apart on U.S. support for Ukraine," Pew Research Center, January 31, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2023/01/31/as-russian-invasion-nears-one-year-mark-partisans-grow-further-apart-on-u-s-support-for-ukraine/>.

of Indian national interests allowed those who debated the tariff to claim to represent these interests. British interests were more concrete; they had clear representation at certain junctures in the debate and, at the outset of the tariff's proposal, had a firm rooting in a fear that India might supply leather to Britain's enemies in a future war. As the debate progressed and national security concerns moved to the wayside, British interests became murkier. While they ended up co-opting those of the regional interests associated with the hides and skins market, it is unclear why this co-optation occurred.² Indian regional interests were the most concrete and had a clear basis in certain regions' economic roles in the tanning industry and the hides and skins export market. Thus, readers should identify Indian regional interests throughout this debate as the interests of the industries those regions are home to. Furthermore, readers should understand the tension and alignment between particular Indian regional interests in this debate as purely economic; when the profit motives of the two industries at hand in this debate align, so did the interests of the regions relevant to the two industries, and when these profit motives diverged, so too did the interests of the regions.

Contemporary scholarly work on the tanning industry of the British Raj broadly focuses on British intervention in the industry with a long time frame for analysis. Monica Sharma of the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, for example, offers a comprehensive overview of the tanning industry in Kanpur before independence spanning many different interventions between 1857 and 1947.³ Tirthankar Roy of the London School of Economics, meanwhile, analyzes the effects of British-backed tanneries on leather-making castes, noting how higher castes attempted to marginalize traditional leather makers to hoard profit; this work, too, generalizes across British interventions and spans from 1880 to 1930.⁴ Padmini Swaminathan of the Madras Institute of Development Studies, by contrast, delves into the particular intervention of the introduction of chrome tanning by Sir Alfred Chatterton and the response of the tanning industry of the British Raj from 1903 to 1911.⁵

Like Swaminathan, my focus is narrow both in intervention and timeframe;

2. A line of inquiry for further research is emergent here through a potential investigation as to the evolution of British interests in the hides and skins markets over this same time frame.

3. Monica Sharma, "COLONIAL INITIATIVE: The Emergence Of Leather Industry In Cawnpore (1861-1947)," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 59 (1998): 539-547.

4. Tirthankar Roy, "Foreign trade and the artisans in colonial India: A study of leather," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 31, no. 4 (1994): 461-490.

5. Padmini Swaminathan, "State intervention in industrialisation: A case study of the Madras Presidency," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 29, no. 4 (1992): 479-506.

I discuss the Indian Tariff Act of 1919 from its enactment to the creation of the Hides Cess Inquiry Committee in 1927. Unlike all three works, however, I chart the evolution of this policy from 1919 to 1927. This contribution is necessary for the existing literature because it reveals that discussing British intervention in this industry is a bit misrepresentative. British interests, while playing a key role in the debate surrounding the Indian Tariff Act of 1919, were merely one agent of many that debated and influenced this legislation from 1919 to 1927. In fact, it was the economic interests of the particular Indian provinces that shaped and drove the debate surrounding the Indian Tariff Act of 1919 along with British interests. Furthermore, British interests were important only insofar as they could coincide with the interests of India. Thus, to state that the British intervened in the Indian tanning industry is inaccurate, as this suggests a top-down form of policymaking where Indian legislators would be obligated to assent to British proposals. While at one point in this debate one might consider British governance in India to be top-down, the British voice in the Assembly waxed and waned in importance relative to those of Indian provincial interests.

Background

The differences between the Indian tanning industry and the hides and skins export market in terms of regional concentration, respective circumstances during World War I, and profit motives provide insight into how the Indian Tariff Act of 1919 would help to drive a wedge between these two industries and their provincial centers. The Bengal Presidency, and to some degree the Sindh region of the Bombay Presidency, were dominant in the export of raw hides from 1919 to 1927. In 1917, Bengal and Sindh ports accounted for 73 percent and 10 percent of all raw hides exported from India, respectively.⁶ In 1928, these figures for Calcutta and Karachi alone (the biggest cities in the Bengal Presidency and Sindh, respectively) were 56 percent and 20 percent.⁷

Just prior to World War I, Germany and Austria-Hungary were the two main importers of raw hides. Trade returns from 1913 show that Germany and Austria-Hungary collectively took 67.6 percent of all raw cowhides from India, and British sources claim that the Germans “established complete command of the Calcutta trade in raw kips [Indian hides] and were able to prevent other firms from entering the trade in competition.”⁸ During the war, the British had serious national security concerns

6. Imperial Institute, *Indian Trade Enquiry: Reports on Hides and Skins* (London: John Murray, 1920), 75.

7. Report of the Hides Cess Enquiry Committee: 21st Oct. 1929-18th Feb. 1930 (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1930), 15.

8. Imperial Institute, *Report on Hides and Skins*, 5.

with this market, as the British hypothesized that “in the past these Indian kips have been of the utmost military value to Germany and Austria, where they were largely utilised for making the uppers [the part of footwear above the sole] of army boots.”⁹

The main laborers in the export trade of raw hides in centers like Calcutta and Karachi were the *arhati*, or commission agents, who would sell raw hides to the shippers that transported Indian hides abroad. The Hides Cess Enquiry Committee describes in detail the vocation of the *arhati*:

The typical arhatdar is not only a commission agent but also a store-keeper. He usually advances to the dealer [the one selling raw skins to them] a certain proportion of the market value; this is generally about 75 per cent, but when the market is keen it may be higher. The *arhatdar's* commission varies not only from centre to centre, but according to the species and even the class of the raw stock to be sold. The commission agent takes delivery, stores the stock, usually assorts it, negotiates the sale, realizes the prices and remits it to his principal.¹⁰

Thus, the *arhatdar's* income varied with market conditions. Because the profit they retained was a proportion of the market value of the hides, if the volume of sales or market value of hides was low, they would take home a low commission.

The Indian tanning industry, by contrast, were concentrated in the United Provinces and the Madras Presidency. Labor statistics report that in 1915, 6,787 people worked in either tanneries or leather works, which were tanneries that sold leather manufactures (e.g. shoes). Of this total, 2,938 people worked in a leather works located in Cawnpore (in the United Provinces).¹¹ While leather works were largely concentrated in Cawnpore, tanneries were concentrated in the Madras Presidency. Through 1915, the Madras Presidency held a plurality of both the number of tanneries in India and the total tannery workforce.¹² The Madras Presidency was the key exporter of tanned hides in India, as anywhere between 80 to 90 percent of all tanned hides exported from India were exported from the Madras Presidency in the pre-War era.¹³ This dominance persisted well past the war, as in 1928, tanned hide exports from the Madras Presidency made up 94 percent of total exports of tanned hides from India.¹⁴

9. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 5.

10. Report of the Hides Cess Enquiry Committee, 69.

11. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 80.

12. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 82.

13. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 83.

14. Report of the Hides Cess Enquiry Committee, 33.

The importance of the United Provinces and the Madras Presidency in the tanning industry was linked to infrastructure and access to raw materials. Both presidencies were well connected to other regions that had livestock and to ports of international importance through rail links (or, in the case of Madras, by virtue of having coastal access). Furthermore, both regions had abundant access to raw materials necessary for leather production through some of the largest livestock endowments in India and tannin-bearing barks such as babul and avaram.¹⁵

The Indian tanning industry believed that they could not survive without economic protection through tariffs. The number of tanneries in India exploded during World War I, when India was supplying the British Army with leather to complement production in England. While some believed that demand for leather would remain heightened after the War, others doubted that Indian tanneries could supply leather at a lower cost than European or American firms due to Western advancements in chrome tanning.¹⁶ Proponents of the Indian Tariff Act of 1919 invoked the USA's rawhide export tariff, which was levied to increase costs of production for tanneries in other countries until its own tanneries were sufficiently cost-effective.¹⁷ Some thought that the revenue from the tariff could be utilized to improve the quality of the Indian tanning process, which the British considered defective, such that the Indian tanning industry could supply tanned hides of equal quality and cost to those found in Europe.¹⁸

The Indian tanning industry did not promote the underlying policy behind the Indian Tariff Act of 1919 from its own interests, but rather from those of the British. The enactment of the tariff was considered to be a "sequel" of the 1917 Report on Hides and Skins done by the Imperial Institute, a think tank directly overseen by the British Cabinet and charged with informing post-WWI industrial revitalization. ¹⁹The Secretary of State for India, a member of the Prime Minister's Cabinet, created the Committee for this Report, consisting of representatives from both the Indian and British tanning industries along with a British War Office employee, and commissioned the report to inform British policy in India. After consulting with various British tanners, the Committee conveyed the tanners' desire to impose "a duty on the export of raw kips with a remission in favour of tanners throughout the Empire," which was the crux

15. Alfred Chatterton, *Monograph on Tanning and Working in Leather in the Madras Presidency* (Madras: Government Press, 1905), 22-23; Sharma, "COLONIAL INITIATIVE", 541.

16. Chatterton, *Monograph*, 45.

17. *Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council*, vol. 58 (Calcutta: Superintendent Govt. Printing, 1920), 254-255, 257.

18. *Proceedings*, 98.

19. "Indian Hides and Skins," *Commerce* 21, no. 539 (1920); 250.

of the Indian Tariff Act of 1919.²⁰ The fact that this legislation came from the mouths of British tanners suggests that Indian interests were a secondary concern in the proposal of this legislation. Furthermore, the Committee describes the Indian tanning industry as an “Imperial asset,” and they submit that “Imperial interests demand that the trade in Indian kips and their conversion into leather should be placed in the hands of British firms.”²¹ These Imperial interests are made clear in the conclusion of the Report’s section on cowhides:

There can be little doubt that after the war Germany and Austria, if only for military reasons, will make strong efforts to regain their former position in the Indian hide trade, and it is probable that they may succeed in these endeavors unless effective counter-measures are adopted. It seems highly desirable that in future Indian kips should be utilised as the basis of an important tanning industry within the Empire, instead of being, as hitherto, a source of profit chiefly to German and Austrian tanners and mercantile firms.²²

This naked appeal to the national security interests of the British, along with the relegation of any discussion of the Indian tanning industry to the appendix of this Report, reinforces the idea that British interests reigned over all others in the crafting of this policy. Interestingly, while the British placed their interests above all else, they were nevertheless concerned that Indian hides and skins merchants would lose out on an important trading partner if an export tariff were enacted. The Report ensured that British traders were willing to take up whatever volume of hides that the Germans previously imported from India, provided that certain conditions were met by the British Government in terms of monetary assistance for the British tanning industry.²³ This indicates that the British government looked to build consensus around this policy; by compensating Indian hides and skins merchants for the loss of a trading partner, the British could ensure that this policy was enacted without any protestations from the Indian hides and skins export market. Despite this, the fact that there were no representatives of the Indian hides export trade on the Committee indicates that the British Government did not want their input on this policy, further suggesting that their interests held the least import of all parties concerned with this tariff.

20. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 10.

21. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 5.

22. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 12.

23. Imperial Institute, Report on Hides and Skins, 9-11.

1919 and the Indian Consensus

The rhetoric surrounding the export tariff policy proposed by the Imperial Institute shifted markedly when it was proposed as legislation in 1919, as the interests of India became far more important for receiving legislative assent. The bill was proposed along the lines suggested by the British tanners in the Report on Hides and Skins: there was a 15 percent tariff on exports of all raw hides and skins, with a 10 percent rebate on any exports to countries within the British Empire. Rather than appealing to the fear of German domination of the hides and skins trade, which was scarcely the focus of the debate, proponents framed the legislation as a recognition that “India rendered an immense service to Great Britain and her Allies in the war.”²⁴ They hailed the Indian tanning industry as a “key industry” of the Empire that must be maintained in case of war, and the concerns of the Indian tanning industry were brought to the fore.²⁵ They saw the tariff as a device to make Indian tanners more competitive by increasing costs of raw materials for tanners abroad rather than a way to prevent German tanners from getting Indian raw hides, and they framed the rebate in terms of India’s inability to tan all her raw hides at her current productive capacity rather than as insurance that British tanners would get Indian hides over German tanners.²⁶ Proponents spoke of the Indian tanning industry as an “infant industry,” a sort of industry that was “to be protected until they are able to stand on their own legs.”²⁷ More broadly, members of the Assembly looked to this policy as benefitting the whole of India. N.F. Paton, an Assemblyman from the city of Bombay, where there was a smaller but significant concentration of tanneries, hailed this legislation as “the forerunner of many measures having for their object the industrial regeneration of India.”²⁸ Sir Dinshaw Wacha, another Assemblyman from Bombay, expressed hope that the state of the tanning industry after this tariff’s levy “will be the harbinger of other industries of the same sort, which of course will also be protected until they make India economically more prosperous than before.”²⁹

While opposition to the bill existed, there was wide consensus around the protectionist principle behind the bill. In fact, members of the Assembly that opposed the bill did so on the grounds that it did not go far enough in protecting

24. Proceedings, 96.

25. Proceedings, 97.

26. Proceedings, 96.

27. Proceedings, 99.

28. Proceedings, 99.

29. Proceedings, 99.

Indian tanners. To this end, B.N. Sarma and Madan Mohan Malaviya, the two speakers in opposition, proposed that the rebate be removed from the bill. Malaviya argued that instead of promoting the export of raw hides in excess of what Indian tanners can currently work with, the Indian Government should invest in the tanning industry so that Indian tanners will have the capacity to tan all raw hides produced in India. In this way, he posited that “every pie that can be raised by export duties” would be conserved for the people of India while helping “to raise our own country economically and industrially.”³⁰ Sarma, meanwhile, perceived British tanners to be as much of a threat to the Indian tanning industry as tanners anywhere else, stating that “we have as much right to take effectual measures here which will protect our industries against new industries in the United Kingdom as elsewhere.”³¹

“Assemblmen considered the interests of the Indian tanning industry a means to an end; while they were important, they did not surpass the interests of the nation in importance.”

The lack of concern about German control over the Indian rawhide market, along with Sarma’s remarks on protection from British tanners, suggest that British interests did not hold much salience in this chamber. The reframing of this tariff policy in terms of its benefits to the Indian tanning industry upon introduction of this policy to the Indian Legislative Assembly indicates some acknowledgement by the British that their own concerns were of little relevance to the Assembly. Rather, through Paton, Wacha, and Malaviya, one can observe that Indian interests are of the utmost importance. While the particular interests of the Indian tanning industry seem to be of some relevance, the protection that this legislation afforded to the Indian tanning industry was seen as heralding the advancement of Indian industry as a whole. Thus, Assemblmen considered the interests of the Indian tanning industry a means to an end; while they were important, they did not surpass the interests of the nation in importance.

30. Proceedings, 101-102.

31. Proceedings, 200.

1921 and the Emergence of Sectionalism

Within a year of the Indian Tariff Act of 1919's passage, the Indian consensus surrounding this legislation broke down. The Southern India Skin and Hide Merchants' Association, the main trade association for Madras Presidency tanners, cabled the following message to the Government of India:

Understand Calcutta Hides and Skins Shippers' Association, mainly composed of foreign firms, who are only middlemen exporting raw hides and skins and having no interest in the Indian tanning industry, have approached government for removal of export duty on raw skins and hides. South India Skin and Hide Merchants' Association, representing bulk of Indian tanning interests, are most emphatically against removal of duty, and strongly urge its continuance as only way open to enable Indian tanning industry already badly hit and now passing through serious crisis to rehabilitate itself [sic].³²

This divergence of interests between the Indian tanning industry and the hides and skins export market resulted from a violation of the key promise of British tanners to Indian hides merchants that they would make up for German demand. Due to the economic conditions prevailing in Germany after the war, Germans' appetite for Indian raw hides did not recover to pre-war levels.³³ At the same time, trade returns show that Britain did not make up for the lost demand from Germany as Britain's intake of Indian raw hides dipped well below wartime levels, let alone those of pre-war Germany.³⁴ Sarma argued in 1919 that, at the time of the tariff's passage, Britain did not have the capacity to make good on its promise to tan whatever hides India could not tan herself;³⁵ even if he was wrong, the data suggests that Britain did not use the productive capacity it had to honor its promise to Indian hides merchants. Thus, the profit motives of those in the Indian tanning industries and the hides export market diverged significantly. Despite the low demand for leather, Indian tanners wanted this tariff in place to become more cost-effective relative to foreign firms. Meanwhile, Indian hides merchants, especially commission agents, desired to have this tariff removed so that any suppression of demand for Indian raw hides due to the

32. "Indian Hides and Skins", 250.

33. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, vol. 3 (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1927), 2638.

34. Hides Cess Enquiry, 20.

35. Proceedings, 262.

tariff could be alleviated to increase sales.

The divergence of Indian tanning and hides export market interests reached the Assembly in 1921 with a proposal to repeal the tariff. The debate over this proposal broke down according to the regions where these interests were most prevalent; the main proponents of repeal, Sir A.D. Pickford and E.L. Price, came from Calcutta and Karachi, respectively, and the main opponent of repeal, Sir Logie Watson, came from Cawnpore. Pickford's remarks were somewhat conciliatory towards Indian tanning interests; while he mentioned the injury this tariff had caused to the hides export market, he spent an equal amount of time convincing the Assembly that this tariff did not protect the Indian tanning industry. In fact, he argued that, far from helping the Indian tanning industry or even being of neutral effect, the tariff was "an important contributory cause [to the condition of the tanning industry]."³⁶ Furthermore, he claimed that Indian tanners were on his side in this matter, purporting that "...the view of all connected with this article of manufacture and export [leather] are agreed on that point [sic]."³⁷ The fact that Pickford appealed to and claimed support from those with Indian tanning interests suggests that these interests were perceived to be quite powerful in the Assembly in 1921. If this were not the case, Pickford would not have felt the need to persuade those with Indian tanning interests of the injury this tariff caused or to claim their support, as Pickford could very easily have appealed to other interests in the Assembly or proposed a repeal unilaterally. Thus, Indian tanning interests must have been key to any repeal and likely held leverage in the fate of this tariff. Furthermore, this indicates that the sectional degree of the debate surrounding this legislation, at least in 1921, was to some degree a function of the perceived political leverage of either set of sectional interests; hides export interests could not afford to antagonize other sectional interests because they believed they did not have the clout to pass a repeal of this tariff unilaterally.

Price's remarks were markedly more sectional than those of Pickford's, but nevertheless reinforce the notion that those with hides exporting interests did not have the political leverage to pass a repeal of this tariff unilaterally. Price repeatedly referenced a Karachi Chamber of Commerce report from 1920, arguing largely from this report and, by extension, the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and the hides exporting interests they served. Most of his argument consisted of quotations from this report,

36. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1921, vol. 1 (Simla: Government Central Press, 1921), 1317.

37. The Legislative Assembly Debates: (Official Report): First Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1921, 1317.

with little contribution from Price himself for the case of repeal.³⁸ When Price did add to the remarks of the report, however, he invoked not only the interests of the Indian tanning industry, but also the sectional divide between Hindus and Muslims. He concluded his remarks by framing tariff repeal as “a Muhammadan question, for it is their trade [the hides export trade] in my part of the country;” noting that “this was one business that the Hindus left wholly to them...”³⁹ While Muslims played an important role in the hides export and tanning trades, they were not the only faith involved in these trades. Across India, numerous Hindu leathermaking castes existed, and these castes continued to provide a key source of labor in hides export and tanning at the time of this debate.⁴⁰ Thus, the invocation of a Hindu-Muslim divide beyond the regional divide that existed between Indian tanning and hides export interests marks the political insignificance of hides exporting interests. Even after attempting to convince those with tanning interests of the merits of repeal, Price felt the need to convince others by artificially creating wedges between communities so that support could be carried for their legislative efforts.

“The fact that there were no representatives of the Indian hides export trade on the Committee indicates that the British Government did not want their input on this policy, further suggesting that their interests held the least import of all parties concerned with this tariff.”

1923: Heightened Sectionalism, and New Terms of Debate

In 1923, the tariff was successfully reduced to five percent with the rebate to countries in the Empire eliminated; the lead-up to this action was marked by extreme sectionalism, unlike the 1921 debate. Sir Campbell Rhodes, who proposed a repeal of the tariff, spoke from the perspective of Bengal, referencing an Associated Chambers of Commerce (headquartered in Calcutta) vote in support of repeal along with remarks from a trade journal in Calcutta claiming that the mere proposal of tariff reduction sparked a revival in demand for Indian raw hides.⁴¹ T. Rangachariar from

38. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1921, 1320-21.

39. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1921, 1322.

40. Chatterton, Monograph, 13-17; Sharma, “COLONIAL INITIATIVE”, 539.

41. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): Third Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1923, vol. 3 (Simla: Government Central Press, 1923), 3779-80.

the Madras Presidency argued the case for retaining the tariff as it was passed in 1919 by claiming that “it was for the protection of the tanning industries in these provinces [Madras Presidency, United Provinces, and Bombay Presidency] that this duty was imposed,” citing a cable jointly written by tanning trades’ associations from the Madras Presidency.⁴² Unlike in 1921, however, members of the Assembly repeatedly claimed that the opposition represented sectional interests. Rangachariar dismissed Rhodes’s motion to repeal, noting that “this is not the first time that the representative of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce tries to remove this duty.”⁴³ Harchandrai Vishindas and Charles Innes, in response, characterized Rangachariar’s support of the tariff as originating from the “interests of Madras and Cawnpore,” and held that “the only effect of continuing this heavy export duty will be that one or two tanners in the Madras Presidency will be benefited.”⁴⁴ The conciliatory tone struck by Pickford in 1921 was cast aside in 1923. It is either that reconciliation failed and that both sides were better off arguing for their own interests, or that both sides perceived their position as having enough leverage in the assembly to achieve their legislative goals unilaterally. While the ramifications of this more conflictual tone for the political leverage of tanning and hide exporting interests are unclear, this shift in tone is nevertheless important as it persisted after 1923 and remained the dominant tone of the debate.

Charles Innes’s remarks point to a resurgence in British influence on the matter of this tariff, with his rhetoric helping both to set the terms of the debate and to reveal the nature of continuing British involvement with this piece of legislation. Innes was the Secretary of Commerce and Industry for the Government of India; as both a member of the Indian Civil Service and a member of the Council of State, the executive body of the Government of India, Innes reported directly to the Secretary of State for India, and thus was a key instrument for the representation of British interests in India. Innes’s remarks were the main remarks on the proposal to reduce the tariff, directly suggesting the importance of British interests at this juncture. Indirectly, this importance was more emergent in Innes’s rhetoric. While Innes engaged in sectional barbs against Madras, he upheld his own position as being “in the general interests of the country.”⁴⁵ Even in his dismissals of Madras tanning, he appealed to the interests of India and its economy, finding that “it [the Madras tanning industry] is not an industry

42. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): Third Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1923, 3781.

43. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): Third Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1923, 3781.

44. Proceedings, 101-102.

45. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): Third Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1923, 3786, 3788.



British Raj in 1909, showing British India in two shades of pink and Princely states in yellow https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/36/British_Indian_Empire_1909_Imperial_Gazetteer_of_India.jpg

which produces anything for use in India."⁴⁶

Simultaneously, he implored the Assembly to do “justice to a poor trade [the hides export market],” thus framing hides exporting interests as the interests of India as a whole.⁴⁷

On one hand, this rhetoric exhibits a return to the nature of the debate of 1919. In furthering British interests, Innes spoke in terms of Indian interests, thus indicating the rhetorical primacy of Indian interests. Furthermore, one can observe weakness in the position of the tanning industry. Its interests were more readily dismissed as sectional, and opponents of a tariff reduction did not purport to represent the whole of India as those with hides exporting and British interests did. This allowed for Innes to describe hides exporting interests as being representative of Indian interests, in contrast to tanning interests. This marks a key rhetorical innovation for the representation of Indian interests in this debate, as in 1919 Indian interests were not placed in opposition to anything.

On the other hand, the Assembly’s willingness to permit Innes to assume the general interests of India suggests an implicit acknowledgment that British interests, while not rhetorically paramount, were politically so. Despite Innes being a vessel for

46. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): Third Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1923, 3786.

47. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): Third Session of the Legislative Assembly, 1923, 3785.

British interests, he was unchallenged in identifying his own interests as the interests of India. This indicates that, at this juncture, the interests of the British equated to the interests of India, and that in stating their own interests, the British could legitimately claim to have India's best interests in mind. Thus, British interests reigned the Assembly in 1923 in a paternalistic manner, as the Assembly accepted that the British knew what was best for India and were given latitude to express this opinion over the interests of the Indian provinces and the industries that reside in them. This is a stark contrast from how British interests held importance in 1919. At that point, British and Indian interests were aligned in tariff policy but for reasons independent of each other; in 1923, British and Indian interests were aligned in policy for reasons that were interdependent.

1927 and Legislative Impasse

The identification of British interests with Indian interests did not last into 1927, when there was a proposal to completely eliminate the export tariff on hides. By claiming to speak for the interests of India in contrast with sectional interests, Innes reset the terms of the debate and provided a rhetorical framework that opponents of tariff repeal successfully utilized, diminishing the political salience of British interests in the Assembly and leading to legislative deadlock. While the debate retained a sectional character, Assembly members attempted to articulate a vision for India in order to stake a claim to Indian interests. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, an opponent of tariff repeal from the Madras Presidency, undermined the strength of British claims to represent the whole of India by arguing that Sir Basil Blackett, an Indian Civil Service member who proposed the elimination of this tariff, kowtowed to the authority of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in Calcutta, which represented hides export merchants.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Purshotamdas Thakurdas, another opponent of tariff repeal, questioned why the Government of India accepted the authority of Burma and Calcutta, but not that of Madras and Cawnpore. Beyond this, opponents of tariff repeal adopted Innes's rhetorical strategy in 1923 to form a claim to the interests of India. Dwarka Prasad Misra described the Government of India as being "more anxious to exploit our raw material than to encourage an industry in this country," thus pitting proponents of repeal against the industrial aspirations of India and characterizing proponents of repeal as taking advantage of India.⁴⁹ He expressed full confidence that with the continued imposition of the tariff, along with expert knowledge of tanning and good management, "the tanning industry of India can be

48. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2635.

49. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2640.

developed to an enormous extent,” thus helping bring about the industrialization of the country.⁵⁰ Thakurdas supported Misra’s aspiration to industrialize India. While he admitted that Bengal, Karachi, and Burma will protest this tariff, he believed that they “will all reconcile themselves from now to the correct aspiration of India and tanneries will be put up and the export of raw hides from India may be a thing of the past.”⁵¹ He considered the proposal to repeal the tariff and encourage raw hide exports “retrograde” and the previous reduction of the tariff “weak-kneed.”⁵²

Opponents of tariff repeal, then, crafted their claim to Indian interests by proposing a vision for a more powerful, self-sufficient India that would come about through industrialization. They framed the repeal of this tariff as an acceptance of exploitation and subjugation and as a return to a past where India was merely an instrument for the industries of other nations. By retaining this tariff, they envisioned that India would be “self-contained” in the manufacture of leather, liberating India from the weak position inherent in merely exporting hides rather than tanning them.⁵³

Proponents of repeal, following Innes, engaged in the same strategy as the opponents of repeal. They railed against the sectional interests of their opponents while promoting their own claim for representing Indian interests. The accusations of sectionalism were the same on this side as they were in Innes’s 1923 remarks, but the vision for India that was outlined on this side was far more nuanced than the vision outlined by Innes in 1923. Walter Willson, who represented the Associated Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, appealed to the agriculturalists, noting their struggles in selling hides due to the export tariff.⁵⁴ Willson and Innes frequently compared the difficulty in selling hides in the current market to the ease and the volume with which they sold before WWI and the levy of the tariff. Innes lamented that the “export trade in raw hides used to be one of the most important export trades of India.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, they both fixated on the present and future lack of growth in the tanning industry. Willson argued, based on trade returns for exports of tanned hides, that “our export trade...can hardly claim that an export duty has been very successful,” projecting that, due to a lack of demand for leather, the tanning industry had few future growth prospects.⁵⁶ Innes dismissed the Madras tanning industry in particular, claiming that

50. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2638-39.

51. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2649-50.

52. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2648-49.

53. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2649.

54. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2641.

55. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2655.

56. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2641.

it “fulfills a limited demand, a demand for upper leathers. They [Madras tanned hides] go practically nowhere, with small exceptions, but to the United Kingdom. And I do not believe myself that we can increase this export industry very greatly.”⁵⁷

Thus, in contrast to their opponents, proponents of repeal proposed a return to normalcy for India. They argued that attempts to grow the Indian tanning industry were follies; this export tariff very clearly had not grown the Indian tanning industry and future prospects for its growth were nil. Instead, they claimed, India should look to replicate the successes of its past, when the hides export market was extremely significant and lucrative for the Indian economy. They posited that, rather than propping up the would-be industrialist, the Assembly should support the agriculturalist, whose supply of livestock was key to the once-successful hides export market.

Conclusion

While British interests played an important role in the debate of the Indian Tariff Act of 1919, the economic interests of Indian provinces played an equally important role in shaping and driving this debate. The British were essential in the proposal and the reduction of the tariff in 1923 and further helped to set the terms of the debate in 1927. However, throughout this debate, it was Indian interests that were rhetorically important, as the British had to appeal to and claim these interests even when their influence was strong. Furthermore, the rhetorical nature of this debate was set by the economic interests of Indian provinces. When regional interests had little political leverage, the debate had a conciliatory tone. Over time, the debate took on a markedly more confrontational tone influenced by the evolving political dynamic between regional interests. Even as Innes influenced the rhetorical framework of the debate, its character could not have changed in 1927 without the adoption of Innes’s rhetorical strategy and the articulation of nuanced visions for India by regional interests.

As researchers look to further this line of inquiry, they ought to understand why Indian interests held such importance in the Indian Legislative Assembly. Pursuant to this, researchers may want to analyze the effects of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 on the rhetoric in this debate. These reforms allowed for more self-governance in India and heightened native representation in the Indian legislature.

57. The Legislative Assembly Debates (Official Report): First Session of the Third Legislative Assembly, 1927, 2655.

Because these reforms were enacted right after the enactment of the Indian Tariff Act of 1919, they likely played a role in uplifting the importance of Indian provincial interests and national interests. A better understanding of the effects of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms may enlighten the evolution of this tariff's debate, especially as it relates to shifts in political clout over time and why such shifts happened.

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13th September, Opening of the new Eskola Politeknikoa by the Education Minister, Manuel Lora Tomayo. <https://www.mondragon-corporation.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1967.jpg>

SOCIAL CATHOLICISM & THE ORIGINS OF MONDRAGÓN

Carson Gilchrist

Written for Democracy and Capitalism

HIST 405

Dr. Peter C. Caldwell

La Corporación Mondragón is the seventh largest corporation in Spain; it employs roughly 80,000 people, generates a revenue of approximately 12 billion euros annually, and is involved in nearly every form of Spanish industry. It was founded and is headquartered in the Basque Country in Northeastern Spain. It is also an excellent resource for understanding the complexity of the peculiar political ideology of Social Catholicism, particularly in Spain. This paper will explain the origins of La Corporación Mondragón, known simply as Mondragón, by examining the values of Social Catholicism. In understanding these values, however, this paper will contextualize Social Catholicism when it gained prominence in the nineteenth century and then explain its development in the early twentieth century prior to the creation of Mondragón in 1956. The group primarily responsible for Social Catholicism's success was Acción Católica (Catholic Action), which I will discuss through examining its nineteenth century origins. With these foundations set, one can gain an understanding of the group during the interwar period, particularly during the papacy of Pope Pius XI and his reforms of 1923. From here, Acción Católica will be placed in its proper context in the Basque Country of the 1950s when Mondragón was formed.

Because the first 20 years of Mondragón's existence were under Francisco Franco's fascist regime, it is important to address and explain the corporation's possible connections to Spanish fascism. After establishing each of these significant ideological points, I will set up a basic understanding of some of the peculiarities of the Basque

Country in Spain, particularly in its connections to anarchism and communism. The discussion of anarchism and communism is important in understanding the tendency of modern conversations about La Corporación Mondragón to portray Mondragón as a commune system that carries the baggage of anarchist and communist modes of production. Next, I will revisit the economic model of Franco's regime, namely corporatist fascism, to explain another facet of Mondragón's founding, namely its connections to Franco's regime and the Catholic Church, which was at times a close ally of Franco. Finally, I will conclude with an analysis of the founder of Mondragón's own words on the company, followed by a brief foray into Mondragón in post-Franco Spain and today.

What is Social Catholicism?

For the sake of clarity, I will provide the definition of key terms I use in my paper. Beginning with a definition of Social Catholicism, there are two definitions I consulted in this paper, one in English and one in Spanish. The English definition is found in the *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* in "The Corporative Third Way in Social Catholicism (1830 to 1918)" written by Stefano Solari in 2010, who explains: "by Social Catholicism, we intend, here, the movement of Catholic scholars who...systematically attempted to develop political economy in the framework of a distinctive epistemology in line with Catholic moral philosophy to supply some answers to the social question."¹ During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the social question of what to do about the surplus of people and rising class stratification in society gained increased attention from the Catholic Church. In response to this, "Catholic political economists...proposed a 'third way' beyond laissez-faire capitalism and socialism. This 'third way' is attributed to intermediate bodies" in the form of guilds and, later on, corporations.² Thus, the development of Social Catholicism served as a way for the Catholic Church to define its position on economic matters as being between laissez-faire capitalism and socialism.

Carlos M. Rodríguez López-Brea, in his article discussing Catholicism and Spanish politics in the interwar period, refers to the same idea, though under the name of political Catholicism. López-Brea explains that political Catholicism was a movement that supported a form of right-wing, third way policy-making opposed to liberalism and fascism, not to socialism per se, which attests to the long-lasting

1. Stefano Solari, "The Corporative Third Way in Social Catholicism (1830 to 1918)," *European Journal of History of Economic Thought* 17, no. 1 (2010): 87.

2. Solari, "The Corporative Third Way," 88.

political effects of Franco's fascism in the academic writings of Spanish speakers. Franco's Fascism was particularly amenable to the pursuits of the Catholic Church because he was anti-liberal first and foremost. Certainly Franco, who led the Nationalists against the Republicans, was in opposition to communism, but he was more concerned with the liberal political establishment, especially after the second world war.)

López-Brea writes that political Catholicism "declares both liberal individualism and state fascism as enemies" and that political Catholicism "was not parliamentarian, but corporatist."³ While the definitions of Social Catholicism or political Catholicism vary across disciplines and languages, these definitions generally agree that it is a form of corporatism. Both definitions tend to agree that it is opposed to laissez-faire capitalism, but there is some confusion about whether corporatism is in greater opposition to socialism or fascism. As for the particularities of Franco's corporatism, they will be covered later in the paper after a proper foundation for these particularities has been laid.

The Development of Social Catholicism

Now, I will examine the development of Social Catholicism in the context of the development of Acción Católica. For Social Catholicism, the primary group responsible for effecting ideological change in the papacy and various parts of Europe was Acción Católica. According to historian Gerd-Rainer Horn, Acción Católica was aligned with "movement[s] stressing—far ahead of its time—the role of the Catholic laity and aiming for far-reaching social reforms and the establishment of meaningful political democracy, two goals which were then for all practical purposes still widely regarded as utopian dreams, certainly within the ranks of the Catholic hierarchy."⁴ Horn is writing in the context of the late nineteenth century when the papacy began to address the social question of the failure of capitalist accumulation to provide for the poor. In the 1870s, "the "social question," i.e., the consequences of rampant capitalism for the material and spiritual circumstances of the new class of proletarians, was beginning to take centre stage for Catholic apostolic activists."⁵ Before this period, the Church was an institution which was inseparable from monarchism into the nineteenth century but industrialization forced the Church to change its perspective.

3. Carlos M. Rodríguez López-Brea, "El catolicismo político: una nueva presencia en la política española (1922-1936)," *Historia Contemporánea* 69 (2022): 400.

4. Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology (1924–1959)*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.

5. Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology*, 34.

One solution that [group/specific people] proposed was for the Catholic laity to focus on social reforms of political democracy and alleviating the worst of poverty, which led to the creation of Catholic Action. For the first few decades of Catholic Action's existence, it was very disorganized, without a clear hierarchical structure or a clear understanding of the position of the Pope in the independent organization of social programs. This created a power vacuum, which was filled by strongmen throughout Southern Europe; for example, "with Mussolini's firm elevation to dictatorial powers by the mid-1920s, Italian Catholic Action had renounced open engagement in politics to retain its place as a functioning organization under Mussolini's regime. Echoes of this switch soon determined Catholic Action elsewhere," notably within Spain.⁶ As supporters of totalitarian regimes in Europe gained influence in Catholic Action in various places such as Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, the church pivoted in their strategy. Catholic Action's focus shifted to effecting change within the Church and in the upper echelons of the Church's hierarchy.

Catholic Action was incredibly successful with this new strategy, and "[v]irtually all observers are united in ascribing the real take-off of Catholic Action to the reign of Pius XI," beginning in 1922.⁷ An issue with the term Catholic Action is that it "had been in use, off and on, since the nineteenth century, along with other labels, to describe a variety of activities uniting clergy and laity in defense of Catholic values against the encroachments of the liberal state, and later, the dangers of industrialization."⁸ These activities and positions could vary from extreme monarchism to the support of communist or anarchist movements throughout Europe. Following this tendency towards centralization of policy, Catholic Action became a group that was synonymous with the political ideology of social Catholicism.

Pius XI's Relationship to Social Catholicism

After beginning his papacy by clearly defining Catholic Action and reigning it in as subordinate to the Vatican, Pius XI turned his primary focus to totalitarianism. Notably, he was not anti-totalitarian from the start of his papacy and, in reality, formed alliances with many totalitarian states in their early stages before eventually opposing totalitarianism in all forms. The Vatican in the 1920s was closely aligned with the emergent Mussolini government in Italy. "All observers agree that a great many Vatican officials felt comfortable in their dealings with the Italian Fascist

6. Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology*, 20-21.

7. Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology*, 38.

8. Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology*, 38.

“The Church and military were the two pillars of his strength, and, as such, he had to satisfy these groups in his control of business interests in Spain to maintain his mandate to rule.”

government and admired Mussolini’s approach to combating Marxism;” in particular, a substantial majority of mid and lower level Vatican bureaucrats sympathized with Fascism.⁹ During the first decade of his papacy, Pius XI can be portrayed as either an incompetent peacemaker unwilling to provoke regional dictatorial governments or an outright fascist sympathizer.

Pius XI’s willingness to engage diplomatically with fascist states supports the idea that “this pope’s actual policy was to promote the spread of authoritarian dictatorships...[and] to encourage the creation of the sort of ‘Catholic corporatist state’ that materialized in Portugal and Austria.”¹⁰ The form of “Catholic corporatist” state building within Portugal and Austria is notable as the direct inspiration and precedent for Franco’s rise within Spain.¹¹ Once more, the condemnation of communism instead of fascism took center stage in the Vatican, and “Pius XI decided not to issue this encyclical...for reasons that must have been related to the numerous reports of anti-clerical atrocities in the Spanish Civil War.”¹²

Social Catholicism in Spain

Returning to Spain, it is imperative to examine the relationship between the regional Catholic Church and the Franco regime. The Church was much more concerned about communism and anarchism within Spain and viewed Franco as a willing ally in their movement to “re-Christianize Spain as under the period of Republican rule the Church’s institutional power was repealed in entirety.”¹³ During the Spanish Civil War, the Church widely aligned itself with Franco’s new regime, with many within the Church considering his rise to power “as the best occasion for a

9. Patch, “The Catholic Church, the Third Reich, and the Origins of the Cold War,” 401.

10. Patch, “The Catholic Church, the Third Reich, and the Origins of the Cold War,” 401-402.

11. Patch, “The Catholic Church, the Third Reich, and the Origins of the Cold War,” 404.

12. Patch, “The Catholic Church, the Third Reich, and the Origins of the Cold War,” 407.

13. José Sánchez Jiménez, “La jerarquía eclesial y el Estado franquista: las prestaciones mutuas,” Ayer (1999): 167.

Christian Reconquista, of [regular people within] society to gain power.”¹⁴ They framed the war as “a fight between two civilizations, one comprised of Catholic laypeople, and one of an elite increasingly without God and without a homeland.”¹⁵ The supposed elite referenced here was the USSR-aligned leftist republic that directly preceded Franco’s Spain. Notably, this period of republicanism also aligned with a resurgence of anarchist anticlericalism in the Basque country, where Mondragón would be founded some 15 years later. The Franco regime extensively quoted scripture and encyclicals from various popes to justify their “crusade” against communism. This includes Pope Pius XI, widely known throughout Spain for writing, “there must be continual combat against laymen’s liberalism, which is the primary enemy of international peace, and there must be a social re-Christianization” in order to restore order throughout the Catholic world.¹⁶

There are many parallels between Pope Pius XI’s and Pope Pius XII’s tact in dealing with the Axis Powers and their dealings with other “Catholic corporatist” states, of which Franco’s Spain is a clear example. Importantly, Acción Católica within Spain was a close ally of the Franco regime, and the policies of social Catholicism were taken under the umbrella of Franco’s semi-populist appeal to the ordinary Catholic people of his country. Moreover, social Catholicism was valuable to Franco because it supported the legitimacy of the papacy as a result of Pius XI’s reforms of 1923 which made the group subservient to papal authority.

Additionally, because of the prevalence of possible fascist sympathizers within the Vatican and Pius XI’s possible proclivities in favor of Catholic state authoritarianism, Franco was able to successfully capitalize on the popularity of Social Catholicism. Franco then controlled a movement that could “dominate as a mix of religion and patriotism that, in conjunction with [Franco’s] extensive political rhetoric, [allowed him] to try to control the social reality and political education” within Spain.¹⁷ In short, Franco exploited social Catholicism and Acción Católica as instruments of institutional authority which allowed him to exercise massive government oversight of all elements of society, particularly businesses. This oversight of business is crucial in understanding Franco’s corporatism as it developed into the 1950s and the origins of Mondragon.

14. Jiménez, “La jerarquía eclesiástica y el Estado franquista,” 168.

15. Jiménez, “La jerarquía eclesiástica y el Estado franquista,” 168.

16. Jiménez, “La jerarquía eclesiástica y el Estado franquista,” 170.

17. Jiménez, “La jerarquía eclesiástica y el Estado franquista,” 172.

Franco's Corporatism

Prior to Franco's regime, there were few government regulations on businesses. The workers had no rights, there were scores of exorbitant tariffs and taxes on businesses, and the government held a *laissez-faire* position on international trade. Even during the beginning of Franco's dictatorship, "before 1950, the weak were unprotected because the laws and regulations that existed were about taxes of businesses, frequently including quotas, and the protections for workers for the first three decades of the 20th century were practically reversible."¹⁸ In order to balance these interests, Franco supported business interests by lowering taxes and worker interests by implementing worker protections by allowing for both as long as they agreed to the Faustian bargain of government oversight of production, massively increasing the authority of the state. Government oversight of production paired with Franco's relationship with the Church, led to "Francoist ideology [being] dubbed an amalgam of fascist corporatism and religious obscurantism."¹⁹

Franco's corporatism was unique, and it is important to explicate the elements of his Corporatism that differed from other fascist powers and why this matters to the founding of Mondragon. Due to his government's close relations with the Catholic Church and the military, it resembled monarchist absolutist control of the means of production. In a sense, it can be more closely compared to mercantilism than Nazism. The success of his Corporatism comes from the fact that "in the first half of the 20th century...there were many social differences [within Spain], which had arisen due to the Industrial Revolution. These differences led to many attempts to unify interests of disparate social groups, between workers and capitalists, landowners and the landless, the strong and the weak."²⁰ It was out of this situation that organized corporatism arose "as a pre-capitalist concept and as a romanticized reactionary form" of absolutist mercantilism.²¹ Franco's corporatism, then, can be accurately described as a semi-feudal conception of state control of the means of production. With this in mind, it is worth noting that "in countries that industrialized 'from above' meaning, from the initiative of the state, [said states by necessity] must gain strength."²² For Franco, the Church and military were the two pillars of his strength, and, as such, he

18. Armando Fernández Steinko, "Actualidad y sociología política de la estrategia corporativa," *Mientras Tanto*, (2002): 104.

19. Donny Gluckstein, "Spanish Prelude," in *A People's History of the Second World War: Resistance Versus Empire*, (Pluto Press, 2012), 15.

20. Steinko, "Actualidad y sociología política de la estrategia corporativa," 104.

21. Steinko, "Actualidad y sociología política de la estrategia corporativa," 104.

22. Steinko, "Actualidad y sociología política de la estrategia corporativa," 105.

had to satisfy these groups in his control of business interests in Spain to maintain his mandate to rule. In some sense, Franco's control of the Church was a two-way street, with the Catholic Church exercising control over Franco's regime as he was doing the same to them. With his ideology, economy, and military secured, Franco turned towards economic developments, usually either by order of or in conjunction with the Catholic Church.

The Origins of Mondragón

La Corporación Mondragón is one such business which arose out of Francoist Spain's corporatism. It was founded in 1956 under orders of the Catholic Church in the Basque Country. During the Spanish Civil War which led to the rise of Franco, there were three primary factions: the Republicans, who were communist supporters and largely anti-clerical, the Francoists, the fascist party ruled over by general Francisco Franco, who would eventually win out in the conflict, and the Basque Independence Party, which successfully led an independent Basque Country for roughly a year before the successful Franco government crushed its revolt in 1937. It is worth noting that "the main political issue in the Basque territories was the 'culture war' between Catholicism and secularism."²³ While the majority of the Basque people were conservative Catholics, "Basque nationalists ultimately backed the Republican project [against Franco] from 1933 on [as] it was meant to gain control over the cause of political autonomy" for the Basque people.²⁴ As time went on, however, many among the Basque realized that Franco had the upper hand in the war, and "the Francoist victory in June 1937 resulted in the extension of military justice to the Republican remnants in the Basque provinces."²⁵ In fact, "The overwhelming social weight of Catholicism and the Church were archetypal features of Francoism, but also emblematic of the Basque nationalist community."²⁶ In many ways, the Basque country was viewed by Franco as the ideal form for the rest of Spain to follow because "there was a point-by-point overlapping of Basque nationalism with the ideological and cultural watchwords of the Francoist New State: social order and discipline; Catholic public morality; organic, ethnic, and corporative views of labour, society, region, and nation."²⁷ In this context, Mondragón began as a quasi-corporatist experiment started by the Catholic Church and supported by the Franco regime to harness the Basque

23. Fernando, Molina, "Lies of Our Fathers: Memory and Politics in the Basque Country Under the Franco Dictatorship, 1936-68," *Journal of Contemporary History*, (2014), 299.

24. Molina, "Lies of Our Fathers," 299-300.

25. Molina, "Lies of Our Fathers," 302.

26. Molina, "Lies of Our Fathers," 307.

27. Molina, "Lies of Our Fathers," 307-308.

people as an economic force. Following the defeat of the Basque nationalists, the Basque people were re-socialized by the Franco government, with “the vehicles for

“Importantly, Mondragón was founded with the support of the corporatist, fascist Franco regime, the state oversaw it in its first 19 years of existence, and it was created by the institutional authority of the Church to re-socialize a group of people seen as outside of the norm under Franco’s regime.”

this public re-socialization [were primarily]...the powerful associational network of the Catholic Church, ranging from parent associations to Acción Católica.”²⁸

José María Arizmendiarieta

To explain the rise of corporatism in Spain in connection to the origins of Mondragon, I will examine the life of a young Basque man and member of Acción Católica by the name of José María Arizmendiarieta.. Arizmendiarieta was a Catholic priest appointed to represent the ideology of social Catholicism in the Basque country by creating a commune. The ideology of Social Catholicism was the engine that allowed the vast success of Mondragón as a corporation. In enacting the political and economic rhetoric of the Social Catholics, “Javier Lauzurica, the Bishop of Vitoria, asked the recently ordained Arizmendiarieta to put this “re-Catholicizing doctrine” [the doctrine of Social Catholicism] into practice in...the town of Mondragón.”²⁹ The Catholic Church picked the Basque Country for this “re-Catholicizing doctrine” for several reasons. First, the religiosity of the Basque peoples of northeastern Spain allowed a priest to maintain a position of supreme conservative authority. This is important as, without this call to the institutional authority of the Church,

28. Molina, “Lies of Our Fathers,” 307.

29. Fernando Molina and Antonio Miguez, “The Origins of Mondragon: Catholic co-operativism and social movement in a 29.

29. Basque Valley (1941-59),” *Social History* 33, (2008), 288.

Arizmendiarieta would have been advocating for cooperativism on the same level as the countless anarchist attempts at cooperativism that have nearly universally failed. The second factor of success was the shared cultural values between the Basque-speaking peasant population of the town of Mondragón and Arizmendiarieta. Arizmendiarieta's knowledge of Basque as a language and culture undoubtedly contributed to his and the Mondragón Corporation's success. Throughout history there have been clergymen of nearly every political creed. The emergence of Basque nationalist priests in the Basque country can be explained as simply clergymen learning the language of those they hope to proselytize. It can be seen as a missionary-esque learning of the language of workers, the language of nationalism, to appeal to them and bring them into the flock of Catholicism. According to Horn, "for maximum integration into working-class communities in order to be able to tackle the task of building of Christian communities [many priests]...took the ultimate step [towards understanding workers] and became workers themselves."³⁰

Mondragón after Arizmendiarieta

With all of the contexts set for the founding of Mondragón, I will now examine whether or not Mondragón can be held up as an example of successful corporatism. Importantly, Mondragón was founded with the support of the corporatist, fascist Franco regime, the state oversaw it in its first 19 years of existence, and it was created by the institutional authority of the Church to re-socialize a group of people seen as outside of the norm under Franco's regime. As I will examine below, The Catholic Church called for the creation of Mondragón to re-Catholicize the Basque people after fears that their nationalist revolt decreased the group's connection with the Church. This paper contends that, while it may seem corporatist without knowing the full historical context, the founding of Mondragón was not corporatist due to the ultimate source of authority stemming from the Catholic Church and not Franco's corporatist regime. In order to prove this, I will analyze some of Arizmendiarieta's writings concerning the founding of Mondragon.

Writing in 1976, a year after Franco's death, Arizmendiarieta wrote an article for the 20th anniversary of Mondragón seeking to define the economic model that the corporation had followed. Arizmendiarieta did not view his corporation as beholden to the government of Franco and, therefore, corporatist, but rather as beholden to individual autonomy with support from the Catholic Church. For Arizmendiarieta, Mondragón was principally organized as a cooperative and then as a system of

30. Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology*, 266.

cooperatives. Arizmendiarieta did not have a background in economics prior to his appointment to lead Mondragón; “he was known for his marked rurality;” and many



Sagrada Familia, By Canaan - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=113178605>

within the Basque country viewed him as stereotypically peasant-like.³¹ While this was initially a stumbling block for Arizmendiarieta, it came to his benefit as he possessed “an immense intuition for economics...[and there were academics] that wanted to convince him to go to England to obtain a doctorate in Economics.”³² He rejected this opportunity, stating that his proper place was with his congregation within the town of Mondragón and his workers in the new business of la Corporación Mondragón. Under Arizmendiarieta’s leadership, “banking had been cooperativized. Livestock and agriculture [had been] cooperativized. He had cooperativized housing, consumption, and medical sports assistance. He [even] cooperativized education among whose achievements the Polytechnic School stands out.”³³ Rather than crediting the Francoist state, he praised God for allowing his cooperative experiment to succeed. He wrote, “God lives, not as a determinate political representative. Looking back would be an offense to God. One must always look ahead.”³⁴ Arizmendiarieta believed that Mondragón’s success was not owed to the success of corporatism, but the success of the Catholic Church, Social Catholicism, Acción Católica, and of God. Having established Arizmendiarieta’s view of the success of Mondragón, I will now examine two pieces of writing from the same newspaper that published Arizmendiarieta.

31. José María Arizmendiarieta, “El Cooperativismo y Mondragón,” *El Ciervo*, (1976): 298.

32. Arizmendiarieta, “El Cooperativismo y Mondragón,” 298.

33. Arizmendiarieta, “El Cooperativismo y Mondragón,” 298.

34. Arizmendiarieta, “El Cooperativismo y Mondragón,” 298.

These two pieces of writing are from the Spanish economist Pere Escorsa. One is an examination of Mondragón in the years directly after Franco's death, and one is from 2010. I will use these two writings to mark any significant changes in the business's political ideology and economic foundation and examine whether Arizmendiarieta's success story was a corporatist success story or a cooperativist one. Escorsa describes in the 1980 article first meeting Arizmendiarieta and touring a couple of Mondragón's factories in 1973. He wrote about being "most surprised" that the "incredible cadence of production" that he observed "results stemmed from a distinct philosophy."³⁵ Escorsa, as a trained economist, chose here to quote Keynes to explain his failure to understand Mondragón's success. He wrote that, according to Keynes, "economic progress is only obtainable through [exploiting people's] avarice, ego, and ambition."³⁶ Mondragón's success contradicts this, as Mondragón's structure held up the well-being of individual workers as more important than capital accumulation. Mondragón, due to its origins in the Church and having been led by a Catholic priest for the first two decades of its existence, replaced Keynes' emphasis on avarice, ego, and ambition with by elevating charity, humility, and caring for those around oneself.

Escorsa, after briefly delving into Keynesian economics, returns to the words of Arizmendiarieta in explaining the form of cooperativism present in Mondragón. Notably, he includes a quote by Arizmendiarieta wherein he states, "we want individuals with dignity in communities which are rich more than rich individuals in communities which are poor."³⁷ Exemplified through the words of Arizmendiarieta, the actual ideology behind Mondragón is revealed as much more than boilerplate corporatism, instead social Catholicism. The ideals of social Catholicism, mixed with the particular Basque culture and the institutional authority of Franco's corporatist state, facilitated the success of Mondragón. Although Arizmendiarieta repeatedly reminds those listening to him that he is a preacher, he speaks and constantly writes of the virtues of work and of supporting one's fellow man.

Shortly after the Great Recession began in December of 2007, Escorsa returned to write another article about Mondragón, entitled "Mondragón stands up to the crisis," in which he once again extolls the virtues of the company and its business model. Specifically, Escorsa writes about the success of Mondragón in internationalizing: "With an oversaturated domestic market, the crisis [of the recession] is lessened

35. Escorsa, "Mondragón, Hoy," 356.

36. Escorsa, "Mondragón, Hoy," 356.

37. Escorsa, "Mondragón, Hoy," 356.

“Mondragón, due to its origins in the Church and having been led by a Catholic priest for the first two decades of its existence, replaced Keynes’ emphasis on avarice, ego, and ambition with by elevating charity, humility, and caring for those around oneself.”

by penetration into other markets.”³⁸ While withstanding the recession, Mondragón also stuck true to the beliefs of Arizmendiarieta, following his advice that “work is the noblest element of society, the oldest, and the most human form of capital, and [that] unjustified ambition...does not allow for proper economic development [as those that] aspire for unlimited economic development do not maintain that [level of] development.”³⁹ Once again, Social Catholicism is an ideology that stood up in the face of adversity, with economic humility having allowed for Mondragón’s success during the Great Recession.

La Corporación Mondragón is today often praised for its ability to adapt to changes in the market. It is one of Spain’s most successful businesses for a reason, and its international successes in recent years have only compounded. With that stated, one must wonder about the relationship between Mondragón and Francisco Franco’s regime, considering that it was created during a period of intense corporatist control of all Spanish businesses. Understanding the ideology of Social Catholicism—and the Social Catholic group Acción Católica—is vital for understanding the relationship between Mondragón and Franco. In many ways, its early years were the success of corporatism. It had the backing and oversight of the Spanish government, and while individual worker autonomy was very high, the business generally lacked this autonomy. However, Mondragón’s mandate to operate as a business stemmed not from Franco’s government, and therefore not from corporatism, but instead from the institutional authority of the Catholic Church. Arizmendiarieta was fiercely apolitical

38. Pere Escorsa, “Mondragón Planta Cara a La Crisis,” *El Ciervo*, (2010), 711.

39. Pere Escorsa, “Mondragón Planta Cara a La Crisis,” 711.

and fiercely Catholic in describing the success of his business. It must be understood that Mondragón's origins lie ultimately in the Catholic Church and Social Catholicism as an ideology, not in cooperativism or in corporatism.

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Figure 1. Advertisement from 1938 for Formosa Oolong and Black tea featuring a photograph of a woman wearing a qipao, holding a gaiwan, a Chinese tea vessel.
Source: National Museum of Taiwan History, Commissioned Cataloging-Taiwan Historical Society 06, (Jan 1938).

PRODUCER AND PRODUCT:

IMPERIAL MARKETIZATION, INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND FORMATION OF THE MODERN TAIWANESE WOMAN

Emma Yang

Written for Modern Girl and Asia in the World

HIST 384

Dr. Tani Barlow

The Oriental Beauty

Oolong tea firms across the island retell a particular story from the infancy of the Taiwanese tea trade. The story goes that Queen Victoria gave oriental beauty tea (東方美人茶) its name because the steeped tea leaves in the teapot reminded her of a dancing young woman.¹ The figure evoked by this name is elegant, exotic, and physiological. Meanwhile, laboring women bent over tea trees across the Datun mountains in Taiwan, shouldering Taiwan's tea export industry on their broad backs.² Although entirely unfounded, the fictional etymology and global fantasy of oriental beauty tea shows how the figure of the Taiwanese woman entered (and was created by) the global market: as both the producer and personification of a colonial product.

In this paper, I examine how imperialist infrastructures of labor reconstruct the

1. Yi Jün Ling. "「茶金」是怎麼鍊成的? 東方美人茶王傳秘訣: 顧好環境讓小綠葉蟬咬越兇越好 | 上下游" 上下游News & Market. 上下游 News & Market, December 6, 2021. <https://www.newsmarket.com.tw/blog/162120>.

2. George Uvedale Price. *Reminiscences of North Formosa*. Yokohama [Japan]: Kelly & Walsh, 1895. Katherine Golden Biting Collection on Gastronomy (Library of Congress).

gender and ethnic containers of colonized societies. I consider this question through the figure of the Taiwanese woman and the colonial tea industry, which started in 1865 and continued through the end of the colonial era in 1945. What does it mean to be a Taiwanese woman? How does the answer to this question change between 1865 and 1945?

Women in Taiwan had always performed labor, but in this era, their labor contributed to imperial economies, global industries, and cultural exchange with the cosmopolitan world. The image of the Taiwanese woman also emerged at this time as a product created by and marketed to both domestic and overseas consumers as a component and a result of imperial industries. Her cultural ethnic identity consolidated disparate native racial groups through socioeconomic interactions with ethnically differentiated imperialist bodies. In this analysis, I argue that the imperial projects of marketization and industrialization formed piecemeal versions of a producing and produced woman that constitute the modern Taiwanese woman.

Qing-Era Marketization and the Commerce of Global Imperialism (1683 - 1895)

While limited information is available for all of the many discrete ethnic groups existing in Taiwan before the mid-nineteenth century, the evidence suggests that for many of these people, agriculture was traditionally women's work.³ Qing observations of both plains and mountain indigenous tribes described practices like female social or religious leadership, uxori-local marriage, and matrilineal inheritance of land and social spheres.⁴ It is important to note that later interviews of indigenous women found that the degree and type of influence they wielded varied widely between communities.⁵ It is also important to note that these observations were likely made relative to patriarchal Confucian conceptions of gender, and they may also have been exaggerated to emphasize the "savagery" of the indigenous people.⁶

Regardless of the true extent of matrifocal power in indigenous populations, by the time the tea trade was established in 1865, agricultural systems implementing European and Qing colonization had already begun to alter the systems of agricultural labor that had existed in Taiwan. The colonial history of Taiwan is summarized in Table 1.

3. Melissa J. Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?: The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities*. (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 2004): 38.

4. Emma Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 173. See also John Robert Shepherd, *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the 17th Century Siraya*. (Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Assoc., 1995), 1 – 20.

5. Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?*, 73.

6. Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*, 173.

Table 1. Colonial History of Taiwan

Period	Ruling Power	Colonial Economics and Labor
Pre – 1626	Indigenous	Subsistence hunting and matrifocal agriculture
1626 – 1642	Spanish	Limited trade with indigenous people in deerskin and rice
1624 – 1662	Dutch	Imperial marketization
1662 – 1684	Koxinga	Limited trade mediated through China
1684 - 1895	Qing Chinese	Imperial Marketization
1895 – 1945	Japanese	Imperial Industrialization

Source: Rubinstein, Murray A., and Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang. *Taiwan: A New History*. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge, 2015.

The Dutch East India Company sponsored sugar plantations managed and operated by settlers from mainland China, promoting the development of a land-oriented agricultural economy.⁷ Following the Qing occupation, this economic model of European investment and Chinese settlement persisted, but with the added dimension of Taiwanese labor driving agricultural production.⁸ The best example of this model is the creation of the tea export industry in Taiwan by Scottish merchant John Dodd around 1865. In a model typical of imperialist marketization,⁹ he lent capital to land-owning Qing farmers for tea cultivation. Eventually, he began importing tea and laborers into Taiwan from Fujian and exporting tea to New York.¹⁰ In 1869, over 5000 piculs, or 330 US tons, of tea were exported from Taiwan.¹¹ Tea soon became one of Qing Taiwan's most significant exports by volume, with over 8600 tons exported to the US and Europe in 1893.¹² The Qing colonial tea trade demonstrates how imperial marketization established two parallel ideas of the physiological Taiwanese woman: the laboring Taiwanese woman and the advertised Taiwanese woman. The producer and the product.

The Modern Taiwanese Woman as a Producer for the Global Export Market

The manual labor of Taiwanese women was critical to the explosive growth of the

7. Tonio Andrade, "The Rise and Fall of Dutch Taiwan, 1624-1662: Cooperative Colonization and the Statist Model of European Expansion," *Journal of World History* 17, no. 4 (December 2006): 429–50. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2006.0052>.

8. Melissa J. Brown, "Taiwan's Intersectional Cosmopolitanism: Local Women in Their Communities," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 9, no. 1 (2020): 107–45.

9. Murray A. Rubinstein and Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Taiwan: A New History*. (Oxfordshire, England: Routledge, 2015). See also Tani E. Barlow, *In the Event of Women*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2021), 29.

10. Gary Marvin Davison, *A Short History of Taiwan: The Case for Independence*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 29.

11. IMC: Imperial Maritime Customs Statistical Department Report on Trade at the Treaty Ports in China for the years 1871-1872. Shanghai: IMC Press, 18723.

12. Brown, "Taiwan's Intersectional Cosmopolitanism," 107-45.

colonial export economy. Most tea-picking and manufacturing workers in the nineteenth century were women.¹³ Figure 2 shows ten tea-pickers, all women of varying ages, in a tea plantation in 1895. Women also staffed the new manufacturing firms financed by foreign and mainland Chinese banks. One hundred and fifty tea manufacturing firms existed in Taiwan by 1900, each employing up to 400 or 500 women per firm.¹⁴

“We may infer that the demands of colonization and recolonization induce the formation and reformation of new models of femininity for any narrative of the colonized”



Figure 2. Tea-pickers on a tea plantation on Datun Mountain. All ten tea-pickers here are women of varying ages. Note that much of the land visible in the background of this photograph is devoted to tea cultivation, demonstrating the mass deforestation and territorial reduction that resulted from development of the tea industry.

Source: Price, George Uvedale. *Reminiscences of North Formosa*. Yokohama [Japan]: Kelly & Walsh, 1895. Katherine Golden Biting Collection on Gastronomy (Library of Congress).

Some analysts attribute the prominence of women’s labor in the tea industry to pre-existing traditions of female agricultural labor in Taiwan.¹⁵ However, not only did gender norms vary between tribes.¹⁶ It is important to consider the role of forced labor in Qing (and later, Japanese) imperial systems. Between 1731 and 1732, a major intertribal uprising occurred among allied indigenous villages in response to Qing officials forcing indigenous

13. Shepherd, *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the 17th Century Siraya*, 173.

14. Shepherd, *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the 17th Century Siraya*, 174.

15. Nicole Constable, *Guest People Hakka Identity in China and Abroad*. (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2014), 28.

16. Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?*, 73.

women to participate in heavy labor in the colonial lumber industry.¹⁷ Imperial demands for raw exports pressured many of these women to participate in cultivation of raw exports. It is not clear to what extent these demands may have interacted with pre-existing agricultural gender roles, but I would argue that the shift from indigenous subsistence agriculture to imperial export plantations demanded that the Taiwanese woman be a manual laborer producing for a global market.

The Modern Taiwanese Woman as a Product for the Global Market

Concurrently, a second figure of the Taiwanese woman was emerging outside of Taiwan. Through legends like Oriental Beauty Tea, foreign-backed tea firms created and delivered a version of the physiological Taiwanese woman onto the global stage.¹⁸ The dancing female personification of the slender tea leaf—eroticized, exoticized, herself a colonial product marketed to the masses—is divorced from the physiological realities of the laboring Taiwanese women who produce the tea. They are two parallel narratives, one invisible to and one illustrated for the global consumer market.

The Industrialization of Taiwan during Japanese Occupation (1895 - 1945)

The industrial and cultural projects that fed the imperial sugar and tea industries during Japanese colonization massively overhauled norms defining daily life and gender in both Qing Chinese and indigenous communities. Industrialization at this time took the form of new infrastructure (dams and irrigation systems, industrial mills), production technology (seedlings, fertilizer, crushing machines), and continued mass deforestation across the island.¹⁹

The Feet of the Modern Taiwanese Woman as a Producer

To understand how industrialization and infrastructure affected Taiwanese gender constructs, it is critical to acknowledge the effects of the sugar industry on foot binding. The sugar industry was the most important Taiwanese colonial export beginning from the Dutch era. Like the tea industry, it demanded large amounts of female agricultural labor to meet imperial production demands. For example, according to a caption written in 1939, Figure 3 shows women removing dead leaves from sugar cane stalks.²⁰

17. Shepherd, *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the 17th Century Siraya*, 100.

18. Lin, yíjūn. "「茶金」是怎麼鍊成的? 東方美人茶王傳秘訣"

19. Brown, "Taiwan's Intersectional Cosmopolitanism."

20. Found in Cheng, Nora, Elliott Fan, and Tsong-Min Wu. "Sweet Unbinding: Sugarcane Cultivation and the Demise of Foot-Binding." SSRN Electronic Journal, January 2021. Translated from Shigeo Ito, *The History of Taiwan* Seitou K. K. (Tokyo, Japan) (In Japanese).



Figure 3. Women removing dead leaves from harvested sugar cane plants in the fields. Sugar cane is a highly labor-intensive crop, and the large sugar industry in Japan-occupied Taiwan demanded high amounts of manual labor from both men and women.
 Source: Found in Cheng, Nora, Elliott Fan, and Tsong-Min Wu. "Sweet Unbinding: Sugarcane Cultivation and the Demise of Foot-Binding." SSRN Electronic Journal, January 2021. Translated from Shigeo Ito, *The History of Taiwan* Seitou K. K. (Tokyo, Japan) (In Japanese).

Foot binding was introduced to Taiwan through Qing settlers and was most common among Han Chinese women, like the one depicted in Figure 4. While the Japanese government had discouraged foot binding since 1895, foot unbinding did not occur en masse until the sugar boom of 1905 - 1915.²¹ A study of geographic trends in agriculture and foot unbinding in Taiwan found, as shown in Figure 5, that a township's proximity to the sugarcane railroad predicted its foot unbinding rates during this period.²² The study suggests that "a change in gender-specific labor productivity led to change in gender norms."²³ In other words, due to the demand for female labor in colonial industries, the modern Taiwanese woman and producer had unbound feet.



Figure 4. Adult woman wearing three-inch golden lotus shoes. Based on her clothing and bound feet, this woman is likely ethnically Hoklo (Han Chinese from Southern Fujian).
 Source: Cai, Jiachang. "Adult woman wearing three-inch lotus shoes (1931)." National Repository of Cultural Heritage, National Taiwan University, 31 Dec. 2002.

21. Nora Cheng, Elliott Fan, and Tsong-Min Wu. "Sweet Unbinding: Sugarcane Cultivation and the Demise of Foot-Binding." SSRN Electronic Journal, March 1, 2021.

22. Cheng, "Sweet Unbinding."

23. Cheng, "Sweet Unbinding."

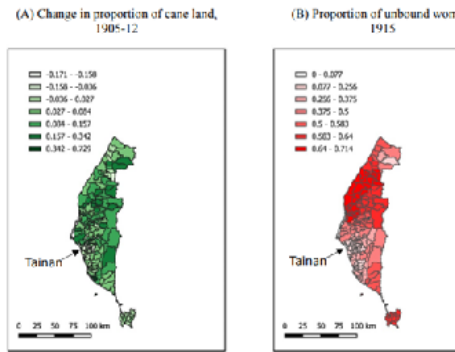


Figure 5. The geographical correlation between cane cultivation and foot unbinding in Taiwan between 1905 - 1915. This study found that a township's proximity to the sugarcane railroad and increased involvement in sugar cultivation predicted the rate at which its women unbound their feet.

Source: Cheng, Nora, Elliott Fan, and Tsong-Min Wu. "Sweet Unbinding: Sugarcane Cultivation and the Demise of Foot-Binding." SSRN Electronic Journal, January 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3775981>.

More broadly, this case demonstrates that the demands of colonial labor under a new imperial administration (Japanese sugarcane production) reversed the cultural imports of the previous colonial administration (Qing foot binding customs). We may infer that the demands of colonization and recolonization induce the formation and reformation of new models of femininity for any narrative of the colonized woman.

The Modern Taiwanese Woman as a Product of Industrialization and Urbanization

The effects of Japanese deforestation and manufacturing on high mountain indigenous peoples recast previous ideals of femininity and success. To feed the ravenous demands for tea, sugar, and lumber, Japanese officials relocated the traditionally nomadic Taroko people from their previously remote hunting grounds to the bases of the mountains.²⁴ These resettled communities experienced an influx of external influence: Japanese was integrated into the existing language, Presbyterian churches were established, and previous systems of internal commodity exchange shifted into global cash commerce.²⁵ As some Taroko women lost social power as religious leaders, others gained social power through new global avenues. One Taroko woman, for example, was raised in a Japanese home, studied nursing, and became "one of the main agents of Japanese modernity and

24. Wan-li Ho, *Ecofamiliarism: Women, Religion, and Environmental Protection in Taiwan* (St. Petersburg: Three Pines Press, 2016), 135.

25. Scott Simon, "Formosa's First Nations and the Japanese: from Colonial Rule to Postcolonial Resistance," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 4, no. 1 (January 4, 2006).

a key part of the process of displacing traditional Taroko healers from their position in society.”²⁶

Similarly, facial tattoos like those in Figure 6 were previously part of female beauty standards and necessary for marriage. During the Japanese occupation, girls voluntarily removed their tattoos to attend Japanese-administered schools, “which they and their families wanted because Japanese education held out the promise of a better life.”²⁷ For them, becoming a modern Taiwanese woman meant becoming visually and culturally more cosmopolitan, more educated, and in some respects more Japanese.



Figure 6. Qing era indigenous woman with tattooed face. Tattoodesigns corresponded with the duties and status of women, alluding to the importance of status in indigenous societies.

Steere, J.B. "Formosa." *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 6 (1876): facing p. 307.

The Modern Taiwanese Woman as a Product of Japanese Media

This Japanized conception of the Taiwanese woman was also perpetuated by Japanese media. Japanese newspapers—the *Taiwan Daily News* in particular—interpellated the Taiwanese woman to fit a container that emulated, but was implicitly inferior to, the Japanese woman. The results of this interpellation are most obvious in Taiwanese women’s fashion (see Figure 7), which took on global objects and styles as mediated by Japanese fashion.

26. Simon, "Formosa's First Nations and the Japanese."

27. Simon, "Formosa's First Nations and the Japanese."



Figure 7. Taiwanese women engaged with global textiles and fashions during the Japanese occupation. Hallmarks of Japanese stylistic influence are present, including clogs visible on the feet of a woman in the left edge of the photo on the left and the bow and hairstyle of the girl in the photo on the right.

Source (left): National Museum of Taiwan History, Commissioned Cataloging-Taiwan Historical Society 09, (1683 - 1895).

Source (right): Cai, Jiachang. "Whole Body Photography of a Girl during Japanese Occupation (1936)." National Repository of Cultural Heritage, National Taiwan University, 31 Dec. 2002, <http://newnrch.digital.ntu.edu.tw/nrch/index.php>.

An article from 1927 titled "Fashion Outlook for Women: Displaying the Modern Girl Look with Ladies Long Pants," for example, encourages Taiwanese women to purchase clothing from Tokyo because of its cosmopolitanism:

Thus, as Tokyo is next to enter the muddle of [the fashion world], which includes, for one, via the Pacific Ocean, Americanized [fashion] traversing the Pacific to our region; and for another, via the Indian Ocean, straight through the Suez Canal, it is imported directly from Paris and London. (TDN 1 Sep. 1927, 8)

Author Dean Brink makes a striking observation about this article. Within this narrative lurks the implied ethnic inferiority of, and thus inherent ethnic difference between, the modern Taiwanese woman compared to the modern Japanese woman. I argue that its implications—that the colonized must become like the colonizer, but can never be the colonizer—may have contributed to the formation and characteristics of the national modern Taiwanese woman.²⁸

28. Zhong, "Explaining National Identity Shift in Taiwan," 4.

In her 1944 memoir *Taiwan no Shojo* (published in Japanese and translated into English by Anne Sokolsky in 2010), Huang Fengzi describes her cultural experiences and self-perceptions as an upper-class Taiwanese girl.²⁹ Fengzi writes that Japanese clothing is the best, but Fengzi expresses embarrassment because she “does not know how to wear them well.”³⁰ The Taiwanese girl’s desire to emulate the Japanese girl, despite her awareness of the gap between them suggests an implicit awareness of a hierarchy separating the colonized woman from the colonizing woman.

However, little is known about how this colonial narrative may have influenced Taiwanese women beyond their changes in appearance.³¹ It is likely that this modern Taiwanese woman consolidates each of Taiwan’s disparate cultural and ethnic groups to varying extents. Culturally, she is Japanese-like but not Japanese, somewhat but not strictly Han Chinese, and often but not always exclusive of indigenous peoples.³² As a result, conceptions of the modern Taiwanese woman in the media frequently tangle with components of each of these cultures.

Ethnic Transmutation of the Modern Taiwanese Woman as a Product

Images circulated overseas reflected these variable ethnic conceptions of the Taiwanese woman. As demonstrated by the international magazine advertisements in Figure 8, the Taiwanese woman was marketed as a colonial, ethnically mercurial product. She was depicted wearing a Japanese *kosode* or a Chinese *qipao*, and she used traditional Japanese or British-influenced Meiji-era tea utensils. These female advertising icons both reflected and perpetuated the competing ethnic identities of the Taiwanese woman: competing identities resulting from Taiwan’s history of colonization and recolonization. Media images of the colonized woman consequently displayed her as a derivative form of the various imperial powers that mediated her cultural-economic exchanges in the global market.

29. Anne Sokolsky, “Yang Qianhe and Huang Fengzi: Two Voices of Colonial Taiwan,” *Journal - Japan Studies Association* 8 (2010): 239–.

30. Huang, *Taiwan no shojo*, 15 quoted in Sokolsky, “Yang Qianhe and Huang Fengzi,” 263.

31. Yang Zhong, “Explaining National Identity Shift in Taiwan,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 99 (February 21, 2016): 4.

32. Chien-Jung Hsu, *The Construction of National Identity in Taiwan’s Media, 1896-2012* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2014), 45.

“For them, becoming a modern Taiwanese woman meant becoming visually and culturally more cosmopolitan, more educated, and in some respects more Japanese.”

The effects of these inconsistent and referential depictions on foreign and domestic audiences are not explicit in historical records. However, it is possible that they contributed to persisting conflicts in the affiliations assigned to, or claimed by, Taiwanese women today. These ethnic containers and national identities often depend on how selectors understand each woman's cultural-political relationship with her previous colonizers and with mainland China.³³ These referential terms of identification may reflect the interplay between the remnants of pre-colonial and imperial influences during postcolonial ethnic and national identity formation.



Figure 8. International Advertisements for Formosa Oolong Tea during the Japanese occupation period featuring women. The woman on the exposition poster (left: 1905, United States) has Edo-era Japanese clothing and tea accessories. The woman in the center (unknown date) has distinctively Japanese features and clothing but uses a British-influenced Meiji-era tea set: both the teapot and teacup have handles on their sides. The woman on the right (unknown date) uses the same tea set and wears a Han Chinese qipao. However, the feathers in her hair are not a Han Chinese fashion, evoking the impression that she may be an aboriginal—or a more “exotic”—Taiwanese woman.

Source (left): Postcard from the Formosa Oolong Tea Parlors postmarked from Portland Oregon to a Dr. George Bral in Alnwick, Northumberland, England. 1905. Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition.

Source (center): 日本時代海報圖像 Advertisement from the Japanese Occupation Period. nd. National Museum of Taiwan History.

Source (right): 日本時代海報圖像 Advertisement from the Japanese Occupation Period. nd. National Museum of Taiwan History.

33. Cheng-Feng Shih, “Language and Ethnic Politics in Taiwan,” *Internconpational Journal of Peace Studies* 8, no. 2 (2003): 89–102. See also Chang-Yen Tsai, *National Identity, Ethnic Identity, and Party Identity in Taiwan* (Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 2007), 11.

The Colonized Woman as Producer and Product

Throughout this paper, I traced how the forces of foreign marketization and imperial industrialization in the colonial tea trade and its associated industries contributed to two distinct constructions of the modern Taiwanese working woman: one as a producer, and one as a product. Under the demands of a global tea market, imperial Qing and Japanese tea production fueled changes in labor structures and infrastructure in previously remote mountain land. Industrialization accelerated the decay of ethnically variable and often matrifocal traditions while integrating women into cosmopolitan markets and models of femininity. Precolonial, imperial, and cosmopolitan delineations of gender and ethnicity thus entangled into a network of images and practices, shaping conceptions of what it meant to be a modern Taiwanese woman which may be influential to this day.

This case study of colonization and recolonization, in seeking to describe how imperialist infrastructures influence gender constructs in colonized societies, has found that the colonized woman is simultaneously a producer and product of imperialist industries. Her identity and how it is marketed toward herself, her people, and the rest of the world reflect the complex relationships with imperial bodies mediating her role in global exchange.

Lastly, largely missing from this survey of economic trends, print media, and archival photography (and from many studies of marginalized women) is the perspective of the Taiwanese woman herself on her role in the global market as it changed under colonialism. I have attempted to represent her experience through retrospective interviews in secondary sources and documented changes in her self-presentation through practices like tattooing and foot binding. However, I have included little written directly by Taiwanese women, and none from the women that participated in the agricultural labor described here. Unfortunately, few of their early records were preserved and translated. Without their complete first-hand recollections, this analysis cannot truly grasp the diversity, agency, or sheer human sentiment that characterized the Taiwanese woman's experience in this era.

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Panorama of Shanghai Bund https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3a/1930_Shanghai.jpg

JAPANESE MODERNITY IN SHANGHAI

Nicholas Ma

Written for The Japanese Empire

HIST 408

Dr. Tani Barlow

Shanghai held a special position to many Japanese. It was the only treaty-port city in the twentieth century where all major imperial powers were present in full force.¹ The Treaty of Shimonoseki enabled the Japanese to set up their own concession in Shanghai, but they chose to join the International Settlement, a de facto independent territory where all foreign citizens enjoyed extraterritoriality and consular jurisdiction. Yet, unlike other cosmopolitan cities such as Paris, London, or New York at the time, in Shanghai, cross-cultural interaction and integration did not happen since each community was self-enclosed. The British remained British, the French remained French, and the Japanese people tried everything possible to isolate themselves from Chinese residents and create a uniquely Japanese residential district. For instance, Japanese stores, tea houses, and fashion were seen everywhere within the district. Out of this Japanese settlement in Shanghai, a Japanese notion of modernity manifested and developed over time. As Yokomitsu Riichi put it in the 1920s,

The question of International Settlement remains the most obscure among the world's problems and yet also contains all the questions of the future. Simply put, there is no other place in the world where the character of modernity is so clearly revealed.²

1. Joshua A. Fogel, "Shanghai-Japan: The Japanese Residents' Association of Shanghai," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 4 (2000): 927-50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2659217>.

2. Ritsuo Taguchi, "Shanghai, Japan, and Identity Politics: On Yokomitsu Riichi's Shanghai," *Asiatische Studien* 53, no. 2 (1999): 203.

The Japanese had been searching for modernity since the onset of the Meiji restoration, the substitution of a unified Japanese national identity for loyalty to the Shogunate. Therefore, in this paper, I define modernity as a nation's framework for its unified political identity. Essentially, the question of what it means to be modern is the same as what it means to be Japanese. As Young argues, "the relationship between modernity and empire was dialectical: just as modernization conditioned the growth of empire, the process of imperialism shaped the conditions of modern life."³ The significance of the Japanese experience in Shanghai is that it instituted a unique notion of modernity, which began from a total acceptance of Western modernity before moving to an invention of a lifestyle that is neither Western nor Chinese: a special symbol of "overcoming modernity" for the Japanese Empire. In this paper, I choose mass media to investigate the formation of identities of Japanese residents in Shanghai as it became increasingly popular during the time period.

I. Japanese Media in Shanghai

A. A Brief Overview

The newspaper industry in China started in the early nineteenth century. The earliest newspapers were all founded by expatriates mainly to serve the citizens of nations which the newspaper publishers belonged to. The British were the most active. Content-wise, early newspapers only focused on missionary work and commerce. In later stages, they gradually involved issues such as current affairs, politics, diplomacy, culture, and academics. The Japanese first started running newspapers in Shanghai, the core of Japan's publishing industry. A study showed that there were at least 34 Japanese-run newspapers in Shanghai from the late Qing to the Republican era.⁴ After the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Japanese newspapers and periodicals in Shanghai began to expand rapidly, and most of them supported China's national reform; but after 1903, partially due to the influence of Japan's national policy toward China, Japanese newspapers and periodicals criticized China's revolutionary ideology and gradually deviated from it.⁵

B. The 1890s: Shanghai Shinpō 上海新报

The Shanghai Shinpo, founded in 1890, was one of the earliest Japanese newspapers in Shanghai. The only Japanese-run publication founded earlier was the

3. Louise Young, "Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism," Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998: 12.

4. Shumei Jia, Shanghai Xin Wen Zhi 上海新闻志 (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2000): 142-48, 325.

5. Jiarong Zhou, "Japanese-Run Newspapers in Shanghai (1882-1945)," CNKI, 2008.

Shanghai Business Journal (Shanghai shangye zabao, 上海商业杂报), which was founded in 1882 and stopped publishing a year later in 1883.⁶ The Shanghai Shinpo was a private agency funded by Mitsui & Co. (三井洋行); it was published once a week and priced at ten qian each. Therefore, in addition to general news and reviews, the content of this magazine also included business reports of Mitsui & Co.⁷ It also published news about the development of economic and cultural undertakings by Japanese residents in Shanghai, such as the opening of photo studios and hotels and the establishment of the Shanghai Japanese Club and the Japanese Youth Association, as well as novels and poems, etc.⁸ The newspaper lasted until 1900.

1. Looking Forward to Tsuruhara, The New Consul

This year more and more men and women come here from our country, but few of them bring enough capital to engage in business activities. Most of them are untouchables who cannot live in domestic society and come here to make a living. Although they should not be interfered too much as long as they do not engage in illegal activities, they often disregard their decency as Japanese and engage in prostitution that disrupts customs, so they are managed and enforced, and those who go too far have to be taken sanctions. The further dishonor of these untouchables includes indulging in gambling or wandering the streets of the city in clothes even more inferior than those of the Chinese. Although inconspicuous at present, such disgraceful acts are gradually increasing throughout the settlements, which will inevitably cause foreigners to treat us with contempt, and cause damage to the credit of us ordinary Japanese.⁹

The first editorial presented above was a request sent to the incoming Japanese consul to China, Tsuruhara. It advocated the use of consular power to take extreme measures to manage the negative impact of those inferior Japanese immigrants. The use of the decency of Japanese people in the argument and the awareness of foreign contempt signify the author's awareness of Japanese nation-state identity. Different from the militaristic expansionist arguments used in Northeastern China, Japanese residents in Shanghai mobilized such desires for dignity purely for their business interests. Their primary objective was to urge the new consul to protect and subsidize the trade route between Shanghai and Japan. The editorial also listed interviews with Japanese merchants in

6. Jiarong Zhou, "Japanese-Run Newspapers in Shanghai (1882-1945)," CNKI, 2008.

7. Weidong Guo and Yigao Liu, *Chin Tai Wai Kuo Tsai Hua Wen Hua Chi Kou Tsung Lu* 近代外国在华文化机构综录 (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1993), 20.

8. Zu'en Chen, *Xun Fang Dong Yang Ren* 寻访东洋人——近代上海的日本居留民 (1868-1945) (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2007), 226-27.

9. "Editorial: Looking Forward to Tsuruhara, The New Japanese Consul to China, 社论: '寄望鹤原新领事(第12号)," Shanghai Shinpō, August 22, 1890.

Shanghai on their experience with the previous consul who, when asked about business-related affairs, always responded with “I don’t know,” compared to other foreign consuls who always provided business reports to their residents. The problem of the “inferior Japanese,” to these merchants, was that they were unable to “bring enough capital to engage in business activities.” In other words, the origin of Japanese identities in Shanghai was founded on the interest of protecting and developing a Japanese commercial presence in the city. The interest of the Japanese State here gave way to privately-run businesses, which defined the unique core of the Japanese identity in Shanghai.

2. Inquiring about Young Japanese Living Abroad

Dear young people, you are now living in the Qing Empire, in which area do you want to display your talents? Facing the white people living in these ports, you have no sense of survival and competition. They are much better than us in terms of intelligence, wealth, and experience. Do young people in our country have to fight against them through enduring hatred and anger? No. We must clearly know that it is currently impossible to compete with or defeat them. However, compared with our same race, the Chinese, can we compete with them? Patience and diligence are the strengths of the Chinese, and we are worse than them in this regard. I don’t know how much it is. Compared with past experience, our country’s merchants are not as good as Chinese merchants, and they have suffered repeated failures, often due to lack of patience and diligence...

There is no doubt that the Chinese are much better than us in both commerce and industry. However, we have many races to compete with besides them. For example, everyone knows that there are many Portuguese in various ports in China, and many of them are employed by Westerners as clerks in commercial houses or as petty officials in the customs office, with monthly wages as high as 50 - 100 Yen, or as low as around 30 yen. They are seen as very hard working, very diligent, and very obedient to the master’s orders, making Europeans and Americans feel that these Portuguese are very easy to give orders to. If we try to compare these races, we don’t have their strategies (手腕) and skills, nor do we have their language advantages. Can’t do anything about it. Even if we are courageous, we can’t actually do anything besides cheer ourselves up spiritually(在精神上豪放一下).¹⁰

The editorial shows how Japanese residents in the early 1890s viewed three types of foreign nationals as rivals for survival in Shanghai when considering their advantages:

10. “Inquiring about Young Japanese Living Abroad, 社论: ‘询问在外日本青年者’ (第45号),” *Shanghai Shinpō*, April 10, 1891.

the intellectual and financial advantages of Europeans and Americans, the perseverance of the Chinese, and the advantages in language and skill of the Portuguese. For the survival and prosperity of the Japanese in Shanghai, the editorial suggested that the Japanese must “lead the Chinese in perseverance and hard-working, crush the Jewish in saving money, exclude the Portuguese in clerk and petty officials.” This further suggests that Japanese residents, specifically the merchants, prioritized business-related challenges over anything else and viewed their business competition with foreign nationals as an existential threat. In conclusion, Japanese residents viewed themselves as weak and marginalized in the international metropolis. They had a strong sense of confrontation against Western forces while also recognizing the power of the Chinese who stood in a more advantageous position commercially. However, the call to action reveals a strong sense of national unification in response to the threats of these other nations; a Japanese identity with distinctive strength against others is being formed in this process.

C. The 1930s: The Criminal Science

The year 1931 was a turning point for Sino-Japanese relations when the Japanese invaded Manchuria through military force. An extensive mass media campaign was carried out to influence the Japanese perception of Shanghai. While the Japanese in the 1890s were starting to build their national dignity as a latecomer in Shanghai who viewed Chinese and Westerners as a threat to survival, in the 1931s they strived to turn themselves into the dominator of China. By the end of the 1890s, there were only around one thousand Japanese residents in Shanghai, two-thirds of whom were female prostitutes serving foreign customers in the concessions. The Japanese population started to grow after the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and Japanese social life evolved as a self-governing body, the Japanese Resident Association (JRA) was established two years later. By the end of World War I in 1919, the Japanese community grew to become the most populated emigre community in Shanghai with more than 17,720 permanent residents. By 1928, the number grew up to 27,660 (including all “citizens” of the Japanese Empire such as Koreans and Taiwanese), the majority of whom were middle-class corporate employees at local banks, factories, etc.¹¹ The demographic shift and growth of the Japanese community shaped the popular perception of Shanghai as an international territory and subsequently played a significant role in shaping Japanese imperial identity.

On the Chinese side, in 1931, after the Manchurian Incident, the Chinese

11. Hirofumi Takatsuna and Zu'en Chen, *Social History of Japanese Overseas Chinese in Modern Shanghai* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 2014): 8-11.

nationalist movement had developed to become precisely an anti-Japanese campaign. The Kuomintang mobilized many volunteer militias in Shanghai, with as many as 17,000 soldiers by the end of the year. The Japanese residents responded in two ways. The elites pressured the Japanese government to protect their business interests in Shanghai. On September 29, 1931, the Shanghai Japanese Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to the Japanese foreign minister:

As long as the relationship between Japan and China does not reach the level of a breakdown in diplomatic terms, the Chinese government is undoubtedly obligated to fully protect the lives and property of Japanese residents, as well as the freedom to live and operate businesses. Especially given the nature of the situation, once retreated, there is no hope of an easy return to the same place. Therefore, if the residents retreat, it means giving up their benefits, unknowingly falling into the tricks of the Chinese, and destroying the economic foundation we have built after years of hard work.... From a holistic and long-term perspective, to solve the outstanding issues in Manchuria and Mongolia and to protect vested interests, which are related to the goals of Japan-China relations, [the matter] should be treated with the understanding that any sacrifices can be indulged.... We request that the Nanjing government fundamentally change its historical policy towards Japan with the most serious attitude and eliminate any anti-Japanese movement.¹²

In light of the success of the military operation in Manchuria, Japanese business elites began to challenge the authority of the Chinese and seek Japanese officials to interfere with the Chinese affairs on their soil. Instead of downplaying their Japanese pride before Chinese' aggression, they demonstrated the nominal privileges as Japanese citizens and actively engaged in the conflict, asking both the Japanese and Nanjing governments to eliminate anti-Japanese movements with extreme measures. However, how did the masses react to this increasingly hostile environment?

There are very few records on the lives of ordinary Japanese in the 1930s, but a handful of mass media outlets emerged to target the residents in Shanghai which can provide a sneak peek into what a Japanese resident in Shanghai might discuss. Criminal Science was a monthly magazine founded in June 1930 and ended in December 1932. Each publication had roughly 340 pages and was priced at 60 qian. The magazine had more discussion around Shanghai than its contemporary counterparts.¹³ In June 1932, the magazine reduced its price to 50 qian. The Editor's Note explained the price change:

12. Sokaze Muramatsu, "上海事変を觀てくる," *Chūō Kōron*, April 1932, 343.

13. Qing Xu, *Modern Japanese Perception of Shanghai, 1862-1945* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 2012): 52.

"Anything detached from public life is powerless. From now on, this magazine will be with the masses."¹⁴ What distinguishes *Criminal Science* was its explicit target towards the "masses," which was only a new concept to Japanese society that emerged in the 1920s after the Great Kantō earthquake.¹⁵ The magazine was filled with hiragana, manga, photos, illustrations, and short stories, and all the kanji were supplemented by furigana to ease the literacy burden for readers.

The year before the First Shanghai Incident (also known as the January 28 Incident), *Criminal Science* published a special edition titled "Shanghai Study." Many influential Japanese journalists and scholars based in Shanghai publish their work here such as Itaru Nii (新居格) and Asatarō Gotō (後藤朝太郎).

Shanghai is a free port. It's a place where you don't need a passport. So the daughters of Nagasaki came to Shanghai with indifferent faces (无所谓の嘴脸) . . . The result of the turmoil between us and them was the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. It is the victory of Japan, which used to be insulted as an inconsequentially small country. In the future, China will be the stage where the Japanese can show off and play a role. Where, the daughters of beautiful Nagasaki raised their yellow voices, "It's too boring in the mainland, go to Shanghai to make a fortune" "It's okay to be a concubine. Be a foreigner's concubine and you can make a lot of money" Anyway It is said that Shanghai is an exhibition venue for ethnic groups from ten thousand countries. . . For us, Shanghai is a very interesting place with different nationalities.¹⁶

Compared to merely forty years ago when the Japanese needed to compete with Chinese and Westerners for survival, Shanghai was now perceived as an "interesting place with different nationalities" where the Japanese could easily make a fortune and show off to the world. The superior side of Shanghai no longer existed in Japanese perceptions. In turn, Shanghai had, on a conscious level, been incorporated into the broad concept of the Empire of Japan: "The city of Shanghai in the Prefecture of Nagasaki." Daughters of Nagasaki now traveled to Shanghai not with faces of amazement but with indifference because to them, the trip to Shanghai was shorter than the trip to Osaka, and the streets in Shanghai were full of Japanese with Nagasaki accents since 70 percent of Japanese residents, the largest foreign population in Shanghai, were from Nagasaki at the time.¹⁷

The Japanese Communist Party might be related to this organization. Many people

14. "Editor's Note," *Criminal Science*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1932.

15. Qing Xu, *Modern Japanese Perception of Shanghai, 1862-1945* (Shanghai People's Press, 2012): 53.

16. Nagai Tokutaro, "Shanghai in the Prefecture of Nagasaki," *Criminal Science*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1931.

17. "Kyushu University Graduate School of Comparative Society and Culture Comparative Culture Research Symposium," 2001.

had planned conspiracy activities in Shanghai, just as the world knows. However, [they did it] in Shanghai not only because of the profits there but also because it is the most beneficial base for conspiracy. It can also be said that it receives the least interference from other places. Therefore, as a strange land, it is feasible to plan all kinds of conspiracy activities. For Chinese nobilities, there are many who avoid the Zhongyuan and slowly retreat to Shanghai, planning a comeback. It is a natural result that places like Shanghai not only have international prisoners but also are cultivating such people. Now all these have become famous products in Shanghai.¹⁸

Another notable fact is that the articles frequently commented on the rebellion in Shanghai against the ruling of the Japanese Empire, most notably on Japanese communism. In 1921, the Communist Party of China was founded in the French concession of Shanghai. In 1925, the Communist International convened in Shanghai and instructed the reestablishment of the Communist Party of Japan, which was dissolved by the Japanese government a year ago. As an authoritative Sinologist scholar from the mainland, Asatarō Gotō equated rebels and revolutionaries to criminals when describing Shanghai. He then added, “In the demonic alleys (魔巷) of Shanghai, first, it’s dangerous to carry a lot of money while walking; second, it’s dangerous to move around in a car; third, it’s dangerous to be followed on the street; fourth, it’s dangerous to be hiding criminal activities. No matter what, Shanghai is a city full of dangerous atmospheres.”¹⁹ “The conspiracy” that the communist “criminals” were planning contributed to what made Shanghai a dangerous city of sin. Rather than praising the city for its modern development and huge business returns, Japanese mass media started to picture a version of modernity that was filled with drugs, prostitution, and danger. However, the question of how Japanese residents in Shanghai reacted to the shifting perception of Shanghai remains unsolved.

“In the eyes of the new generation of Japanese, a superior identity of Japan was formed and inherently connected to modernity and civility.”

. 1937, Compositions by Primary School Students

Itaru Nii, the famous leftist journalist who created the term “moga” (modern girl), compiled and published a series of compositions by primary school pupils. In these

18. Gotō Asatarō, “在逆光中辉煌的上海魔巷,” *Criminal Science*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1931.

19. Gotō Asatarō, “在逆光中辉煌的上海魔巷,” *Criminal Science*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1931.

compositions, Japanese pupils described Shanghai as an international metropolis. The awareness of ethnic and national diversity was introduced to them for the first time as they encountered people who were different. Their childishly pure observations of the city revealed their process of internalizing identities: who is Japanese and who isn't, and what it means to be Japanese.

After getting up in the morning, the Japanese brush their teeth, whereas Chinese people barely brush their teeth. In the summer, they put their meal in a very huge bowl, one side with rice and the other with food, and stand outside to eat. Japanese people would never do this as it is considered very ungracious. There are countless ditches in Shanghai... There are no ditches in Japan. Japanese river water is entirely different from ditch water. The water in the creek is clear and not turbid, but the water in the ditch is muddy, and there is no place that is not turbid. Moreover, there are hundreds of thousands of dead Chinese soldiers under such turbid water. Such disgusting water, but the Chinese can use it as if nothing happened, such as washing rice and washing clothes. People who do not have tap water even boil the water for drinking. From the perspective of us Japanese, this is simply unimaginable.²⁰

Japanese kids were very much aware of the difference between Chinese and Japanese people through their daily experiences. Similar negative descriptions of the Chinese appeared in most compositions. Some simply described the discriminatory treatment, "Chinese people in dirty clothes have to show their pass to the sentries before they can pass, and Japanese people in neat and clean clothes only need a simple bow to pass."²¹ They could clearly come to the conclusion that the Japanese were a more educated, beautiful, and simply greater nationality than the filthy Chinese. However, in 1937, even though the compositions mentioned the effects of war such as "hundreds of thousands of dead Chinese soldiers," they seemed to show no empathy towards the violence and casualties that the Chinese people suffered, nor did they think any less of Japanese when they witnessed the military invasion in Shanghai which prompted thousands, if not millions, to flee from their home. In the eyes of the new generation of Japanese, a superior identity of Japan was formed and inherently connected to modernity and civility.

20. Nose, Yoshi, "Shanghai JRA Normal Primary School Six Grader" in *Compositions by Primary School Students*, ed. Itaru Nii, 1937.

21. Yoshida, Yuki, "Shanghai JRA Normal Primary School Second Grader" in *Compositions by Primary School Students*, ed. Itaru Nii, 1937.

II. Japanese Identity Consolidation in Shanghai

A. Cultural Identity

It is impossible to define the formation of Japanese identity in Shanghai without discussing the soil that nurtured it. Shanghai, one of the few multinational and multi-religious trade centers that emerged in the world as the product of Western imperialism, was arguably the birthplace of “modern” culture as we know it today. This notion of “modernity” emerged in the concessions driven by the Western industrial economic system and, as a result, was dominated by Western emigre communities. The prominence of Shanghai as a model of modernity came from its high amount of international trade and foreign investments in certain industries, especially the publishing and leisure industries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, books and periodicals were among the most important industrial products - as had been the case in nineteenth-century New York.²² Through a massive and deliberate media campaign, such as guidebooks, advertisements, and serial fiction, “Shanghai” became a widespread cultural construction. Being a “Shanghaiander” was a uniquely “modern” identity, a collective consciousness of all foreigners who decided to reside in the concessions in Shanghai. Alexander Des Forge, in his book *Mediasphere Shanghai*, argues that the Shanghaiander rhetoric, created in the late nineteenth century, identified the crucial role of Western colonialism in Shanghai’s very existence as a prosperous city, hence “the colonial modernity” paradigm.²³ Newcomers of the city quickly transformed themselves into “Shanghaiander,” a native place identity, which, as argued by Des Forge, “reconfigures the relationship between local identity and larger economic and political forces.”

If guidebooks and other reference works provide the “vocabulary” of the Shanghai experience for newcomers to the city, Shanghai fiction supplies the “grammar” of that experience both to visitors and to residents of the city: not only what a Shanghai person should know, but how he or she acts on that knowledge.²⁴

No other foreign nationals had experienced Western cultural hegemony more than the Japanese residents of Shanghai. Shanghai was figuratively and legally detached from China as a uniquely “European” territory where Westerners enjoyed the same, perhaps even more luxurious lifestyle and did not have to bother learning any language or tradition

22. George G. Foster, *New York by Gas-Light and Other Urban Sketches*, ed. Stuart M. Blumin (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990): 1–61.

23. Alexander Des Forges, *Mediasphere Shanghai: The Aesthetics of Cultural Production* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007): 12.

24. Forges, *Mediasphere Shanghai*: 13.

of Asia.

The Japanese, on the other hand, did not seem to have left a visible legacy in Shanghai. The modern culture in Shanghai was entirely Western or a Chinese imitation of Western fashions.²⁵ Newspapers rarely reported on Japanese residents in Shanghai. Only when the Japanese army was fighting in the city, or when the boycott of Japanese goods made daily life inconvenient, did the Japanese people appear in the headlines of the newspapers in Shanghai. But even then, it is difficult to find any substantive reports of the lives of Japanese civilians.

Early Japanese experience in Shanghai took place in the context of the pursuit of a modern nation-state where the emperor was the symbol of the state and of the unity of the people. However, when Japanese merchants set foot on the soil of Shanghai, they had to absorb an unparalleled socio-economic shock. Yukio Ozaki, the former mayor of Tokyo, uncritically praised everything he saw in the international concessions for their prosperity in the 1880s, from bridges to pavements, gardens to music.²⁶ Additionally, the Japanese saw themselves as marginalized latecomers to the city where opportunities were already exploited. More importantly, Japanese residents, who were mostly merchants and corporate employees, saw a distinct lack of state involvement and protection in their business interests. They saw this as an existential threat and competed fiercely for survival with other skillful people in the city. Culturally, the mental vulnerability prompted “a sentimental response to a global ideology.”²⁷ For every story of success in Shanghai, there were countless individuals who the news infrequently recognized. This is the problem of the “Global City Model,” as argued by Tsung-yi Michelle Huang.²⁸ Collectively, the Japanese were hidden behind every picture of prosperity in Shanghai. From then on, the quest for modernity no longer equated to following European powers, but to compete with them for a limited amount of resources. The cultural response present in Shanghai Shinpo is a specific political endorsement of a particular expansionist and somewhat predatory approach to global capitalism and its commercial culture.

B. Political Identity

The Imperialism of Free Trade, by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, which

25. Fogel, Joshua A. “The Recent Boom in Shanghai Studies.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 2 (2010): 314.

26. Jianhui Liu and Huijie Gan, *Mo Du Shang-Hai*; Ri-Ben Zhi Shi Ren De Jin Dai Ti Yan 魔都上海 日本知识人的“近代”体验, Shanghai: 上海古籍出版社, (2003): 85.

27. Tsung-yi Michelle Huang and Muzi Dong, “Imagining the Entitled Middle-Class Self in the Global City,” in *The Routledge Companion to Urban Imaginaries*, London, Routledge, (2018): 359.

28. Huang and Dong, “Imagining the Entitled Middle-Class Self in the Global City:” 359

mainly focused on the formation of British imperialism, described the mechanism of integrating less developed regions into the domestic advanced economic system. This was a policy termed “informal empire” based on the principles of free trade that sought to dominate the region not by formal imperial control, but through a series of unequal treaties and concession ports to seek economic dominance over the region: China. Japan sought to join European forces in setting up informal empires in China after the First Sino-Japan War in 1895. The situation turned out during the First World War when Japanese imperialism and economic prosperity rose to an unprecedented height in East Asia as the war-devastated Europe.



Figure 1. New map of Shanghai²⁹

After the establishment of the concessions, Shanghai was divided into two parts, the advanced international modern city and the traditional premodern city occupied by the Chinese, as shown in figure 1. After the Taiping Civil War, Chinese refugees fled into the modern concession port, creating a unique place where the West met the East, or “traditions” met “modernity.” Scholars have argued that it was precisely this paradox that led to the rise of the Chinese nationalist movements.³⁰ The problem of modernization for

29. Saito K, “New map of Shanghai,” David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY--8~1~274097~90047828:New-map-of-Shanghai---Published-by?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2C-Pub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2C-Series_No&qvq=q:shanghai;sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2C-Series_No;lc:RUMSEY--8~1&mi=20&trs=270. Title and place names in English and Japanese. The map shows districts, roads, railways, tramways, major firms, banks, and businesses. Legend at upper left lists Japanese businesses. A scarce early twentieth-century Japanese map of Shanghai and China hints at the rising influence and presence of the Japanese in Shanghai and in China overall following the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed between the Japanese and Chinese at the end of the first Sino-Japanese war in 1895. The map is dated Meiiji 42 (1909), the year that the International Opium Commission convened in Shanghai.

30. Joshua A Fogel, “The Recent Boom in Shanghai Studies,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 2 (2010): 313-33.

Chinese and Japanese alike was that their version of modernity was never based on some version of the premodern period with Western roots. For the Japanese, the Eurocentric nature of modernity led to its total rejection and the acceptance of imperial identity.³¹ The literature overlooks is the role of Shanghai as a uniquely transnational, non-territorial place, which shaped the imperial consciousness of the Japanese residents different from other Japanese imperial territories such as Taiwan or Korea, where the Japanese were the “master,” “patriarch,” and “superior” to the other races in the political structure where they can freely control and dominate the less powerful. In Shanghai, the political identity of the Japanese was developed largely through fear. Before World War One, the fear originated from the lack of financial security and competitiveness. After World War One, investment in Shanghai boomed with the Japanese economy. The overall population also grew and surpassed the British population in numbers to become the largest international community in Shanghai. At this point, the unthinkable happened: the Chinese anti-Japanese boycott. The incident completely changed the political identity of the Japanese from a successful merchant, a Shanghailanders, to a member of a remote and anti-Chinese nation, Japan.

As Japanese territory expanded to include Korea, Taiwan, and parts of China, the glory and power of the empire and the Imperial Army had gradually become the pride and security of the Japanese residents of Shanghai. This created an “imperial consciousness.”³² Yōichi Kibata defined imperial consciousness as one who thinks they have the right to speak in world politics and may have strong domination and influence over other peoples on the earth; that is, a consciousness that they belong to the core nation in the empire.³³ Japanese people saw the domination of Shanghai as a victory not for the residents themselves, but for the nation of Japan that can be shown to the world. “China will be the stage where the Japanese can show off and play a role.”³⁴ The Manchurian Incident inspired residents in Shanghai, who believed that the Chinese in Shanghai would not have escalated the anti-Japanese movement had they witnessed the power of the imperial Japanese army like their counterparts in the Northeast³⁵. Hence, the residents’ fear of the danger of the nationalist movement, which they called a “conspiracy,”³⁶ manifested as the armed unification of all the residents, regardless of social class and background, against the rising antagonism with militaristic actions. They created their own volunteer community patrol (jikeidan, 自警団) and started destroying houses and killing Chinese whom they claimed to be militia

31. John W. M. Krummel, “The Symposium on Overcoming Modernity and Discourse in Wartime Japan” *HISTORICKÁ SOCIOL-OGIE* (Feb 2021): 83.

32. Takatsuna and Chen, *Social History of Japanese Overseas Chinese in Modern Shanghai*, 11.

33. Kibata Yōichi, *Shihai No daishō 支配の代償—英帝国の崩壊と「帝国意識」* (新しい世界史) (Tokyo: 東京大学出版会, 1987): 15.

34. Nagai Tokutaro, “Shanghai in the Prefecture of Nagasaki,” *Criminal Science*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1931.

35. 高西賢正, ed., “東本願寺上海開教六十年史” (Shanghai, 東本願寺上海別院, 1937), 396.

36. Gotō Asatarō, “在逆光中輝煌の上海魔巷,” *Criminal Science*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1931.

conscripted by the Nationalist government of China. If the act of organizing a militia could be justified as a response to physical threats to the Japanese residents of Shanghai, the subsequent action of murder and violence against Chinese civilians as a show of force and intimidation that shocked the international world can only be explained by the inflated “imperial consciousness” installed into the minds of the residents. Ernest O. Hauser, the American travel book writer, wrote, “They (Japanese residents) are people who have lived peacefully in Shanghai for decades. If I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn’t believe that they would do such a thing.”³⁷



Figure 2. Chinese patriot held by Japanese agents, Zabei, Shanghai, 1932.

C. Social Identity

Although there were significant political and economical interactions between Chinese and Japanese in Shanghai, in social life, both were strictly segregated, bounded by 界 (jie, space, world). In fact, the Japanese settlement was just as extrinsic to the city as any other foreign settlement.

The Japanese emigres who enter the international metropolis of Shanghai for the first time inevitably found that Shanghai was under the hegemony of Western power, where the Chinese were in a position equivalent to slavery.³⁸ These emigres developed a deeper sense of inferiority towards Western civilizations in shock at the “modern” experience in Shanghai³⁹. This sense of inferiority translated into a sense of difference: the contempt for Chinese enslaved by Westerners reflected the superiority of self. As pointed out by Eiji Oguma, “swaying in the consciousness of admiration and confrontation for the strong while ruling the weak at the same time... was how the ‘colored Empire’ consciousness was formulated.”⁴⁰ When the Japanese started participating in social life in the International

37. Ernst Otto Hauser, *Shanghai: City for Sale* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace And Company, 1940), 208.

38. Takatsuna and Chen, *Social History of Japanese Overseas Chinese in Modern Shanghai* (Shanghai, Shanghai People's Press 2014): 13.

39. Takatsuna and Chen, *Social History of Japanese Overseas Chinese in Modern Shanghai*, 13.

40. Eiji Oguma, “日本人”の境界 (Tokyo: Shin-yo-sha Publishing Ltd, 1998), 662.

Settlement, Shanghai was already an industrialized and modernized city. The Westerners took control of the government while the Chinese also accumulated a significant portion of the capital. Different from Manchuria, Japanese residents in Shanghai were mostly commoners instead of military and bureaucratic personnel. Additional evidence can be found in Japanese investments. The major Japanese investment in Shanghai was in the textile companies such as Japan China Spinning and Weaving Company, Limited. (日華紡織株式會社) which held a similar level of significance as Mantetsu (滿鐵, abbreviated from Minamimanshū Tetsudō, 南滿州鐵道) in Manchuria. However, Mantetsu was directly funded and supervised by the Japanese state whereas the Japanese-run textile industry was purely the product of market-driven private investments from domestic capital.⁴¹

The social class of Japanese residents were divided into about 5% of the upper class, about 40% of the middle class, and the rest were lower-class common people.⁴² Those from the upper class were business executives of trading companies and banks' Shanghai branches, senior officials, and business owners who lived in the British and French concessions. The middle class was employees of textile companies, banks, and trading companies, and most of them lived in apartments provided by their employers. The lower class were small businessmen, workers in catering and various service industries, and the unemployed at the bottom. The upper class, such as business executives, almost never settled in Shanghai. After two or three years, they would relocate to the corporation's New York or Paris branch as the general managers.

“The discrepancy between the theoretical Japanese modernity and its reality prompted the Japanese to resolve the tension: a movement to overcome modernity”

In the eyes of the new generation of Japanese, a superior identity of Japan was formed and inherently connected to modernity and civility. Japanese residents in the settlements lived in renovated Japanese-style houses, bought fish and vegetables imported from Nagasaki, and lived exactly the same life as they would in mainland Japan.⁴³ There were fish shops, vegetable shops, shops selling Japanese desserts, shops ordering and selling kimonos, shops selling Japanese-style shoes, etc. Japanese residents could live a completely

41. Naosuke Takamura, 近代日本棉業と中国 (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), 75-87.

42. Takatsuna and Chen, Social History of Japanese Overseas Chinese in Modern Shanghai (Shanghai, Shanghai People's Press 2014): 60.

43. Takatsuna and Chen, Social History of Japanese Overseas Chinese in Modern Shanghai (Shanghai, Shanghai People's Press 2014): 61-62.

Japanese life. Of all the foreign communities in Shanghai, the Japanese were beyond any doubt the most organized and regulated. Two major factors may explain this phenomenon: the strong involvement of the state in the control of its subjects, and the overreaction of Japanese residents to Chinese nationalism.⁴⁴ These unique conditions reinforced the notion that the Japanese were the most civilized in a racially diverse world, whereas their Chinese counterparts were always the object of comparison as the supposedly filthy, disgraceful, and implicitly inferior race. It was a psychological defense mechanism of the Japanese who were anxious to demonstrate their superiority when exposed to a multiracial environment.

D. Revolutionaries/Overcoming Imperialism

Nobody in the International Settlement could escape the cosmopolitan political dynamics at work here. Japanese residents inevitably found themselves involved in the power politics of interwoven relationships. While the majority of Japanese eventually subjected themselves to the imperial scheme to overcome modernity and western hegemony, an alternative humanistic approach emerged in the overcoming modernity debate.⁴⁵ While the residents were trying to mediate the conflicting relationship of British, American, and Japanese informal imperialism, some were introduced to revolutionary Russian Leninist communism. They witnessed the expansion of Marxist ideologies among Chinese laborers in Japanese cotton mills, and the subsequent founding of the Chinese Communist Party. A group of Japanese people reacted differently to the violence that the Japanese residents put out on Chinese civilians.

The soldiers in civilian clothes once dispatched by the 19th Army were constantly being arrested. Among them, many were women and children. Japanese soldiers shot them one by one. I also killed close to ten people. If I don't kill them, my boss will kill me. They questioned us, "We didn't do anything bad, why kill us? We just wanted to defend our country, isn't it wrong?" Actually, we didn't understand why they were killed either but were just killing them. The actions of the Japanese army on the battlefield were completely unnatural. Moreover, shooting them was okay, since people got killed instantly. But (we were) killing people with bayonets. We trucked the half-dead along with the corpses up on the Yangtze River and threw them into the river. The flow of the Yangtze River is divided into three layers. If the

44. Christian Henriot "Little Japan in Shanghai: An Insulated Community, 1875-1945" In *New Frontiers : Imperialism's New Communities in East Asia, 1842-1953*, ed. Robert Bickers and Christian Henriot, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000): 146-69.

45. John W. M. Krummel, "The Symposium on Overcoming Modernity and Discourse in Wartime Japan" *HISTORICKÁ SOCIOL-OGIE* (Feb 2021): 83.

corpses are thrown in the middle of the water, they will not come up again.
This was exactly what we want.⁴⁶

While the history of Japanese communism is not the subject of this paper, the active participation of Japanese residents in Shanghai in the global communism movement deserves special attention in future scholarship as it substantiates the Japanese experience of Shanghai and the heterogeneity of identities of imperial citizens in a transnational metropolis.

III. Conclusion

Opening the border and setting foot on a metropolis required the Japanese to reflect on their identity and positions in the world for the first time. They saw the need for modernization for the first time as it related to their survival as a nation and race. Through their eyes, modernity was anything that nobody but the Westerners enjoyed. However, when they did achieve some level of prosperity through modernization, the notion of modernity became rather ambiguous to them. They could never be accepted as a member of the Western world, nor did the Chinese follow their path to modernity. The discrepancy between the theoretical Japanese modernity and its reality prompted the Japanese to resolve the tension: a movement to overcome modernity.⁴⁷ The imperial consciousness rooted deep in the culture and history of Japan was formed as a defense mechanism in the minds of Japanese expatriates in Shanghai. This process sheds light on the evolving relationship between the ambiguous definition of modernity and empire.

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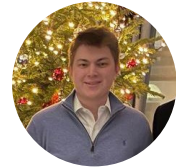
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