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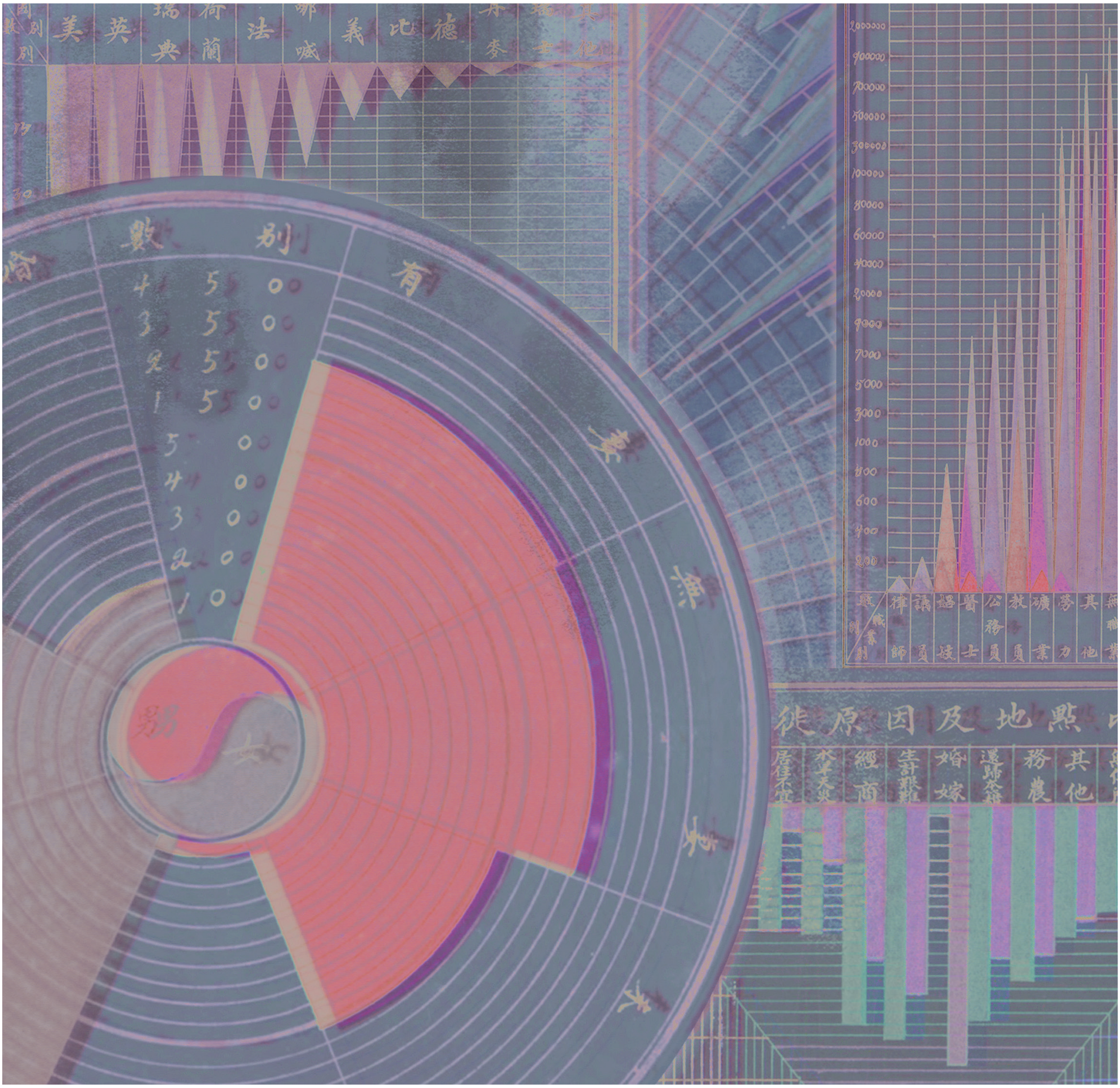
| CIPHERING & RULING CHINA'S POPULATION | 近代中國人口的編碼與治理



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EDITORIAL

Matters of Multiplication

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The editorial committee is pleased to present volume 6.1 of the Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies, which opens with a special section on "Ciphering and Ruling Modern China's Population".

編委會榮幸地推出《歐洲漢學學會學刊》第六卷第一期。本期特設"近代中國人口的編碼與治理"專題，作為開篇內容。

Keywords: Editorial, China, Sinology, Quantification, Statistics, Modern China, Population, Society

關鍵詞： 編委，中國，漢學，量化，統計，近代中國，人口，社會

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Welcome to the first *JEACS* issue of 2025! This year we are starting to produce two issues of the Journal instead of one. We hope this will enable our readers to enjoy a wider variety of articles and book reviews through the year.

Appropriately for the first year of our multiplication, this issue contains a special section on numbers and how they have been used to govern China. **Andrea Bréard** and **Stefan Christ** have brought together a group of scholars who originally met for a conference on this topic at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg in July 2022. Numbers and statistics may not be a familiar topic for those of us with an arts and humanities background, but readers will find that the authors of our special section papers have opened up an interesting and original topic, integrating the 'hard' science of statistics with the 'softer' fields of social and political studies, and showing how the new science of statistics in early 20th-century China played into ideas about the transition to a modern nation-state and the emerging concept of 'society'. The introduction to the special section by our guest editors explains the significance of the theme and clarifies some of the issues addressed in the papers, including their own.

In addition to the special section we have a fascinating 'Spotlight' article by one of our editorial team, **Marie Bizais-Lillig** of the University of Strasbourg, highlighting the work of a French sinologist couple, Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény, and the significance of the bequest of their sinological book collection to the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg (a distinct institution from the University of Strasbourg). Our Spotlight articles, of which we usually include one or two in each issue, aim either to discuss the life and work of a significant – but often lesser known – European sinologist, or to examine a current hot topic in Chinese studies. We welcome suggestions for Spotlight articles via journal@chinesestudies.eu.

We also present several book reviews. **Yiyang Gao** provides a review of Gao Xi's 高晞 research-based but accessible work *He Lu zhi si: 1831 nian zhenhan quanqiu de yiliao shijian* 何魯之死：1831 年震撼全球的醫療事件 (The Death of Hoo Loo: The 1831 Medical Incident that Shocked the Globe) (2024); this uses a now obscure event – the death on the operating table in London of a Cantonese patient with scrotal elephantiasis – to illuminate the cultural, social, and political circumstances of the time which were reflected in the trope of China as the 'sick man of Asia'. **Stefan Messingschlager**'s review of *The Conscience of the Party: Hu Yaobang, China's Communist Reformer* (2024) by Robert L. Suettinger, who comes from a policy rather than an academic background, shows how a biographical study can also contribute to a deeper understanding of China's politics and governance. A review by **Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik** of Andreas Fulda's *Germany and China: How Entanglement Undermines Freedom, Prosperity and Security* (2024) is illustrative of the gulf between those in European countries who adopt different stances towards the Chinese government.

We have no translation reviews in this issue. We do encourage our readers to submit proposals for reviews of recent translations from the Chinese language of any era, particularly translations into European languages other than English. And of course we still welcome reviews of recent academic (or popular) books on Chinese topics in any European language, or in Chinese. To propose a book or translation review, please contact jeacsbookreviews@chinesestudies.eu.

Our second issue of 2025, which will not have a specific theme, will be published at the end of this year. The deadline for submissions is **15 July 2025**.

As the editorial team, we hope to be in Paris around the time of the EACS 50th anniversary celebrations later this year, and look forward to meeting many of our readers and contributors there.

Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies

Bréard, Andrea and Stefan Christ. "Ciphering and Ruling Modern China's Population". *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, vol. 6.1 (2025): 5–10.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Ciphering and Ruling Modern China's Population

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The special issue "Ciphering and Ruling Modern China's Population" focuses on the increasing efforts to quantify the Chinese population beginning in the twentieth century. The introduction explains how it does not understand numbers as neutral entities reflecting objective facts but as cyphers that encode hidden realities and emerge from concrete historical contexts. Furthermore, it summarises the four contributions to the special issue: Drawing on approaches from intellectual and conceptual history as well as the sociology of science, they examine Liang Qichao's early demand for statistics, attempts to quantify China's Muslim population, Sun Yat-sen's evolving obsession with the "400 million Chinese", and the surprising wealth of statistical production in warlord-ruled Shanxi province. The authors ask why numbers, and statistical ones in particular, became so alluring and even fetishised, despite those involved in the production and use of the numbers being aware of their imprecision. Why did statistics become a *sine qua non* for governing China's population? And how did specific numbers become central political terms? The authors also explore how numbers were used to construct arguments about China's "population", "society", and "people" and how these arguments changed over time.

本專刊《近代中國人口的編碼與治理》聚焦二十世紀以來在量化中國人口方面的不懈努力。數字並非中立地反映客觀事實，而是產生於特定歷史背景、用以藏匿現實的密碼。本專刊收錄的四篇論文綜合運用思想史、概念史以及科學社會學的研究方法，分別探討了梁啟超對統計的早期需求、中國穆斯林人口量化的初步嘗試、孫中山對“四萬萬中國人”的執著探究、以及軍閥統治下山西統計工作的驚人成就。並進一步探究了為什麼數位（尤其是統計資料）明明不精確，但時人仍為之癡迷？統計資料何以成為治理中國人口的必要條件？特定數位怎樣成為核心政治術語？統計資料如何被用以建構關於中國"人口"、"社會"及"人民"的論述以及這些論述的歷時性演變。

Keywords: Quantification, Statistics, Modern China, Population, Society

關鍵詞： 量化，統計，近代中國，人口，社會

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Numbers pertaining to the size and evolution of the population were of concern to the rulers of China throughout the imperial era. Upon entering the twentieth century, however, the urge to quantify the population increased considerably. In these times, not merely politicians and bureaucrats, but also intellectuals, scientists, and social activists, began to seek out and gather information about the population in much more detailed and diverse manners. Furthermore, in concert with all kinds of attempts to build a modern state, new methods of collecting and analysing numbers were introduced, known generally as "statistics" (*tongji* 統計). The Qing established a Bureau of Statistics in the final years of its existence (Bréard 2008), which was followed by similar institutions under various warlord regimes and the KMT central government, paving the way for a "golden age of statistics" during the Nanjing decade (Paulès 2020). Statistical numbers were seen to describe social reality in an unambiguous way and were supposed to serve as a basis for governmental measures and the determination of policy goals. However, numbers that emerged from non-scientific contexts were also alleged to be objective references and rarely underwent scrutiny after their introduction.

While countless studies deal with the composition of China's population and demographic politics (e.g. Blayo 1997; Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005; Mullaney 2011), this special issue focuses on the intellectual, political, and social production aspects, as well as the afterlife of numbers, ratios, and quotas in relation to the Chinese population that sometimes possessed only the semblance of having been scientifically produced. Rather than simply viewing these numbers as the objective outcome of quantitative research that represented reality or shaped the nation (Patriarca 1996), numbers are and were understood by extension as cyphers that encode a hidden reality that stretches beyond their numerical actuality. Such cyphers are the central focus and the very object of historical inquiry: the contributions to this special issue tackle discourses, concepts, and practices related to the emergence, circulation, transformation, adaptation, persistence, and disposal of numerical values related to population from the late Qing period to the Republican era (i.e., 1900–1949).

Drawing on approaches from intellectual and conceptual history as well as the sociology of science, the individual articles examine how numbers are "alive" and enmeshed in specific historical contexts, repeatedly crossing functional boundaries, as they represent, influence, and transform the lives of individuals, social groups, and political concepts. The central concerns of the following articles are therefore "why" and "how": Why do numbers become so alluring and even fetishized, despite those involved in the production and use of the numbers being aware of their imprecision? Why was it that statistics became a *sine qua non* for governing China's population? And how did specific numbers become central political terms or even concepts? We are also interested in how numbers were used to construct arguments and establish narratives about China's "population", "society", and "people". How and why did their meanings and practical application change?

Stefan Christ's article "The Quantification of Chinese Society: Why Did Liang Qichao Ask for Statistics?" addresses the question of what exactly propelled the increasing urge to quantify the Chinese population in the twentieth century. He argues that this trend is inherently linked to the transition from a hierarchically stratified society to one that was more functionally differentiated, in correlation with the emergence of the new concept of *shehui* 社會 (Vogelsang 2012). He explores the relationship between social differentiation and quantification by comparing an eighteenth-century essay by Qian Weicheng (1720–1772), which presents a rather typical late imperial vision of social order, with an early twentieth-century article by Liang Qichao (1873–1929). The latter text was one of the first to express concern about the lack of numbers and statistics regarding the Chinese population. Christ illustrates how changing perceptions of social contingency, along with new forms of social self-observation, led to an increase in quantification efforts and a fundamental reconsideration of social relationships. The mere anticipation of the ability to produce more detailed and accurate statistics in the future already altered Liang Qichao's perspective on and evaluation of society; he heralded the "avalanche of numbers" (Hacking 1982) that would descend upon China in the twentieth century.

Presuming that numbers have a history of their own, much like living entities, two of the articles look at the "birth" and "life cycle" of numerical values, probing how they are created out of attempts at quantification or statistical surveys and subsequently undergo conceptual changes and developments which transcend their inception. While their precise origin was often blurred, specific numbers became standard terms (cf. Bréard 2019) that, for instance, served as a means of policy legitimisation. We also see them develop into powerful symbols or catchphrases that contributed to political and social mobilisation (cf. Merry et al. 2015). Eventually, for various reasons depending on the case at hand, they pass away into oblivion.[1]

Li Gang's article "Recognition through Numbers: Muslim Population Numbers and the Hui in Modern China" examines the efforts to quantify the Muslim population in China during the late Qing and Republican periods. He explores how various social actors—Western missionaries, Chinese scholars, and Muslim Chinese—, arrived at their population estimates and investigates their motivations for wanting to count the Muslim population in the first place. Li demonstrates immediate political reasons connected to parliamentary representation in the new Republic. However, there were also broader questions of identity at stake, particularly regarding the Hui as a distinct group within the framework of the modern Chinese nation-state, as well as issues surrounding religious revival and social reform. Li's case study

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[1] A biographic approach to numbers was taken in a conference on "Biographies of Numbers" organised by A. Bréard at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg in July 2022 and financially supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Two contributions in this special issue (Li; Roctus) result from this conference; four others, which lean more towards the history of science (Bréard 2025b; Gänger 2025; Ghosh 2025; Nocchi 2025), can be found in a Focus Section on "Global Life Histories of Numbers" in *ISIS* 116.1 (Bréard 2025a).

shows that not only did the state have an interest in quantifying the population, but civil society actors also undertook statistical surveys. They "questioned the unquestionable" (Desrosières 1992), that is they rejected those numbers which they deemed disconnected from reality but were employed by state actors as supposedly objective numbers. By looking at the controversies, Li traces how many different estimates converged around the figure of fifty million, which for a time was widely promoted as the definite number of Muslims in China.

Jasper Roctus's article "Sun Yat-sen, '400 million Chinese', and the Fear of Demographic Stagnation in Early Twentieth-century China" is the second article in this special issue that examines the origins and the political life of a cypher regarding the Chinese population. Roctus traces how and why Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the first provisional president of the Republic of China in 1912, used the widespread trope of the "400 million Chinese" despite the lack of evidence for this alleged population number. From celebrating the size of the Chinese population and its revolutionary potential in the face of a tiny minority of foreign oppressors before the 1911 Revolution to fears about stagnation in population growth compared to the other great nations in the 1920s, Sun continually referred to the "400 million Chinese" in his speeches and writings. Ultimately, when systematising his philosophy in 1924, Sun used "400 million Chinese" to generate a sense of urgency for the implementation of his *minzu* 民族 ("Nationalism") doctrine, the first of three doctrines constituting his chief political philosophy, the Three Principles of the People. As Roctus concludes, the vagueness surrounding this number was probably an asset in Sun's eyes, because it allowed him to pragmatically adjust its (ethnic) definition along with his shifting political aims.

The last article, "Turning Society into Graphs: Early Twentieth-Century Statistical Undertakings in Shanxi Province", co-written by **Andrea Bréard**, **Stefan Christ** and **Tang Lina**, investigates the statistical production under the warlord regime of Yan Xishan (1883–1960). The early Shanxi statistics are notable for their consistency, wealth of data, and pioneering experimentation in graphical representation. While no census was ever successfully completed for all of China under the Republic, the poor province of Shanxi published new population statistics every year since 1919. For the first time, this article examines the actors and institutions involved, supplies a close reading of Yan Xishan's preface to the earliest population statistics compilation, and analyses examples of statistics and statistical graphs towards a better understanding of the reasons, circumstances, and results surrounding Shanxi's production of statistics between 1919 and 1931. The authors focus on how these efforts figured into Yan Xishan's modernisation and state-building endeavours and the meaning created through visualising the statistical numbers through diagrams. Their findings show that the high degree of experimentation reveals an uncertainty about graphical representation, partly explained by the fact that statistical production in Shanxi was not the outcome of long-term deliberation within an established "scientific community". Instead, it was the product of a state bureaucracy operating under challenging circumstances and with personnel that had received a limited degree of formal training, in spite of the fact that, as the authors also reveal, statistics occupied a prominent position in one of the provincial capital's vocational schools. The visualised statistics, in particular, manifest a political primacy in communicating about Shanxi's society and its governance. They clearly depict which aspects were of central concern to Shanxi's governor and, simultaneously, the *raisons d'être* of his statistical endeavours. What statistical tables could not accomplish, statistical graphs could at first glance: namely, ordering social and demographic categories. Ordering them symmetrically was also an expression of control and rule over the population, with the ultimate goal of enhancing state capacity and producing social progress in Shanxi.

Altogether, the four articles in this special issue demonstrate how and why the language of numbers for all or parts of China's population came to play an essential role in political and social life. They show how the construction of statistical objects—tables, diagrams, categorizations, and imagined quantities—rendered societal and demographic observations visible and debatable in numerical terms. As it turns out, ciphering the population was a crucial step in constructing—and ruling—modern Chinese society.

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Christ, Stefan. "The Quantification of Chinese Society: Why Did Liang Qichao Ask for Statistics?". *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, vol. 6.1 (2025): 11–34.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

The Quantification of Chinese Society: Why Did Liang Qichao Ask for Statistics?

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This article seeks to explain the sharply increasing tendency to quantify Chinese society in the twentieth century. It argues that this trend is inherently connected to the passage from a hierarchically stratified society to a one that was more functionally differentiated, which also resulted in the emergence of a new concept of society. The relation between social differentiation and quantification is explored by way of comparing an eighteenth-century essay by Qian Weicheng, which presents a rather typical late imperial vision of social order, with an early twentieth-century article by Liang Qichao, which is one of the earliest texts to lament the lack of numbers and statistics regarding the Chinese population.

本文探討了 20 世紀中國社會在量化管理方面迅速增長的趨勢及其成因。研究發現，這一趨勢與社會結構從傳統的等級分化轉向現代的功能分化密切相關，並促使新型社會概念的出現。通過對比 18 世紀錢維城關於封建社會秩序的論述與 20 世紀初梁啟超對中國缺乏人口統計數據的反思，本文深入分析了社會功能分化與量化管理之間的關係。

Keywords: quantification, society, Liang Qichao, Qian Weicheng, statistics, statecraft, functional differentiation

關鍵詞： 梁啟超，錢維城，社會，統計，經世，量化，功能性分化

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The practice of collecting and registering numbers for administrative purposes has a long history in China. However, it was mostly employed in very limited and selective ways and rarely affected the broader understanding of state and society. Only in the twentieth century, when both Chinese society and the way it was conceptualised changed profoundly, can we observe more widespread tendencies of quantification. It even seemed to become impossible to speak of "society" without relating to numbers. Already in one of the key texts in the formation of the modern concept of society, Liang Qichao's 梁啓超 "New Citizen" (*Xinmin shuo* 新民說), the author laments the lack of numbers and statistics on the Chinese people. Liang clearly anticipated the "avalanche of numbers" that would roll over China in the following decades, when new ways of collecting, classifying, and presenting numerical data were introduced.[1] But what triggered this avalanche? How is the dramatically expanded use of numbers in China during the last century to be explained? And how exactly are the concepts of society and statistics related?

To answer these questions, it makes sense to start not with Liang's arguments but to focus on a very different understanding of society first. I will do so through a close reading of the eighteenth-century essay "On Eradicating Conflict" (*Qu zheng lun* 去爭論), which has been chosen not because it could be seen as a key text in conceptual change in the same manner as Liang's "New Citizen", but to the contrary for the opposite reason. Its arguments are relatively conventional for the late imperial era and can be found in one form or another in many texts. The editors of the influential 1827 statecraft collection *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝經世文編 (Collected Writings on Statecraft from the Qing Dynasty) deemed it to be so representative that they included it in a prominent position, namely as the second essay in the section on the "Essentials of Governing".[2] The close reading of this essay serves both as an example of the basic tenets informing views on social differentiation before Liang Qichao and as an introduction to this article's analytical framework, which is then applied to the relevant part of Liang's "New Citizen" series.

The overarching argument presented here is that the increasing demand for numbers in twentieth-century China is directly related to a change in the basic social structure and the perception of Chinese society, namely the transition from a stratified society to one marked by the differentiation of functional spheres. Many researchers have shown that the development of Chinese society was from the late nineteenth century marked by aspects of

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[1] The term "avalanche of numbers" was coined by Ian Hacking (1982). On the introduction of modern statistics to China see Bréard (2008; 2019c) and Lam (2011).

[2] The collection consists of eight parts in total. Part One, which comprises *juan* 1–6, provides texts on "(Confucian) scholarship" (*xueshu* 學術). Part Two, *juan* 7–14 is titled "Essentials of Governing" (*zhiti* 治體) and deals with the basic institutions of the empire. These two parts provide the basis for the more technical discussions of particular problems in the latter six parts, which are arranged according to the Six Ministries of the Qing administration. Qian's essay is the second of the seventh *juan* (the first *juan* of the "Essentials"), which bears the title "The Origins of Order, Part One" (*Yuan zhi shang* 原治上) (*Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 2004, vol. XIII). On the collection's influence see Janku (2004).

differentiation, and have explored the consequences in different fields and forms.[3] This article builds on their work to show that society could only manage the heightened level of complexity inherent to this change by reducing information into quantifiable forms. By way of numbers, especially in the form of statistics, it became possible to make hidden interrelations visible, identify the effects of social structures, and translate information to different parts of society.

The analysis of the two articles in question focuses on three aspects in particular: contingency, visibility, and functionality. They serve well to highlight both the diachronic changes in conceptualising social differences and the relationship between functional differentiation and quantification. The more society is understood as a historically developed and changeable entity, the greater the demand for concrete data about it (contingency); the more one reduces complex phenomena into quantifiable forms, the more possibilities there are for bringing social forces into view that remain hidden to direct observation (visibility); the more information is processed according to functional logics, the less convincing hierarchical differences between humans become (functionality).

Before "Society": the View of an Eighteenth-Century Writer

The short essay "On Eradicating Conflict" by the eighteenth-century literatus and high official Qian Weicheng 錢維城 (1720–1772)[4] provides an illustrative example of traditional views on social order and their justification. It was first published as part of the author's prose collection *Chashan wenchao* 茶山文鈔 in the early 1770s[5] and later included in various collectanea, the *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* probably the most important among them.

In the first sentence of his essay, Qian identifies "inequality" (bu ping 不平) as a basic problem: "All miseries in the world originate from conflict, and conflict originates from inequality" 天下之患皆起於爭，而爭起於不平.[6] He continues, "I cannot eradicate all the conflict under heaven; I can only equal out what is unequal" 吾不能去天下之爭，平其不平者而已矣. The responsibility to make things equal is given to the "superior man" (junzi 君子): "The superior man, by diminishing where there is plenty and increasing where there is little, weighs

[3] For an overview of social change in late nineteenth-century China see Bastid-Bruguière (1980); on the emergence of the modern Chinese concept of society see Vogelsang (2012); on the differentiation of disciplinary knowledge in the humanities, see Chiang (2019).

[4] On Qian's biography see Tu (1943).

[5] The prose collection *Chashan wenchao* has a foreword dated to 1770; it was also included in the author's collected works, first printed in 1776 under the title *Qian Wenmin gong quanji* 錢文敏公全集.

[6] Qian's text is cited here and in the following instances from *Qian Wenmin gong quanji* (1995–2002).

things and levels them out" 君子以裒多益寡，稱物平施. At this point, a modern reader might assume that Qian means to say that socioeconomic inequality is the root cause of social instability and expect an explanation of how to overcome it to follow. His argument, however, moves in a very different direction.

Before getting to the twist in the argument, it is worth noting that Qian's reasoning is entirely based on the intricate interpretation of an image from the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經). To illustrate the extraordinary character of the "superior man", Qian harks back to the hexagram qian 謙 ("humility") and explains that it is formed by the trigram "earth", which consists of three broken lines, standing above the trigram "mountain", which consists of one continuous line above two broken lines. Then he quotes from the *xiang* 象 commentary on this hexagram to highlight how unusual this image is: "There is a mountain within the earth" 地中有山. Usually, mountains stand on top of the earth, so there is something special about the mountain that is capable of being in the middle of the earth. It is a metaphor for the "superior man", of course, who is so special because, on the one hand, he stands above the "commoners", but, on the other hand, he also knows how to handle this difference in social status.

The same metaphor of the mountain and the earth also allows Qian to push the argument in a direction which may surprise the modern reader. Leaving aside the special case of the superior man, mountains usually stand on top of the earth, which makes the terrain "uneven" (bu ping, using the same characters as "unequal" above), as Qian writes. If the earth stands for the commoners and the mountains for the rulers, it is entirely natural, we are to assume, that some are standing on top of others in the social order. The way to avoid conflict can then surely not be to flatten everything (or everyone) to the same level: "Mountains are higher than the earth, but the earth is broader than the mountains. The height and breadth correspond to one another" 山高於地，而地大於山，大與高相稱. According to Qian's reasoning, commoners need someone they can look up to, who keeps order among them and guides them in their lives. Meanwhile, those on top depend on the common people to materially support them and their ventures. Thus, the image of the mountain and the earth implies that the social difference between rulers and ruled is not contingent but necessary. It is not created by human will but ingrained in the very makeup of the world.

It is important to note that Qian does not speak of "society" as a distinct entity. Until the introduction of the term shehui 社會 in the early twentieth century, no precise counterpart existed in Chinese discourses (see Vogelsang 2012). Instead, Qian thinks about social order in terms of tianxia, which is not only very different from "society", but also somewhat difficult to translate. Tianxia, literally "(all) under heaven", is not the "world" in a cosmological sense (which would rather be a word like tiandi 天地), and also not a geographically limited "dominion" or "state" (which would usually be guo 國). Following Eric Voegelin, it might be rendered as "cultural ecumene", that is, the community of potentially all humans or, simply, humankind (Voegelin 2000, esp. 361ff). In contrast to more modern concepts, tianxia does not distinguish between "state" and "society" or between different functional parts of society. In practice, however, it does often connotate the idea of an ideal social order brought about by those who understand the essence of human beings and their place in the larger order of things. Usually, it is assumed that the "sages" of antiquity were the first such people. Their knowledge was stored in the Confucian classics, which therefore came to form the essential content of any meaningful education. The concept of tianxia implies a distinction between the common people, who do not have such insight, and the "superior men" who do and, therefore, are destined to rule. Social inequality, in this sense, is not a defect but a feature of the best possible order, as can also be seen in Qian's subsequent line of argument.

Qian diagnoses two weaknesses of human nature that explain why conflict arises, even though order is possible and has existed in the past. First, based on another quote from the *Book of Changes*, he reasons that those on top should care well for those below and must not take too much from them because to do so would guarantee conflict. However, humans are inclined to take advantage of others whenever they can 好利者人之情也. Second, Qian observes that the deferential gestures which make up the "etiquette" (jie 節)—a basic element of social order—are, in most cases, just a superficial cover for all kinds of self-serving behaviour. Giving self-interest the appearance of humility, however, only exacerbates the conflicts arising between individual interests. Unfortunately, the large majority of humans are not only unable to refrain from seeking profit at every opportunity, but even fewer humans are able to practise true humility: "[True] humility is made impossible by humans' natural inclinations" 惟謙者人情之所不能. The sages of antiquity understood this and placed the duty to prevent the chaos resulting from "conflicts" on the only ones capable of resisting such inclinations: the "superior men". So, overcoming conflict "under heaven" is possible, but dependant on having the right people on top: "[...] Therefore, the superior men govern in the following way: in small matters, they give their wealth; in large matters, they give their heart-mind" 故君子之於治也，小則損其財，大則損其心. Giving one's wealth can "equalise the wealth in the world" 平天下之財 and thereby avoid conflicts that spring from material interests. Giving one's heart-mind can "equalise the heart-minds of the world" 平天下之心, and thereby avoid conflicts resulting from false morality. This kind of equalisation will result in "peace throughout the world" (tianxia ping 天下平)—the best order possible—promised in the classic passage from the *Daxue* 大學 (Great Learning).

Three points should be emphasized with regard to Qian's essay, because they are relevant for the comparison with the Liang Qichao text discussed next. First, regarding the absence of contingency and the inability to conceptualise social forces, Qian's arguments clearly rest on basic premises about human nature that are not subject to change in different circumstances or over time. The only alternative to the rule of the "superior men" over the commoners, as instituted by the unquestionable sages of antiquity, was having no order at all, that is, "chaos" (luan 亂). The social hierarchy was not a contingent fact but a requisite if there was to be order at all. Hence, there was also no way in which a structural critique of this unequal social order was possible; the only possible critique concerned individual moral behaviour, as seen in Qian's remarks on superficial humility merely hiding immoral motives.[7] One could also formulate this point in somewhat different terms: Qian's conceptual framework is almost incapable of capturing any kind of social force or structural logic that works above the level of the individual but below the universal moral-cosmological premises of tianxia. Apart from the hierarchical distinction between the high ("superior men") and the low (commoners), virtually no space remains to think about such groupings as economic classes, professions, political parties or other varied social groups with their own specific interests, impact and outlooks.[8]

The second point concerns visibility. Qian's argument about etiquette—demanding that outer reality *should* correspond to inner moral quality, despite his observation that it most often does not—points toward the importance of visibility in the stratified order of premodern society. The fact that not all people are equal was not unknown to the premodern Chinese. To the contrary, social hierarchies had to be clearly marked and made visibly manifest in any social encounter. This can be observed, for example, in the great care taken to distinguish members of the title-holding gentry from the general populace (and between different ranks within the gentry) in terms of clothing, seating arrangement, ritual function, and so on. Qian mentions the order of sitting and standing and deferential bowing as part of ritual etiquette and markers of distinction. The most important thing to know about ritual propriety, one of the core topics associated with Confucian thought, were the specifics of how to behave in certain social situations and to treat everybody according to his or her status, which is why everybody benefitted from a high degree of transparency regarding each other's social position. The visibility of status distinctions allowed every participant involved in a social encounter to behave according to these distinctions and, thereby, to stabilize and perpetuate the social order. Qian is aware that such visible distinctions might not really accord with an individual's inner moral quality, which is given as a justification for the hierarchical differences. However, this leads him to a moral critique of those individuals who fail to understand the true tenets of social order, and not to question the underpinning hierarchical distinctions themselves.

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[7] For a similar argument see Vogelsang (2012, 161): "Of course, the old order was also characterized by inequality, and in fact was unequal by its very nature. The crucial difference was that these inequalities were legitimized by the social structure itself: the *simin* were a pre-ordained order, instituted by the sage kings of antiquity and authorized by an unquestionable tradition. To criticize inequality would have amounted to criticizing an order to which there was no alternative. This is why disapproval was only possible 'as moral criticism concerning factual behaviour, not as structural criticism and not as the hope for a non-stratified society'".

[8] One might object that there were distinctions made between political groups, for example in the factional battles in the Song dynasty, see Levine (2008). However, the presence of groups with differing ideologies tended not to be conceived in any positive way but rather as a harmful deviation of the good social order.

carrying it suggests, they are bound together by a mutual functional dependency. Rulers guide and protect the ruled, while the ruled support and provide for the rulers and, in this sense, they fulfil certain functions for each other. However, it is important to distinguish this from what is described as functional differentiation.[9] What binds rulers and ruled together here is an integrated functional hierarchy that only works if taken as a whole. Functional differentiation, in contrast, posits all functional systems on the same level, being heterarchical, not hierarchical, and is based on a fundamental difference in their logic of operation. Each differentiated functional system—be that politics, economy, the legal system or any other—applies its basic distinctions to the whole of society and ignores all the rest. That is, the economic system views everything as economic transaction, the political system views everything in terms of power relations, etc. Thus, in a society which is primarily structured according to functional differentiation, there are many different kinds of logic operating at the same time. In a stratified society, in contrast, all is reduced to a single logic which governs everything, from the inner nature of humans to the cosmic order (Luhmann 2013, 87ff). This is perfectly evident in the famous stages of the *Great Learning*, where the same process leads from the inner cultivation of the individual (xiu qi shen 修其身) to the ordering of the family (qi qi jia 齊其家), the state (zhi qi guo 治其國) and potentially the whole world (ping tianxia 平天下). The basic logic of the stratified order reproduces the same hierarchical up/down distinction on every level, from the natural world to all kinds of social relationship; any functional concerns are overridden by this. In practice, this meant that premodern social institutions like the Chinese dynastic states took on very diverse responsibilities (e.g. cosmological, ritual and moral functions), while many social problems of economic or political nature (e.g. peacekeeping) often were left to family institutions (Cf. Luhmann 2002, 78).

A New Understanding of Society: Liang Qichao on Economic Productivity

In 1902, about 125 years after Qian's essay, Liang Qichao began to publish his seminal series on the "New Citizen" in the biweekly *New Citizen Journal* (*Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報).[10] The fourteenth chapter in this series was titled "On Production and Distribution" (Lun shengli fenli 論生利分利).[11] Apparently inspired by Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*

[9] The understanding of functional differentiation as used here essentially follows Luhmann (2013, II: 65ff).

[10] For an introduction to the *New Citizen*, see Chang (1971, 149ff; discussion of this essay 209–214). For a more recent overview of "Liang studies", especially regarding his conceptualisation of citizenship, see Lee (2007).

[11] The text was published in two parts in *Xinmin congbao* 19 and 20 (1902). No. 19 also carried an article on Adam Smith in Liang's series "Shengjixue xueshuo yange xiaoshi" 生計學學説沿革小史 (Concise History of Economic Thought). For a

Yan Fu's 嚴復 translation) and an article by the missionary Timothy Richard,[12] Liang reflects in this essay on how nations grow economically and how different parts of society contribute positively or negatively to this process. More specifically, he explores who "generates profit" (sheng li 生利) and who "takes a share of the profit" (fen li 分利; hereafter translated less literally as "consume"). Although he also starts out with a quote from the abovementioned *Great Learning*, his text could hardly be more different in style and content from that of Qian before him. Obviously, Liang is not interested in the old hierarchy of "superior men" and "commoners" but in a very different kind of social difference. He no longer operates through the conceptual frame of tianxia but takes the "nation(-state)" (guo; guomin) as his main reference.[13] And, what is moreover relevant for our purpose, he proves to be very interested in numbers.

Liang begins his text by asking if China really is a poor country. He answers by quoting one of the last sections of the *Great Learning*, which explains that wealth is based on people and land, and that it is important to have "many who produce and few who consume" 生之者眾，食之者寡. From there, Liang proceeds directly to modern economic parlance:

> 此言至矣。後世生計學家言殖產之術。未有能外者也。夫一國之歲殖者國中人民歲殖之總計也。綜一國之民。無論或勞力或不勞力。勞力矣或生利或不生利。而其待養於地之所產民之所出則均。一國歲殖。只有此數。
>
> This [i.e. the *Great Learning* quote] is precisely to the point! The economists of more recent times, when they speak about production, can also not ignore it. The "value of annual production" of a country is the grand total of everything produced by the people of this country within one year. It takes together all the people of a country and treats them equally, no matter whether they work or not and whether their work is productive or not, and whether their livelihood is produce of the earth or produced by the people themselves. For the entire annual production of one country, there is only this number (Liang 1902, 1).

Liang's series "Shengjixue xueshuo yange xiaoshi" 生計學學說沿革小史 (Concise History of Economic Thought). For a discussion of this essay in the broader context of the *New Citizen* see Chang (1971, 209ff).

[12] On Yan Fu's 1901 translation of Smith's work see Lai (2009). The terms *shengli* and *fenli* were apparently taken from the article "Lun shengli fenli zhi bie" by Timothy Richard, translated by Cai Erkang (Lüxin xianshi 1893). On Timothy Richard in China see Kuo (2020). Liang Qichao must have known this article, as it was republished in his book series *Xizheng congshu* 西政叢書 (Shanghai: Shenji shuzhuang, 1897). A year later, this article, among many others by Liang Qichao, was incorporated into Mai Zhonghua's 麥仲華 (1876–1956) *Huangchao jingshiwen xinbian* 皇朝經世文新編 (New Version of the Collected Writings on Statecraft from the Qing Dynasty). Liang also referred to the distinction between "producers" and "consumers" in an article on the education of women, see Liang (1897) and Bréard (2019a). For Liang Qichao's other sources and his role in the introduction of economic ideas to China see Trescott and Wang (1994).

[13] On the history of *guomin* 國民 see Jin and Liu (2008, 82–83, 494). Liang does not yet use *shehui* (he only once makes the distinction between *shangdeng* 上等 *shehui*, *zhongdeng* 中等 *shehui* and *xiadeng* 下等 *shehui*), which became the standard term for society shortly thereafter (see Vogelsang 2012, 156). Apart from *guomin* or simply *min*, he also uses the term *renmin* 人民 once. When referring to different groups within society, he sometimes employs the term *qun* 群.

This number, the "value of annual production" (modern economists would probably speak of the "gross domestic product"),[14] is very important to Liang, because he sees "the world of the twentieth century" as marked by "economic competition" 二十世紀生計競爭之世界 (Liang 1902b, 17 and 18).[15] At the same time, this number also is a cypher that, in its "averaging" of all production among the entirety of the people, hides a complex interrelation that Liang seeks to unpack. If economic strength, as the *Great Learning* claimed, was simply about land and labour, China, with its size and large population, should be the world's number one, he writes. Yet that was not the case, so its weakness must come from elsewhere. Indeed, there is a third factor the *Great Learning* does not mention. Aside from land and labour,[16] Liang explains, the economists of his day also saw "capital" (ziben 資本) as a decisive factor in economic wealth. The "civilised nations" (wenming minzu 文明民族) were advanced because they understood that production, that is, the use of capital and labour on land, was not supposed to be a zero-sum game, but rather one that ideally produced a "return" (you suo fu 有所復). This did not only mean that one ought to produce more than one consumes, but also that the surplus was ideally invested into the production of higher-value goods, which one could then trade and sell. This would bring in new capital, which constituted the "return" on the initial investment. The return could then be reinvested to increase production and generate further returns; at every round, the total amount of capital increased. Over time, this process could lead to considerable economic growth and a major advantage over those national economies that were not able to increase their capital stock and thus stagnated or even shrunk (not to move forwards was to move backwards, as Liang says):

> 國中之人。雖有善費者，有善殖者。而殖者之人數。不及費者之人數。[...] 今之孱國。比比然也。國之總費既過總殖。則勢不得不蝕及全國之總母財。
>
> Among the people of a country, there might be good spenders and good producers, but the number of producers might not reach the number of spenders. [...] This is the case in all the weak countries at present. Their total expenditure surpasses their total production, so they cannot but erode their countries' entire capital (Liang 1902a, 4).

With this in mind, it is of utmost importance to identify those who contribute to production and those who do not. Liang does so with a long list of different categories of "producers"

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[14] On the history of this concept and its usage by Adam Smith, see Lepenies (2016).

[15] On Liang's thought on "modern civilisation", social Darwinism and the respective influences in the early 1900s see Huang (1972, esp. 55ff). Already Liang's teacher, Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858–1927), stressed the importance of "comparison" (*bijiao* 比較) among nation-states for their development and their ability to compete, for which puropose he assembled some basic data on different countries' population, population density, number of students, imports and exports, railway network length, etc., in simple tables; see Kang (2007).

[16] This essay is also notable for being one of the first Chinese texts to use "labour" as an abstract economic concept, see Liu (2017).

and "consumers." In the case of the producers, he explains, one can distinguish between "direct producers" and "indirect producers" (like merchants, soldiers, and educators) or between those working with their bodies and those working with their minds (Liang 1902a, 5f).[17] With regard to different tasks, he enlists the different categories of "discovery and invention" 發見及發明, "seizing" (xianzhan 先占) of unclaimed natural resources, "labour used [to obtain] raw materials" 用於生貨之勞力, "labour used to process goods" 用於熟貨之勞力, "labour used for transportation" 用於交通之勞力, "labour used to protect and assist" 用於保助之勞力; like administrators, soldiers, doctors, etc. (Liang 1902a, 6).

Regarding the "consumers", the list is considerably longer, but it is here, of course, that Liang situates the main problem. He distinguishes between two basic groups: those who consume without working and those who consume even though they work. The non-working consumers comprise thirteen groups: beggars, thieves, fraudsters, monks, the "profligate sons of the rich" (wanku zidi 紈絝子弟), wastrels, soldiers, a large portion of the officials and those dependent on them,[18] local strongmen and the gentry, a large portion of women (unless they take care of children or manage the household), the disabled, and convicts (Liang 1902b, 1ff). The "working consumers" are divided into seven groups: (slave) servants, entertainers and prostitutes, scholars, teachers, a small part of the officials, a part of the commercial sector, and a part of the agricultural sector (Liang 1902b, 8ff).

Such lists are not a new phenomenon of Liang's time; they appear in many premodern Chinese texts.[19] There even exists an early nineteenth-century list of "consumers" by Yun Jing 惲敬 (1757–1817) that is based on the same *Great Learning* quote we find at the beginning of Liang's essay.[20] However, what is notable about Liang is his attempt to *quantify* these groups. He seeks to come up with precise numbers regarding their share of the Chinese population, despite immediately running into trouble:

> 吾今日欲取中國民數而約計之。以觀其生利分利之比較。中國無統計。雖有巧算。萬不能得其真率。不過就鄙見臆度而已。然諒所舉者有少無多也。

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[17] The latter is an old distinction that goes back to *Mengzi* 3A.4 but took on new meaning and significance in the early twentieth century. For a relevant discussion in connection with the emerging class discourse see Jiang (2023).

[18] Note that, as Liang stated earlier, politicians, officials, soldiers, teachers, etc., should be counted as "indirect" producers. In the case of China, however, Liang thinks that the majority within these groups did not contribute to society as they were supposed to, which led him to classify them as "consumers".

[19] The listing of politically troublesome groups seems to be a characteristic of political realism ("legalism"); the *Shangjun shu*, for example, lists "six parasites" (*liu shi* 六蝨) (Pines 2017); for a nineteenth-century example see the "seven perils" (*qi huan* 七患) listed by Wei Yuan in his *Mogu xia* ("Zhi pian"), *juan* 11 (*Wei Yuan quanji* 2004, XII: 65). Confucian texts like the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi* seem to focus on lists of moral virtues and vices (e.g. the "five excellent" (*wu mei* 五美) and "four bad things" (*si e* 四惡) in *Lunyu* 20).

[20] The essay was the fifth part of Yun's work "Sandai yinge lun" 三代因革論 (Continuities and Changes since the Three Dynasties). It was included as the fifth text in *juan* 11 of the above-mentioned *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (2004, XIII: 472–478). For more on Yun Jing and his "economic" arguments, see Zanasi (2020, 120ff).

> I would now like to take China's population number and make an approximate reckoning of it, to observe the respective share of producers and consumers for comparison. There are no statistics for China; even though there are clever calculations, they do not come anywhere near the true ratio, so all I can do is offer my own rough projections. However, they may rather be too conservative than exaggerated (Liang 1902b, 13).

Acknowledging the lack in data, Liang proceeds to take the widespread number of 400 million Chinese[21] as a basis and then estimates the relative share of each of the "consumer" groups. He does, however, not give any numbers for the groups of "producers". The results of his estimates regarding the "consumers" are presented in a large chart (see fig. 1), a form of graphical representation that, albeit still rudimentary, is associated with the rise of modern statistics[22] and thus constitutes another difference to traditional enumerations.

The chart differs somewhat from the distinctions Liang makes in the text. First of all, it only lists the "consumers", not the "producers". Furthermore, the first step evenly separates men and women, echoing a similar distinction between "productive" men and "consuming" women Liang had made in an essay a few years earlier, although here he only considers sixty to seventy per cent of the women as unproductive. In the next step, adult men (dingnan 丁男) are separated from the elderly and children. In the last step, he lists thirteen groups of consumers that are mostly identical to the categories mentioned above (conflating some of the sub-categories into one), although without the distinction of "working" and "non-working". The chart's key feature, however, is the quantities for the various groups he estimates, from the smallest group, the 200,000 disabled, to the largest, the 130 million non-producing women.

After adding up his estimates, Liang concludes that China has too many consumers: "Of the about 400 million people, more than 210 million are consumers, the rest are producers" 大約四萬萬人中分利者二萬萬一千萬有奇，自餘則為生利者 (Liang 1902b, 14). As expected, the numbers confirm Liang's explanation for China's weakness and imply a bleak assessment of the prospects for Chinese society.

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[21] On the history of the number of 400 million with regard to the Chinese population see Bréard (2019a). For Sun Yat-sen's political usage thereof, see Jasper Roctus's "Sun Yat-sen, '400 million Chinese', and the Fear of Demographic Stagnation in Early Twentieth-century China" in this issue.

[22] The visualisation of statistical data in China is a largely understudied phenomenon; on this topic also see Bréard et al., "Turning Society into Graphs: Early Twentieth Century Undertakings in Shanxi Province" in this issue. For an exemplary study in the European context, see von Oertzen (2018).

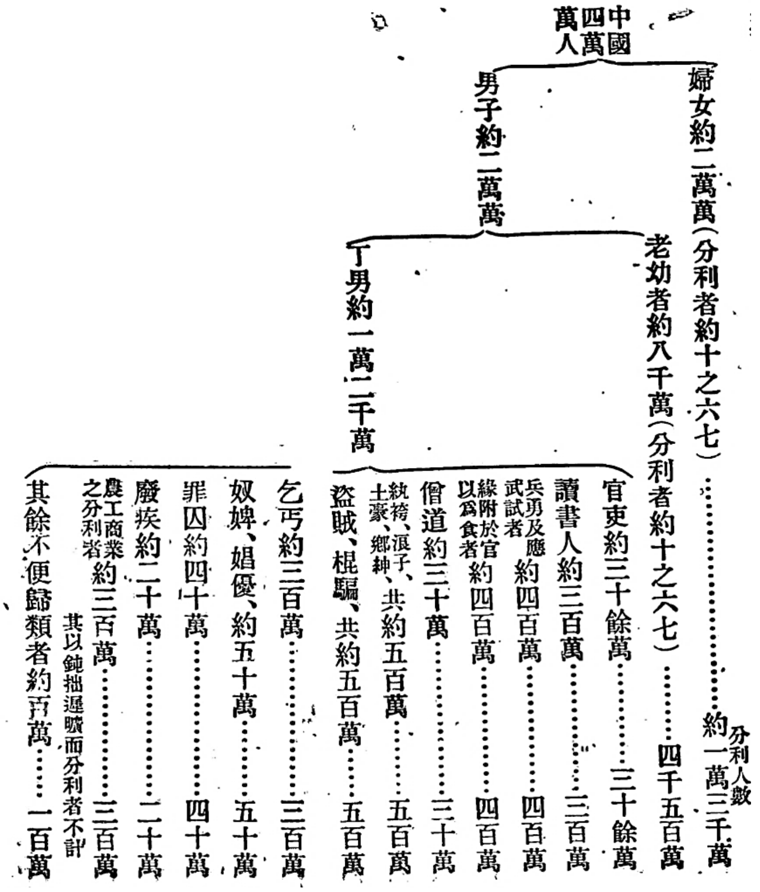

Fig. 1: Chart given in Liang (1902b, 13f).

While it is somewhat pointless to ask if Liang's estimates and calculations are correct (they are certainly not),[23] the more intriguing question, especially considering the context of Qian Weicheng's essay, is: why does Liang seek to come up with numbers at all? Why is he not content, as Qian had been, to distinguish between the good and the troublesome elements of society and to draw his conclusions from there? Why does Liang lament the lack of statistics for China, while Qian (or Yun Jing, for that matter) appears not to not to have even noticed it?

[23] Apart from the dubious number of 400 million, another problem is that the numbers given for the individual groups do not add up to the "more than 210 million" given by Liang, but only to 204.7 million. The problem seems to lie in the ratio of "six or seven out of ten" Liang provides for the share of consumers among both women and the elderly and children. While for the women he actually calculates 6.5/10 (which gives 130 million out of the total 200 million), for children and elderly he seems to have calculated 5.625/10 (which gives 45 million out of the total of 80 million). If in the second case he had calculated equally with a share of 6.5/10, he would indeed have arrived at 52 million "consuming" elderly and children, which would have given him a total for all groups of 211.7 million. Perhaps Liang changed the ratio of elderly and children in his chart when the initial calculation yielded a number that seemed too low, and subsequently did not update the sum below.

Why does Liang Qichao ask for numbers?

The first and most obvious answer is that the decisive factor in Liang's analysis is not the hard-to-measure moral quality of individuals (as with the "superior men" in Qian's argument) but an interplay of various factors—land, labour, capital, levels of production and consumption—which are all quantifiable and whose exact quantities, also in relation to each other, matter very much. While Qian would have been content to have some "superior men" (or even just one) under heaven, for Liang it did not suffice merely to have "some" producers in society. In his case, it matters exactly how many there are, how much they produce, and how many there are in relation to the number of consumers.[24]

This points to an underlying concept of "society" radically different from the notion of "all under heaven", which informed Qian's thinking. To come back to the point of contingency, stressed in the interpretation of the earlier essay, the different social groups and their relationships, as described by Liang, are not the way they are because of the eternal nature of humans or heaven, but because of a particular historical development and the interplay of contingent factors. Liang's arguments are not aimed at reestablishing an ideal moral community under the guidance of the sages but at changing the current state of society, with the ultimate aim of creating a strong Chinese nation. He is not interested in a timeless heavenly order but in how to produce progress for China to become one of the "civilised nations". There is a strong orientation towards measures towards improvement and future development in his thought, which becomes apparent in his appreciation of those "discovering", "inventing", and "seizing" resources specified in his outline of productive labour. The more one reckons with contingency, the greater the demand for concrete data on the actual state of affairs so that one knows where it can and needs to be improved and at what level, a phenomenon that is clearly played out in Liang's essay.

It is not only the heightened awareness of contingency that makes Liang's concept of society different from that of Qian. We also see Liang take into account factors of development that are neither rooted in the individual nor in the all-encompassing nature of the cosmos but in the very structures of society itself. Only on such a mid-level between individuals and the cosmos can one truly speak of social forces and come up with a critique that is not limited to the moral condemnation of individuals. The most obvious example in Liang's essay is how he describes the role of "capital" in the development of society. At one point, he explains that it is not the fault of the poor if they sit idle but that it is the lack of capital which leaves them without opportunities to make use of their labour force and develop specialised skills (Liang 1902a, 4). He approvingly quotes Adam Smith, who in *The Wealth of Nations* also

[24] This last relation was also important for Yun Jing, who nevertheless did not ask for exact numbers.

makes the point that "industriousness" is not an individual trait but determined by the larger makeup of society:

> We are more industrious than our forefathers; because in the present times the funds destined for the maintenance of industry are much greater, in proportion to those which are likely to be employed in the maintenance of idleness, than they were two or three centuries ago. Our ancestors were idle for want of a sufficient encouragement to industry. It is better, says the proverb, to play for nothing than to work for nothing. In mercantile and manufacturing towns, where the inferior ranks of people are chiefly maintained by the employment of capital, they are in general industrious, and sober, and thriving [...][25]

Another argument in the same vein can be found almost at the end of Liang's essay, where, talking about his home province of Guangdong, he laments the self-reinforcing cycle of too many "consumers" exerting pressure on the "producers" and thereby pushing them to become pure "consumers" as well (that is, bandits and the like) (Liang 1902b, 17f). Again, it is not the individual depravity of morally corrupt individuals but a phenomenon on the level of society as a whole that Liang sees as the cause of the problem. Qian might have criticised the higher-ups for lacking the moral quality to justify their elevated position, yet he could not question the social hierarchy in principle, as it formed the basis of all possible order for him. Liang, in contrast, presents a structural criticism of the society that provides the ground for problematising social inequality per se, as was spelled out by Chinese anarchists just a few years after the publication of his essay.[26]

The focus on effects caused by broader social structures leads to the second highlighted point: visibility. According to Qian, the basic foundation for social order was constituted by a hierarchical structure with morally superior men on top of the commoners. As pointed out above, these hierarchies had to be made transparent in any kind of social situation so everybody was clear about his or her position in the overall order of things. Liang's analysis, in contrast, focuses on complex social interrelations that are not directly visible in social encounters. The flows of capital, for example, that he deems so important for the development of the productive forces, his "total value of annual production", or the ratios of producers and consumers, remain totally obscure until uncovered by indirect means. Here we find one of the deeper causes of Liang's lament regarding the lack of "statistics": there is no way to observe and understand the complex makeup of society and the causes and effects of its structures if not indirectly through numbers and tables.

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[25] The text quoted here is the original English by Adam Smith from *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Book II, Chapter 3. Liang quotes Yan Fu's translation (Liang 1902a, 4f).

[26] On the idea of equality in Chinese anarchism and socialism see Arif Dirlik's foundational studies (1989; 1991), as well as Zarrow (1990).

As Liang himself recognises, his argument about the shrinking national stock of capital would hold only if he could prove with corresponding numbers that the number of consumers actually exceeded that of producers. This, in turn, requires an investigation of society that measures the total size of the population, the relative share of the different forms of occupation, their relative production of value, and so on. Liang thus rightly points to the fact that "only this number", the "total value of production within one year", could act as a cypher that encapsulated a complex reality that can be observed only by relating different sets of quantified data to each other. What he describes is not a simple phenomenon but rather a complex "pattern" of social development that could be observed only through a numerical representation of the world.[27] More precisely, Liang *anticipated* the observation of such patterns, as he knew he could not work with reliable numbers at the given moment. Nonetheless, his attempt hints at the fact that many further social patterns awaited discovery in statistical tables.

To put it in yet another way, quantifications, such as the ones proposed by Liang, are a way for society to describe and understand itself in the abstract and to visualise relations that otherwise remain hidden to direct observers. Modern sociologists, informed by systems theory in the style of Niklas Luhmann, would speak of "second-order observations" in this context (see Luhmann 2013, II: 102f). When one works with statistical tables, one does not directly observe the environment in the sense of operating with one's own distinctions; instead, one observes the distinctions through the grid of categories defined in the statistics. In this sense, it is the observation of an observation, hence a second-order observation. Whenever the number of elements in a system becomes too large and their interrelations too complex, direct observation becomes impossible. As a result, the coordination and control of many interrelating elements is dependent on second-order observations: this is precisely why the administration of the Chinese imperial institutions had always required the counting and categorizing of population. Liang, however, seems to advocate the broader application of this form of social self-observation.

At this point one must note an important qualitative difference to earlier attempts at data-gathering and thinking about social forces. It is true, of course, that dynastic Chinese institutions frequently collected population numbers as a basis for levying taxes.[28] It is also true that many Qing statecraft thinkers like Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 (1746–1809), Yun Jing, Bao Shichen 包世臣 (1775–1855) and Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794–1857) thought about structural issues like population growth or the role of market dynamics.[29] However, the premodern "censuses" neither had to be comprehensive nor entirely accurate, as the purpose they served was limited. It was enough for the administration to have a few numbers it could work with, so it did

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[27] Cf. the description of the "discovery of society" in statistical patterns in Nassehi (2019, 46ff).

[28] For details on Qing census and survey practices, see Lam (2011, 50ff).

[29] On Hong Liangji and Yun Jing see Zanasi (2020); on Bao Shichen see Rowe (2018); on Wei Yuan's statecraft thought see Leonard (1996) and Christ (2021).

not matter that these numbers were gathered on a very irregular basis and in a rather unsystematic way. Once they had fulfilled their main administrative purpose of tax-gathering, they were filed away and never used for further analysis, let alone in combination with other data sets. It was not until the very last years of the Qing dynasty, and years after the publication of Liang's article, that a Statistical Bureau was set up in Beijing, where numbers were not only collected but used to create new knowledge of society.[30] It would be even longer until these statistics were published and could be used by broader parts of society to create new knowledge of itself.[31] Therefore, it was impossible for the Qing statecraft thinkers interested in the dynamics produced by broader social structures to really get a grasp on these phenomena. They could make virtually no second-order observations and instead were mostly reliant on direct observations made by themselves or by friends and colleagues,[32] which they could compare to equally imprecise descriptions in older texts. It is no wonder, then, that they almost invariably lent towards half-mystical talk on cosmological patterns and the moral nature of humans to explain larger connections: Qian's complicated interpretation of the earth and mountain metaphor described above is a case in point.[33] Liang, in contrast, is already very aware that there were other, newer ways to understand society than the hexagrams in the *Book of Changes*. Nevertheless, it is no trivial task to convince readers of the effects of social forces that can neither be directly observed nor based on the time-honoured authority of the Confucian canon. The neatly arranged figures in a chart like the one presented by Liang might have acted as a substitute for some of the rhetorical strength the expressions from the classics had. As Ian Hacking has argued, charts and statistical tables can be understood as a

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[30] See "Data Management and Knowledge Production in Late Qing Institutions", in Bréard (2019c, 169–193). Maura Dykstra has argued that the new bureaucratic practices introduced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries allowed the Qing administration to have summary reports "compiled into empire-wide statistics" (2022, 160) and that "the throne could request special statistical analysis by the ministries on topics of particular interest" (161). However, the requests and practices described involve only counting cases and producing long numerical lists, which substantially differs from "statistical analysis" (on the novelty of such analysis in 20th-cent. China see Bréard [2008, 30f; 68f]). Dykstra argues that the new reporting and archival procedures from the mid-eighteenth century allowed the Qing administration "to see more", that is, to gather more information about local conditions, but this did not fundamentally alter their approach to governing. Dykstra concludes that the Qing rulers learned more (and sometimes shocking) things about their own administration, which led to "uncertainty" and an urge for greater control over officialdom. However, this did not lead to a new understanding of society at large; neither did the new practices allow society to learn something about itself.

[31] See Bréard (2008, esp. 37; 52).

[32] See, for example, Wei Yuan's remark in the editorial notes of the *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (2004, XIII: 2): "Everybody's experience is limited to a certain perspective, so one has to be thankful for the contributions of friends and acquaintances".

[33] For another example, see the argument by Yun Jing on the historical changes in land property patterns in his "Sandai yinge lun" (see footnote 20): "In antiquity, the ruler owned the fields, and the people tilled them. In later times, the rich people owned the fields, and the poor were hired [to till them]" 古者，上有田而民耕之。後世富民有田，寡貧民為佣. This observation is framed in very general terms, and is therefore utterly imprecise. Yun also explains the superiority of the older system by the supreme moral character of the "sages", who were able to safeguard the order of the "four estates" (*simin* 四民) and to keep the "excesses" of the literati (*shi* 士) under control: "What was the way of the sages? I say: It was simply not to harm the four estates. How did they not harm the four estates? I say: Simply by not harming peasants, artisans and merchants, and by keeping a watchful eye on the literati" 聖人之道奈何？曰：不病四民而已。不病四民之道奈何？曰：不病農工商而重督士而已。

self-authenticating "style of reasoning" (1990, 6f) that purports to deliver objective observations of a complex environment. The more Chinese society developed structures that were independent of personal contacts in close circles of interaction, the more such "technologies of intersubjectivity" —like statistics—grew in importance.[34]

This leads to the third point of difference between the two essays. While Qian's vision of a well-ordered society hinged on an integrated functional hierarchy, Liang's discussion of different social groups' productivity reflects a radical reduction of complexity characteristic of functional differentiation. Qian's perspective was holistic, in the sense that it conceptualised humanity as a whole and in firm connection to the natural order of the cosmos. Derived from this order, he postulated leadership by individuals of superior moral quality. Liang's argument, in contrast, is not interested in any of that. In the article discussed above, he reduces all social relations to a purely economic aspect and only distinguishes between humans on the basis of their capacity to produce economic value; all is reduced to the simple binary code of productive/non-productive. This reflects the emancipation of economic logic from all other social concerns, be they moral, political, scholarly, or otherwise.

The emancipation of functional logic has considerable consequences for understanding social relations. Although Liang's perspective is a partial one, largely limited to economic logic, it is applied to the whole of society, regardless of any hierarchies or valuations based on different kinds of logic. As a result, functional differentiation creates entirely new rifts through society. Liang's group categorisations perfectly illustrate how he cuts right through the hierarchical layers of the stratified order. See, for example, what he has to say about the "literati" (dushuren 讀書人), who, in Qian's social order were supposed to be the morally superior humans ruling over the common populace:

> 謂其導民以知識耶。吾見讀書人多而國日愚也。謂其誨民以道德耶。吾見讀書人多而俗日偷也。四體不勤。五穀不分。偷懦憚事。無廉恥而嗜飲食。讀書人實一種寄生蟲也。
>
> You say they have the knowledge to guide the people? The way I see it, when there are many literati, then the country gets dumber by the day. You say they have the moral virtue to educate the people? My view is that when there are many literati, then more people steal by the day. The literati "neither move their four limbs nor are able to tell the five cereals apart"; they are "evasive, timorous and shirk their duties; they lack any sense of modesty and shame and have an inordinate fondness for food and drink".[35] The literati truly are a kind of parasite! (Liang 1902b, 9).

[34] Cf. Cevolini (2014, 26). Liu (2009) raises a similar point, albeit in a different historical context.

[35] Liang quotes *Lunyu* 18.7 and *Xunzi* 2 here. The *Xunzi* quote uses Knoblock's translation (1988, I: 157).

It is not only social groups that are seen differently under functional differentiation, but also individuals. In fact, functionally differentiated structures do not consider humans as a whole, much less their social rank, and rather only in terms of their contribution to the functional system. Liang is interested in people exclusively as contributors to the national economy and ignores all other aspects. The idea of seeing all humans as equals would probably have seemed ridiculous, if not outright offensive, to Qian Weicheng, but precisely this indifference to humans as a whole has the paradoxical effect of making everybody appear equal. While a stratified society is characterised by the essential inequality of ranks and estates, a functionally differentiated society is marked by the equal functional integration of all persons, regardless of their social status or rank.

The reduction of complexity is typical of functional differentiation but also serves to build up new complexity within these limited functional perspectives. By excluding all aspects that are not relevant, functional structures gain in capacity and effectiveness in handling large amounts of information. Here, the aforementioned "second-order observations" come into play: functional systems can often ignore much of their environment by relying on previously made observations; they do not look directly at all aspects of society but instead at data that has already been aggregated and processed. Only by reducing society to economic relations could economists discover the interrelations between "labour" and "capital" that matter so much to Liang. If businesses concentrated on matters other than producing "returns", they would soon fail, as Liang also writes. It was by focusing on profits that companies could create ever more and better products, that labour could specialise and improve its efficiency, and that countries could get wealthier. Economists do not see much, and companies have a hard time making decisions without second-order observations: they all need data on production, prices, trade volumes, available labour force and much more. The same is true, of course, in the political sphere, where the same process of operational closure offers governments more possibilities for management and control.[36] The numbers and statistics demanded by Liang aid in both steps of the process. The quantification of data supports the reduction of complexity by cutting down idiosyncratic differences to standardised numerical distinctions. Aggregated in statistical tables, numbers enable second-order self-observations of society and thereby also help to build up new complexity within functional systems. This is probably the most important reason for the enormous increase in quantification observed in China throughout the twentieth century.

The limitation of certain structures to one task, as we have seen in the example of the economic system, might also speak to the use of numbers under the conditions of functional differentiation, for it means that other tasks (e.g. handling legal disputes, making generally

[36] Cf. Malcolm Thompson's description (2018) of how statistics in the Republican era changed "the very logic and form of governing itself". Although he uses somewhat different terms and his arguments develop in a different direction, his analysis of how statistics reduce complexity in that they introduce "a matrix of formal identity and interchangeability into a field of dissimilar objects", and create "social formations" like "population" and "capital" that become "objects of government", resonate very much with this article.

binding decisions, offering spiritual guidance) must be left to other functional systems in society such as the legal and political systems, and religious organisations. Their perspectives and operational logic claim universality in the same way as the economic system. Thus, different functional logics will create very different perspectives on the same subject matter (or the same person). In a stratified society, there is a clear centre, which grounds all different angles from different parts of society, and there is a singular truth, which must be grasped in order to have the singular "correct" perspective. In a functionally differentiated society, the dao gets lost; there no longer is a single "correct" perspective, no centre, no absolute truth. Instead, there is a sometimes-disorienting simultaneity of multiple perspectives which are no longer necessarily mutually compatible or supplementary. Furthermore, there is no straightforward or natural switch from one perspective to the other. On the contrary, what might seem necessary from the viewpoint of economic logic may well be wholly undesirable from a political perspective and vice versa. Rather than communicating with each other, the best different functional systems can hope for is to irritate and thereby change their environment. In Liang Qichao's essay, it is clear from the beginning that he wants his socio-economic analysis to have political consequences: at the end, he explicitly demands policies to address the problem he describes. However, he also notes that the political will of a number of people in the government alone would not be enough to turn the situation around, neither could his analysis be directly converted into policies, nor could politics have a direct impact on the economy (Liang 1902b, 18). While direct communication between different functional systems is impossible, the presentation of seemingly neutral and abstract statistics can facilitate translations between them. Modern sociologists have described the process of quantification as breaking down a multifarious reality into a homogeneous form, that is, numerical elements. Numerical data itself is devoid of particular meaning. Its significance lies in the relationship between the numbers: "A number does not designate a property of what is distinguished, but rather the relational context of the distinction – its referential horizon, its potential variance".[37] A world represented in numbers is only numbers; whatever relations exist between the numbers only has meaning beyond these relations when placed into a meaningful context.[38] In this sense, it is the use of a statistic in a particular context and for a particular purpose that invests it with meaning beyond sheer numerical relations. The meaning might differ according to the functional system in which the statistic is used, but the numerical form eases the acceptance and further processing of the information across different systems. Even though political actors might not necessarily have drawn the same conclusions from the ratios of consumers and producers as Liang, it was nonetheless possible that his numbers provoked

[37] Lehmann (2014, 42), translated by author.

[38] Cf. Armin Nassehi's description of "data processing": "Data sets, the connection of data sets, the internal static-statistical and dynamic-statistical description of regularities and patterns must then, in a second step, be translated into a processable form, namely into a meaningfully processable form" (Nassehi 2019, 79; translation by the author).

political reactions.[39] Thus, quantification might not only respond to the need for second-order self-observation of a complex society, but it could also be a useful mediator between the functionally differentiated systems of such a society, especially around the moment it began to understand itself in these terms.

Conclusion

The close reading of Qian Weicheng's essay "Eradicating Conflict" has shown how, in the eighteenth century, the main social difference was still conceptualised as hierarchical and in terms of moral quality and cosmological imagery. About a century later, however, this view was no longer considered plausible. Society was now conceived of as contingent and ruled by invisible structures and forces, a view that demanded new, quantified forms of social self-observation. As was the case for so much else, it was a text by Liang Qichao that heralded this seismic shift in understanding society and its relation to numbers. Even though Liang did not have any accurate statistics to hand, he anticipated that statistical charts would be the place one would have to look for crucial information on the past, present, and future of China's people. Many years before the quantification of Chinese society by modern statistical means really gained steam, Liang seemed to acknowledge that these were indispensable in enabling the observation of crucial social structures and interrelations hidden to the direct observer.

Certainly, Liang's reception of new ideas from Adam Smith and other foreign thinkers played a role in his demand for numbers, as well as his experiences in Japan, where the use of statistics was already much more widespread.[40] But this can only be part of the explanation. Momentous changes in the structure of Chinese society itself fuelled new ways of thinking about it. The way Liang followed a purely economic logic in his argumentation was congruent with China's passage from a hierarchically stratified society to a more functionally differentiated one, and it is functional differentiation that plays an essential role in the spread of quantification. At the same time, the mere expectation of statistics to play a more important role in the future had already started to alter Liang's outlook, as it gave him new categories for observation and argumentation and new criteria by which to evaluate different parts of society.

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[39] This is meant as a general point; the author is at present unaware of any direct political reactions to this particular essay. Both Trescott and Wang (1994) and Lee (2019) see the importance of Liang's economic writings mainly in terms of their dissemination of Western economics in China and view Sun Yat-sen's economic ideas as having been more influential politically.

[40] Bréard (2019a, 217f). Broader context can be found in Fogel (2004).

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Recognition through Numbers: Muslim Population Numbers and the Hui in Modern China

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Islam and Muslims have been in China for over a millennium; however, it was during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that their demographic situation came under various kinds of scrutiny. Previous scholarship has focused on the reconstruction of “correct” statistics of the Muslim population in modern China. This paper, inspired by the sociology of quantification, aims at an investigation into the “making” and “doing” of Muslim population numbers in late-Qing and Republican China. It presents case studies regarding how the Muslim demographic numbers were produced, in which socio-political contexts they emerged, and what purposes and meanings they imply for those who produced them. The article will focus on the relations between the Muslim population numbers and the identity construction of the Hui Muslims in the context of China’s transition into a modern nation-state. Particular attention will be given to the production and circulation of the number of 50 million.

伊斯蘭教及穆斯林在中國的歷史淵源可追溯至千年以上，然而，直至 19 世紀末 20 世紀初，穆斯林人口狀況才開始受到各方關注並得以系統研究。既往研究多聚焦於重構中國近現代史中穆斯林人口的“正確”統計數據。本文則從計量社會學（sociology of quantification）的理論出發，探討清末與民國時期穆斯林人口數據的“建構”與“運作”機制。通過案例研究，本文分析穆斯林人口數據的生成過程、其背後的社會歷史背景，以及這些數據對其生產者的實際意義與功能。本研究特別關注穆斯林人口數據與回族穆斯林身份建構之間的關係，並將其置於中國傳統社會向現代民族國家轉型的宏觀歷史背景中加以考察。此外，本文著重討論了“五千萬”這一關鍵數字的形成及其社會傳播機制。

Keywords: Muslim population; Republic of China, the Hui nation

關鍵詞： 穆斯林人口，中華民國，回族

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1 Introduction

On 23 August 2004, the Lifa Yuan 立法院 (Legislative Yuan) of the Republic of China (Taiwan) announced that the "provision of Article 135 ... of the Constitution shall cease to apply" (憲法第 ...... 一百三十五條之規定，停止適用).[1] The Article in question was promulgated in 1947 when the Guomindang 國民黨 (Nationalist Party, hereafter GMD) was still based in mainland China. It stipulated that "for those living in Inner China (*neidi* 內地)[2] with special living habits, the number and the election of their members in the National Assembly shall be stipulated by law" (內地生活習慣特殊之國民代表及選舉，其辦法以法律定之). According to the *Guomin dahui daibiao xuanju bamian fa shixing tiaoli* 國民大會代表選舉罷免法施行條例 (Implementation regulations for the election and recall of the members of the National Assembly), the so-called citizens "with special living habits" referred to the "Hui people living in various places" (*juzhu gedi zhi Huimin* 居住各地之回民).[3] As will be shown later, one of the reasons why these people were recognised by state law as a collective group had something to do with the belief that they had a huge population.[4] The present paper is about these people, the Hui 回, or Chinese-speaking Muslims,[5] and the ways in which they made use of their population numbers so as to be recognised as a collective group of people during the late-Qing and Republican periods (up to 1949).

Previous scholarship has shown that, alongside the introduction of the concept of *minzu* 民族 (variously translated as nation, nationality, race, ethnicity, etc.) in the late-Qing and Republican periods, come various Chinese nation-state building projects. These projects have also affected Muslims in China, especially the Hui, who constantly tried to negotiate their identities and positions between the Islamic *jiao* 教 (religion) and the Chinese *guo* 國 (state).[6]

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[1] See *Lifa jilu* 立法記錄 (legislation records) of the Legislative Yuan published on 23 August 2004, also available on the website of the Legislative Yuan, https://lis.ly.gov.tw/lglawc/lglawkm?@@423861377 (2 December 2022).

[2] The term *neidi* has several English translations, including inland, the interior, China proper, mainland, etc., depending on the context. Here it represents the territory of present-day China, excluding Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Qinghai.

[3] See the website of the Legislative Yuan. Available at

https://lis.ly.gov.tw/lglawc/lawsingle?06206C013C00C6E6206C003790C607026D003D8CC606A06C843C0 (2 December 2022).

[4] For the legal-political context of the law in question, see Eroglu Sager 2021, 825–858.

[5] It has to be pointed out that the term Hui as perceived in late Qing and republican China has multiple meanings, referring to all Muslims as a religious group, various ethnic Muslim groups in today's Xinjiang, or to Islam, etc. This issue will be discussed again in the following text.

[6] The term Hui has encompassed multiple meanings that have shifted over time and among different groups. To a large extent, the term Hui, recognised as an ethno-national group by the Chinese Communist Party in its early period (the Hui-hui nation, 回回民族) and later as an officially designated ethno-religious minority group by the Chinese government since the 1950s (Hui nationality/ethnicity, Huizu 回族), is closely intertwined with the concept of Muslim as a religious identity in contemporary China. For instance, the National Religious Affairs Administration (*Guojia Zongjiao Shiwuju* 國家宗教事務局) of China identifies ten ethnic minority groups, including the Huizu, as "traditionally, in principle, believers in Islam" (傳統上基本信仰伊斯蘭教). During Republican times, the term Hui was often used broadly to refer to all Muslims in China, including those in Xinjiang—though not necessarily the Uyghurs. This was also a time when Muslims in China, particularly Chinese-speaking Muslims, engaged actively in redefining their identity within the framework of a Hui/Muslim nation (*minzu*) in

Generally, two main opinions existed among the Hui: some regarded Muslims in China, together with those in other parts of the world, as one nation (*min* 民 or *minzu* 民族); some denied the nationhood of Muslims in China and considered them as a group of Han Chinese who believed in Islam.[7] Whatever position they took, they saw themselves, the Hui, as a collective of people, distinct from the Han Chinese. One common reference or strategy they adopted in constructing their collectiveness was an overstatement of the number of their people whenever an estimation of the Hui population was needed.[8] The number of "50 million" appears particularly ubiquitous.

During the Republican period (1912–1949), Muslims from diverse backgrounds contributed to our knowledge of the issue in question. Among those participating in the construction of a collective identity of the Hui were Muslim and non-Muslim scholars associated with different research organisations, Islamic clerics, Sufi followers, members of various Muslim associations, teachers and students from new Islamic educational institutions, editors of prominent journals and magazines produced by Muslims, etc. By tracing the biographies, that is, the emergence and dissemination, of the numbers for the Muslim population in nineteenth- and twentieth-century China, this article will explore why and how demographic numbers of a minority group were constructed, used, and became relevant for different groups with different aims, especially in relation to the Hui as a nation (*minzu*) of 50 million. As will be shown later in this article, diverse Muslim population estimates existed in modern Chinese history among both Chinese and foreigners, Muslims and non-Muslims, ranging from a couple of millions to over 100 million. However, it seems that for many, if not all, of them, what mattered was not the accuracy of the number but the agency of a number to legitimise their agenda, be it religious, social, or political. Their use of population numbers offers an example of the making of a group of people which took place, among other means, through the description of numerical data. In other words, the counting of the Muslim population in China presupposes a shared identity of Muslims, and the result of the counting will in turn contribute to the establishment and reinforcement of a collective identity of Muslims.[9] To this end, the paper will be based primarily on documents from the late-Qing to the Republican periods, including reports of missionaries, interviews conducted by Arab newspapers with Chinese Muslims, talks delivered by Muslim elites in and outside China, as

response to the sociopolitical transformations of Chinese society. In this article, the terms Hui, Hui Muslims, and Chinese Muslims are used interchangeably to denote Chinese-speaking Muslims, unless otherwise specified. For discussions on the identity negotiation of the Hui, see Gladney 1991 and Li 2021.

[7] For a discussion of the Hui Muslims' nationhood, see Li 2021, 115–138.

[8] Based on the data provided by the last three Chinese national population censuses conducted in the twenty-first century, the combined demographic numbers of the ten ethnic groups officially recognised as predominantly Muslim are as follows: 20,320,580 in 2000, 23,142,104 in 2010, and 25,951,094 in 2020. It is important to note that China's national censuses do not record data based on religious identity. Instead, these figures pertain to ethnic groups traditionally associated with Islam, namely the Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh, Dongxiang, Kirgiz, Salar, Tajik, Baoan, Uzbek, and Tatar. For detailed information on these censuses, refer to the official website of the National Bureau of Statistics of China at www.stats.gov.cn/.

[9] For a study on national census and minority groups, see Petersen 1987, 187–234.

well as articles published in the newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and other forms of publications produced by Muslims in China.

Apart from the introduction and some concluding remarks, the paper will be organised in three sections. First, I will present a contextualised analysis of various population numbers of Muslims in China, starting from those offered by missionaries during the late Qing to a variety of numbers provided by Muslims throughout China in the first half of the twentieth century. It offers concrete case studies showing a wide range of occasions where numbers were used as a reference point to legitimise differing projects. The contextualisation of various population numbers of Muslims in China shows how numbers are embedded in, and intertwined with, diverse domains, especially in relation to the construction of modern China as a nation-state and its impacts on the identification of the Hui Muslims. The article aims to prove that numbers not only "represent" the things they measure, but indeed, in the case of Muslims in modern China, also "produce" things they aim to measure. Through the efforts made to count Muslims, new identity categories will be created. This will be detailed in section three of the article, which focuses on the major attempts of Muslims in China to search for the correct number of their population. The article shows how these numbers were employed for the construction of a unified Muslim identity, and it highlights, in section four, the creation of a fictive, but widely shared, number of 50 million, and examines the effect this number, a cipher for the Muslim population, may have had upon the self-perception of the Muslims.

2 Slippery Numbers: Estimations of Muslim Demography in Modern China

2.1 Problematising Islam in China: Initial Attempts of Missionaries

Before the first national census conducted by the Manchu Qing government in the first decade of the twentieth century,[10] several attempts had been made to come to grips with the number of Muslims in China. In this regard, Western missionaries were among the first to dig into the issue in question. However, their interests in the population of Muslims in China were closely related to their missionary work, although with differing motivations.

One of the members of the Russian Orthodox Mission to China, Vasily Pavlovich Vasilyev (1818–1900), who provided "the earliest Russian contribution on Chinese Muslims" (Loewenthal 1960, 1) was concerned about the possibility of "whether China is ever to become a

[10] Regarding the Chinese population during the Qing period, see Ho 1959, 65–100, Cao 2001, and Croddy 2022.

Muslim state" (Vasil'ev 1960, 4). Having spent ten years in China,[11] Vasilyev delivered a speech in 1867 at the University of St. Petersburg, in which he reported on the situation of Muslims in China. While he claimed to have "a very clear idea about the distribution of Muslims in China", he was not able to come up with any specific number regarding the actual population of Muslims. His final conclusions incorporated comments such as "the Muslim population there must be very considerable," "the number of Muslims there is not small," or "the followers of the Prophet... are quite numerous" (Vasil'ev 1960, 8–11).

Vasilyev's lack of reliable and solid sources, hence the absence of specific demographic figures, besides being a general problem in late-Qing China, may also have resulted from the fact that he did not travel much in China but spent the entire ten years in Beijing. However, this did not stop him from problematising China's growing Muslim population, nor diminish his concerns about the possibility of "whether China is ever to become a Muslim state". The answer to that question "would be of world-wide importance", in that if China were to become a Muslim state "it would alter all the political relations of the countries of the old world." This, for Vasilyev, would lead to the unwanted expansion of the Muslim world, which would "once more threaten Christianity" (Vasil'ev 1960, 5). In that case, the "peaceful activities of the Chinese nation", Vasil'ev (1960, 5) believed, would be transformed "into a heavy yoke... under the influence of an energetic and fanatical [Muslim] policy" (Vasil'ev 1960, 5). What is more, for Vasilyev, a Muslim state was inherently incompatible with ideas that originated in the Occident, "ideas which have triumphed over the spiritless speculations of the Orient" (Vasil'ev 1960, 5). For Vasilyev, Muslims were not only potential threats to Christianity but also to the Chinese regime. He was surprised that "the conversion of millions of Chinese to Islam went unnoticed" in Chinese texts even if they included such detailed observations as the height and width of each city wall (Vasil'ev 1960, 6). He thought this problematic, for the lack of attention to the expanding Muslim people reminded him of "the destiny of all great cataclysms" (Vasil'ev 1960, 5).

As a Russian Orthodox missionary, Vasilyev believed that the Chinese were not serious religious believers. Religion for them was less about faith but more about daily needs. If China were to become a Muslim country, the Muslim conquerors would "alter the spirit of the country" (Vasil'ev 1960, 28), which, presumably, would render it more difficult for missionaries to convert the Chinese to Christians.

This type of narrative that treats Muslims in China as a "problem" is perhaps most explicit in the pioneering and path-breaking book authored by the British Protestant Christian missionary, Marshall Broomhall (1866–1937). One of the main problems Broomhall had in mind was the issue of Muslim population in China. He dedicated an entire chapter to the issue of the "Mohammedan population in China". What distinguishes Broomhall's work

[11] For his activities in China, see Zhao 2007.

from that of others who endeavoured to figure out the "fact" of Muslim population in China is perhaps the methodology that he applied.

Broomhall sent more than eight hundred questionnaires to his friends, other missionaries, commissioners of Customs, etc., in almost all parts of China. This made it possible for him to work out a "careful estimate" of the figures for the Muslim population of China. The territory Broomhall covered included the 18 provinces in China proper (*Handi shiba sheng* 漢地十八省) plus Manchuria, Xinjiang, and Mongolia. His informants were asked to provide, as accurately as possible, an estimate of the local Muslim population in its minimum as well as maximum.

Based on his research, Broomhall concluded that "the Moslem population of the Chinese Empire lies somewhere between the minimum and the maximum figures of 5,000,000 and 10,000,000" (Broomhall 1910, 216). Broomhall was aware of the methodological limitations of his estimate and admitted that he "only hopes to throw a little more light upon what will still remain a debatable issue," and that all he had achieved was just "a careful estimate based upon such data as is obtainable" (Broomhall 1910, 193). Nevertheless, his research became widely cited not only by other missionaries interested in Islam and Muslims in China[12] but also by Chinese scholars.[13]

Broomhall distinguished himself from Vasilyev not only in terms of the methodology he applied but also with regard to the significance it had for the success of Western missionary work. Compared with the non-Muslim Chinese, some missionaries found more similarities with Muslims in China, especially in terms of each other's religious tradition: a God in heaven, notions of sin and righteousness, rituals and the familiarity of Biblical/Quranic stories. In Vasilyev's case, the "problem" of Muslims in China lay in the incompatibility of Islam with Western civilisation characterised by Christianity. In Broomhall's case, even though Muslims in China might rightfully "consider themselves more enlightened than those [Chinese] around them" ("The Moslem Problem in China" 1913, 1), they were still "problematic" and more missionary work should have been devoted to them. Broomhall pointed out at the end of his chapter that:

[12] In 1921, a decade after Marshall Broomhall's pioneering book on Islam in China, British missionary William Francis Rhodes, based in Yantai 烟臺, Shandong 山東 province, undertook a similar survey. Rhodes described his research as being based on "the best data possible under the existing limitations." His sources included: (1) figures from earlier investigations, (2) more recent data, (3) responses to questionnaires distributed to missionaries, foreign officials, and carefully chosen Chinese scholars familiar with Muslim communities, and (4) statistics provided by cooperative Muslim leaders. Rhodes also offered reflections on factors that may have impeded the survey's accuracy. He identified three primary challenges: (1) the limited personnel available in mission stations across China, (2) the restricted geographical scope of mission work in regions with significant Muslim populations, and (3) political instability in certain areas, which made detailed investigations unfeasible. Despite these limitations, Rhodes's findings aligned closely with those of Broomhall, estimating the Muslim population in China at approximately 10 million. For further details, see Rhodes 1921, 53–68.

[13] One year later, Broomhall's chapter was republished in the first issue of the journal, *The Moslem World*, founded in 1911 by Samuel Marinus Zwemer (1867–1952) with the Christian Church in Egypt. For Zwemer and *The Moslem World*, see Tuoheti 2021, 61–76.

> The Moslem population of China is certainly equal to the entire population of Algeria, or Scotland or Ireland; that it is in all probability fully equal to that of Morocco, and possibly not less than the total population of Egypt or Persia.... It may, therefore, be said that within China there is a special people equal in number to the population of any of China's dependencies, for whom practically nothing is being done, and whose presence hitherto has been almost ignored. (Broomhall 1910, 216–217)

Missionaries were among the earliest to conduct research aimed at estimating the Muslim population in modern China. Their efforts revealed the relevance of Muslim population to missionary work. Although both missionaries here regarded Muslims in China as a "problem" that needed to be tackled for the sake of their missionary work, they apparently did not find it a "problem" to identify the Muslim population in the first place, nor did they pay any attention to the self-perception of Muslims in China. However, the fact that they constantly referred to local Muslims as sources for their investigation indicated that a certain self-perception as a collective religious group did exist among Muslims in China. As Espeland and Stevens (2008, 406) have pointed out, the "purposes and meanings of numbers change as they travel across time and social space." Like the missionaries who were surprised at the unnoticed large population of Muslims in China, Muslims' own discussions regarding their demographic situations also highlighted their large number of populations, oftentimes with higher numbers than those estimated by the missionaries, but their concerns were largely related to the discussions around their collective identity.

2.2 Demographic Figures among (Muslim) Chinese

Muslims were already referred to as sources in missionaries' reports. For instance, Broomhall in his chapter mentioned a "Chinese Moslem official of Yunnan", Seyyid Sulayman, and a "Chinese Moslem scholar", Abd ur Rahman. Both of them reported the demographic situation of Muslims in China. Sulayman gave a number of 70 million in 1894, and Rahman gave a number of "one-twelfth of the whole population, or 34,000,000" (Broomhall 1910, 194).

Seyyid Sulayman provided the number when he was interviewed in Cairo by a local newspaper. According to the interview,[14] he travelled from China to the Muslim world, studied Turkish and Persian, and also knew Arabic. When he was in Turkey, Sulayman visited Jamal

[14] The interview was initially published in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Mu'ayyad* (The supporter), one of the influential dailies in Egypt from 1889 to 1900. It was then republished in the Lebanese biweekly periodical, *Thamarat al-Funun* (Fruit of the arts), in 1894. For the interviews, see *Thamarat al-Funun* 20, no. 968–977 (1894). For the information regarding Sulayman, see (ḍayfu ṣīnīyu 1894, 3). A full-text digital copy of the periodical from 1875 to 1908 is available at the American University in Beirut (AUB) Libraries. The author would like to thank Ms. Nabila Shehabeddine at the AUB, who kindly provided access to these sources.

al-Din al-Afghani (1838/1839–1897), a prominent Muslim legal scholar and Islamic reformer. It was during this encounter that a journalist, who was also paying a visit to Afghani, conducted an interview with Sulayman. Sulayman held that there were in total 400 to 450 million people in China, the then popular estimation of the Chinese population.[15] As far as the population of Muslims was concerned, he maintained that China had a population of 70 million Muslims, out of which over 12 million lived in Yunnan (ʿal-muslimūn fī ʿal-ṣīn 1894).

The Muslim scholar Abd ur Rahman whom Broomhall mentioned was probably the well-known imam Wang Kuan 王寬 (1848–1919), also known as Wang Haoran 王浩然. Broomhall did not give any details about Rahman in his chapter.[16] However, we know that Wang Kuan's Islamic name (*jingming* 經名) was Abd al-Rahman (Abudu Laheman 阿卜杜拉合曼) (Huang 1982, 13), and that he visited Egypt and Turkey during his Hajj journey from 1906 to 1907.[17] However, differing from Broomhall's account, the Chinese sources gave the following information with regard to Wang Kuan's visit to Turkey:

> Imam Wang Haoran…went to Constantinople [Istanbul], capital of Turkey… At that time, the King of Turkey… was Abdul Hamid… [The King] asked Wang about the total number of the followers of Islam in China. Wang replied that there were 40 or 50 million, or one ninth of the complete population of China.
>
> 王浩然（寬）阿衡……赴土耳其京城君士但丁堡……當時土耳其國皇，便是……阿布頓哈米特……問王氏中國回教教徒總數有多少？王氏答稱有四五千萬，約居全國人口九分之一。(Sun 1939, 15–16).

Although neither the percentage, nor the actual number, found in the Chinese sources are the same as those recorded by Broomhall,[18] they are both much higher than Broomhall's final estimation. This high estimation of the Muslim population in China could also be found among other Hui Muslim elites.

For example, Huang Zhenpan 黃鎮磐 (1873–1942), one of the founding members and secretary of the *Liudong Qingzhen Jiaoyuhui* 留東清真教育會 (Islamic educational association in Tokyo, hereafter the Educational Association), who was studying Political Economy at

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[15] Regarding the "400 million Chinese", see Jasper Roctus' article in this issue.

[16] Broomhall mentioned in a footnote that the information he got came from a report published in *Revue du Monde Musulman* in January 1907. However, he did not mention the Arabic sources, though he said Abd ur Rahman gave the figure in his interview in Cairo.

[17] According to Zhang (2013, 5–14), Wang Kuan was making a transit in Hong Kong in October 1906, which was probably still the month of Ramadan. It is likely that Wang paid a short visit to Cairo or Istanbul before he visited Mecca.

[18] Interestingly, during the late Qing, it seems that the number of 30 million was shared by other Muslims in China. For instance, Ding Baochen 丁寶臣 (1874–1914), a student of imam Wang Kuan and founder of one of the earliest newspapers published by Muslims in China, the *Zhengzong aiguo bao* 正宗愛國報 (Newspaper of authentic patriotism), mentioned a similar number. In his 1906 article, Ding (1906) maintained that, "investigating [the number of] the Hui, there are approximately 30 million, almost one thirteenth of the entire population of the country."

Waseda University, maintained that "those of us in China who believe in Islam number over 80 million" (吾中國宗回教者計八千餘萬人) (Huang 1908, 31). Another member and accountant of the Educational Association, Zhao Zhongqi 趙鐘奇 (1878–1970), who was studying at the Imperial Japanese Army Academy, held a similar opinion. He wrote that "today, the number of the (Hui) Muslims who are scattered over the provinces is above 80 million" (今日散處各省之回教，其數在八千萬以上者也).[19] The estimates of Huang and Zhao were much higher than those of the Qing government produced a couple of years later. In 1911, the Qing Ministry of the Interior (Minzheng Bu 民政部) issued national statistics in which they maintained that the population of Muslims was 35.4 million (Yue 1933, 67).

Notably, members of the Educational Association were not primarily concerned with the issue of Muslim population in modern China. They referred to the population number, without providing any sources, as evidence supporting their argument of a modern Islamic revival through educational reform. Studying in Japan and being members of Sun Yat-sen's 孫中山 (1866–1925) Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmeng hui* 同盟会),[20] these students must have known about the nation-building project of the revolutionaries that aimed at the establishment of a China where all the non-Han Chinese would potentially be excluded.[21] It is, therefore, only natural that these Muslim students rejected the idea of the Hui as an independent race/nation,[22] in order to protect themselves from being marginalised or excluded from the future Republic of China. However, they still tried to establish themselves as a collective group defined in relation to Islam, distinct from the Han Chinese. And an overestimation of their population fitted perfectly into their argument that the Hui Muslims were not an alien race/nation, but a religious group with a large population, and therefore, perhaps more importantly, should not be excluded from the future Han Chinese nation-state that the revolutionaries aimed to establish. Similar strategies that defined the Hui through numerical data could be found in other groups that argued for the nationhood of the Hui. This became explicit with the establishment of the Republic of China, which claimed to be a nation-state constituted by the five races/nations (wuzu gonghe 五族共和).[23]

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[19] See Zhao 1908, 63. It seems that the opinion that China had 80 million Muslims was shared by members of the Association. See also an article by Bao Tingliang 保廷樑 (1874–1947), president of the Association (Bao 1908, 31–40).

[20] Among the 36 Muslim students of the Educational Association in Japan, there were at least fourteen students who were at the time (founding) members of the *Tongmeng hui*. See Li 2022, 217–258.

[21] On Han Chinese nationalism in the late-Qing and Republican periods, see Schneider 2017 and Matten 2012, 63–106. For a detailed discussion regarding the dynamic relations between the Hui Muslims and this Chinese nationalist discourse, see Chen 2018, and Li 2021, 104–140.

[22] Yee Lak Elliot Lee argued that there were two directions in formulating the Hui identity among the Muslim students in Japan: one regarded the Hui as a *minzu* and the other saw the Hui as a religious identity (Lee 2019, 226–263). But it has to be noted that these two directions are not independent from each other; they are rather closely intertwined.

[23] As noted at the beginning of this article, the Chinese term *minzu*, introduced from the Japanese term *minzoku*, encompasses a range of meanings and associations, similar to those expressed by the English terms "race", "people", "nation", "ethnic group", and "nationality". Regarding Sun Yat-sen's conception of *minzu* and its adoption by members of the *Tongmeng hui*, including his Muslim followers in Japan, see Leibold 2004, 173–183, Cieciura 2016, 107–146, and Li 2021, 104–140.

One typical example are the documents and correspondence that Li Qian 李谦 (dates unknown) collected in his *Huibu gongdu* 回部公牘 (Official documents of the Hui region) from 1916 to 1924. Li Qian, also known as Dawud (Dawude 大悟德), was a government officer and Muslim political activist who served as Plenipotentiary Representative of the Hui Region (*Huibu quanquan daibiao* 回部全權代表).[24] His main activity was to lead campaigns, appealing to the Republican government and the legislative institutions to fix a certain quota for the Hui parliamentarians in the National Assembly. According to the *Guohui zuzhi fa* 國會組織法 (Organisation law of the national assembly, hereafter Organisation Law), issued in 1912, quotas for members in the National Assembly were allocated to Mongolia 蒙古 (27 seats), Tibet 西藏 (10 seats), and Qinghai 青海 (3 seats).[25] However, no specific arrangements were made for Muslims, irrespective of their ethnolinguistic diversity, such as those groups now recognised as Hui and Uyghurs. In order to support his initiative, one of the arguments he put forward was the large population of Muslims.

Based on the Organisation Law, which stipulated that one representative would be elected for every 800,000 people, Li Qian (1916, 3) argued that there were 72 million Muslims in the Hui Region, and therefore, he suggested (1916, 3), "in particular, over 70 representatives shall be elected among the [people in the] Hui Region" (回部尤宜選出議員七十餘名). Apparently, in this petition, Li was speaking on behalf of the Muslims in Xinjiang. However, his initiative and strategy received widespread support from Muslims across China. An analysis of the *Huibu gongdu* reveals that supporting letters were sent from almost all corners of China. These included not only major urban centres such as Beijing, Shanghai 上海, and Guangzhou 廣州, and the Muslim-concentrated regions of the northwest such as Shaanxi 陝西, Gansu 甘肅, and Xinjiang, but also from provinces with smaller Muslim populations, such as Anhui 安徽, Zhejiang 浙江, Hebei 河北, Henan 河南, Hubei 湖北, Hunan 湖南, Shandong 山東, Shanxi 山西, Jiangxi 江西, Sichuan 四川, and Yunnan 雲南, among others. This widespread support highlights the remarkable geographical reach and solidarity of the Muslim community in China during this period.

For instance, Ma Yuanchao 馬元超 (1859–1929), great-grandson of Ma Mingxin 馬明心 (1719–1781), founder of the Jahriyya Sufi School (*menhuan* 門宦) in China, claimed that the petition Li Qian led would be beneficial to his 80 million fellow-Muslims (Ma 1924, 137). Muslims from Shanghai participated in Li Qian's campaign by arguing that the number of

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[24] Prior to this, Li Qian was appointed representative of the hereditary Muslim prince of Hami 哈密, Shah Maqsud. See David Brophy, "Five Races, One Parliament? Xinhai in Xinjiang and the Problem of Minority Representation in the Chinese Republic," *Inner Asia* 14, no. 2 (2012): 353–358.

[25] For Mongolia, Qinghai, and Tibet, the same seats were allocated in both the *Canyiyuan* 參議院 (Legislative court) and the *Zhongyiyuan* 衆議院 (House of representatives). For parliamentary representation in late-imperial and modern China, see a recent study by Moniz Bandeira (2022, 23–37).

the Muslim population was no less than that of Mongolia, Tibet, and Qinghai, exceeding 90 million (*Shanghai Huimin quanti qingyuan shu*, 144). Furthermore, Muslim representatives from western Henan province argued that the lack of Muslim parliamentarians was unfair to the Hui people, who had a population of 100 million (*yi wanwan* 一萬萬) (*Yuxi Huimin daibiao qingyuan shu*, 161). One hundred million is definitely an exceptionally high estimate, which fitted nicely into the political argument here. However, it was not uncommon then to assume that China had several million Muslims. Even Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858–1927) wrote in his preface to the *Huibu gongdu* that, "It has been over a thousand years since the Mohammedan religion came to China and their population numbers tens of millions" (穆護[26]之教入中國千餘年人口以千萬計).

This broad support from Muslims across China demonstrates that the campaign led by Li Qian was not merely rooted in a "territorialised notion of Muslims as inhabitants of a distinct part of China, the Muslim Territory (Huibu)" (Brophy 2012, 355). Instead, it reflects a reimagining of the inclusive term "Hui" as a unifying identity that encompassed both Chinese-speaking and Turkic-speaking Muslims. Furthermore, Li Qian's campaign transcended geographic boundaries, highlighting not only the shared solidarity among Muslims but also shedding light on the broader "political aspirations of Muslims within the Chinese state" (Theaker 2022, 1029).

Li Qian and his supporters' first attempts resulted in the admission of four Muslim representatives, including imam Wang Kuan, into the National Assembly in 1915.[27] However, they were not successful in legalising a certain quota of seats for the Hui in the National Assembly. Their efforts represented a strong self-consciousness of Hui as a collective identity for all Muslims in China. They explicitly referred to themselves as the Hui nation mentioned in Sun Yat-sen's theory of the Republic of the five races/nations. Their pragmatic approach shows that the new political settings of a modern Chinese Republic strengthened the Hui Muslims' identification as active political participants. In their efforts to seek an equal status in the arena of the Chinese nation-state, they actively made use of the legal and political framework to define their positions, claiming that the Hui Muslims were a nation recognised by the government and should be treated equally according to the Constitution. Again, one notable strategy they used was claiming to form a large part of the population.

These are some examples that highlight the existence of various demographic estimates of the Hui during the Republican period.[28] The chances are that these figures, much like those

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[26] Scholars generally agree that the term *muhu* refers to a Zoroastrian *magus*, a "wise man or leader of the Mazdeans (i.e. the Zoroastrians)." See Leslie 1981–1983, 279. However, for Kang Youwei here, it seems that he used the term for Islam or Muslims. This can also be seen in his other writings. For instance, he maintained that "there is an old temple in Constantinople [Istanbul] for those who respected Jesus, which now turns to a place for *muhu* [Mohammedans]." Later in the same work, he described Islam as "the religion of *muhu* [Mohammedans] in Mecca." See Kang (2009, 712 and 728).

[27] This could be seen in Da zongtong piling qingyuan guohui zengjia yiyuan you 1924, 1–2.

[28] Other examples could be seen, for instance, in Shui 1923, 4 and Mengyang 1929, n.p.

provided by the Republican government regarding China's demographic situation at that time,[29] were either "self-deception" or "guesswork" (Ho 1959, 79 and 86). This is probably why Jin Jitang 金吉堂 (1908–1978), one of the most prominent scholars of the history of Islam in China, after years of meticulous research, refrained from specifying an exact number for the Muslim population in China, instead stating only that there were "millions" (Jin 1935, 25).

Although none of these numbers were scientifically grounded, they demonstrate the constitutive power of numbers. These figures, regardless of their accuracy, played a significant role in shaping and reinforcing a collective identity for the Hui Muslims.

In addition to the numbers provided by missionaries and (Muslim) Chinese, some local governments during the Republican era also produced statistics on Muslims. While these statistics were far from comprehensive and never on a national scale, they nonetheless reflected localised efforts to quantify Muslim populations. One notable example is the Shanxi local government, which offers a glimpse into such attempts at quantification, as shown in the following figure.

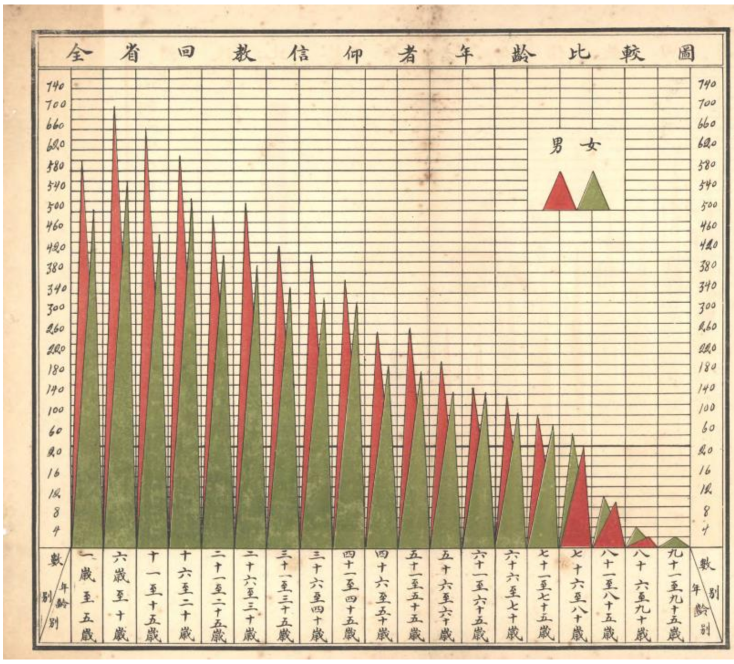

Fig. 1: "Age Distribution Chart of Muslims in the Province" produced by Shanxi Province in 1924[30]

[29] Among various nation-wide endeavours, there also existed provincial attempts to come up with statistics on Muslims; see the contribution by Bréard, Christ, and Tang to this special issue.

[30] No overall demographic information of Muslims was offered here, but it demonstrates the relevance of modern statistics in local governance. The diagram was published in the *Social Statistics of Shanxi*, fourth edition (山西省第四次社會統計) by the Shanxi Provincial Governor's Office Statistics Bureau (山西省長公署統計处). The author would like to thank Andrea Bréard for directing me to this source.

This diagram underscores the limited yet meaningful scope of demographic analysis undertaken by regional authorities. The visual representation also illustrates the fragmented yet persistent interest in understanding the demographic, socioeconomic landscape of Muslims at a local level.

Together, these various sources —missionary reports, scholarly estimates, and local government statistics —reveal the multifaceted and contested nature of demographic quantification concerning Muslims in Republican China. They underscore how numbers, even when imprecise, serve not only as tools of governance and research but also as symbols of identity and belonging.

Apparently, Muslims were aware of the lack of a correct number of their population, despite the existence of numerous figures that we mentioned before. But why did they need a correct number at all? Islam has been in China for over a millennium; however, no such discussions regarding a correct figure for the Muslim population in China could be found in its history until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[31] The discussions around the issue of quantifying the Muslim population cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the socio-political context of modern China, along with the revival of Islam in China.

3 Muslims' Attempts to Establish an Accurate Number

In 1930, a young Muslim student who had probably just started his education at Tongji University in Shanghai, Lu Shaozhai 魯少齋 (1912–2000),[32] published an article articulating the significance of correct demographic statistics of Muslims in China for the revival of Islam (Shaozhai 1930, 2–3). For him, a correct population number of Muslims was crucial for a wide range of issues, including the economy, education, and everyday life. Furthermore, to him, the lack of a solid and actual number of Muslims in China demonstrated the uneasy situation of Islam in China and represented the extent to which Muslims were (dis-)united. He acknowledged various projects that Muslims had developed and admitted that they had achieved some progress, including the establishment of associations, the publication of newspapers, the founding of schools, etc. However, he believed that what was still needed was demographic statistics about his coreligionists. He argued that properly organised surveys would not only lead to a correct figure of the Muslim population in China but could also have other social and economic effects. For instance, the correct figure would help elucidate the proportion of peasants, workers, entrepreneurs, academics, and soldiers in the overall

[31] See also Stefan Christ's article in this issue.

[32] For a brief introduction to Lu, see Guo 2015, 12.

composition of the Muslim population. It would also make it possible to have a better distribution of the *zakāt* (*tianke* 天課, almsgiving).[33] In a word, as he contended, the resolution to such issues as unemployment, children's education, marriage, election of imams and leaders for Muslim associations, etc., all depended on correct demographic statistics. In his opinion (1930, 3), a survey for the Muslim demographic situation was so fundamental that all those projects aiming for the revival of Islam depended on it, and it "is the prerequisite for [the settlement of] all the issues" (是一切問題的前提). He called for his fellow Muslim to make proper preparations for a future survey.

One year later, his appeal elicited a response. In 1931, the Muslim magazine *Yueh Hwa* 月華 (Moonlight) published an announcement calling on Muslims from various regions to contribute to an initiative aimed at "investigating local mosques".[34]

It seems that the investigation led by *Yueh Hwa* went well. Two years later, one author, Hu Fangquan 胡枋權, also known as Hu Enjun 胡恩均, published two articles in *Yueh Hwa* (Hu 1933a, 7–9; 1933b, 4–7) specifically discussing the issue of "statistics of Islam" (*Huijiao tongji* 回教統計). Hu was then studying at the Shanghai Islamic Teachers' School (*Shanghai Yisilan Shifan Xuexiao* 上海伊斯蘭師範學校) and was to be sent to study at Al Azhar University in Cairo in the following year, 1934.[35] In his article, he suggested the establishment of a "Committee for the Survey of the Hui People/Nation" (*Huimin diaocha weiyuanhui* 回民調查委員會) to be in charge of the demographic survey. Hu also designed a form (see fig. 2) to be used by the members of the Committee when conducting the survey (Hu 1933b, 5).

Hu's detailed plan suggests that the intention of the Hui Muslims to determine accurately the population of Muslims in China was becoming more concrete. The reason for this, in Hu Fangquan's case, was an immediate challenge from an article published by a non-Muslim Chinese. In that article, the author Yue Sibing 樂嗣炳 introduced a variety of Chinese and non-Chinese scholarship on Muslim population in China, including research conducted by Western missionaries, Japanese scholars, and the Chinese government (Yue 1933, 61–71). At the very end of the article, Yue maintained that the total number of Muslims in China was approximately six or seven million, constituting about 15 per mille (‰) of the whole population of China, much fewer than the estimations provided by Muslims themselves. Based on the numerical data regarding the Muslim population in China, Yue concluded, among other things, that:

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[33] *Zakāt*, together with *shahāda* (profession of faith), *ṣalāt* (prayer), *ṣawm* (fasting) and *ḥajj* (pilgrimage), constitute the five pillars of Islam. According to Islamic jurisprudence, it is obligatory for Muslims to give up a certain percentage of their property to the needy as *zakāt*.

[34] For this announcement, see "Diaocha gedi qingzhensi qishi" 1931, n.p..

[35] See "Di si jie liu Ai xuesheng Shanghai Yisilan shifan xuexiao qiansong wuming" 1934, 28). For detailed discussion of the Chinese Muslim students at al Azhar, see Ma 2011 and Benite 2013, 249–268.

> Mohammedanism is a religion, and its followers are scattered all over the world. Since Mohammedanism is followed by many nations in the world, it cannot be said that the followers of Mohammedanism are a Muslim nation, not to mention confusing it with the Hui nation... to confuse Muslims with the Hui nation is a result of either a lack of common sense or a result of political conspiracy.
>
> 穆罕謨德教是一種宗教，教徒散佈全世界，穆教既為各民族所共同信奉，就不能說穆教徒就是穆民族更不能混淆稱回民族......把回教徒混稱回民族由常識不足或政治陰謀所致。(Yue 1933, 71)

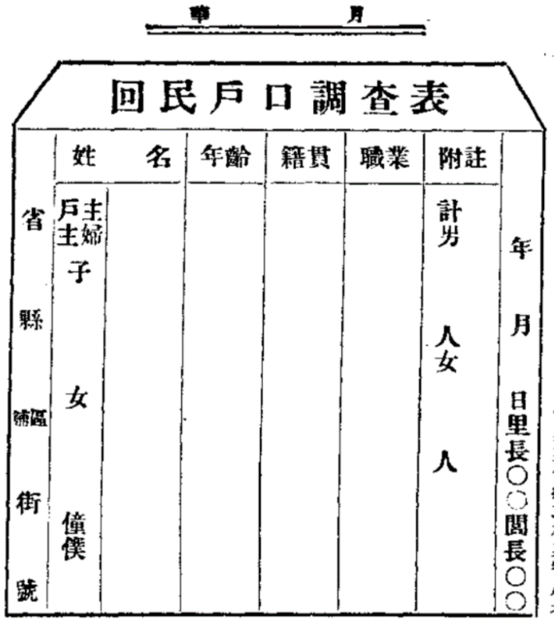
回民戶口調查表
省 縣 區 號 街 號
姓名 年齡 籍貫 職業 附註
戶主 主婦 子 女 僮僕
計男 人 女 人
年 月 日 里長○○ 閭長○○

Figure 2. The Survey of Hui Households (*Huimin hukou diaocha biao* 回民戶口調查表) designed by Hu Fangquan

Obviously, the Muslim population number here served Yue's rejection of the Hui's nationhood. Hu, on the other hand, found Yue's conclusion problematic. He believed that his proposal to conduct a detailed demographic survey of Muslims in China would finally help to prove whether Yue's (under-)estimation, as well as his rejection of the Hui's nationhood, was right or wrong. Furthermore, he believed that accurate demographic statistics would contribute to the resurgence of Islam in China. He argued that:

> Meanwhile, on the other hand, if we want to revitalise our religion... we have no other choice but to start with a demographic survey. Only after we know the living situation, social situation, economic situation, educational situation... etc. of the Hui people/nation in various places [in China], may we come up with a proper comprehensive plan to revitalise Islam in China.

> 同時另一方面：我們要想復興我們的宗教......非從統計人口做起不可，因爲知道了各處回民的生活狀況，社會狀況，經濟狀況，教育狀況，......等後，才能施以適當的整個的計劃，以振興中國的回教。(Hu 1933a, 8)

This suggests that Hu's objective was not merely to determine the correct population number of Hui Muslims but to use this as a foundation for the resurgence of both Islam and the Hui people or the Hui nation (Huimin 回民). In this regard, his stance echoed that of Lu Shaozhai, who had earlier asserted that an accurate population count of the Hui was "the prerequisite for [the settlement of] all the issues". Such statements underscore the existence of a clear collective identity among the Hui, an identity fundamentally rooted in their shared adherence to Islam.

At the same time, Hui elites such as Hu and Lu were acutely aware that their identity as Hui was tied to the sociopolitical and economic contexts of broader Chinese society. For them, and for many Muslims, Islam was not regarded as a purely religious domain but rather a comprehensive way of life that intersected with critical issues such as education, social reform, and economic development. To revive Islam, therefore, was to address these interconnected aspects within the framework of Chinese society. Central to this revival was the need to ascertain the demographic reality of the Hui population. For these reformers, a clear understanding of the population's size and distribution was seen as one of the most fundamental prerequisites for addressing the broader challenges faced by the Hui community and for advancing the modernisation of Islam in China.

Hu went to study in Cairo the year after publishing his plan; we do not know if, or to what extent, his proposal was actually put into practice. At the same time, *Yueh Hwa* was unable to complete its statistical investigation. One reason might be the relocation of its producer, the Cheng-Ta Islamic Normal School (*Chengda Shifan Xuexiao* 成達師範學校, hereafter the Chengda School).[36] In addition, from the seventh volume onwards, *Yueh Hwa* also cancelled the Survey (*Diaocha* 調查) section and, instead, went on to publish articles introducing the situation of Muslim communities throughout China. Yet they informed the authors that what they wanted was not "something dry and boring as it used to be" but something livelier and more interesting ("Yisao wangri zhi kuzao chenmen" 1935, n.p.).

Another attempt to discover an accurate figure for the Muslim population was led by the National Salvation Association of the Hui Nation (*Zhongguo Huimin jiuguo xiehui* 中國回民救國協會, later known as the Chinese Islamic Association for National Salvation,

[36] The Chengda School was founded in Jinan 濟南, Shandong province, in 1925. However, due to the sociopolitical situation in China then, the school had to move and relocate to different places. In 1929, it moved to Beijing; in 1937, with the help of General Bai Chongxi 白崇禧, it moved to Guilin 桂林; however, it had to move again to Chongqing 重慶 in 1944, before moving back to Beijing in 1946. For a general introduction to the teaching activities of the Chengda School, see Lin and Lin 2019, 231–246.

Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui 中國回教救國協會, hereafter the Islamic Association).[37] At the first plenary meeting of the Islamic Association held one year after its establishment in 1938, the Muslim general, Bai Chongxi 白崇禧 (1893–1966), who was also President of the Islamic Association, mentioned that upon the establishment of the Islamic Association one of the first things they set out to do was to investigate the status and distribution of the population of Muslims. He saw the lack of an accurate number for the Muslim population as part of a larger phenomenon that represented China's statistical deficiencies, weakness, and backwardness.[38] He argued that:

> China, when it comes to population numbers, has always been vague and general. Not only are there no accurate statistics regarding the exact number of our Muslim compatriots, nor are there for the national population. Although everyone says [that the national population is] 450 million (*si wanwan wu qianwan* 四萬萬五千萬), there has never been a rigorous survey. All this reflects how ill-organised our country is.
>
> 中國對於人口多寡，向來就籠籠統統的，不僅我們回教教胞確實人數沒有確切的統計，就以全國的人口而論，雖然大家都說是四萬萬五千萬，可是也沒有經過縝密的統計，處處都表現我們的國家，組織鬆懈。(Bai 1939a, 8)

Correct and accurate statistics for the Muslim population are crucial for the Islamic Association, because, as General Bai argued, "There is no way to figure out how much power we have within our religion, if we do not know how many Muslim compatriots there are" (不知道有教胞多少，就無法知道教内的力量) (Bai 1939a, 7). This is in line with the aims of the Islamic Association stipulated in the Charter of the Association for Chinese National Salvation of the Hui Nation (*Zhongguo Huimin jiuguo xiehui zhangcheng* 中國回民救國協會章程, 1938, 15), that is, to promote the teachings of Islam, to unite its followers, and to work in cooperation to save the country. For them, the ultimate purpose of the Islamic Association was to "work in cooperation to save the country", and for that reason it was necessary to "unite the followers of Islam", as they claimed: "There is no cooperation without unity, and without cooperation there is no way to save the country" (微團結莫能協力；非協力無以救國) ("Lun jiuguo de liliang" 1938, n.p.). Soon they established a department in

[37] The Association was originally named as a national salvation association of the Hui nation (*Huimin*) in 1938, and was later renamed, upon the request of Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887–1975), as a national salvation association of Islam/Muslims (*Huijiao*). It has to be noted that the late-Qing and Republican periods witnessed the debates, negotiations, definitions, and constructions of the idea of Hui as a collective group of people. In this regard, how to name them was an important issue, which already existed upon the establishment of the new Republic. For a discussion regarding the naming of the Hui's associations, see Wan 2015, 160–166 and Li 2021, 119–121.

[38] This was a common view held by a large number of people during that time. For the relationship between the production of social facts and the construction of the modern Chinese nation-state, see Lam 2011.

charge of conducting surveys (*Diaocha bu* 調查部), with Wang Yuebo 王月波 (dates unknown) and later Feng Qinghong 馮慶鴻 (dates unknown, also known as Zibin 子斌) as the director ("Benhui li jian shi lianxi huiyi jilu" 1938, n.p.), Zhang Zhaoli 張兆理 (1906–1997, known as Hajji Yusuf Chang) as the deputy director ("Benhui di shiliu ci changhui huiyi jilu" 1939, n.p.), and Hong Kuiyuan 洪奎元 (dates unknown) as the secretary ("Benhui ge buhui banshi renyuan mingdan" 1938, n.p.). At the end of 1938, the *Diaocha bu* published a brief outline of their activities, which included the purpose, scale, methods, and contents of the surveys they intended to carry out, including the forms and questionnaires they designed ("Benhui diaocha bu diaocha gangyao" 1939, n.p.). In total, they issued seven types of forms and questionnaires to the local branches covering surveys and statistics in terms not only of population and households, but also of local Muslim associations, educational institutions, mosques, publications, etc. ("Yinian lai gongzuo baogao" 1939, 19).

The Islamic Association was perhaps the most organised body among Muslims in Republican China, especially in terms of financial support. However, several factors limited their endeavour of conducting comprehensive surveys regarding Muslim populations in different parts of China. First and foremost, for any census, especially "doing it on a large scale requires well-funded bureaucracies with highly trained administrators" (Espeland and Stevens 2008, 410). This seems to have been challenging for the Islamic Association. As a matter of fact, they do not seem to have had enough personnel for the surveys at either the central or the local levels. According to the revised Charter of the Association in 1939, there were, at most, only three secretaries who were actually in charge of daily affairs of the department ("Yejing xiuzheng chengzhun shehuibu bei'an" 1939, n.p.). The number of personnel might be even fewer at the local branches of the Islamic Association, not to mention the expertise required for them to conduct such a large-scale survey. On the other hand, the local branches of the Islamic Association never covered all parts of China. In Xinjiang, for instance, no such local branches ever existed; nor did they exist in other provinces and cities that were under Japanese occupation. That was probably why in 1940 the Islamic Association turned to the government for help.[39] However, this turned out to be challenging for the government as well. In the end, only twenty provinces actually carried out surveys, still to varying degrees.[40] Although no statistics for the overall population of Muslims in China based on actual surveys existed during the Republican period – neither the various initiatives or endeavours of the Hui themselves, including those of the Association, nor the attempts made by the Republican government, led to a reliable figure of the demographic situation of Muslims in China – various individuals and organisations still claimed that there were, more or less, 50 million Muslims in China.

[39] This record can be found in the archive of Academia Historica in Taiwan. See "Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui cheng ni paiyuan souji youguan Huimin cailiao" 1940. See also the study in Zhao and Zhang 2019, 73.

[40] Even in those provinces where surveys were conducted, the results remain far from satisfying, due to limited personnel and the expertise required. See Wan 2019, 19–28.

4 Settling upon 50 Million Muslims

General Bai Chongxi admitted that there were no accurate statistics regarding the exact number of our Muslim compatriots, and he even stated explicitly that the most cited figure of 50 million was ungrounded (Bai 1939a, 8). He regularly ascribed the weakness of the Hui to the lack of population surveys. However, this does not seem to have stopped him from joining others in using the number 50 million on various occasions. When elaborating on the purpose of the Islamic Association, Bai Chongxi, being aware of the fact that no one knew the exact number of Muslims in China, still insisted that, "the Association aims to unite the 50 million Muslim compatriots ... so as to save the country" (這個會底目的就是要把全國五千萬教胞團結起來......救國) (Bai 1938, 2). In another speech to mobilise Muslims for China's anti-Japanese war, Bai again reminded his fellow Muslims that they had a population of 50 million, who were not only great in number but had great characteristics, including unity, obedience, loyalty, etc. (Bai 1939b, 4–5). At the end of his speech, Bai made a *duʿā* (supplication to God in Islam), on behalf of the entire 50 million Muslims in China, that "the Real Lord will soon bring the ultimate punishment upon our aggressive enemies" (真宰速予暴敌以末日之制裁) (Bai 1939b, 5).

The belief in a population of 50 million Muslims was also shared by other members of the Islamic Association. For instance, Tang Kesan 唐柯三 (1882–1950), vice president of the Islamic Association, encouraged female Muslims to contribute to the Hui's project of national salvation and contended that if Muslim women, who constituted half of the 50 million, could not take on their responsibility for "religious revival and national salvation" (*xingjiao jiuguo* 興教救國), half of their strength would be wasted (Tang 1940, 13–14). For Tang Kesan, the 50 million Muslims, who were brave and enthusiastic for their religion and their country of China, should be the vital force for China's war with Japan.[41]

Despite the fact that no comprehensive figures for their Muslim compatriots in China had been provided, they still, it seems, felt confident about the number of 50 million. In a 1940 Open Letter to Muslim Compatriots throughout the Nation (*Gao quanguo Huibao shu* 告全國回胞書), the Islamic Association again confirmed publicly that there were 50 million Muslims in China ("Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui gao quanguo Huibao shu" 1940, n.p.).

The figure of 50 million was actually not the invention of the Islamic Association. One of the earliest mentions of it could already be traced back to the sources provided by Western missionaries. Elwood Morris Wherry (1843–1927), an American Presbyterian missionary to India, mentioned that an Indian gentleman[42] reported a population of 50 million Muslims in

[41] This could also be seen among other members of the Islamic Association, such as Sun Shengwu 孫繩武 (1894–1975), a prominent Hui politician and Islamist. See Sun 1940, 17.

[42] The person to whom Wherry referred here, an expert on Tibetan and Chinese literature, Rai Surat Chandra Das, C.I.E, is most likely the prominent scholar of Tibetan language and culture, Sarat Chandra Das (1849–1917).

China (Wherry 1907, 82). One of the first Chinese authors who claimed a population of 50 million Muslims in China was Sha Shanyu 沙善余 (1879–1968, also known as Shouyu 守愚), a well-known Muslim in Shanghai and founding member of the China Muslim Literary Society (*Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui* 中國回教學會).[43] In his *Foreword* to the journal of the Society, Sha maintained that, since there existed no detailed surveys concerning the Muslim population in China, with some saying it was 80 million and others saying it was 20 million, it would be reasonable to find a number in between, which was exactly 50 million (Shouyu 1926, 8). Subsequently, it became quite common to read in books, journal articles, and newspapers, published by Muslims and non-Muslims, that China had 50 million Muslims.

Thanks to the development of Muslim associations in modern China, Muslims at the time not only became better organised in China but were also able to be better connected with Muslims in other parts of the world, for instance, through the *Ḥajj* (Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca), international travel, business, and education in Muslim countries. Apparently, the number of 50 million also travelled with them.

Imam Ma Songting 馬松亭 (1895–1992), a founding member of the Chengda School, accompanied the Muslim students to Cairo in 1933, where he was invited to give a talk on Islam in China. After giving a brief introduction of Islam's long history in China, Ma Songting continued his speech with the population of Muslims in China. He stated:

> As for the population of the Hui people/nation in our country, we Muslims have not done any accurate surveys. According to the records of people from friendly countries in the East and the West, the numbers vary greatly: the minimum is said to be 8 million and the maximum 80 million, though neither is reliable. A reckoning shared by the majority is 50 million. Now, we Muslims, by calculating based on the density of the population in the 28 provinces in China, also believe that 50 million is indeed a reliable number.
>
> 全國回民總數，我們自家不曾有過精細的調查；據東西友邦人們的記錄，有很懸殊的數量：最少的說是八百萬，最多的說是八千萬，這些都不可靠；比較得大數人們同情的記錄是五千萬。現在，我們自家按照全中國廿八行省人口密度去推論，認爲五千萬是實在可靠的數目。(Ma 1933, 4)

His talk was given in Arabic in Cairo, translated by Ma Jian 馬堅 (1906–1978), and published later in *Yueh Hwa*. However, imam Ma Songting probably did not expect that his speech

[43] Many of the founding members of the Society were fluent in English themselves. For instance, Sha Shanyu studied English with Gilbert Reid (1857–1927), a missionary reformer in China and founder of the Mission among the Higher Classes in China. Sha also worked as an interpreter for Reuters in Shanghai, and served as editor of the famous *Shenbao* 申報, where he met Wu Tegong 伍特公 (1886–1961), another founder of the Society, who worked as an English interpreter at *Shenbao*. Therefore, my rendition of the title of the Society and the journal they published follows their own versions.

would later bring him great trouble. During the Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957–1959) under the Chinese Communist Party, he was frequently attacked,[44] and one of the accusations was that he supported the GMD when going to the Middle East under the pretence of being the "leader of 50 million Muslims in China" (Ma Huiping 1957, 13–14). As a matter of fact, Ma was not the only one who made such claims of 50 million Muslims in China when visiting other Muslim regions. To support their aim of "religious revival and national salvation", the Chinese Islamic Association for National Salvation launched several initiatives, including one that "involved employing linguistically accomplished, well-qualified Chinese Muslims as diplomats to make goodwill overtures to Muslim countries" (Chen 2016, 708). In 1938, *Yueh Hwa* reported on the activities of the Chinese Islamic Near East Delegation (*Zhongguo Huijiao Jindong fangwen tuan* 中國回教近東訪問團).[45] In the report, one member of the delegation told his Muslim coreligionists in Kolkata that there were 50 million Muslims in China (Ma 1938, 2). Interestingly, he addressed Muslims in India as "no strangers" (諸君非外人), even as his compatriots (*tongbao* 同胞). Therefore, he argued, "China is your [Indian Muslims'] China ... and India is our [Chinese Muslims'] India" (中國乃諸君之中國……印度乃吾人之印度) (Ma 1938, 3).

As discussed in earlier sections, none of the above-mentioned cases provides a comprehensive explanation of how the figure of 50 million Muslims in China was calculated. This situation changed in 1947, when the Islamic Association finally established a more robust foundation for their claim. Their persistent efforts to ascertain the Muslim population in China, as well as to legitimise the figure of 50 million, should be understood in the context of the 1946 constitutional amendment. This amendment, the result of which was presented at the beginning of this article, formally recognised the Hui population—not as a pan-Muslim identity, but as a distinct group defined as "those living in Inner China with special living habits". This constitutional recognition was pivotal for the Hui, as it provided a legal-political framework for advocating for an "appropriate" quota of representation in the National Assembly, an endeavour that Li Qian strove for some decades before.

As noted at the outset of this article, Chinese Muslims' demands for parliamentary representation culminated in the creation of Article 135 of the Constitution of the Republic. Drawing on this provision, the Islamic Association argued that the Hui people/nation were entitled to at least 90 seats in the National Assembly ("Zunzhong yisanwu tiao lifa jingshen tichu Huimin xuanju fa juti yijian" 1947, 4). This proposal was grounded in the constitutional stipulations regarding representation and the estimated population of the Hui. However, the figure of 50

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[44] Relevant reports could be seen, for instance, in Ma Mingji 1957, 9, Yishi 1957, 11, and "Quanguo Musilin jixu fanji youpai fenzi Ma Songting" 1958, 9–10.

[45] The Delegation was led by Wang Zengshan 王曾善 (1903–1961), officer of the government and member of the Legislative Yuan, together with imam Ha Decheng 哈德成 (1888–1943), government officials Ma Tianying 馬天英 (1900–1982) and Zhang Zhaoli, as well as Xue Wenbo 薛文波 (1909–1984). For the detailed activities of the Delegation, the Wang Zengshan Private Papers in the National University of Singapore Libraries are helpful. See https://digitalgems.nus.edu.sg/collection/140 (accessed February 10, 2023).

million Muslims did not result from years of diligent survey conducted by the Islamic Association. Instead, it was derived from statistics published by the Republican government's Statistics Department.

As the Islamic Association pointed out, the Statistics Department mentioned in the *Statistical Analysis of the Population Issue in China* (*Zhongguo renkou wenti zhi tongji fenxi* 中國人口問題之統計分析, 1946, 50), that China had a population of 48,104,240 Muslims. However, the Statistics Department also mentioned that this number was not based on their own survey but was taken from the *Chinese Year Book* (*Zhongguo nianjian* 中國年鑒).

In 1935, the Commercial Press in Shanghai published the premier issue of the *Chinese Year Book* in English. In his *Foreword* to the book, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940) specifically pointed out that the publication of the book was entirely under Chinese editorship and management (Cai 1935, n.p.). What is perhaps particularly relevant here is that Cai emphasised that "the present volume may properly pride itself upon the authenticity of all data embodied therein" (ibid.). The "authenticity" of the figures probably came from the fact that, according to Cai, the "chapters are specially prepared by renowned authorities in their respective fields" (ibid.). Cai Yuanpei's endorsement, the expertise of the contributors, and the reputation of the Commercial Press all seemed to guarantee the authenticity of the numbers offered in the book.[46]

In the *Year Book*, the chapter on Islam was titled "Mohammedanism". It was attributed to a certain Ha Guodong 哈國棟, an alleged authority on Islam in China, and most likely a Muslim too. Apparently, his ability to write in English indicates that he must have been well-educated. Ha Guodong introduced the history of Islam in China, especially Islam during the Qing and Republican periods, and the religious, commercial, and educational activities of Muslims in China. Several tables were contained in the chapter, in which the author provided us with information concerning not only the Muslim population in China, but also famous mosques, prominent Muslim elites, Islamic educational institutions, Muslim public bodies, popular publications, and a list of Chinese students in Egypt (Ha 1935, 1559–1565). As far as the table for the distribution of Muslims in China is concerned, the author, an expert and "prominent authority on Mohammedanism", as described in the book, did not provide any details about the basis for the figures. However, a brief look at the numbers in the table would lead one to suspect the "authenticity" that Cai Yuanpei promised, or at least, render them counterintuitive. For instance, Xinjiang or the Huibu 回部 (the Muslim region, if Hui is understood as Muslims), China's largest Muslim province, had around 2.3 million Muslims, which, unexpectedly, was less than that of many Han Chinese populated provinces, such as Sichuan 四川 with a number of 2.6 million Muslims. The author reported that the Three

[46] The editors of the book also emphasised the authenticity and even authoritativeness of the data they offered in the book. For instance, see Zhang's contribution that stressed the "Important Features of This Issue" (Zhang 1937a, vii).

Eastern Provinces, for instance, had a total number of 7.5 million Muslims, which was more than the total of the three traditionally Muslim concentrated provinces of Gansu, Ningxia 寧夏, and Qinghai.

The *Year Book* had a different editor for its following issues; it went through revisions, the content was reorganised, and other specialists and experts were invited to contribute to the book. However, the chapter on "Mohammedanism" remained unchanged until the sixth issue in 1943.[47] In that issue, the chapter was no longer titled "Mohammedanism" but "Islam". The contents were also largely different. The historical part was significantly reduced, and more contemporary information was added, especially from the work led by the Islamic Association. As a matter of fact, the chapter author, Zhang Qixian (Chang Chi-Hsien), who was also the editor of the book, noted at the beginning of the text that the data he presented was "furnished by the Chinese Islamic National Salvation Federation [i.e. the Islamic Association]" (Zhang 1943, 66).

When it comes to the data regarding Muslim population, the chapter quotes several numbers. It was reported that 300 million people in the world followed Islam and "out of this number some 48 million are Chinese" (Zhang 1943, 66). In the paragraph immediately following, the author wrote that "during the past 1,300 years, the number of Muslims in China had increased from a few thousand to nearly 50 million at present" (Zhang 1943, 66). Notably, the original table created by Ha Guodong was preserved in this chapter, giving a total number of 48,104,240.

It seems that everyone created their own numbers. As for the number 50 million, Sha Shanyu invented it simply by giving the average number between the highest (80 million) and lowest (20 million) figures that were available to him. The Islamic Association finally legitimised their claim by cross-referencing the data that they themselves "furnished". And for the rest, they just conveniently used the number, without justification. The number 50 million became even more widespread through the publication of the first issue of the *Chinese Year Book*. It was quoted by a large number of authors, such as Tao Xingzhi 陶行知 (1891–1946), Wang Zengshan, and Fu Tongxian 傅統先 (1910–1985).[48]

5 Concluding Remarks

The discourse surrounding modern Chinese Muslim demography is deeply intertwined with Hui identity politics, particularly in the context of China's nation-state building in the mid-

[47] From the third issue in 1937, the name of the chapter's author, Ha Guodong, was removed from the book.

[48] See Tao 1938, 7, Wang 1939, 21, and Fu 1940, 167–168.

twentieth century. The inclusion of Article 135 in the 1946 Constitution represents both a beginning and an endpoint for this phase of Hui identity politics. It can be seen as a beginning because, for the first time in the history of Islam in China, the Hui were formally recognised as equal citizens within a constitutional democracy. This legal-political framework allowed them to define themselves in relation to other groups, peoples/nations, and particularly the Han majority, under the principles of equality and citizenship within a modern nation-state. However, this constitutional identity also faced an abrupt end. Within just a few years, the political landscape in China shifted dramatically following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This transformation precluded the Hui from actively participating in the nascent democratic framework or fully developing the constitutional identity envisioned under the 1946 Constitution.

While the constitutional recognition of the Hui marked a critical moment in the intersection of identity politics and the emerging Chinese nation-state, the quantification of Muslim populations further reflects the interplay between numbers and sociopolitical frameworks. Following the scholarship on the sociology of quantification, particularly Espeland and Stevens, who describe the "production and communication of numbers, and its consequences for the organization and character of modern life" (Espeland and Stevens 2008, 402), this article has traced the emergence and distribution of various Muslim population figures during the late Qing and the Republican periods.

Differing from previous scholarship that focuses on a "correct estimation" of the Muslim population in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century China, this article is more concerned with the historical context in which these numbers emerged and the social implications they had. I have analysed not only the "making" of different numbers for the Muslim population in China, but also the "doing" of these numbers, that is, "the different dimensions of what gets done by them in different contexts" (Espeland and Stevens 2008, 405). This approach of "numbers in context" highlights the purposes and meanings of numbers, instead of the accuracy and scientificity of numbers.

I have shown how numbers, which "easily circulate and seem straightforward to interpret" (Espeland and Stevens 2008, 415), serve as an authoritative agency and are used for different purposes, especially the roles which population numbers played in constructing the Hui Muslims as a collective group of people in the context of China transiting from an empire to a modern nation-state. The Hui's endeavour to identify themselves as a *minzu* of their own shows how numbers work in constituting the things they represent, especially through "directing attention, persuading, and creating new categories for apprehending the world" (Espeland and Stevens 2008, 404). My article also demonstrates that it was only during the last decades of imperial China that numbers became a relevant topic for scrutiny in the long history of Islam in China. Notably, the Muslims' case also reveals that, as Silvana Patriarca argued, the establishment of the modern nation-state brought it about that statistics, that is, in our case, the Muslim population number in China, "became a widespread practice and attracted the solicitous attention of ruling elites and reformers alike" (Patriarca 1996, 1).

I have demonstrated that the history of Muslim population figures in modern China is multifaceted, shaped by diverse religious, political, and social agendas. Across the various cases examined in this article, a key observation is that nearly all the actors involved recognised the "constitutive power of statistics" (Patriarca 1996, 240) in transforming the Muslim population into a collective entity. This is particularly evident in the case of the Islamic Association, whose public dissemination of demographic figures not only quantified the Muslim *minzu* but also reinforced its collective self-awareness. By making these numbers visible, the Association effectively facilitated a process of self-recognition among Hui Muslims, providing a demographic foundation upon which claims to distinct identity and political representation could be articulated. In doing so, population figures became more than just statistical data; they functioned as tools of self-definition, shaping both internal understandings of Hui identity and external perceptions of Muslims within the broader national framework. As Lam (2011, 172) has suggested, the publication of such numbers enabled the transformation of information about "who we are" and "what we want" into public knowledge, allowing for further dissemination and engagement with state authorities and wider society.

By tracing the production and circulation of these numbers, my research contributes to a broader understanding of how Islam and the Hui were conceptualised in twentieth-century China. Rather than treating demographic figures as objective reflections of reality, I have highlighted their role as socially constructed artefacts that were shaped by—and in turn helped shape—the shifting dynamics of Hui identity, state policies, and national belonging. In the context of China's transition from empire to nation-state, these numbers became a means through which Hui Muslims positioned themselves within the emerging political order, negotiating their status in relation to both the Han majority and the modern Chinese state. This study, therefore, not only re-examines the historical processes underlying Muslim demographic enumeration but also sheds light on the evolving interplay between statistics, identity politics, and nation-building in modern China.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Sun Yat-sen, "400 million Chinese", and the Fear of Demographic Stagnation in Early Twentieth-century China

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Through a concise biography of the number "400 million" (*si wan wan*) as used by Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the first provisional president of the Republic of China in 1912, this paper clarifies how and why Sun used the widespread image of a stagnating "400 million Chinese" despite the lack of evidence for this alleged population number. The article elucidates how the vagueness surrounding the image of "400 million Chinese" was attractive to Sun, as it allowed him to pragmatically adjust its (ethnic) definition along with his shifting aims. Ultimately, when systematising his philosophy in 1924, Sun used "400 million Chinese" to generate a sense of urgency for the implementation of his *minzu* ("Nationalism") doctrine, the first of three doctrines constituting his chief political philosophy: the Three Principles of the People.

本文通過傳記分析，探討了孫中山（1866 – 1925）在缺乏確切人口數據的情況下，為何及如何廣泛使用“四萬萬中國人”這一概念。研究表明，這一模糊意象對孫中山具有吸引力，因其允許他根據政治目標的變化靈活調整他的民族定義。最終，在 1924 年系統化其政治哲學時，孫中山使用“四萬萬中國人”這一數字，為其“民族主義”學說的推行營造緊迫感，而該學說成為其核心政治哲學“三民主義”的重要組成部分。

Keywords: Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan); Three Principles of the People; Late Qing China; Republican China; Biography of Numbers; Ethnic Politics

關鍵詞： 孫中山（孫逸仙），三民主義，晚清，中華民國，數字傳記，民族政治

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Introduction

In early 1924, Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙, 1866–1925), who had been the first provisional president of the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo* 中華民國; hereafter ROC) in 1912, discussed a wide array of themes as part of a set of six lectures on his central doctrine (*zhuyi* 主義) of *minzu* (民族, "nationalism"). *Minzu* was the first of three doctrines, the second doctrine being *minquan* (民權, "democracy") and the third being *minsheng* (民生, "people's livelihood"). Together these constituted his chief political philosophy: the Three Principles of the People (*San min zhuyi* 三民主義).[1] As Sun's lectures on the *minzu* doctrine took place under the auspices of the First United Front (1923–1927) between his Chinese Nationalist Party (*Zhongguo Guomindang* 中國國民黨; KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (*Zhongguo Gongchandang* 中國共産黨; CCP) which received significant support from the Soviet Union, Sun's rhetorical focus on the theme of anti-imperialism came as little surprise. His tendency towards allegorical references to the field of demography in making his case for anti-imperialism during the said *minzu*-lectures was, however, much less predictable.

Sun did not duplicate communist dogma in providing evidence for the threat of imperialism, instead opting to focus on the demographic threat presented by the imperial powers. An ever-present keyword in all of Sun's six *minzu* lectures was "population" (*renkou* 人口), and, especially in his first speech of January 27, 1924, this was the theme that wove his anti-imperialistic argument together. When discussing demographic developments in this lecture, Sun noted that China's population of 400 million (*si wan wan* 四萬萬)—a population estimate that he, just like many of his contemporaries, took as a preset but never substantiated—had essentially stagnated since 1800, while the populations of the imperial powers had increased exponentially during the same timeframe. Sun took lessons from demographic developments in France, where population growth during the nineteenth century had been similarly lacklustre to the allegedly stagnating population of China. As will be shown below, the cause for the French stagnation was clear to Sun: an excessive French fear over the demographic catastrophes predicted by Thomas Malthus (1766–1834).

Although mentions have been made of Sun's obsession with demography or his usage of an image of "400 million Chinese" in passing, this has seldom served as the focal point in existing scholarship.[2] This article's decision to focus on developments around 1912 and 1924

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[1] 1924 was not the first time Sun had discussed his Three Principles of the People. The earliest references are found in his 1905 discussion of "Three Great Doctrines" (*San da zhuyi* 三大主義) that to him explained the strength of the West. It was not until 1924 that Sun systematised his ideology in a set of sixteen lectures: six on *minzu*, six on *minquan*, and four on *minsheng*. References to the Three Principles in this article pertain to the 1924 lectures unless stated otherwise. For the "maiden publication" of his political philosophy in 1905, see Sun Yat-sen (1989, II: 256–257).

[2] For instance, Audrey Wells (2011, 62–63) stated in reference to Sun's first *minzu* lecture: "Inappropriate as it might seem today, Sun concluded by expressing concern that the Chinese population might fall behind that of the European powers who might then swallow her up". Wells did not, however, discuss Sun's invocation of "400 million Chinese". Mainland Chinese

specifically, beyond these years being recognised as pivotal moments in his life, can be explained by the notably high frequency of references made by Sun to "400 million" in these periods. Using the *Sun Yat-sen Studies Database* (*Zhongshan xueshu ziliaoku* 中山學術資料庫), which includes *The Complete Works of the Father of the Republic* (*Guofu quanji* 國父全集) that this article follows for citations of Sun's discourse,[3] 150 instances of use of "400 million" by Sun between 1897 and 1924 were identified. Of these, 43 entries are concentrated in 1912, and 28 in 1924, while no other year surpasses 14 entries (1923).[4]

This contribution, originally inspired by the 2022 *Biographies of Numbers* conference at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, explores the background and evolution of the connotation of Sun's "400 million Chinese" through a concise qualitative biography of Sun's usage of the number up to his first lecture on the doctrine of *minzu* in January 1924. It clarifies how Sun frequently used the abstract image of a stagnating "400 million Chinese"—despite little factual basis underpinning the alleged population figure—to justify a sense of urgency in implementing his political aims. Furthermore, the article elucidates how the vagueness of the number was attractive to Sun, allowing him as it did to pragmatically adjust its (ethnic) definition as his own aims shifted over the years.

400 Million Chinese: an Abstract yet Attractive Image

Before delving into Sun Yat-sen's views on China's demographics, it is important to highlight that the notion of a stagnant population of "400 million Chinese" had by the early twentieth century already been widely accepted both within and beyond late Qing China. As shown by Andrea Bréard (2019) among others, the fact that census surveys were infrequent and imperfect prior to the founding of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo*

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scholarship contains a handful of studies on Sun Yat-sen's preoccupation with "400 million Chinese", but these tend to use selective snippets of Sun's rhetoric to argue that his ideas aligned with the PRC's one-child policy (1980–2016), by claiming he had been worried about "overcrowding" (*ren man wei huan* 人滿爲患). This claim is based on one single utterance in 1894, prior to the start of Sun's revolutionary career (Sun Yat-sen 1989, IV: 3–11). Most scholars concede that by 1924 there had been a drastic shift towards an encouragement of demographic growth, with "400 million Chinese" as a sidenote in Sun's general demographic views; e.g., Zhang Jianhua (2002); Li Daoji (2009). Other more recent works that look beyond the (now abolished) one-child policy and acknowledge the persuasive quality of an imagined "400 million Chinese" tend to gloss over the racial connotations of Sun's demographic ideas, e.g., Yan Deru (2016).

[3] This 1989 ROC anthology represents the most comprehensive collection of Sun's discourse. While certain contentious texts attributed to Sun such as the much-debated 1925 'second will' addressed to the Soviet Union are omitted, these exclusions do not pertain to the focus of this article. Therefore, all translations of Sun's Chinese-language discourse follow the *Complete Works of the Father of the Republic*.

[4] Beyond this quantitative note on the frequency of Sun's utterances on the "400 million", the hermeneutical selection and analysis of Sun's references below is based on the author's personal research on Sun's Complete Works. The lack of quantitative methods in spite of the numerical nature of the topic, can nevertheless find support in the argument made by Theodore Porter (2020, ix) on the sometimes-excessive *Trust in Numbers* in recent times: "Those who undertake to toss qualitative reasoning out the door are likely soon to be found sneaking it back in through the window".

中華人民共和國; PRC) in 1949 did not dissuade intellectuals, politicians, and scholars from using constructed "biographies" of the number 400 million to their advantage. Tong Lam (2011, 36) called this constructed image of a "400 million Chinese" an "enumerative imaginary", noting that it became a popular trope in the West which before long was also employed by the Chinese to "express their own hopes and fears" on the future of their country.

Demographic surveys were not alien to China. The first somewhat unified empire-wide census was taken in 2 CE during the Han dynasty (202 BCE–9 CE, 25–220 CE), with 57,671,400 "mouths" (*kou* 口) in 12,366,470 "households" (*hu* 户) registered in a bid to obtain a clearer view of the empire's tax base and the amount of soldiers available for mobilisation. Demographic dread might already have been present during the late Han, as the (recorded) population dropped significantly to 48 million by 140 CE as the dynasty faltered (Twitchett, Loewe, and Fairbank 1986, 240). Population surveys came and went by differing frequencies and accuracies throughout China's dynastic history. Census surveys taken during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), for example, attested to a stagnant Chinese population just above 60 million, with a massive northward migration of the population underway. Ho Ping-ti (1959, 258–260) noted, however, that said migrations were "probably more apparent than real", as the south worked more actively (and successfully) to reduce its local tax burden by understating its population. This phenomenon would extend well into the twentieth century and was by no means limited to China alone. In the preindustrial world, especially, qualitative factors often outweighed quantitative ones, as (census) figures offered local interests a means of negotiating with central authorities, thus providing opportunities to increase agency (Porter 2020, 25). Indeed, reliable population statistics have been hard to come by through China's dynastic history: numbers more often reveal qualitative local narratives than quantitative numerical facts.

During the first centuries of the Qing, novel ideas on population censuses had started to take shape. A survey taken in 1741, for instance, made a distinction between "men/women and adult/child" (*nannü daxiao* 男女大小) (Bréard 2019, 220). From the issue of this census until 1851, when the Taiping rebellion (1850–1864) fragmented the unity of the Chinese realm, statistics were recorded annually (Durand 1960, 236). While numbers fluctuated heavily over the years and still suffered from similar deficiencies as during the preceding Ming dynasty (1368–1644), they at least to some degree attest to explosive population growth. Demographic surveys of the faltering Qing dynasty between 1873 and 1887 suggest a Chinese population somewhere between 277 and 426 million (Bréard 2019, 223–224). Considering the high death toll caused during the Taiping rebellion and general calamities related to the decline of the dynasty after 1850, it appears likely that an actual "400 million Chinese" could have been reached somewhere during the first half of the nineteenth century, and perhaps was maintained beyond. However, given the eventful and bloody nature of the century, a *stagnant* figure of "400 million Chinese"—the abstract demographic narrative that was ultimately popularised—is extremely unlikely.

"400 million Chinese" gained traction in Chinese, as well as Western and Japanese ideas on the Chinese population. Andrea Bréard (2019, 228–229) invoked the example of polemic Liang Qichao (梁啓超, 1873–1929), who, despite also noting that the actual population statistics were vague and the number should have been much higher by the turn of the twentieth century had no misfortunes befallen China, used the image of 400 million and its half, 200 million, to put emphasis on the fact that Chinese women were still unable to productively contribute to society.[5] Equally, however, the number was invoked abroad whenever suspicion arose that the estimate of "400 million Chinese" was too high. Other times, the number was taken as a given, and used in the West to emphasise that the "400 million Chinese" constituted a massive untapped market, be that religious or economic. Bréard (ibid.) cited, for instance, a 1880 letter by an American Presbyterian missionary which held that a "Chinese gentleman" had stated that the actual number of Chinese was closer to a quarter of the alleged 400 million, but equally showed examples that the number of 400 million when seen as a preset staple number, was used to stress that a large amount of people remained estranged from the Christian God. Another popular frame with an ethnic connotation, as we shall see below through Sun Yat-sen's usage of the demographic image, was that of a "400 million [Han] Chinese" being unjustly occupied by a mere few million "Manchu foreigners" (Tong Lam 2011, 32 –33).

Such demographic images of "400 million Chinese" would persist well into the first half of the twentieth century, and even survive the return of census surveys with some level of credibility during the waning years of the Qing. These were, once again, incomplete and fragmentary at best, as most efforts were upended by the dynasty's collapse (Durand 1960, 245). Further adding to the ambiguity surrounding the actual size of the Chinese population was popular resistance to the "modern" census practices that the Qing administration tried to implement, with some Chinese accusing census takers of "stealing souls" (Tong Lam 2011, 128).

In lieu of clear numbers, be they to emphasise that the Chinese population was too low, stagnating, full of boundless potential, or too high, the constructed image of "400 million Chinese" would, by the turn of the twentieth century when Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary career started to gain traction, take shape as a leading narrative in Chinese demography. As will be shown below, just like most of his compatriots—and for that matter, those who invoked the trope abroad—Sun would use a wide array of evolving frames using the image of "400 million Chinese" to suit various revolutionary and governmental aims.

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[5] On Liang Qichao's advocation of numbers and statistics in relation to economics and concepts of society, see Stefan Christ's "The Quantification of Chinese Society: Why Did Liang Qichao Ask for Statistics?" in this special issue.

Sun Yat-sen's Formative Years

Sun was one of the first Chinese to receive an almost entirely Western education with only the bare minimum of Chinese education at the primary school level. After enjoying a middle school education on Hawai'i, where his elder brother owned a considerable estate, Sun successfully pursued a medical degree in Hong Kong. After graduating in 1892, Sun would attempt to obtain government employment in Beijing through a letter to the senior Qing statesman Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901),[6] which went unanswered as Li was preoccupied with the military and diplomatic fallout of the first Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895). This failure to obtain a position in the Qing government was a turning point for Sun, who abandoned reformism to opt for revolution. In November 1894, Sun would play a prominent role in the establishment of the revolutionary Revive China Society (Xing Zhong hui 興中會), which would conduct a failed revolutionary attempt a year later in Guangzhou.

Shortly prior to the Guangzhou uprising of 1895, Sun had connected the suffering of the "400 million Chinese" to his revolutionary cause, and expressed great pride in the size of the Chinese population in the founding declaration of the Hong Kong chapter of the Revive China Society: "With 400 million people [四百兆人民][7] and tens of thousands *li* [里][8] of land, we [Chinese] can become heroes, invincible in the world". (Sun Yat-sen 1989, II: 2–5; quoted in Hu Shengwu and Dai Angang 1996, 18). Despite the great potential Sun saw in his plentiful compatriots, no national uprising was triggered by his efforts in Guangzhou, and he was forced into exile to Japan. Many more attempts at revolution and many voyages over Asia, the United States and Europe would follow, before the Wuchang Uprising (*Wuchang qiyi* 武昌起義) would finally succeed in late 1911.

A period worth singling out during Sun's early revolutionary career with regard to the topic of demography is his visit to London in 1896 and 1897.[9] After gaining celebrity status in Great Britain through a dramatic kidnapping incident at the Qing dynasty's consular offices during October 1896 (see Sun Yat-sen 1897), Sun spent several months in the British capital and frequently visited the city's libraries where he met with local and foreign scholars, many of

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[6] The letter, dated June 1894 and listed as *Explaining the Great Plan to Save the Country to Minister Li Hongzhang*, can be found in Sun Yat-sen (1989, IV: 3–11). This was Sun's only reference to the dangers of overcrowding, see footnote 2.

[7] Note that Sun here refers to "400 million" with *si bai zhao* (400 times one million). Subsequently most of his references (and all others mentioned in this article) were to *si wan wan* (four times 10,000 times 10,000). Presently, this manner of denoting units of a hundred million has fallen out of grace as well, and *si yi* (four times 100 million) has become the standard way to denote 400 million.

[8] *Li* is a traditional Chinese unit of distance. Its length was never fully standardised but was usually close to half a kilometre.

[9] Considerable controversy surrounds the length of Sun's Europe stay in the late nineteenth century. Sun himself attested to a stay of two years (until 1898) and claimed he also visited France. However, as nothing is documented about this proposed longer stay, a sojourn of less than a year limited to London and some places in England seems more probable (Wells 2001, 11–14).

whom held left-wing sympathies.[10] Expecting to witness prosperity on every street corner, Sun had been shocked by the London slums and the general inequality of British society. It was the era of the Fabians and Socialists, and Sun witnessed with his own eyes that not everybody had profited from Great Britain's industrial successes. While a degree of speculation remains on which specific ideological influence ultimately prevailed on Sun during this time, one inspiration is clear: the American economist and philosopher Henry George (1839–1897). As George had passed away during Sun's sojourn in London, he and his magnum opus *Progress and Poverty: an Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth* (1879) received amplified media attention in the British press, likely catching Sun's eye. This work essentially represented a "liberal fix" to prevent the social upheavals predicted by Karl Marx (1818–1883) through a land-equalization scheme under a single-tax movement, and would ultimately provide much inspiration for Sun's anti-Marxist standpoints in the doctrine of *minsheng* in his 1924 version of the Three Principles of the People.

That Sun chose to connect Henry George's ideas to the perils of late Qing China is hardly surprising as the American philosopher cited ample demographic examples from China in his work. Specifically, George referred to China to prove the fallacy of the theory of Malthusian population growth in one of his central arguments (e.g., George 1912, xi–xii). George, for instance, claimed that the descendants of Kongzi (孔子, 551–479 BCE, a.k.a. Confucius) should have numbered in the septillions (24 zeros) by the nineteenth century had Malthus's predictions been correct: under Malthus's theory, they should have doubled in number every generation due to the societal privileges they had generally enjoyed since Kongzi's death, which evidently had not been the case (George 1912, 111–112). The fact that George not only praised China as a great ancient civilisation while simultaneously criticising its stagnation under Qing rule (e.g., George 1912, 480), and sharply condemned imperialist practices in general throughout the work by, for example, connecting the Indian and Chinese plight (e.g., George 1912, 117; 121), likely made it even more suited to the reinforcement of Sun's ideological foundation.

While Sun would not immediately reproduce any demographic arguments in a Georgist vein, one finds an increasing amount of references to a "400 million Chinese" in the years following Sun's stay in London. A noteworthy early usage of this image came shortly after Sun's return to Japan in 1897 during a discussion with the eccentric Japanese adventurer Miyazaki Tōten (宮崎滔天, 1871–1922), when Sun connected the ongoing suffering of the "400 million Chinese" under the faltering Qing dynasty to the general plight of oppressed Asia:

> The reason why our Party is trying so hard to agitate is in order to live up to the expectations of our compatriots (*tongbao* 同胞]. You have all tried your best to

[10] For information about Sun's (possible) meetings with foreign scholars during his stay in London, see Wells (2001, 10–28). For an overview of English writings by Sun, many of which were compiled during his London stay, see Anderson (2016).

> support the way of our party and wish to provide support for China's 400 million common people, as well as wiping away the humiliation of Asia's yellow races, in restoring humanity in the universe. Only if our country's revolution succeeds, will [an end to the humiliation] be obtained. (Sun Yat-sen 1989, II: 398–399)

The fact that Miyazaki Tōten had likely (further) inducted Sun into Georgism should, in this regard, come as little surprise.[11] In the subsequent years, Sun would continue to invoke the image of "400 million Chinese" under the domination of a tiny minority of Manchu oppressors. In *The True Solution of the Chinese Question*, a treatise dated Autumn 1904 and aimed at convincing the American people to support his revolutionary quest, Sun emphasised the non-Chinese status of the Manchu Qing rulers as well as their relatively small demographic size vis-à-vis the oppressed (Han) Chinese, and stated (in English): "The Manchus number at present not more than five millions, while the Chinese have a population of not less than four hundred millions. It is therefore their constant fear that the Chinese might rise up some day and regain their country" (Sun Yat-sen 1989, X: 87–96). Sun's aims were clear: by affirming the hugely discrepant population sizes of the 'subdued' native (Han) Chinese and their 'foreign' Manchu occupiers, Sun hoped to find sympathisers to liberate them from this injustice.

Clearly, "Chinese" was equal to "Han Chinese" during this part of Sun's life. In an English treatise dating back to 1898 titled *The Chinese Rebellion*, Sun had already made a distinction between "China with its four hundred million inhabitants" and the "comparatively small body of Tartar conquerors" that governed them in a bid to elicit British support for his cause.[12] Similar views would gain more ground in the same year, after the Hundred Days' Reform (Wuxu Bianfa 戊戌變法; June–September 1898) at the Qing court was crushed, and, among others, Liang Qichao started to propagate the notion that China was experiencing a Darwinist struggle between the Manchu and Han (Pusey 1983, 181–185). Such beliefs would be further radicalised in *The Revolutionary Army* (*Gemingjun* 革命軍, 1903) by the young revolutionary Zou Rong (鄒容, 1885–1905), who hailed the revolutionary struggle of the Han Chinese to replace the Manchu occupiers as the racial duty of all 400 million Han Chinese (Zou Rong 1903; quoted in Tong Lam 2011, 32–33).

Sun, who during this period was in close touch with both Liang Qichao and Zou Rong, would occasionally also drop any inclusive ethnic pretences by referring directly to the perceived

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[11] Miyazaki Tōten (1982, 31–45) described in his autobiography how his brother had introduced him to George's philosophy at an early age. It is highly likely that he discussed this with Sun, as contact between the two men was frequent around the turn of the twentieth century. Marius Jansen (1967, 56–57) also noted that Tōten's brother may have even introduced George's philosophy to Sun directly.

[12] The article was released on July 22, 1898, in the London-based newspaper *The Morning Post*. Found through a reprint included in Anderson (2016, 218–222).

plight of a humiliated "400 million Han Chinese". An example of this came during a speech in 1906 in Tokyo, where he ended an exposition on an early version of his Three Principles of the People as well as his aim of overthrowing the Qing dynasty and founding a republic by stating: "[A Chinese republic with a strong constitution] is the greatest happiness for *we* 400 million Han Chinese. I think all of you will be willing to take this task on and work together to make it into reality, which is what I have wished for the most" (emphasis mine; Sun Yat-sen 1989, III: 8–14).[13] Despite such rhetoric, even Sun himself does not appear to have claimed that "400 million Chinese" was a factual estimate: an English journalist who attended a 1905 lecture by Sun in Beckenham, London noted that during his speech Sun stated that the "estimated 400 millions of inhabitants of China was based on a census made 200 years ago and the number might have increased or decreased" (Anderson 2016, 248–249).[14]

Sun had clearly paid note to the useful ethnic connotations of the "400 million", but perhaps in somewhat less radical terminology than, for instance, Liang Qichao and Zou Rong. James Pusey (1983, 319) observed that Sun, unlike some of his revolutionary contemporaries, had been "anti-Manchu before he was pro-Darwin". Wu Benxia (2015) has also argued that, compared to Liang Qichao's Social Darwinism concerning racial competition, Sun's ideas were to a greater extent centred around the notion of "mutual aid" (*huzhu* 互助), which would become especially apparent in his 1924 version of the *minsheng* doctrine. Be that as it may, Sun's narrative of the "400 million Chinese" during his revolutionary career was primarily also one of ethnic (Han) pride whenever he spoke of their suppressed potential.

"Inclusive" Provisional President Sun Yat-sen and the Road to the First United Front

After the success of the Wuchang Uprising in late 1911, Sun Yat-sen, seen as the ideal compromise candidate between bickering factions on account of his senior revolutionary track record, was elected provisional president (Linshi da zongtong 臨時大總統) of the ROC and started his term on January 1, 1912. Sun's tenure was to last no more than six weeks, as he resigned in favour of military leader Yuan Shikai (袁世凱, 1859–1916). Despite the fact that the Qing dynasty had been successfully overthrown and the image of a "400 million Han Chinese oppressed by a tiny minority of Manchus" seemed now a matter of the past, Sun maintained a tendency to invoke "400 million Chinese". On his first day as provisional president of the ROC, Sun paid tribute to his compatriots as follows: "We owe the restoration of

[13] The entry *The Three Principles of the People and the Future of the Chinese Nation* is dated December 2, 1906.

[14] These remarks were originally printed in *The Beckenham Journal* of March 18, 1905.

our country to the efforts of all of you, and I, the president, therefore would like to respectfully convey a message of appreciation to you, my 400 million compatriots" (Sun Yat-sen, II: 437). Many similar callouts to 'his' 400 million compatriots would follow in 1912.

At least in public, the definition of these "400 million compatriots" was now broader than it had been during Sun's revolutionary years. On the same day as his tribute to the Chinese people Sun explained that the ROC consisted of five major nationalities: "The essence of the country is in the people. Combining the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui,[15] and Tibetan lands into one country; that is, combining the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan nationalities into one people, is the unification of our people" (Sun Yat-sen 1989, II: 23–24).[16] Sun would even hail the "five nationalities" (*wuzu* 五族) as "one family" (*yi jia* 一家) during 1912.[17] However, as also aptly noted by Murata Yujiro (2004, 123), while perhaps not as frequent and openly Han-centric as before, the goal of striving for racial assimilation of said five nationalities was still present during this period whenever Sun was speaking to specific audiences, such as other party members.[18] It goes without saying that the core of this to-be-assimilated new Chinese 'family' was implied to be the Han.

This view was also prominent in the foreign press at the time. For instance, when explaining that the five-coloured flag of the ROC was based on the idea of the five nationalities, James Cantlie and Charles Jones (1912, 141–142), whose *Sun Yat-sen and the Awakening of China* (1912) can be considered the first coherent biography of Sun, stressed that it was only logical that the (Han) Chinese were entitled the highest red stripe of the flag due to their "intellectual, commercial, and political superiority". While the authors did not invoke the image of the "400 million Chinese" and were highly positive about Sun's "enlightened" efforts in 1912, they did touch upon related demographic tropes that were popular around the turn of the twentieth century, as if Sun was to prevail in China they expected the "yellow peril" to materialize (Cantie and Jones 1912, 126). The discourse by Sun imbued with a more inclusive interpretation of the "400 million Chinese", rebranded as made up of the five nationalities, would nevertheless persist until the first half of the next year. On March 13, 1913, for instance, Sun paid tribute once more to the five nationalities and included them in his "400 million Chinese" during a speech to the Chinese community in Kobe, Japan: "Today our country is a country shared by our five nationalities' 400 million. Our 400 million people have become

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[15] Note that the "Hui" here pertained to all Muslims in China, and is unrelated to the later Hui ethnicity delineated by the PRC. On the notion of Hui and the ambiguity surrounding Muslim population statistics during nineteenth- and twentieth-century China See also Li Gang's "Recognition through Numbers: Muslim Population Numbers and the Hui in Modern China" in this special issue.

[16] These comments were made in the *Proclamation on the Inauguration of the provisional president* on January 1, 1912.

[17] The most prominent example is Sun's speech *The Five Races Work Together for the Benefit of Mankind All over the World* of September 3, 1912 (Sun Yat-sen 1989, III: 72–73).

[18] The *KMT Manifesto* of August 13, 1912, can be considered an example of this (Sun Yat-sen 1989, II: 33–35).

the masters of the Republic of China, which is very different from the position of slaves [that they held during the Qing dynasty]" (Sun Yat-sen 1989, III: 150–153).

Yuan Shikai seized absolute power in 1913 by expelling Sun's KMT, which had won the first national assembly elections (Spence 2012, 266–267). After a second revolution in 1913 to oust Yuan failed, Sun was forced into exile to Japan for another three years. During the remainder of the 1910s, Sun desperately sought ways to get back into power, and approached several Western countries and Japan for assistance. By 1916, Sun was once again able to operate from China after the collapse of Yuan Shikai's imperial ambitions and his subsequent demise. An attempt to retake power from Guangzhou as generalissimo of a government comprised of part of the assembly elected in 1913 ended in failure, and in 1918 Sun retreated from politics to his estate in Shanghai's French concession. After Yuan Shikai's downfall in 1916, China fragmented with the advent of the warlord era (*junfa shidai* 軍閥時代, 1916–1928).

Thereafter, the image of "400 million Chinese" sharply decreased in frequency in Sun's discourse,[19] and came to be subject to another narrative shift. Domestically, Sun used the large size of the population to emphasise the raw potential of the country and inspire his compatriots to (re)unite. While the limitless potential of the (Han) Chinese had previously been a theme in Sun's pre-1911 rhetoric on the "400 million Chinese" as well, only now did it truly take centre stage, since the downfall of the Qing dynasty had rendered the foreign occupiers narrative impractical. In the preface to his *The Fundamentals of National Reconstruction* (*Jian guo fanglüe* 建國方略) released in February 1917, a work Sun would expand during his self-imposed exile in Shanghai before releasing a full version in 1921, Sun exhorted the Chinese people to familiarise themselves with the content of his forthcoming work:

> If everyone becomes familiar with this book, then the hearts of our people will be united and the people's power will be consolidated. If we, with our nation of 400 million people and outstanding civilisation, the most beautiful land in the world, and the greatest source of wealth, are united like one heart and mind to be rich and strong, I am sure that we will be able to catch up to and surpass Europe and America within ten years. My 400 million compatriots, you should strive for this (Sun Yat-sen 1989, I: 553–555).

Another of a number of similar uses of the image to energize the Chinese is found in a speech to students in Shanghai where Sun would emotively start off the description of each of his ideas to save China by exclaiming: "Oh dear 400 million compatriots!" (Sun Yat-sen, III:

[19] The *Sun Yat-sen Studies Database* records 48 entries for 1912 and 1913, but only 9 between 1914 and 1918.

200–202).[20] The persuasive use of the image of "400 million Chinese" in making a political comeback was clear to Sun by this point.

In May 1917, Sun extrapolated the image of "400 million Chinese" in a treatise named *The Vital Problem of China* (*Zhongguo cunwang wenti* 中國存亡問題), which urged against Chinese participation in World War I, to the subjects of the British Empire, who happened (at least by Sun's practical estimation)[21] to boast 400 million as well. Sun explicated that the strength of the British empire of 400 million was due to its demographic majority of 350 million Indians, who constituted an enormous marketplace and were a crucial element in its empire-building (note the similarity with the abovementioned "large untapped market" frame consisting of a "400 million Chinese" popularised in the West). Most striking in Sun's argument is the statement that followed an account of the unequal trade relations between the British Isles (which brought industrial goods to India) and its Indian dominion (that primarily provided agricultural products for the British) which, according to Sun, depended specifically on the size of the population.[22] Despite Sun's intentions at making an anti-imperialist (or more precisely: anti-British Empire) argument, the citation betrays his underlying belief that a large population was a major factor in the success of a nation (or empire), an idea he would further expound on in 1924. The indirect message that Sun hoped to convey to the foreign powers—the treatise was translated into English—is equally apparent: China could be a marketplace as large as the British Empire, and it could be so even without any colonial apparatus by counting on its 400 million natives alone.

Western and Japanese support for Sun's development of the untapped Chinese market was not forthcoming,[23] however, and by the early 1920s his eye fell on a newly established power: the Soviet Union. Around this time the Soviets had successfully overthrown the Russian empire and the Russian civil war (1917–1923) was ending in their favour. Therefore, the Soviet leadership felt the time had come to search for allies to spread the revolution abroad. Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) had in his *Theses on the National and Colonial Questions* (1920) decided that during the early stages of spreading the revolution abroad (nominally) temporary alliances between communist parties and bourgeois revolutionary parties were warranted.[24] As the CCP was still too weak to be a major force in the ongoing struggle

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[20] The speech *The Urgent Need to Save the Country* is dated October 18, 1919. Similar rhetoric can be found in *The Revolutionary Army* by Zou Rong (1903, e.g., 11).

[21] Sun crudely added the population of the British Isles (50 million) to that of India (350 million), and apparently ignored other British colonies for the sake of producing a figure of 400 million.

[22] The original Chinese for *The Vital Problem of China* can be found in Sun Yat-sen (1989, II: 284–329).

[23] Martin Wilbur (1976, 100–111), among others, reported a telegram by Sun to American president Warren G. Harding (r. 1921–1923), in which Sun asked the American president to recognize his government, as well as Sun's dispatchment of a representative to the recently vanquished Germany to solicit support and recognition, both during 1921.

[24] The manuscript dated June 5, 1920, can be found in Lenin (1977, XXXI: 144–151). The Soviet shift to alliances with bourgeois parties should also be understood in light of the failure of "pure" communist revolutions in Europe during the preceding years.

between the Chinese warlords, the Soviet Union reached out to Sun and his KMT, despite the "bourgeois" nature of the Party and its founder.

Sun, meanwhile, had been impressed by the Soviets' success in unifying their broken country, and had been especially pleased by the pragmatic "New Economic Policy" (NEP, 1921–1929) which reflected Sun's belief that capitalism and socialism could exist side-by-side (e.g., Sun Yat-sen 1941, 237; Sun Yat-sen 1989, II: 559–560). Initial contacts between Sun and the Soviet Union were made in early 1920, and in January 1923, Sun signed a manifesto that created a united front between the Soviet Union, the CCP, and his KMT. Although Sun and the KMT were to be the alliance's leader, the communists were allowed to retain their own Party structures, and they could join the KMT on individual basis (Spence 2012, 301–309).[25] Despite the fact that Sun occasionally also reached out to the West during 1923 and 1924, support proved not forthcoming and the Soviets were able to fully capitalise on this opportunity (Schiffrin 1980, 247–250).

In October 1923, a Soviet support mission under the leadership of Comintern representative Mikhail Borodin (1884–1951) arrived at Sun's Guangzhou base. The mission that Borodin had received from his superiors in Russia was that support was only to be given if it was willing to break with its right-wing elements, unconditionally support an alliance with the CCP, and strive to improve the rights of the Chinese workers (Wilbur 1984, 7–8). Sun was aware of these demands, and after the arrival of Borodin one can observe a shift in his discourse toward anti-imperialist rhetoric. Sun's anti-imperialist views at this time were likely further fuelled by a conflict with several Western powers over the customs rebates in late 1923, as several nations deployed gunboats to pressure Sun into abandoning his plan to seize their customs offices (Wilbur 1976, 183–190). By January 1924, Sun's pro-Soviet attitude can be said to have reached its apex, as the KMT was effectually reorganised along Soviet lines, with Leninist organisational principles introduced to make the Party a more efficient fighting force.

Demography Boosts the First Principle of the People: *Minzu*

Still under the looming threat of Western warships, a considerable amount of (pro-)Soviet rhetoric was present by the time Sun Yat-sen embarked on explicating his doctrine of *minzu* on January 27, 1924. Especially the theme of anti-imperialism was emphasised as the KMT was holding its first "National Congress"[26] (January 20–30, 1924) under United Front auspices where this subject was at the forefront (Wilbur and How 1989, 93–100). On the opening

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[25] The *Joint Declaration on Sino-Russian Relations with Joffe* of January 16, 1923 can be found in Sun Yat-sen (1989, II: 116–117). For an overview of the prelude to the establishment of the United Front, see Bergère (1998, 293–351); Wilbur and How (1989, 18–139).

[26] While the KMT's Guangzhou government was by this point only in control of most of China's southern Guangdong province,

day of the congress, Sun paid tribute to the Soviet Union and its ruling party, related their revolutionary success to the Chinese need to implement his Three Principles of the People, and exhorted the KMT to follow the Soviets' Leninist example by also "building the state by the means of a party" (*yi dang jian guo* 以黨建國) (Sun Yat-sen 1989, III: 412–414).

Merely praising the Soviet Union, however, was not sufficient, and Mikhail Borodin considered it in the best interest of the United Front that Sun systematised and deepened his Three Principles of the People through sets of lectures, six per doctrine. So as not to suffocate Sun's enthusiasm (remember that Lenin himself had allowed bourgeois partners onto this stage of the proletarian revolution) he gave Sun considerable freedom in writing them. For Sun, who always had wanted to eventually systematise his ideas, a suitable opportunity to explain his vision for the "400 million Chinese" in more detail had finally come.

With the KMT congress ongoing in the background, Sun held his first lecture on the doctrine of *minzu* on January 27, 1924. Except for the segments with the predictable praise for the Soviet Union, Sun's emphasis on the themes of race and population might have come as a surprise to his audience. In the first part of his lecture Sun distinguished the "kingly way" (*wangdao* 王道) from the "hegemonial way" (*badao* 霸道) present in international politics, stating that the first was a natural force that had shaped nationalities (*minzu* 民族), and the second was an artificial invention that had given rise to nation-states (*guojia* 國家) (Sun Yat-sen 1989, 3–12). Sun argued that China followed the first way, while the West (ab)used the second, and singled out Great Britain's large colonial empire as example of the weakness of those that followed the hegemonial way. Sun's point was that although the British had added large parts of the world to their empire through violent means, the "natural" nationalities of the subdued parts, such as the Chinese in British Hong Kong, would never perceive themselves as British (ibid.).

After providing five forces (*li* 力) that, unlike the "artificial" concept of the nation-state, made nationalities "natural", such as bloodlines (*xuetong* 血統), which Sun considered the most important factor, lifestyle (*shenghuo* 生活), language (*yuyan* 語言), religion (*zongjiao* 宗教), and customs and traditions (*fengsu xiguan* 風俗習慣), Sun went on to claim that China was made up of one nationality —the largest of the world. This was followed by his definition of this "natural" nationality with reference to the "400 million Chinese":

> In order to promote the doctrine of *minzu*, it is necessary to fully understand this doctrine before it can be brought into full play to save the country. The total number of Chinese people is 400 million, interspersed (*canza* 參雜) among them there are only a few million Mongols, just over a million Manchus, a few million Tibetans, and a million and few hundred thousand Muslim Turks, a total of less than 10 million

delegates representing other parts of China were also present. It was in this sense that it could claim to be a "national" congress.

> externals [in China]. So, for the most part, the 400 million Chinese can be said to be entirely Han Chinese, with the same blood, the same language and script, the same religion, and the same customs; they all are one people (Sun Yat-sen 1989, I: 3–12).

Despite acknowledging that other nationalities "interspersed" among the Han Chinese, Sun clearly presented the Han population as the true core of the "400 million Chinese". This strikes a similar chord to his rhetoric prior to the founding of the ROC in 1912, now without a need to attack a non-Han oppressor. Racial inequality, though still less pointed than during Sun's pre-revolutionary years ("interspersed" instead of downright exclusion), thus prevailed in his demographic ideas. As Audrey Wells (2001, 69) aptly stated, those that considered Sun's *minzu* doctrine of 1924 to connotate equality between nationalities were mistaken.[27] While one may assert that around 1912 there was—in public at least—some form of racial equality in Sun's rhetoric on the "400 million Chinese", the above citation demonstrates that by the 1920s this had once more ebbed away in favour of his pre-revolutionary focus on the Han Chinese. Earlier in the same decade, when lecturing on previous versions of his *minzu* doctrine, Sun had also again identified himself as a Han Chinese on multiple occasions.[28] Even when discussing other nationalities in China in a more inclusive manner, admitting they were not limited to the five nationalities, he always indirectly stressed the leading role of the country's Han majority in fusing the groups into one Chinese nation.[29]

Still, as fluid as the ethnic boundaries of Sun's "400 million Chinese" might have been, he maintained his strong belief in their limitless potential. In his speech of January 1924, Sun stated his regret that although the "400 million Chinese" should be "on par with America and Europe" on the world stage, they were: "a patch of scattered sand (yi pan san sha 一盤散沙)",[30] despite China being made up by 400 million people" (Sun Yat-sen 1989, I: 3–12). He warned his compatriots that urgency was needed in implementing his doctrine: "Our position is most perilous at this time. If we do not take care to promote the doctrine of *minzu*

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[27] Here Wells mostly refers to a claim by Chang Hsu-Hsin and Leonard Gordon (1991, 23) that supports a more inclusive ethnic connotation for the 1924 version of the *minzu* doctrine.

[28] In a 1921 speech titled *The Specific Methods of the Three Principles of the People*, for instance, Sun (1989, III: 226–233) stated: "The Han nationality boasts about 400 million, or perhaps even more than that. It really is the greatest shame for us Han Chinese that we cannot truly independently form a country that is completely Han. This is due to the failure of our Party's *minzu* doctrine".

[29] During a speech before KMT delegates titled *Explanation on Amending the Party Charter* dated November 4, 1920, Sun (1989, III: 215–219) stated: "We must actively raise the status of our 400 million people and carry them forward. Now we are talking about a republic of five nationalities, but actually the term "five nationalities" is not appropriate. Aren't there more than five nationalities in our country? What I mean is that all nationalities in China should be integrated into one Chinese nation".

[30] Sun had introduced the idea of the "400 million Chinese" being "a patch of scattered sand" in the preface to *The Fundamentals of National Reconstruction* (1917). Sun (1989, I: 553–555) stated: "The 400 million Chinese resemble 'a patch of scattered sand'".

and unite the 400 million people into a solid nationality, China will suffer the sorrow of national and racial extinction [*wangguo miezhong* 亡國滅種]" (ibid.). This was both the most prominent and urgent fusion of the fate of the Chinese nation and Chinese nationality that Sun would ever make.

Subsequently, Sun went over the main imperial powers that had, in his opinion, successfully implemented some localised form of his *minzu* doctrine to strengthen themselves. In order, he discussed Great Britain, Japan, Russia, Germany, France, and the United States. While Sun would focus on different aspects that could explain the strength of the respective states and their peoples (ibid.),[31] he either started with, or returned to, one similar theme for all of them: demographic developments during the nineteenth century. Sun praised the demographic growth of Japan and most Western nations, but noted that there was one nonconforming example among the population increases of the West: "In the last hundred years, [the population of] the United States has increased tenfold, threefold in Britain, threefold in Japan, fourfold in Russia, two and a half times in Germany, [but merely] a quarter in France" (ibid.). The culprit of this lacklustre development in France had been clear to Sun since his encounter with Henry George's work in the late nineteenth century:

> A hundred years ago, there was an English scholar named Malthus, who was worried that the world's population was too large and the supply of goods was limited, so he advocated reducing populations. The French, being naturally disposed to strive to live an untroubled life, embraced Malthus's doctrine, and advocated that men should not be burdened with their families and women should not bear children (Sun Yat-sen 1989, I: 3–12).

Disregarding Sun's extremely stereotypical portrayal of the French, at least two interesting evolutions in his thought are evident: 1) even successful nationalities, like the French, could encounter demographic stagnation; and 2) Sun now saw such stagnation as extremely dangerous for a nationality's internal cohesion. According to Sun, the French, who in the early nineteenth century had been the most populous out of the countries mentioned, but by 1920 were on the lowest step of the ladder, had eventually realised that Malthus's "toxic" teachings could lead to racial suicide, and were desperately trying to avert their ongoing demographic downfall (ibid.). In this attack on Malthus, who was not well-known in China during the 1920s, Sun's intellectual debt to Henry George is especially apparent.

[31] With regard to Great Britain, Sun focused on the strength of the Anglo-Saxon race in forging their empire. On Japan, Sun stressed its embrace of science and technology and racial unity, which, he held, equipped it as suitable example for the Chinese. On Germany, Sun stressed that the Germans had recently successfully overthrown their militaristic ("Teutonic") tenets to pursue justice and rights. But most of his praise was reserved for his Soviet benefactors, eulogizing their efforts in assisting oppressed nations like China to resist the imperial powers.

Fearing similar developments in China, Sun stated: "I feel alarmed when comparing the increase in population of each country with the [stagnating] population of China!" (ibid.). He further explicated this by pointing out that the Chinese population already numbered 400 million during the reign of Qing emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735–1796), but had then stagnated: "There will soon have been 200 years between Qianlong's reign and the present. Yet, there are still 400 million Chinese. It was 400 million a hundred years ago, and it will certainly be 400 million a hundred years from now" (ibid.). Later in the speech, Sun even professed doubt in the 400 million itself, citing an undated population estimate by American diplomat William Rockhill (1854–1914) of "no more than 300 million [Chinese]" (*bu guo sanwanwan* 不過三萬萬). Sun mentioned that despite the possibility of a retained 400 million, which he apparently viewed as more likely than a decrease, was not much better as it still implied stagnation (ibid.).

Sun's demographic fears are even more apparent in his discussion of the demographic developments that had occurred in the United States during the same period. Claiming that the American population had increased more than tenfold in the previous 100 years, Sun predicted that the American population could number one billion by the year 2000 if this trend persisted (ibid.). Sun then compared his fear of an eventual demographic American domination to an supposed assimilation of the Manchus by the (Han) Chinese:

> In the past, the Manchus could not conquer the Chinese nationality because they only had a million or so people, which was too few compared to the Chinese population. Of course, they were absorbed by the Chinese. If the Americans came to conquer China, then in a hundred years, when there could be ten Americans interspersed among four Chinese, the Chinese would be assimilated by the Americans (Sun Yat-sen 1989, II: 3–12).

Sun's standpoint concerning assimilation was something new, to say the least, considering that he had presented the Chinese as effectively occupied by the Manchus until the 1911 revolution that had brought him into power, and had made no prior mention of the occupiers' alleged Sinification. His repeated usage of "interspersed", now with an even clearer connotation of impending racial assimilation, also raises questions regarding his views on the position of the Han vis-à-vis the other nationalities in China. Sun nevertheless pressed the argument in the final part of his lecture, and even included the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) in an allegory that predicted a grim future if the Chinese population of 400 million continued to stagnate:

> In a hundred years, if our population does not increase and the population [of the imperial powers] increases a lot, they will use [their] majority to conquer [our] minority and are bound to annex China. By that time, China will not only lose its sovereignty, but will also be lost entirely as a country. The Chinese people will be digested (*xiaohua*

> 消化) by their nationalities, and face extermination. The Mongolian and Manchurian conquests of China in the past used their minorities to conquer the [Chinese] majority, and wanted to use the majority of Chinese people as their slaves. If the imperial powers conquer China in the future, they will use the majority to conquer the minority, and will not need us to be their slaves. By that time, we Chinese will be lower than slaves (Sun Yat-sen 1989, I: 3–12).

In Sun's next five lectures on *minzu*, his demographic fears were repeated in the background as he discussed other (political and economic) ways in which China was oppressed.[32] Demographic themes would, however, largely retreat when Sun held his lectures on the doctrine of *minquan* in March and April 1924, which were concerned to a greater extent with adapting and perfecting Western (democratic) conceptualisations. Here, the few references to population and the 400 million were imbued with the "limitless potential" frame. The sixth and final lecture on *minquan* of April 26, 1924, contained the series' most direct note on China's imagined "400 million". Sun (1989, I: 113–128) stated: "Speaking of our Chinese population, with 400 million people, we are the most populous country in the world. Our vast territory and abundant resources should surpass those of the United States".

Initially, demographic references would not make a return when Sun started lecturing on the doctrine of *minsheng* on August 17, 1924. The first and second lectures addressed the social issues China was facing and sharply attacked Marxism in a Georgist vein, almost creating a rift with Sun's Soviet benefactors (Wilbur 1976, 243–245).[33] By then, as Harold Schiffrin (1980, 257) has argued, Sun had likely clearly 'cooled off' after his customs dispute with the West and was looking once again towards avenues for cooperation beyond the Soviets. In the third lecture, which was concerned with the issue of food, his previous demographic fears prominently returned as Sun (1989, I: 157–170) again professed doubts in the size of the Chinese population by stating that an unnamed "accurate foreign investigation" (*waiguo queshi de diaocha* 外國確實的調查) had put it closer to 310 million that year, which he related to famines due to China's lagging food production—this time seeming to accept population decline as a fact. Strikingly, in his final *minsheng* lecture a week later on the issue of

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32 In the second lecture, for example, Sun was concerned to a greater extent with political and economic oppression by the Western powers. He nevertheless tied his arguments to demographic fears at the end, stating (1989, I: 12–22): "In the past hundred years, China has already been oppressed due to the population issue. While China's population has not increased, foreign populations have grown continuously day by day. Now, we are also being oppressed by political and economic forces simultaneously. We are under pressure from these three forces at the same time, and if we do not find a solution, no matter how vast China's territory is or how large its population may be, within a hundred years, we will surely face national and racial extinction".

33 In the first two lectures on the doctrine of *minsheng*, Sun would reject Marxist notions such as the inevitability of class struggle and the incompatibility of capitalism and socialism in a similar vein to Henry George. For Sun's first and second speech on the doctrine of *minsheng*, held on August 3, 1924, respectively see Sun Yat-sen (1989, I: 129–145); Sun Yat-sen (1989, I: 145–157).

clothing, Sun presented that number (sometimes rounding down to 300 million) as a given (Sun Yat-sen 1989, I: 170–181), seemingly breaking with the "400 million" frame.

However, Sun's final main speech, i.e., his lecture on Great Asianism (*da Yazhou zhuyi* 大亞洲主義) on November 28, 1924, in Kobe, Japan, en route to Beijing where he would fall ill and pass away, proved the frame too attractive to abandon entirely. Invoking an oppressed Asian majority of the world population fighting the imperialist West, the "400 million Chinese" were again portrayed as brimming with potential to flip the balance (Sun Yat-sen 1989, III: 535–542). Until the very end, then, Sun proved himself a pragmatist: the potential population decline was ignored, with the fact of the Chinese population outnumbering the West paramount in his bid for Japanese support in reuniting China.

Conclusions

From a glorious 400 million brimming with limitless potential to an outnumbered future lower than slaves: Sun's ideas about the "400 million Chinese" and demography in general evolved significantly over the years. More than that, Sun contradicted himself on such matters during different periods of his life. Shortly before the revolution of 1911, for instance, Sun expressed the belief that his 400 million compatriots were being effectively occupied by the Manchus despite the latter's trivial population size vis-à-vis the (Han) Chinese. In 1924, by contrast, he would maintain that the Manchus had failed to suppress China due to their successful racial assimilation by the (Han) Chinese. Clearly, the theme of anti-imperialism, the changing international circumstances, and the need to hurry along the implementation of his *minzu* doctrine had inspired Sun to swap the image of a "tiny minority occupying a grand 400 million with limitless potential" for the vision of a "stagnating 400 million vanquished by a potentially even larger population", that is, if his political philosophy went unimplemented. As shown in the first section of this article, the shifting and contrasting connotations of the popularised narrative of a "400 million Chinese" detached from any verifiable census was emblematic for the era Sun lived in, whether that number represented a market, peril, or myth. Even when he occasionally pondered whether the Chinese population had dropped even lower (but never contemplated whether it might be higher), the frame proved too attractive to entirely abandon.

Just within the first lecture on the *minzu* doctrine in 1924, Sun contradicted himself multiple times. If nationalities were unchangeable, as claimed with his example of the persistence of a Chinese identity among the Hong Kong population despite living under British domination, then why should the Chinese people, who apparently boasted all five factors that made a nationality "natural", fear American assimilation or even racial extermination if outnumbered? Furthermore, if the ways of the imperial powers were as artificial and hegemonial, and thus should not be copied, as Sun seemed to imply on multiple occasions, one could question his praise of their "vigorous" demographic development and alleged successful implementation of a localised form of his *minzu* doctrine during the nineteenth century. These contradictions illustrate how political pragmatism consistently guided Sun's rhetoric.

Equally striking are the shifts in inclusivity within Sun's "400 million Chinese". While originally vague and largely focused on the large untapped potential of an occupied group of native Chinese, an exclusive connotation of "*Han* Chinese" took shape under ideological influences such as of Liang Qichao and Zou Rong. While dropping these notions in public speeches during his short stint as provisional president in 1912 but retaining them in certain speeches with limited audiences such as party members, they returned after Sun was forced into exile again in 1913. Although from that point onwards, "untapped potential" came first and "Han-centrism" was secondary, the racial focus remained present throughout his career. In January 1924, Sun's flirtation with exclusivity and inclusivity culminated into a fluid notion of a "400 million Chinese", with other nationalities "interspersed" among them, which evidently implied "soon to be assimilated/Hanified". Therein his rhetoric became more urgent than ever: If the stagnating figure "400 million Chinese" did not increase soon, they would face national and racial extinction.

Sun's choice to use Malthusian theory in reinforcing this point by attacking France, the one anomalous demographic trend amongst the imperial powers, should also be emphasised. The citation of Malthus was a peculiar choice as the English demographer was virtually unknown in early twentieth-century China. Sun's grounding in Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, which criticised Malthus, might help explain this decision. Sun's debt to Georgism would become more apparent in August 1924, when he lectured on his third doctrine of *minsheng* which sharply attacked Marxism. Perhaps the erratic demographic theories espoused by Sun during the first speech on his doctrine of *minzu* had been similarly formed by his American inspirator. In January 1924, while his Soviet audience were perhaps puzzled by Sun's bizarre brand of anti-imperialism that stressed the plight of "400 million Chinese", they were probably willing to disregard it on account of the ample pro-Soviet rhetoric that accompanied it. Little did they know that the hints of an ideological debt to Georgism, the ammunition that would later assist him in attacking Marxism, was already apparent.

As we now know, Sun's demographic fears never materialised. As of 2022, the United States boasts about 330 million people. This is still less than the imagined "400 million Chinese" of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and a far cry from Sun's fear of "one billion Americans by 2000". Great Britain would grant India independence in 1947 before growing at a slow rate to the 65 million of today. Chinese population growth, instead, would break out of its inertia soon after Sun's demise, surpassing 500 million before the founding of the PRC in 1949, reaching 580,555,948 by the country's first official census in 1953, before soaring to the 1,411,778,724 people listed as living in mainland China by the seventh PRC census of 2020, despite the implementation of extensive family planning measures over the preceding decades. In 2025, there are no "ten Americans for every four Chinese", but about ten Chinese for every two and a half Americans. Yet, no "racial assimilation/extermination" as predicted by Sun has taken place in any direction. In hindsight, if anything beyond being erratic, Sun's usage of "400 million Chinese" as a quantitative statistical number was exemplary for the impracticality of demographic estimations and predictions of his era, even more so when fuelled by subjective nationalist sentiments. Sun's political obsession with the idea of "400 million Chinese" and its pragmatically shifting ethnic inclusiveness, does, however, clearly show the high discursive and propagandist power that the attractive qualitative image of a vague but widespread number holds in providing impetus for action.

Sun's invocation of "400 million Chinese" as a symbol of both potential strength and demographic peril also resonates with more recent usage of the "power of big numbers". This motif, representing the scale of China's population (until recently the largest in the world) as both an asset and a source of vulnerability—particularly after it went into decline for the first time in 2023—has continued to shape discourse on China's global role and self-perception under growing Chinese nationalism. Contemporary discussions on China's economic growth, military expansion, and influence often similarly leverage population size as a justification for a unique place in the global hierarchy for the (Han) Chinese, and subtly echo Sun's early twentieth-century demographic appeals. While quantitative statistics are ever-changing, some qualitive narratives indeed prove highly resilient and are therefore still worthy of further investigation.

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Turning Society into Graphs: Early 20th Century Statistical Undertakings in Shanxi Province

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While no census was ever successfully completed for all of China under the Republic, the poor province of Shanxi, ruled by warlord Yan Xishan, published new population statistics every year from 1919. The province's Statistical Office not only consistently collected various statistical data, it was also a pioneer with respect to graphical statistics. Why did Shanxi produce so many statistics? Who produced them, and for what purpose? How did they figure into the modernisation and state-building attempts by Yan Xishan? What can we learn about his concerns regarding the population from the collected statistical materials? How is statistical knowledge and information made visible in statistical diagrams, what meaning is created, and which arguments are made through visual semantics? To tackle these questions, we examine relevant actors and institutions, closely read Yan Xishan's preface to the earliest population statistics published in Shanxi, and finally look at the statistics and graphics published there between 1919 and 1931.

民國時期，儘管民國政府未完成全國人口普查，但閻錫山治下的山西省不僅持續收集統計資料，更以圖形統計的實踐領先全國。本研究通過分析原始資料、圖表及閻錫山親撰序言，探究其統計機制、實施主體及政治意圖。我們發現其圖表設計存在實驗性和不確定性，且凸顯出鮮明的政治邏輯——通過視覺化手段，將資料轉化為直觀的治理工具。統計圖以視覺秩序重構龐雜資訊，既服務于人口管控與國家能力建設，亦成為閻錫山推行地方現代化的話語載體。

Keywords: Statistics, Yan Xishan, Shanxi, Republican China, Statistical Graphs, Population

關鍵詞： 統計，閻錫山，山西，中華民國，統計圖，人口

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Introduction

By the 1930s, the lack of accurate countrywide population numbers had been a perennial problem since the waning years of the Qing dynasty. Chinese intellectuals and foreign observers alike questioned China's capacity to govern a state and its society without precise demographic and social statistics (Bréard 2018 and Zhu 1931, 5–8). Yet it was also recognised, that "obtaining precise population numbers was not just a problem of statistics *per se*, but first and foremost required political resources/strength and secondly a certain level of education."[1] In 1927, after the establishment of a National Government in Nanjing, government officials began to be trained according to the provisions of the Outline for the Establishment of the Republic of China (*Jianguo dagang* 建國大綱). This stipulated the census-taking of households and the measurement of land. Obtaining the total number of households in a certain place and period and studying the composition of these households should serve as a basis for the governance of the whole country. In 1928, the Ministry of the Interior promulgated the Rules for Statistical Reporting of Household Surveys (*Hukou diaocha tongji baogao guize* 戶口調查統計報告規則), which were ordered to be uniformly followed by all provinces throughout the country[2] and in October 1932 the Statistical Law (*Tongji fa* 統計法) was promulgated. Therein, it was determined that the household census would be centrally sponsored by the Office of the Comptroller of the National Government (*Guomin zhengfu zhuji chu* 國民政府主計處). However, even two decades later, these measures still "failed to achieve more than a patchwork of uneven data collection" (Lam 2011, 117); no census was ever successfully completed for all of China under the Republic.

Surprisingly, the poor province of Shanxi, ruled since 1911 by one of the infamous "warlords", seemed to do much better.[3] In 1931, Qiao Qiming 喬啟明, a native of Shanxi interested in questions of agricultural economics,[4] blamed Chinese cultural backwardness for

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[1] Chen 1933, 19: 要人口統計精確，不單是統計的問題，第一要政治有力量，第二要教育有程度。

[2] Results for the year 1928 were published by the Statistics Department of the Ministry of the Interior as the *Statistical Report on Household Surveys of Provinces and Municipalities in the Seventeenth Year of the Republic of China* (民國十七年各省市户口調查統計報告) in February 1931.

[3] See for example Qin 1926, 14: "If all provinces would equally be able to have statistics as accurate as Shanxi's, then I would certainly obtain a more sound basis to research the actual situation of the important issues of the whole country." (苟各省均能如山西之有正確統計，則吾人對於全國重要問題之時機狀況，必可多得切實之研究根據。)

[4] In 1931, Qiao was a 1924 B.S. graduate and Officer of Administration and Instruction at the Department of Agricultural Economics of the (private Christian) University of Nanking (see the *University of Nanking Bulletin* 8–1 from December 1931, p. 11), where he was "in charge of a population project under the China Land Utilization population study" (Chiao 1933a, 325). The study contained an important demographic aspect in collaboration with a statistician (Research application project from February 9, 1928, Yale University Archives RG011-200-3419, 18). In 1934, with a scholarship granted under the Famine Fund budget from Nanking University, he obtained a Master Thesis in

the continuing lack of reliable population numbers on a national level, but praised the quality of the exceptionally regular statistical production of his home province:

> 最近二年，有些省份，雖已各別的盡力做了些人口調查，可是其材料之是否真確，仍令人不能無疑。所以著者本平日的聞見以爲中國辦理人口調查較有成績者，仍不能不首推山西。
>
> 山西從民國元年，即從事本省的人口統計。民國八年，開始實行人事登記，聞至今未曾間斷。[…]
>
> 至於山西統計能進行順利的原因，約有三種：
>
> 一， 十數年來未受政局的大影響，
>
> 二， 村里制度比較嚴密而完善，
>
> 三， 主持統計者識見較遠。
>
> In the last two years there were some provinces which conducted population investigations through individual efforts, yet whether their material is reliable or not is still not without doubt. Therefore, the author, based on ordinary knowledge, believes that among those who in China conduct population investigations rather successfully, one cannot but put Shanxi in first place!
>
> Since the first year of the Republican era the province of Shanxi has been engaged in compiling its own population statistics. In 1919, they began to implement the registration of people, and I have heard that up to today, they have not interrupted it. [...]
>
> There are about three reasons why Shanxi can carry out statistics smoothly:
>
> 1. For more than ten years, the province has not been much impacted by the political situation.
> 2. The "village system" (*cunli zhidu* 村里制度)[5] is relatively strictly ordered and complete.
> 3. Those who are in charge of statistics have a fairly far-reaching knowledge.[6]

Sociology from Cornell University (Chiao 1933b). See also his earlier social survey work in Shanxi in Qiao 1932.

[5] On the village system see Gillin 1967, 53.

[6] Qiao 1931, 2. Even years after its dissolution, the work of the Shanxi Statistical Office was generally seen as exemplary, see Shanxi sheng zhengfu tongji zuzhi 1937. Taeuber 1973, 160 also refers to the "presumably model records of Shansi Province" which began in the period from 1912 to 1916, yet without indicating a reason or his source of information. Others had a more more critical view of Shanxi's statistics (and its governor). A population survey of a single district is even taken as representative of the main demographic problems the province was facing: an excess male population and a mortality rate exceeding the birth rate: "Because of more than ten years of peace, Shanxi has been praised as a model. De facto, Shanxi's governor has extorted money from the common people, the

The extraordinary efforts of the Shanxi Statistical Office were not confined to collecting numbers; it was also a pioneer with respect to graphical statistics. While before the late 1920s most provinces did not make use of complex diagrammatic designs (nor did the central Statistical Department 內務部總務廳統計科), charts on population statistics from Shanxi province for the years 1918 to 1926[7] show a bewildering variety of colourful layouts.[8] Yet, neither the statistical endeavours in general nor the particularly fascinating attempts at graphical representation have received much attention from scholars. Why did Shanxi produce so many statistics compared to other provinces? Who produced them, and for what purpose? How did they figure into the modernisation and state-building attempts by the ruling warlord Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960)? What can we learn about his concerns regarding the population from the collected statistical materials? And what problems in quantifying and representing society can we discern from them? In order to tackle these questions, we will first present the relevant actors and institutions, then read closely Yan Xishan's preface to the first population statistics published in Shanxi, and finally look at the statistics and graphics published there between 1919 and 1931.

Statistical Actors and Institutions in Shanxi Province before 1928

When a constitutional government was supposed to save the crumbling Qing dynasty, population numbers were specifically needed to determine quotas of seats in a national assembly.

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population sits poverty-stricken, there are rifts within families. If one county is like this, the entire province can be known. I truly wish that you gentlemen inspect the tables: once you think thoroughly about it, you will feel deeply concerned." (十餘年來山西為安全，推山西為模範，其實山西當道多事聚斂，人民坐而困窮，以家庭為溝壑。一縣如此，全省可知。甚願閱表諸君子，一深思而軫念也) Liu 1930, 59.

[7] Statistics were published for Shanxi's population by the central *Neiwu bu tongji ke* 內務部統計科 for the years 1912 (published in 1917) and 1916 (published in 1918), before Shanxi Province's Statistical Office (*Shanxi shengzhang gongshu tongji chu* 山西省長公署統計處) compiled population statistics (among others) nine times for the years 1918 (published in 1919) to 1926 (published in 1931). For the year 1931 (published in 1934 as 山西省戶口統計) the work was again taken up centrally, following the forms that the government, i.e. the 民政廳, had issued in 1928.

[8] The fact that these publications fill the gap between the 1912 and 1928 national censuses might explain the relative independence/individuality with which these statistics were edited, coded, tabulated, and published. For the Nanjing decade (1928–1937), Paulès 2020 ascribes such statistical independence to the Warlord regimes: "La décennie de Nankin est caractérisée par la relative faiblesse du pouvoir central en dehors de la basse vallée du Yang Tsé, qui laisse de larges parties du territoire chinois aux mains de seigneurs de la guerre (*junfa* 軍閥) *de facto* quasi indépendants. Il est remarquable que sous la houlette de ces autocrates, que l'on a trop souvent dépeints comme des brutes uniquement assoiffées de pouvoir et de richesse, les zones situées hors de l'orbite du gouvernement central prennent elles aussi pleinement part au mouvement de production de statistiques."

The first ever Statistical Bureau (*Tongji ju* 統計局) in China was established in 1907.[9] In 1910, the Qing Government promulgated the Regulations on Household Surveys (*Qingcha hukou tiaoli* 清查戶口條例), which established a six-year household survey programme.[10] Population survey reports from the Xuantong era (1909–1911) were compiled and published in 1912, when the Republic of China was founded (see Lam 2011, 64ff.). The new Ministry of the Interior soon ordered a nationwide census to be held that year. It was in fact a continuation of the Xuantong period's census, with similar items to be counted, such as the number of households, the sex and age of individuals, marriage, occupation, and birth and death rates. Publication of the results of the 1912 census was much awaited but delayed. It began only in 1916, province by province, when, for example, statistics for Fengtian and Jilin were published. For Shanxi, it was in June 1917 that the Statistics Section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs published the 1912 data and again, a year later, data from 1916 (see Neiwu bu 1917 and Neiwu bu 1918). Later on, during the civil wars of the warlord era (1916–1928), the Beiyang government suspended its efforts to take care of statistics in the localities, and the nationwide population census was put on hold. As we already mentioned, no further national census was successfully conducted by the Republic of China.

The Beiyang government set up a national Statistical Bureau (*Tongji ju* 統計局) in 1916. In 1917, after Yan Xishan had seized the governance of Shanxi Province, he immediately reorganised the government and founded a Statistical Office (*Tongji chu* 統計處) under the Department of Civil Affairs (*Zhengwu ting* 政務聽) (Shanxi sheng difang zhi bangongshi 2014, 35). Interested in a sound basis for governing Shanxi's population and all its related crises, Yan invested heavily in the production of numbers and graphs, in terms of human capital: "Two thirds of the bureaucrats he gathered around him in Taiyuan were less than forty years old, and virtually all had attended colleges or middle schools, generally in Shansi" (Gillin 1967, 173). The Statistical Office had a director, two section chiefs (*guzhang* 股長), four section staff, one first-rank secretary, and one second-rank secretary; every county seat also was supposed to appoint somebody responsible for statistical work (Shanxi sheng difang zhi bangongshi 2014, 36). They hired many additional staff, as can be seen from their own publications: 105 accountants and statistical officers (*zhujiyuan jian tongji zhuren* 主計員兼統計主任) were working throughout the province in 1919, thus soon after the founding of Shanxi's Statistical Bureau (see fig. 1).[11] They not only published their illustrated census, education, social, and climate statistics, but they also issued a large number of written directives

[9] See Bréard 2008, 5. Among the earliest published illustrated statistics were those on education. See Xuewu 1909.

[10] The original memorial by the Ministry of Civil Affairs 民政部 can be found in Tao 1909.

[11] In the counties, 79, 61, and 37 were hired in the years 1918 to 1920 and 2, 33, and 37 were dismissed from office, which leaves a total of 105. See Shanxi 1922, 11–12.

(from 1919 on) on how to collect data, fill out forms, and other census and survey-related matters.[12]

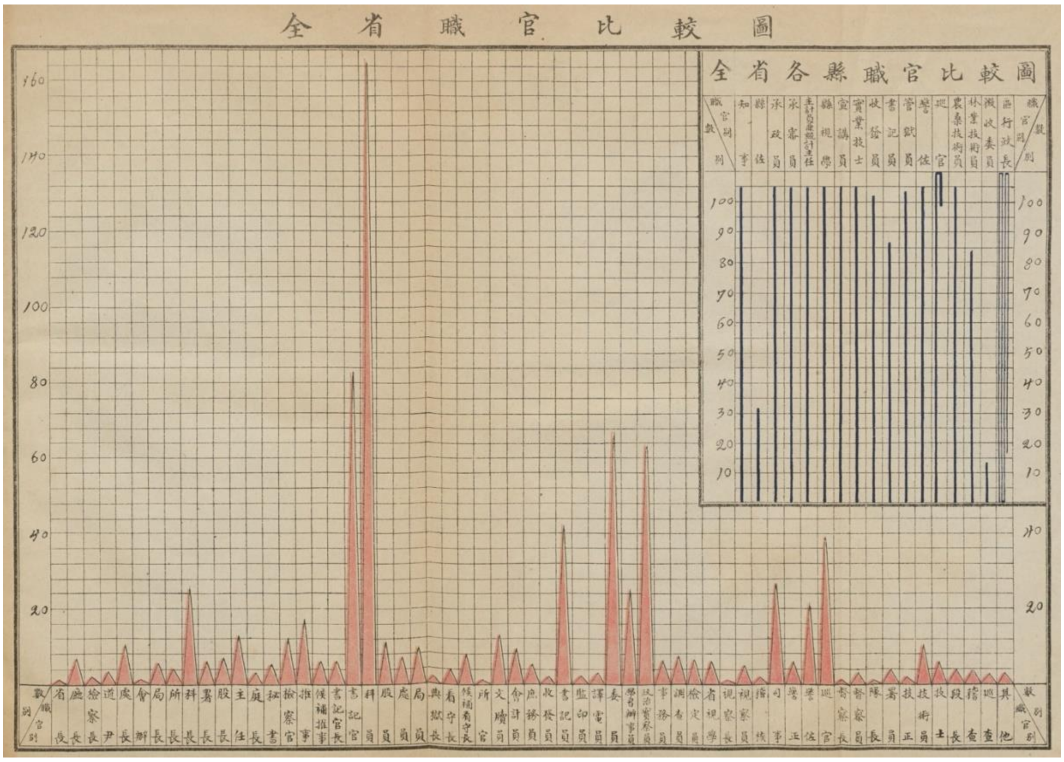

Fig. 1: Comparative diagram of government officials in the entire province (red triangles) and Comparative diagram of government officials in all districts of the entire province (blue bars, partly in serpentines) (全省[各縣]職官比較圖). Diagrams 1 and 2 in Shanxi sheng zhang gong shu tongjichu 山西省長公署統計處 1922.

The first director of the new Statistical Office was Gao Hong 高洪 (1880–1935), a native of Shanxi who, like Yan Xishan, had gone to study in Japan in 1904, namely at the Tokyo Railway College (*Dongjing tiedao xuetang* 東京鐵道學堂). After his return in 1909, he taught at various new academic institutions such as the Shanxi Railway College (*Shanxi tielu xuetang* 山西鐵路學堂), the Industrial School (*Shiye xuetang* 實業學堂), the Shanxi Business School (*Shanxi sheng shangye zhuanmen xuexiao* 山西省商業專門學校), and others. His subjects not only included "Accounting" and "General Introduction to Railways" but also "Statistics" (*tongji xue* 統計學) (Gao and Gao 2005, 29–31). In 1912, Gao Hong was elected vice-chairman of the first Shanxi Provincial Assembly. After he assumed the leadership of

[12] 1146 documents in 1918 and 1695 in 1920. See Shanxi 1922, 87–88.

the Statistical Office in 1917, he held this post until the bureau was dissolved in 1928 by the central authorities.

Statistical institutions had been plagued since the Qing dynasty by a lack of qualified personnel (Bréard 2018, 270–271), but Shanxi had invested early in statistical education and training. One important institution in this regard was the Shanxi Business School, founded in 1908 and operating until 1935, with a maximum of nineteen students graduating per year in specialised subjects.[13] It was one of only five public business schools in the Republic of China, and the only one left after 1926 (Gao 2020, 55). All the programmes taught there (including at the higher middle school level) included a course on statistics, which usually began in the third year and comprised two hours per week (Shanxi shengli shangye zhuanye xuexiao 1932, 121–123, 141–143). Some programmes also included more specialised courses on statistics: future accountants studied "statistical laws and regulations" (*tongji fagui* 統計法規), taxation students could choose "financial statistics", "economic statistics" (*caizheng tongji* 財政統計, *jingji tongji* 經濟統計), or "customs statistics" (*haiguan tongji* 海關統計) (ibid., 137). The major in statistics started with a compulsory class on "Population theory and population statistics" (*renkou lun ji renkou tongji* 人口論及人口統計), which lasted for a whole year with two hours each week (ibid., 253). In this class, students discussed "issues concerning population quantity, birth rate, quality of the population, migration, nutrition, cultural level, living standards, the future of world population, the relationship between population and the state and the international situation, the current status of the population in various countries and China, and population policy. It also summarized the population theories of Malthus and Marx" (講述人口之數量問題、生成問題、品質問題、移民問題、食料與人口問題、文化程度、生活程度、世界人口之將來、人口與國家及國際之關係、各國及吾國人口之現狀及人口之政策，並就馬爾薩斯與馬克思之人口論述其概要) (ibid., 253–254). Furthermore, the major included compulsory classes such as "Price index theory" (*wujia zhishu lun* 物價指數論), "Surveys of national strength" (*guoshi diaocha* 國勢調查), "Statistical systems of various countries" (*ge guo tongji zhidu* 各國統計制度), and non-compulsory courses such as "Economic statistics", "Customs statistics", "Political statistics" etc. The school's library included 65 books on statistics in Chinese and five in Japanese. Additionally, there were reference books such as *The General Theory of Statistics* (*Tongji tonglun* 统计通论, written by Yokoyama Masao, translated by Meng Sen), A. L. Bowley's *Elements of Statistics*, E. M. and W. P. Elderton's *Primer of Statistics*, M. T. Copeland's *Business Statistics*, etc. The importance of the transfer of foreign knowledge was not only reflected in the teaching and reference materials but also in the teaching staff's education: almost half of the

[13] The school changed its name several times. Upon its founding in 1908, it was called *Shanxi shangye xuetang* 山西商業學堂; in 1912, it was renamed *Shanxi gongli shangye zhuanmen xuexiao* 山西公立商業專門學校; in 1930 it was renamed *Shanxi shengli shangye zhuanye xuexiao* 山西省立商業專業學校.

214 teachers between 1908 and 1932 had studied abroad, most of them in Japan, eight in England, five in the United States, three in Germany, and one in France; two of the teachers were British and one American (ibid., 297–313). Many who worked at the Statistical Office also taught at the Shanxi Business School, including the already mentioned director Gao Hong.

The Warlord and his Numbers: Statistics in Service of the State

The political leadership in Shanxi demanded and sponsored the collection and publication of statistics on the province's population. But what were its reasons for doing so? How did they frame their statistical endeavours?[14] What problems, hopes, and political goals were associated with statistical practices? Answering these questions might shed new light on the state-building efforts of the Chinese warlord regimes in the early Republican era. Recent research has emphasised that the "men of guns", despite their negative image, "were not only military leaders, civil governors, and occasional subscribers to the prevailing ideas, but also important agents of the Chinese enlightenment" and that their rule might have been conducive to "intellectual, ideological, and cultural innovations" (Guo 2022, 8). At least one researcher has even pointed to statistical endeavours as a significant part of the warlords' state-building efforts; unfortunately, he did not provide much detail (Paulès 2022; also see Paulès 2020). In the following, we analyse the preface that Yan Xishan wrote for the first *Shanxi Population Statistics* from 1919, before taking a closer look at the statistics and their graphical representations produced in Shanxi during the 1920s and 1930s.

Yan Xishan begins his preface with two quotations highlighting the importance of statistics. The first is from Sugi Kōji 杉亨二 (1828–1917), a Japanese who introduced statistics from Prussia to Japan in the 1870s (Bréard 2008, 31): "Statistics is a decisive instrument for governing the state and pacifying the people" (統計者，治國安民之要具也) (Yan 1919, 1; all translations by the authors). Yan then comments: "That Japan could revoke its unequal treaties with other countries is due to its statisticians having compiled government tables and overviews of national strength. This is how one gets to see the real situation of civilisational progress" (日本之能與各國改正條約者，實賴統計家編纂政表及國勢要覽列陳。文明進步之實況有以致之) (ibid.). The second quote, attributed to Napoleon, says that "without statistics, there is no performance record; without a performance record, the state is not a state" (無統計則無政績，無政績則國為不國者哉) (ibid.). Clearly, Yan considers statistics in the general framework of a global competition between nation-states, which have to

[14] This is not a trivial question considering the opposition earlier population censuses ran into; see Lam 2011, 75ff.

modernise if they want to survive and prosper. "Civilisational progress" was already a key term in the Japanese modernisation efforts in the late nineteenth century, brought up by the highly influential thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi and later taken over by Liang Qichao (Nakajima 2020). Yan Xishan experienced Japan's progress firsthand when he studied there from 1904 to 1909, "awed and chagrined by the rapidity with which the Japanese were modernizing their country" (Gillin 1967, 10). The way he begins his preface demonstrates that statistics not only serve to measure a nation's "civilisational progress" but also to showcase it so the nation in question can be recognised as part of the modern world. It is noteworthy that the reference to foreign models is not coincidental. "Civilisational progress" is not an unknown entity but a measure given by the progress already produced in other locales, most notably Europe and Japan. A bit later in his preface, Yan writes, "Everything in the universe has a correct and unshakeable track, which is the guideline of evolution; if you follow this path seeking progress, there is no fear of failure midway" (宇宙閒萬事萬物靡不有一正確不移之軌道，以為進化之導綫，循此道以求之，自無中途覆敗之虞) (Yan 1919, 1).

Yan not only refers to foreign models but also points to a Chinese origin of statistics, harking back to a style of argumentation already popular when Western technology was introduced during the Ming and Qing dynasties. He claims that an ancient cultural hero, Yu the Great, had already surveyed the land and registered the population, thus making him the founder of statistics in China.[15] Yu the Great was said to be from Shanxi, so he was a national and a local hero, which made him especially attractive for Yan Xishan's propaganda attempts in various contexts. Why, then, did China not develop modern statistics? Yan blames the "negligence" and ignorance of Yu the Great's successors. He knows, of course, that the dynasties ruling China throughout imperial times collected numbers on the population for administrative purposes. However, Yan thinks they were too careless in collecting the numbers and did nothing to gain deeper insights from the collected data. Thus, the old record-keeping could not fulfil the function Yan sees as the decisive feature of modern statistics: giving the state full visibility on its population. Yan knows he must break with past practices and introduce new statistical techniques because modernisation has brought a completely new set of challenges:

> 今者國家事情日趨複雜，風雲起伏莫可端倪，求廬山之真面惝恍迷離，探星海之淵源絕少跡象，圖治之難什百倍於曩昔，立一鵠焉以為庶政設施之助，斟酌而損益之，猶慮無完全，滿望達到樂觀之一日，況貿貿然僅憑個人理想上之判斷力，施諸此波譎雲詭之社會中，則非是是非寸長尺短，南其轅而北，其轍將愈趨愈遠也，豈不悲哉。
>
> At present, the affairs of the state are becoming ever more complex. Storms are impossible to predict. In searching for the true face of Mount Lu, the view is blurred and confusing; exploring the origins of the sea of stars, there are hardly any signs to be

[15] From the late Qing, Yu the Great was constantly referred to as the first Chinese statistician; see Bréard 2008, 97.

> found. Governing well has become a hundred times more difficult than in the past. Establishing a target to help set up your policies and deliberating on their advantages and disadvantages means you want to think it all through and fully hope to reach a happy day [when your target is hit]. But if you hastily make decisions solely based on your personal judgement and thus put your policies into practice in this bewilderingly changeable society, then right will be wrong, wrong will be right, an inch will be long and a foot will be short, and south-pointing carriages will go north; the further you go this way, the farther you will end up from your destination. Isn't that tragic! (Yan 1919, 2f.)

The argument here, brought forward in highly metaphorical terms, implies two claims that are both related to *complexity*. Put simply, the first claim is that society has become more complex: it is "bewilderingly changeable", its "true face" is hard to see, and the sudden eruptions of social and political crises — the "storms" — seem impossible to predict. The usage of the relatively new term "society" indicates that Yan is very aware that not only has the old political order of the empire disappeared, but the social order is also experiencing profound change. Since its introduction in the early 20th century, the concept of "society" referred to a heterogeneous, troublesome, and constantly changing entity that no longer formed an organic unity of subjects and rulers but implied a sharp antithesis between society and the "state" (Vogelsang 2012). Although Shanxi was still mainly an agrarian society with little industrialisation, the presence of foreigners and foreign goods, the repeated student protests (Gillin 1967, 73f.), and Yan's aspirations to modernise the province's education, infrastructure, and economy had brought and would further bring hitherto unwitnessed social forces into play.

The second claim is that the tasks of the state have become more complex. The breakdown of the old social hierarchies and the new tasks of modern state-building meant that it was no longer enough to coopt only a part of the social elite into the state's service and mostly rely on the gentry for local issues, as had been the case in imperial times. Instead of merely using some outstanding men — late imperial statecraft thinkers usually spoke of "*yong ren*" (用人) — Yan deemed it necessary to secure the support of the whole population for his policies; he wanted a "government that makes use of the people" (*yong min zhengzhi* 用民政治).[16] It was a matter of both participation and control: Yan's government aimed at centralising the administration to gain a better grip on the population, and, at the same time, the population was supposed to contribute actively to the success of the government's policies. Yan established militias to fight banditry and a centrally trained police force; after an outbreak of the bubonic plague, he tried enforcing quarantine measures (Gillin 1967, 36). He also put in place various measures to send better-trained officials to administer districts and villages and to educate the largely illiterate population (ibid., 30ff., and 66ff. on educational policies). The

[16] About *yongmin zhengzhi*, explicitly mentioned in the foreword, see Gillin 1967, 41.

administrative division of his province was reorganised into the "village system" (*cunzhi* 村制), which Yan explicitly mentions in his foreword (Yan 1919, 3; also see Gillin 1967, 53). This policy was supposed to give the villagers a little more say in local affairs, to reduce the gentry's power, and to secure popular support for the central government. At the same time, it was aimed at improving central oversight. Furthermore, Yan attempted to revive and modernise Shanxi's economy, setting up a chamber of commerce, establishing the Taiyuan arsenal and further industries, increasing coal production, building roads, and improving agricultural productivity by introducing new technology and pushing the plantation of cash crops (Gillin 1967, 80ff.).

Most of Yan's government initiatives were hindered by inadequate planning and mismanagement, but there was also a more fundamental issue that Yan clearly articulates in his preface to the statistical compendium. It could be framed as a problem of *visibility*: the government lacked even the most basic data about the province's population ("the view is blurred and confusing"). Yan is aware that his policies might easily go astray without such an empirical basis and fail to show any effect ("south-pointing carriages will go north"). That is precisely where he brings statistics into play — in Yan's own words:

> 統計者，凡國家社會所生一切現象，網羅蒐集，纖細靡遺，鈎因果而證盈虛，綜名數而資比較。 其變通張弛之故，燦若列眉，成敗得失之原，瞭如指掌。
>
> Statistics catch and collect all phenomena occurring in state and society down to the finest detail without missing anything; it captures their causes and effects and demonstrates their waxing and waning; it summarises the numbers with measures and provides comparisons. [Thus,] the reasons for changes and constancies become evident, and the origins of successes and failures become clear. (Yan 1919, 1f.)

At first glance, and especially considering the statistical tables that follow, this seems like a gross overstatement of what statistics are able to do. Counting the population and the number of births, deaths, and marriages, as published in this 1919 compendium, hardly seems enough to reveal "causes and effects". However, Yan seems to have grasped the critical difference between the old administrative practices of record-keeping and modern statistics. As Xavier Paulès has put it: "Modern statistics indeed go well beyond the systematic compilation of numerous and precise figures. Raw data are analysed by ad hoc administrative structures and processed with sophisticated mathematical tools, in order to extract major national indices (inflation rate, GDP, foreign trade balance, unemployment rate, etc.). These indices guide public policy to a significant extent. Modern statistics change the way everyone understands certain social phenomena by formatting them in new ways, in particular by making them quantifiable and even (using diagrams and graphs, for example) *visualisable*" (Paulès 2020, 1328. Translation by the authors).

The increasing complexity of society and state demands new methods of seeing: even though the mathematical tools used in Shanxi were not yet very sophisticated, Yan has realised that collecting statistics on all kinds of social phenomena and combining them for analysis can indeed lead to seeing interrelations and social patterns that would stay hidden to a first-order observer of society.[17] Yan is not interested in the number of people, births, or deaths *per se*; he wants to understand what the trend is, that is if his population is growing or shrinking and at what rate. Therefore, he needs all those different numbers combined in a single analysis or, even better, a single graph that shows where things are heading. And he is not only interested in demographic trends; the wealth of data collected on many different aspects of the population shows that he clearly recognises the fundamental transformation in understanding society afforded by modern statistics. He fully embraced it as a way to uncover hidden social patterns and, thereby, to tame social complexity while building a modern state. In his own words: "Indeed, within this vast universe, the principles and fundamentals of innumerable matters can now be sought after following the charts[18], making it not difficult to uncover the most precious truths. What a significance it [statistics] has!" (即此茫茫宙合內，無量數事事物物之原理原則，從玆按圖而索，不難探得驪珠，其關係爲何如也).[19]

Furthermore, the new ways of observing society could also serve to solve the problem of *coordination*:

> 夫國於天地必有與立，與立者何？即國家政治上之一定軌道也。[…] 否則途徑紛歧毫厘千里，未有不望洋興嘆者矣).
>
> A state in the world must have a foundation to stand on. What is this foundation? That the governance of a state is set on a clear path. […] Otherwise, the ways part in too many directions, and slight deviations result in wide divergences, leading everybody to despair. (Yan 1919, 1)

"A state in the world…" is an interesting formulation since it quotes a *Zuozhuan* passage that was also used in Qing statecraft thought but takes on a new meaning here.[20] As we have already pointed out, a modern state can no longer depend on a selected few for its governance but must instead engage the whole population. However, Yan repeatedly expresses concern

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[17] Cf. Stefan Christ's article "The Quantification of Chinese Society: Why Did Liang Qichao Ask for Statistics?" in this issue.

[18] It is somewhat unclear, what *tu* 圖 here refers to. It could be the statistical charts, which are also mentioned later in the foreword, or it might be a classical literary allusion to *an tu suo ji* 按圖索驥, "to look for a horse with the aid of a picture", as the anonymous reviewer has pointed out.

[19] Yan 1919, 2. We thank the anonymous reviewer for correcting some errors in our original translation of these passages.

[20] *Zuozhuan*, Zhao gong yuan nian: 一世無道，國未艾也，國於天地，有與立焉，不數世淫，弗能斃也。For an example from Qing statecraft thought, see Wei 1976, *juan* 1 and 7.

about people going in the wrong direction, on diverging paths, and getting ever further from the destination. He obviously thinks there must be clear goals and a clear way to reach these goals to let officials and the population at large know what to do. Now, the "clear path" is no longer provided by the *dao* of imperial times but broadly speaking by "civilisational progress" and "national strength". In contrast to the *dao*, these are translatable into measurable quantities: population and army size, industrial output, literacy rate, etc. So, statistics again is important because it not only provides a way to measure the status quo but also helps in setting targets and measuring progress towards these targets. As Yan Xishan presents it here, statistics is a vital tool for the state to set up policies and see them executed in a unified and effective way. It is thus unsurprising that Yan was impressed by the state-led modernisation and economic planning efforts in the Soviet Union and tried to implement his own "Ten-Year Plan" in the 1930s (Gillin 1967, 125ff.).

To sum up, in his preface, Yan Xishan presents statistics as a practice conducted by the state and for the state, which finds itself in competition with other states. The results of the statistical investigations and their visualisations were published to share information and secure popular support for the state: at the end of the preface, Yan again expresses his hope that the publication will help "to realise the policy of using the people". However, the statistics are not for the people to draw their own conclusions or for the population to recognise itself as "a people" (cf. Nikolow 2005). Although Yan emphasises using "careful thinking", collecting "adequate and realistic materials", and "striving for the truth" (Yan 1919, 3), he is not sponsoring a scientific undertaking. The statisticians he places in the newly founded Bureau of Statistics are not scientists researching the state as an object of knowledge; statistics serve the state in taking control over society as an object. It is there to enhance state capacity and bring order into a disorderly and complex society. What better way is there to order society not only in numerical tables but also in graphs, by arranging two sets of categories along the horizontal and vertical axis of a diagram, thereby allowing the co-ordination of data and eventually the deduction of logical correlations between a certain social category and its size?

Turning numbers into graphs

If we were to believe the author of a manual on historical statistics from 1934, China already had statistical graphs in the Warring States period, while in the West, it was not until 1782 (probably a reference to Crome 1782) that graphic methods were applied to "let the readers at a glance clearly understand the true situation or the relations of what is shown" (令閱者一見，即明瞭其所示事實的狀態或關係) (Wei 1934, 149). The manual's author even interprets the Han dynasty River Chart (*hetu* 河圖), the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (*taiji tu* 太極圖), or more generally, Zheng Qiao's Song dynasty theory of combined diagrams and lists (*tupuxue* 圖譜學) as a kind of statistical chart (ibid., 156–157). All of these certainly do represent numbers in a relational way, a characteristic shared with statistical diagrams that relate, for example, population to the size of a country (see fig. 2) or to national income as in William Playfair's famous map from 1802 (Playfair 1802). The manual's diagrams certainly were also "essential epistemic instruments" (Sepkoski & Tamborini 2018) in Chinese intellectual history. Yet, they were not based on statistical data nor were they used to depict social realities, to make comparisons, to engineer society, or to expose the statistically illiterate to a more readable digest of legions of numbers.[21]

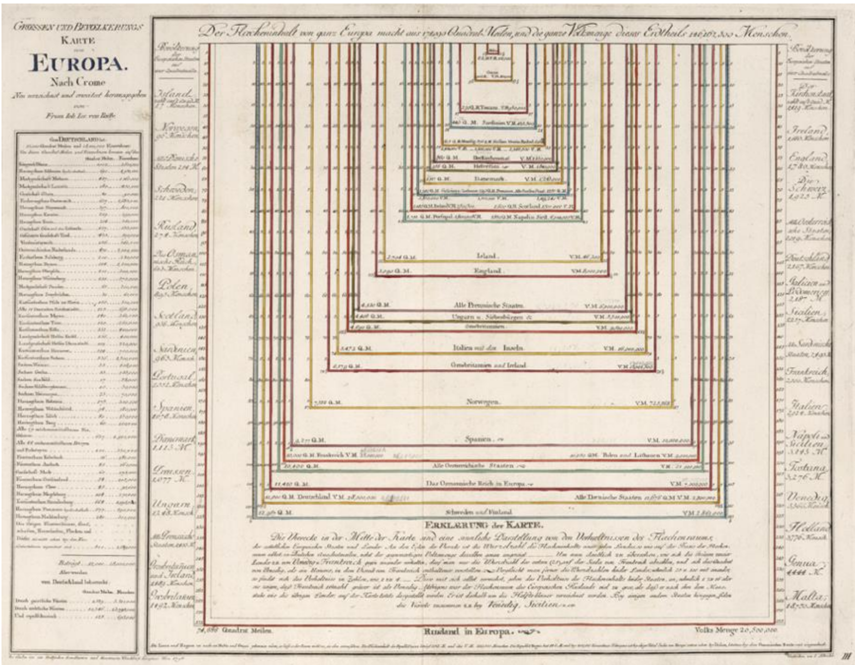


Fig. 2: "eine sinnliche Darstellung von Verhältnissen des Flächenraums" [A sensory representation of relations between surface areas] Reilly, Franz Johann Joseph von (1766–1820), Kininger, Vinzenz Georg, Schutz, Karl, and Albrecht, I. Groessen und Bevoelkerungs-Karte von Europa. Nach Crome. Neu verzeichnet und erweitert herausgegeben von von Franz Joh. Jos. von Reilly. Zu finden im von Reilly'schen Landkarten und Kunstwerke Verschleiss Komptoir. Wien, 1794. Gestochen von I. Albrecht (to accompany Crome's Grosser Deutscher Atlas).

As will be shown below, with respect to graphical statistics, the Shanxi province Statistical Office was a major actor – or rather, a major site of experimentation in the Republican era. As noted above, Shanxi's population statistics charts for 1918 to 1926 are remarkable for their visually appealing layouts. They are rarely accompanied by text, at best by a foreword; the images and tables do "speak" for themselves. Diagrams, thus, are not only representations

[21] Statistical charts were commonly exhibited at International, Health, and Colonial Exhibitions in the 19th century for a general public. See for example the list of statistical charts and tables from Japan at the 1884 London Health Exhibition, in Executive Council of the International Health Exhibition & Council of the Society of Arts, 1884, 677–679.

of social things, but they are things by themselves (Morgan 2020, 226 fn. 1). Yet, historians of Chinese science or statistics have devoted little or no attention to them.[22] The following will analyse how knowledge and information in statistical diagrams are made visible, what meaning is created and which arguments are made through visual semantics.

It would go beyond the scope of this article to discuss the transcultural nature of the Shanxi diagrams, for which models existed in statistical manuals from the Anglo-Saxon "Golden Age of Graphical Statistics" (Friendly 2008), i.e. the nineteenth century, but also from Japan.[23] Yan had studied in Japan, and, given that he refers to Sugi Kōji right at the beginning of the above-mentioned preface, which he wrote for the first locally compiled Shanxi population statistics in 1919, a certain Japanese influence cannot be ruled out. In Japan, colourfully illustrated atlases have been published since the late nineteenth century. In China, too, simple coloured pie and bar charts were included in statistical government publications from the late Qing onwards and in the early years of the Republican era, after the founding of the Central Statistical Bureau in 1907.[24] Yet, when one looks, for example, at the 1912 census results published by the Ministry of the Interior (*Neiwu bu* 內務部) in separate volumes for nearly all provinces, the number of illustrations is highly limited. For Shanxi alone, five diagrams squeezed on two pages precede a flood of tables spilt over 108 pages (Neiwu 1917).

While statistical manuals in the early Republican era all had chapters on statistical diagrams,[25] these were rather unsensational in layout. They were black and white, not particularly attractive to the eye, and they depicted only simple numerical facts.[26] In research articles, many of which discuss China's population problems, diagrams are rarely used[27] and specific manuals for teaching graphical statistics are rare.

Population statistics translated into diagrams functioned more than simply to represent data that resulted from a census or a survey. They were an ideal material for visually demonstrating the province as one yet composed of heterogeneous groups, and they show in an exemplary fashion a way of thinking in terms of a collective, away from the individual. In

[22] Bray et al. 2011 do not address statistical knowledge representation, nor does Wang 2017.

[23] On the Japanese influence on statistical theories and practices, see Bréard 2008. See Kure 1911, plate between pages 94 and 95, as an example of kinds of graphs in Japanese statistical manuals.

[24] See, for example, Educational Statistics for the year 1907 or the First Statistical Tables for Commerce and Agriculture for 1912.

[25] Before 1932, it seems that no Chinese manuals specifically for quantitative graphics did exist (see Tai 1932). See also, slightly later, Zhu 1934, Tai 1935, and Chen 1936. Interestingly, Zhu 1934 was intended for primary school teaching.

[26] See for example Chapter 30 統計圖 in Meng 1909, the most widely circulated and reprinted statistical manual, which was an annotated translation from Japanese. On Meng Sen and his intellectual involvement with statistics, see Bréard 2018.

[27] For Shanxi in particular, see for example Qiao 1931; Qiao bases his statistical analysis solely on tables, as does Liu 1930. Liu 1929 has only one line diagram.

particular, pie charts were perfect illustrations of the functional differentiation of society: depending on the statistical categories which could be based on different functional systems, such as education, health, the economy, etc., the same pie — society as a whole — is cut into different pieces. By their sophisticated designs, statistical diagrams from Shanxi proved that the provincial government took quantification seriously as a tool for communication about the complexities of Shanxi's society.[28] Infants, primary school pupils, and secondary school students (see fig. 3), both female and male, were part of a whole; they had their share in the round of Shanxi's population. But social problems, such as illiteracy, were also addressed, and the illiterate were depicted, again, as a part — actually the majority — of the whole.

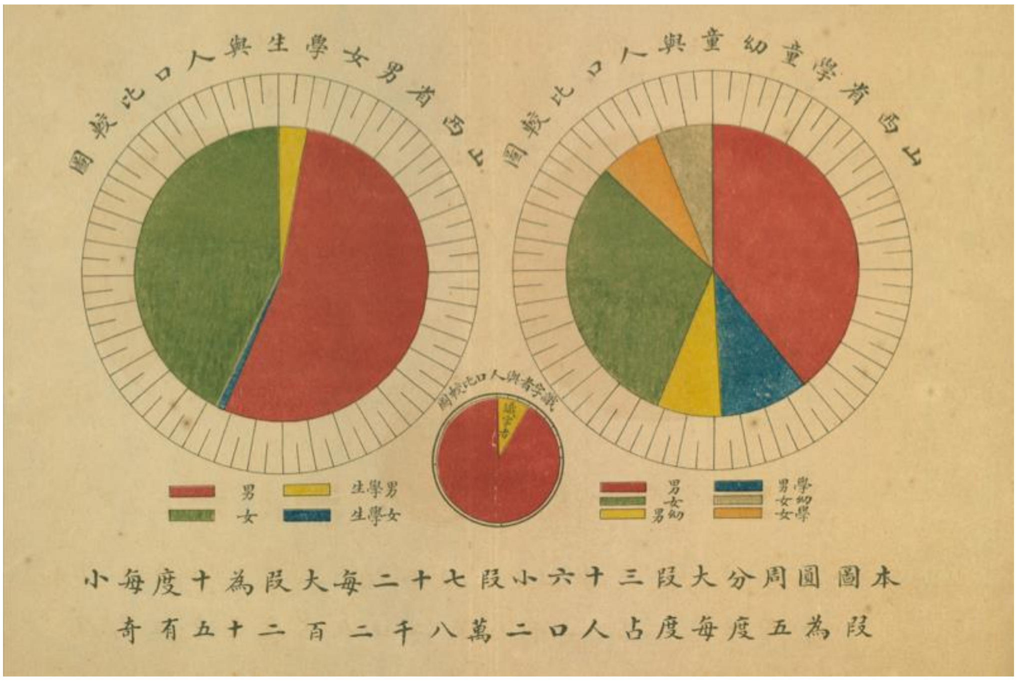


Fig. 3: The share of the illiterate population depicted in red in a cake diagram (small circle in the middle), in 山西省第一次人口統計圖表 (民国七年分=1918), 山西省長公署統計處編, 1919, plate 6.

That statistical graphics were not simply there to visualise numerical data but instrumentalised to make visible certain social phenomena is underlined by the fact that the shown quantities do not correspond exactly to the numbers in the published tables. What matters in the figure below (Fig. 4) is the stark and continuous difference between a smaller female and a larger male population. That there was a drop of more than 10% in the total population

[28] Cf. for example the rather unspectacular presentation of occupational data for the years 1912 to 1924 in Liu 1929.

between 1917 and 1918 is not accurately depicted. Not even the absolute numbers are correctly represented, but any viewer of this bar chart would notice the striking (and numerically correct) excess of males over females of about one third when comparing the green with the brown lines. The reasons were both cultural and medical: the lower regard for the value of women in society, the pernicious habit of foot-binding and the casualties at childbirth (Hao 1934, 15), all three of which were part of Yan Xishan's concerns in modernising Shanxi's society.

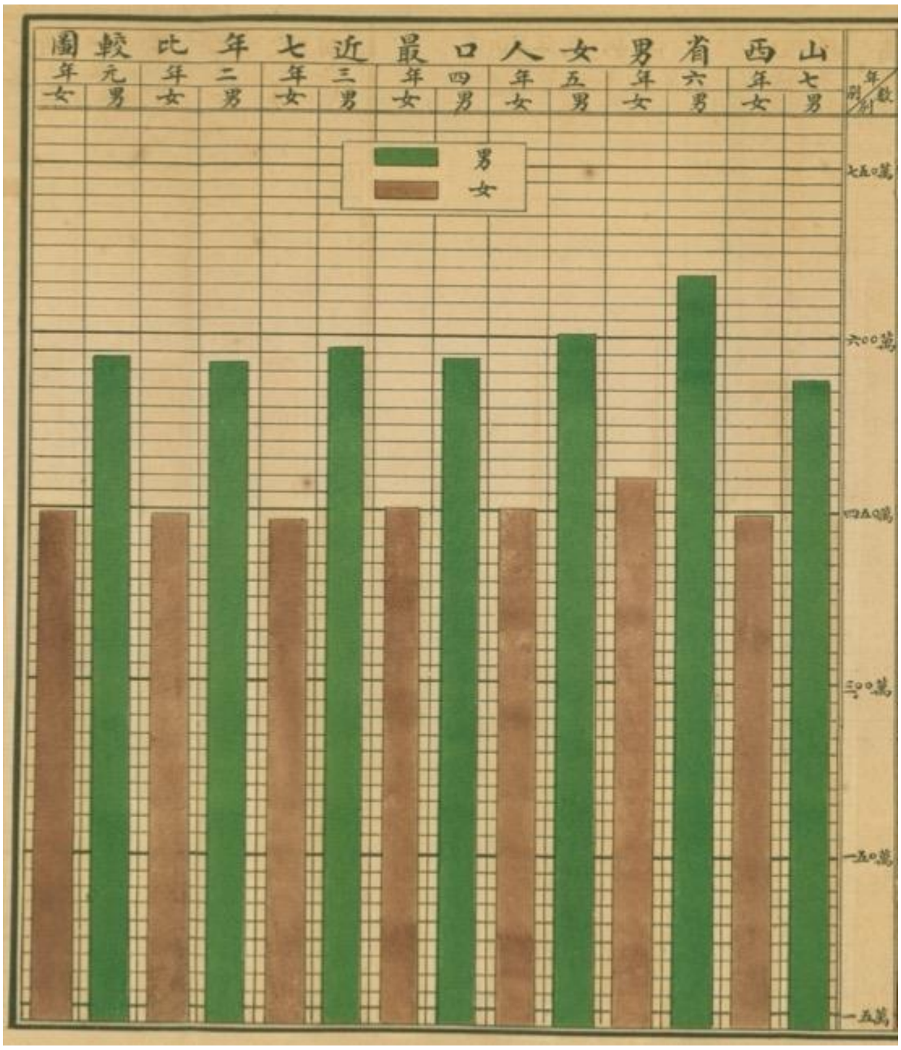
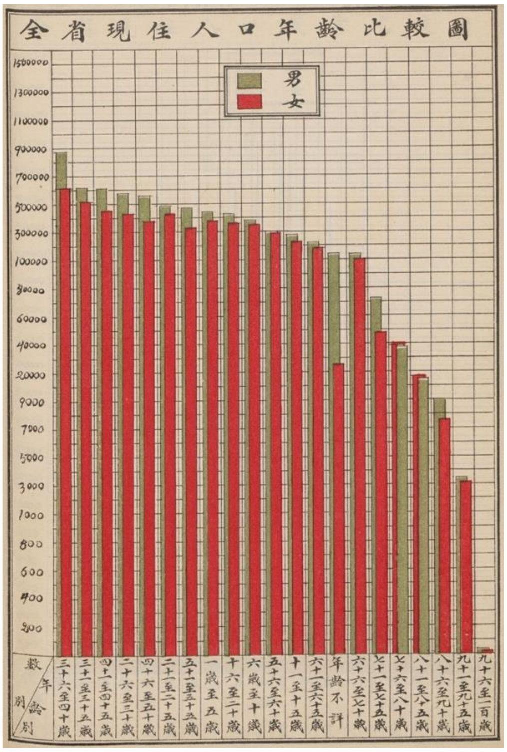


Fig. 4: Male (in green) and female (in brown) population of Shanxi for the years 1912 to 1918 (from left to right), in 山西省第一次人口統計圖表 (民国七年分=1918), 山西省長公署統計處編, 1919, plate 3.

<table>
<tr><th>1917
內務統計 山西人口之部</th><th>1919
山西省第一次人口統計圖表</th><th>1921
山西省第二次人口統計圖表</th><th>1922
山西省第三次人口統計圖表</th><th>1927
山西省第七次人口統計圖表</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. 山西現住人口年齡比較圖
2. 山西人口平均每百人所有已婚及未婚比較圖
3. 山西人口出產每百人中生死比較圖
4. 山西現住人口死亡類別比較圖
5. 山西現住人口患入種傳染病死亡比較圖</td>
<td rowspan="4">1. 山西省各縣每方里住戶疏密比較圖
2. 山西省各縣每方里人口比較圖
3. 山西省總人口最近七年比較圖
4. 山西省男女人口最近七年比較圖
5. 山西省各縣民商戶比較圖
6. 山西省現住人口比較圖
7. 山西省學童幼童與人口比較圖
8. 山西省學童幼童與人口比較圖
9. 山西省男女學生與人口比較圖
10. 識字者與人口比較圖</td>
<td rowspan="4">第一編 靜態
1. 各縣現住戶口比較圖
2. 各縣每方里住戶疏密比較圖
3. 各縣每方里人口比較圖
4. 全省戶口最近八年比較圖
5. 全省現住人口年齡比較圖
6. 全省現住人口已婚及未婚比較圖
7. 全省現住人口職業比較圖
8. 全省寄居外國人職業比較圖
9. 全省寄居外國人國籍比較圖
第二編 動態
1. 各縣婚姻比較圖
2. 全省婚姻季別比較圖
3. 全省婚姻月別比較圖
4. 全省婚姻年齡比較圖
5. 各縣出生死亡比較圖
6. 全省出生月別比較圖
7. 全省死亡月別比較圖
8. 全省死亡年齡比較圖
9. 全省死亡人數與年齡比較圖
10. 全省死亡原因比較圖
11. 全省移住戶數月別比較圖
12. 全省來住籍貫及往住地點比較圖
第三編 省會人口靜態
1. 省會現住人口數目比較圖
2. 省會現住人口百分比例圖
3. 省會現住人口年齡比較圖
4. 省會現住人口職業比較圖
5. 省會現住人口已未婚嫁比較圖
6. 省會現住人口廢疾比較圖
7. 省會現住人口籍貫比較圖
8. 省會現住人口宗教比較圖
9. 省會寄居外人國籍比較圖</td>
<td rowspan="4">第一編 靜態
1. 各屬現住戶口比較圖
2. 各屬每方里住戶疏密比較圖
3. 各屬每方里人口比較圖
4. 全省戶口歷年比較圖
5. 全省現住人口年齡比較圖
6. 全省現住人口職業比較圖
7. 全省現住人口已婚及未婚比較圖
8. 全省寄居外國人國籍比較圖
9. 全省寄居外國人職業比較圖
第二編 動態
1. 各屬婚姻比較圖
2. 全省婚姻季別及月別比較圖
3. 全省婚姻年齡比較圖
4. 全省出生月別比較圖
5. 全省死亡月別比較圖
6. 全省死亡年齡比較圖
7. 全省死亡人數與年齡比較圖
8. 全省死亡原因比較圖
9. 各屬出生死亡比較圖
10. 全省移住戶數月別比較圖
11. 全省來住籍貫比較圖
12. 全省往住地點比較圖</td>
<td rowspan="4">第一編 靜態
1. 全省現住人口比較圖
2. 各縣平均每方里住戶比較圖
3. 各縣平均每方里現住人口比較圖
4. 全省戶口歷年比較圖
5. 全省現住人口年齡比較圖
6. 全省現住人口職業比較圖
7. 全省寄居外國人國籍及職業比較圖
第二編 動態
1. 全省婚姻類別與年齡比較圖
2. 全省出生者父母年齡比較圖
3. 全省出生歷年比較圖
4. 全省死亡年齡比較圖
5. 全省死亡原因比較圖
6. 全省每年千人中出生與死亡數歷年比較圖
7. 全省遷徙原因及地點比較圖
8. 全省失踪者親屬及年齡比較圖</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 pages</td></tr>
<tr><td>1934
山西省政府秘書處編
中華民國二十年份山西省戶口統計</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. 山西各縣戶數比較圖
2. 山西各縣人口比較圖
3. 山西全省戶數歷年比較圖
4. 山西全省人口歷年比較圖
5. 山西各縣戶數密度比較圖
6. 山西各縣人口密度比較圖
7. 山西全省男女人口數百分比較圖
8. 山西全省外國人寄居國籍比較圖</td></tr>
<tr><td>8 pages</td><td>6 pages</td><td>23 pages</td><td>21 pages</td><td>15 pages</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1: Diagrams in different editions of Shanxi population statistics as listed in their tables of contents



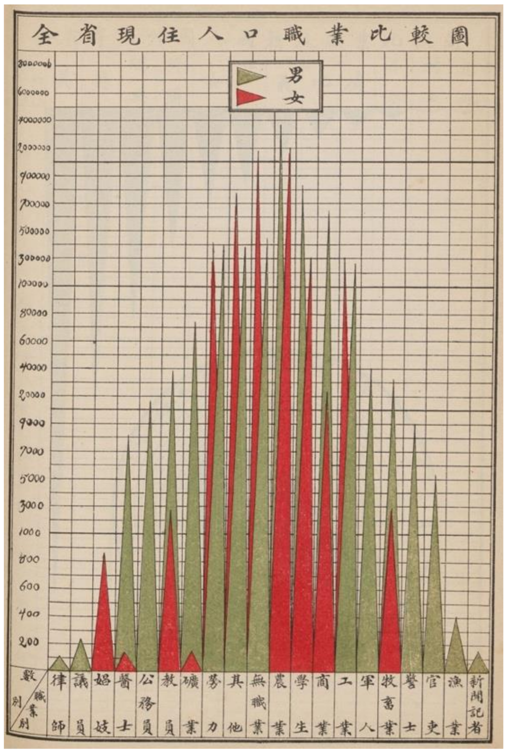


Fig. 5: Age "pyramid" (left) and Occupational categories (right) (Jinsui 1927)

What is striking when one looks at the first to the ninth editions of population statistical charts and tables published by Shanxi's Statistical Department is, first of all, a new structure that appears with the second instalment from 1921. It introduces the population as an entity subject to temporal change. Therein, all demographic material is divided into two categories, the static and the dynamic aspects of population, and separate diagrams and tables are provided in a third part for the static aspects of the provincial capital.[29] This division was not entirely new: already in Meng Sen's 1908 translation of Yokoyama Masao's *Tōkei tsuron* 統計通論, we find precisely, in chapter 4 on population statistics, a division into population states (*renkou zhi jingtai* 人口之靜態) and population flows (*renkou zhi dongtai* 人口之動態). This goes back to the German social statistical school of Georg von Mayr, who was highly influential in Japan.[30] Distinguishing between static and dynamic aspects of the population remains the overall classification from the 1921 edition of Shanxi population statistics onwards, but

[29] This third part is unique to the second edition and left out in all subsequent instalments.

[30] Mayr 1897. Mayr was in close contact with Hanabusa Naosaburo 花房直三郎 (1857–1921) and had a Japanese student, Takano Iwasaburo 高野岩三郎 (1871–1949), both of whom were important figures in population studies and statistics more generally in Japan. See Ōshima 1968, Takano & Suzuki 1968, and Mayr 1917.

1) the graphical layout of the same statistics is unstable, and 2) the content of the visually showcased numbers changes and becomes more specific from the 1st to the 7th edition.[31]

As for the first observation, it reveals the experimental character of the graphical production of statistics in Shanxi. By playing with the range of possibilities for laying out population numbers and related "social facts", the statisticians and workers in the offices often chose designs which were not intuitive for conveying numerical realities. For example, they organised certain data in a symmetric way. The numbers of persons belonging to different professional categories become harder to compare mutually when arranged in a bell-shaped curve rather than in ascending or descending order (fig. 5 to the right), yet in this way, the biggest category is moved to the central and most prominent position.[32] Here, the farmers are followed by those without profession to their left and students to their right. Thus, we find in the spotlight precisely those social groups which deserved particular attention or represented a particular social burden: the farmers because they supplied food for the people, students for they were responsible for building a modern future by learning, and the primarily female part of the unemployed population which was unproductive. What we see is the political gaze on society, not the mathematician's gaze on numbers, and by pushing our interpretation even further, what we see is the desire to order society in a symmetric fashion, to see it in a balanced and organised fashion instead of a chaotic, unordered social reality.

The same symmetrisation can be seen in a diagram of migration patterns within and without Shanxi province (fig. 6), where women migrating to and out of Shanxi for marriage represent the biggest group, followed by men moving in and out of the province to earn their livelihood. Arranging population numbers according to age group in a descending or ascending order is also not the most intuitive design. The 1927 edition of Shanxi population numbers shows a graph with the biggest group from 36 to 40 years of age to the very left down to the smallest group of those above 96 (fig. 5 to the left). Yet again, this is not simply an aesthetic choice for organising quantitative material. Such a layout focuses on the largest biological categories of Shanxi's population in terms of age and, thus, the group of highest political priority to act upon.

The second observation is that more specific topics of social concern and population dynamics were included over time from the 1st to the 9th edition. For example, we find new topics such as:

[31] The 7th and 9th editions have the same content for the graphs and tables; only one minor change can be seen in the 8th edition. There, marriage statistics additionally show monthly figures, and age at marriage (*hunyin nianling* 婚姻年齡) and type of marriage (*hunyin leibie* 婚姻類別) are two separate charts instead of being shown on the same page one within the other.

[32] Precedents for this layout can be seen in Meng 1909, 149.

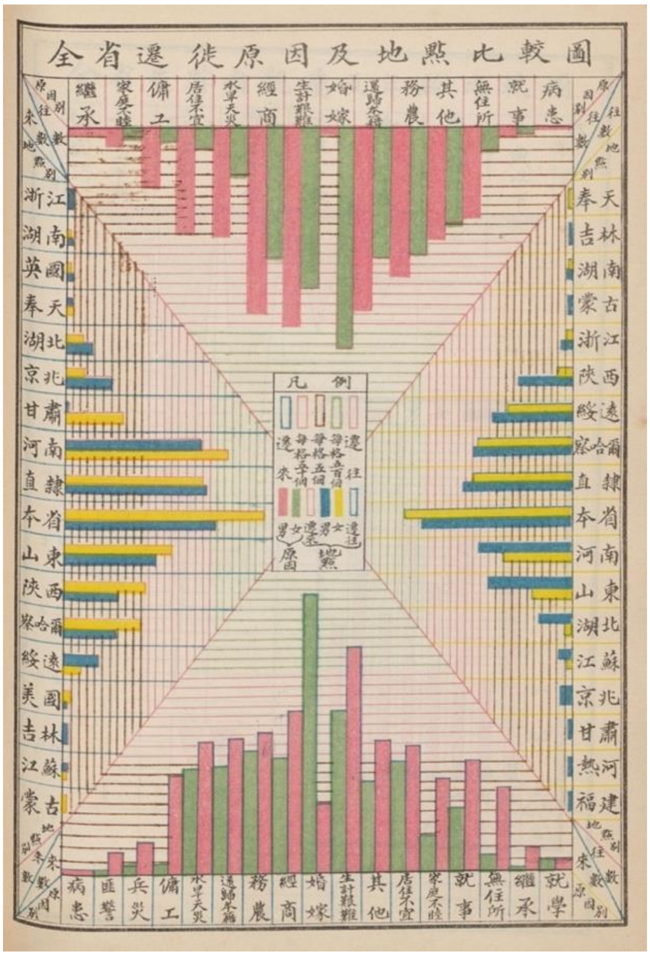


Fig. 6: Comparative diagram on reasons for and places of migration for the entire province (全省遷徙原因及地點比較圖) (Jinsui 1927).

- Profession and nationality of foreign residents (added in the 2nd ed. from 1921),
- age at marriage (added in the 2nd ed. from 1921),
- age of parents at childbirth (added in the 7th ed. from 1927),
- causes of death (added in the 2nd ed. from 1921),
- the number of missing persons (added in the 7th ed. from 1927),
- the reasons for intra- and interprovincial migration (added in the 7th ed. from 1927).

The second and third items were significant for explaining the growth rate of Shanxi's population. Qiao Qiming, in his analysis of Shanxi's population problems, credited its important scale to the "early marriage early childbirth pattern in Shanxi" (*Shanxi zaohun zaochan* 山西早婚早產) which he called "a common social disease" (*shehui tongbing* 社會通病) (Qiao

1931, 16). With Yan Xishan's attention paid to hygiene and medicine in Shanxi,[33] the causes of death were equally part of the "population problems" that Qiao listed. The least frequent known cause of death — giving up opium consumption (*jiechu yapian* 戒除鴉片) — was depicted centre stage in the 1927 population statistics (see fig. 7). But there is more to that: the low number of casualties is not only at the centre but also visually increased by adopting a logarithmic scale for the abscissa[34] — instead of a linear scale with serpentine-shaped bars for large values as seen in many other graphs (cf. fig. 1). The main reason for death — weakness due to age — thereby becomes a minor affair at the right margin of the graph and attracts less of the observer's attention.

Such a choice of visual layout confirms our hypothesis about the primacy of political statements over purely numerical information in statistical graphs. These were not simply condensed representations of large sets of numbers but allowed the visual support and justification of political goals. The finger was laid on the wounds and the weaknesses of society, not on the successes of policies nor the "strength of the state" (Nikolow 2001). Fig. 8 also shows nicely the burden of opium smokers in Shanxi's legal and penitentiary system: the sheer size of the amount of law cases resulting in punishments for opium consumption (followed by cases of gambling) rests as the solid basis of a tower that one — just like Yan Xishan — would like to dismantle.[35]

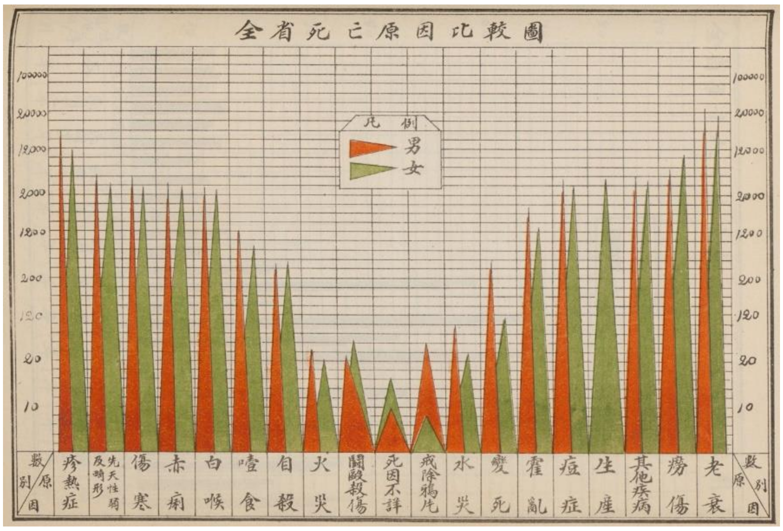


Fig. 7: Comparative diagram on reasons for death in the entire province (全省死亡原因比較圖), women in green, men in red (Jinsui 1927)

[33] On Yan Xishan's (failed) efforts to improve public health and his reliance on foreign missionaries, see Gillin 1967, 36–37.

[34] Logarithmic scales allow to depict small quantities relatively bigger and large quantities relatively smaller.

[35] See Gillin 1967, 38–40 on Yan Xishan's changing approach to eradicating opium smoking.

Conclusion

The collection of statistical data in Shanxi was relatively systematic and consistent during the first half of the Republican era, yet, when turned into graphs, formats and layouts constantly changed. The high degree of experimentation and uncertainty regarding graphical representation can only partly be explained by the fact that statistical production was not an outcome of long-time deliberation within an established "scientific community" in Shanxi, but the product of a state bureaucracy operating on the provincial level under very challenging circumstances with personnel who had received only some formal training.

Behind the apparent graphical variety, we found that visual statistics all manifested a political primacy in communicating about Shanxi's society and its governance. They clearly depicted which aspects were of central concern to Shanxi's governor and, at the same time, the *raisons d'être* of his statistical endeavours. What statistical tables could not perform, statistical graphs could at first glance: ordering social and demographic categories. Ordering them symmetrically was also an expression of control and rule over the population, with the ultimate goal of enhancing state capacity and producing social progress in Shanxi.

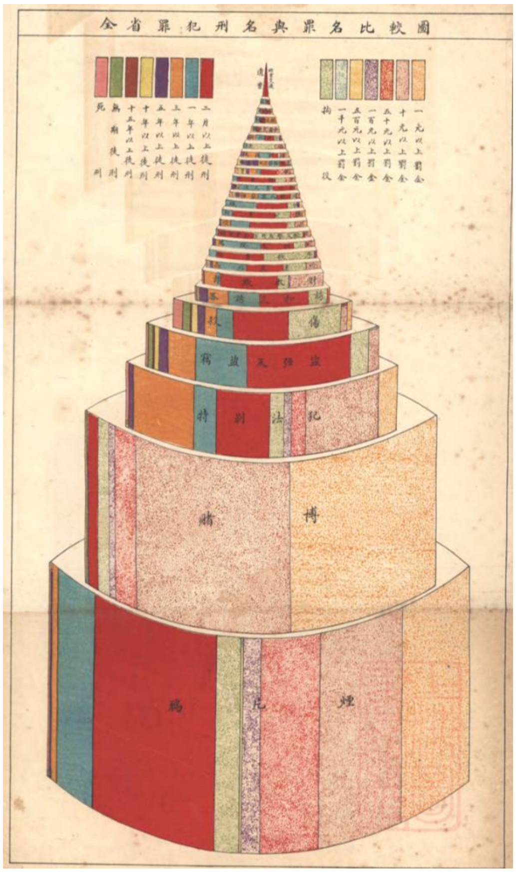


Fig. 8: Punishments shown according to monetary fines and length of imprisonment/death penalty 山西省第四次社會統計 民國十年份 (山西省長公署統計處 編纂 1924)

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SPOTLIGHT

Bestowers of Books and Knowledge: On the Collection Bequeathed by Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény to the National Academic Library of Strasbourg

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In 2015, a collection of books on Asia, and China more specifically, was donated to the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg in France. The donors were Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény. The collection is very large, it reflects some of the characteristics of the two sinologists' research, and it opens up new possibilities for education and research in the field of sinology.

2015年，法國史特拉斯堡國立學術圖書館獲贈一批關於亞洲，尤其是中國研究的重要書籍。這批藏書由桀溺（Jean-Pierre Diény）和科萊特・帕特（Colette Diény）夫婦捐贈，規模宏大，不僅體現了兩位漢學家在學術研究中的獨特視角，還為亞爾薩斯的漢學教育與研究開闢了新的領域。

Keywords: China, Sinology, History, Literature, Science, France, Alsace, Library, Collection, Provenance

關鍵詞： 中國，漢學，歷史，文學，科學，法國，阿爾薩斯，圖書館，收藏，來源

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Introduction

On 2nd January 2005, Jean-Pierre Diény, then aged seventy-seven, wrote to the administrator of the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg (BNUS):

> I confirm the decision that my wife and I have taken to bequeath our sinological library to the BNUS, as evidenced by our will.
>
> Je confirme la décision que nous avons prise, ma femme et moi, de léguer à la BNUS notre bibliothèque sinologique, comme en fait foi notre testament.

After the very close deaths of the couple — Colette Diény passed away in December 2013, Jean-Pierre Diény in May 2014, the library was transformed into a collection, which was first kept in the BNUS Fischart stacks. The donation has triggered a collaboration between the BNUS and the University of Strasbourg — its libraries in particular. The collection is currently being processed so as to make the books available to the public: basic scholarly resources are already displayed on the shelves of the new section of the Bibliothèque des langues at the University of Strasbourg, which is devoted to collections on the Eastern part of the world, less commonly used documents along with rare books are being catalogued before they are moved to the main stacks of the BNUS — with a very limited selection of books on literature, religion, and philosophy being added to the open shelves of the library. All the books of the collection are identifiable thanks to a stamp with the words 'Fonds Jean-Pierre et Colette Diény'. This article presents the Diény collection in three parts. First, it traces the history of the bequest and outlines the characteristics of the collection. Then, it recalls how the work of the Diény family and, more generally, their contribution to the development of sinological studies are reflected in this collection of works. Finally, it considers some of the prospects that this rich collection opens up for the future.[1]

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[1] I would like to thank the managers and librarians of the BNUS for the trust they placed in me when they came to handle this collection, contacted me, and asked for my opinion on a number of issues. My special thanks go to Catherine Soulé-Sandic, Dmitri Koudriashov, and Christophe Didier. This summary would not have been possible without the help of Elsa Cuillé, who knows the collection well and who, as an employee of the BNUS, went through the stacks and archives of the BNUS for me in a pandemic context, when I was stuck at home. I have relied on numerous publications, mentioned throughout this document, as well as on additional information from invaluable contacts. The children of Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény, Claire Diény in particular, answered my many questions and were kind enough to proofread the draft of this article in French. I am indebted to Pierre-Henri Durand, who knew Jean-Pierre Diény well and took part in sorting the papers kept in the library, Shum Wing-fong, who is a living encyclopaedia of the IHEC library and has catalogued and analysed the rare books in the collection, Catherine Jami, who, as a specialist on mathematics in China, is very familiar with the history of the science research group in which Colette Diény took part, as well as Jean-Pierre Drège, who was better able than anyone else to help me choose a suitable terminology to describe the books and their printing methods. I would like to thank them most sincerely. I would also like to thank Alison Hardie for her generous and patient help and support in rephrasing and copy-editing this paper. I am, of course, responsible for any errors that may appear in the article. A French version of the article is available in Bizais-Lillig 2025.

From Collection to Bequest

As the above-mentioned letter from 2nd January 2005 makes clear, the donation proposed by Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény corresponds to the sinological part of the family library, the history of which I will outline below. In the appendix to this letter, Jean-Pierre Diény drew up an approximate inventory of the collection which corresponds more or less to that now held by the BNUS, and which I will further describe. At the end of this section, I will explain why a couple of sinologists living south of Paris chose the BNUS as a recipient.

The Creation of the Diény Couple's Sinological Library

The Diény collection results from a selection among a larger collection, that of the library at the Diény family home in Orsay. Although Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény spent a great deal of time in libraries, particularly that of the Institut des hautes études chinoises (IHEC) in the fifth *arrondissement* of Paris, and did so until very late in life, they also relied heavily on works collected over the course of their lives.

Born in 1927, Jean-Pierre Diény initially trained in the Classics. Nonetheless, as early as during his studies at the highly selective École normale supérieure on the rue d'Ulm between 1948 and 1951, it was the Chinese language and culture that aroused his curiosity.[2] This interest led him to take up the study of Chinese at the Langues Orientales[3] from 1955 onwards. There he met a fellow student, Colette Patte, whom he married in 1958. Colette, who was also studying Chinese, was particularly interested in the history of science.

The couple soon left France for East Asia, where they stayed for many years. It is perhaps worth putting the situation in context. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the sinological landscape was being rearranged. To begin with, the great French figures of early twentieth-century sinology, Marcel Granet (1884–1940), Henri Maspero (1883–1945), and Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), had disappeared. Although they did not leave the field empty, succeeding them was a challenge made all the more difficult by the fact that Chinese studies was now required to open up to the world, to "abandon its Eurocentric prejudices and consider its object of study with greater humility and genuine sympathy", as expressed by Jean-Pierre Diény himself (Diény 1985, 23). Yet the situation in China, far from stabilising, was marked by the division between the People's Republic of China (PRC), established on the mainland in 1949, and the Republic of China (ROC), which had taken refuge in Taiwan. And under Mao, particularly at the end of the 1950s with the Great Leap Forward (1958–1961), the PRC was difficult to access. The authoritarian state of the ROC led by General

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[2] Biographical information on Jean-Pierre Diény is mainly taken from two sources: Bastid-Bruguière 2016, pp. 174-179, and Martin 2016, pp. vi-viii. Additional information was supplemented by Claire Diény.

[3] Otherwise known as Langues O', it corresponds to today's Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Inalco) in Paris.

Chiang Kai-shek was not much more welcoming. So, from the 1950s to the 1970s, many apprentice sinologists turned to Hong Kong and Japan.

Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény were no exception. While focusing on the study of Chinese language and civilisation, they also learned Japanese in Paris. Then, from 1959 to 1962, Jean-Pierre Diény, accompanied by his wife, went to live at the Maison franco-japonaise, first in Kyoto and then, at the end of their stay, in Tokyo. They belonged to the small sinological circle of the time, as testified by a few book reviews they wrote for the *Revue bibliographique de sinologie*. In 1960, eventually, Jean-Pierre Diény published his first research work, a translation of the family letters of Zheng Banqiao 鄭板橋 (1693–1765) (Diény 1960, 15–67). They spent the following two years (1962–1964) in Paris, during which time *Les Dix-neuf poèmes anciens* appeared, a major contribution by Jean-Pierre Diény which still stands as a reference today.[4] They subsequently moved to Beijing, where Jean-Pierre Diény taught French at the Foreign Languages Institute (1964–1966). The context was not conducive to research: the authorities prevented both Chinese and foreign researchers from accessing and studying ancient texts. In December 1966, the PRC, shaken by the Great Cultural Revolution, expelled all foreigners. The Diény family, which then included three children, moved to Hong Kong, where their fourth and last child was born. A year later, in 1967, the family returned to France, where they remained for the rest of their lives. Jean-Pierre Diény was first appointed *chargé de recherche* (research fellow) at the CNRS and later, in 1969, *chargé de recherche* at the École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), where he was finally elected *directeur d'études* (full researcher) in 1970. In order to devote more time to her family, Colette Diény continued her work although in a less formal context. She took part, for instance, in the ground-breaking work of the multidisciplinary research group on science and technology in China, Korea, and Japan, founded by Jacques Gernet at the CNRS in 1984.[5]

Although it is impossible to specify the place of acquisition of each of the works that now make up the Diény collection, the ensemble bears witness to an openness to Asia in general, and brings together editions of ancient Chinese texts from the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, Japan, the United States, and various European countries. This openness to the world, which Jean-Pierre Diény so admired in his teacher Paul Demiéville (1894–1979), was also one of his hallmarks. The family library covered a wide range of subjects. In addition to a sinological section, which is now in Strasbourg, it included a large number of works, some inherited from a scholarly family,[6] others relating to general culture and classical literature, and others collected around the world as Colette and Jean-

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[4] Diény 1963; the work will be discussed further below.

[5] The so-called *Recherche coopérative sur programme* (Cooperative Research Programme) RCP 798 became the *Groupe de Recherche* (Research Group) GDR 798 in 1986, and then the GDR 1950 from 1996 to 1998. Colette Diény collaborated in particular with Joël Brenier, Jean-Claude Martzloff, and Wladyslaw de Wieclawik. See Jami 2020. I would like to thank Catherine Jami for allowing me to read her text before its publication.

[6] Jean-Pierre Diény's father, André Diény, was a highly qualified (agrégé) professor in history specialising in the history of Greco-Roman antiquity, which he taught at the prestigious high school Lycée Henri IV in Paris.

Pierre Diény grew curious. This vast collection of heterogeneous works on mountains, nature, art, and literature was distributed throughout the house where the Diény family lived in Orsay, from the basement to the bedrooms. Two offices, however, housed the bulk of the works that composed the sinological section.

Distribution of the Diény collection

It was precisely this sinological part of the library that was bequeathed to the BNUS in their will. It was assembled, organised, and sorted by subject by Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény. This collection is considerable and remarkable in more ways than one. It is made up of several sub-sets, which Jean-Pierre Diény had already presented in the appendix to his letter of 2nd January 2005, at a time when he and his wife were still using these works, which they kept in their offices for the most frequently consulted, and in the basement of the house for the others.

According to this inventory, the collection bequeathed to the BNUS by Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény occupies one hundred and fifty linear metres[7] and consists mainly of works relating to the Chinese language and civilisation of the pre-imperial and imperial periods. Modern and contemporary China was not part of Colette's or Jean-Pierre Diény's main scientific or personal interests.

Around fifteen per cent of this collection[8] consists of research tools that the couple shared. These include dictionaries, encyclopaedias, indexes, and thematic bibliographies. While the indexes are of less interest today because of the advent of digital texts and resources, the other tools are still relevant.[9] Although digital dictionaries have become more widespread, paper versions are still essential to sinological work. While the online version of the *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大辭典 (Great Dictionary of the Chinese Language) is imperfect, that of the *Great Ricci Dictionary* is not freely accessible for example. The presence of these editions on the shelves of libraries in Strasbourg is hence valuable for our field of study.

Sixty per cent of the collection brings together the great texts of classical Chinese culture. These include the Confucian Classics, texts by ancient masters, the Dynastic Histories, and collections and anthologies of reference texts from antiquity to the early twentieth century. This very large set of texts constitutes a necessary foundation for any study of ancient China. Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény undoubtedly shared this part of their library. In fact, these works, in all their variety, underpin the whole of Chinese textual production and therefore

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[7] Measurements taken by Claire Diény when the collection was assembled to move to Strasbourg suggest a total of one hundred and seventy-five linear metres.

[8] For the sake of clarity, I have converted the divisions and sub-divisions of Jean-Pierre Diény's inventory into percentages of the whole.

[9] Jean-Pierre Diény showed this intuition in Diény 1978.

serve as a point of reference in many research projects, particularly of a philological nature. Within this part of the collection, anthologies and other collections of texts dominate. A large proportion of these are poems and, to a lesser extent, prose texts, all appreciated for their aesthetic qualities or for their role in the definition and criticism of poetry. It is here that the heart of Jean-Pierre Diény's work lies, as this article will detail below. However, this part of the collection also reflects the subjects studied by Colette Diény. It includes, for instance, works related to the history of the establishment of Christianity in China and to the exchanges with the Jesuits.

The penultimate part of the collection, which accounts for almost fifteen per cent of the whole, covers the fields of science and technology. In addition to the reference works in English edited by Joseph Needham and various studies on the history of science in Western languages, there are numerous original texts and studies on mathematics, metals, and pharmacopoeia, mainly in Chinese but also in Japanese. These texts were mainly for the use of Colette Diény in her work at the CNRS.

The last ten per cent of the collection is divided into two parts. On the one hand, there is a large collection of periodicals in Western and Chinese languages in the field of Chinese studies. On the other hand, there is a disparate collection of books on Asia in general, from all periods and disciplines, including works on painting, city maps, and tourist guides. The collection is completed by Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény's own works, in the form of books or offprints. In his letter of January 2005, Jean-Pierre Diény had planned to bequeath "the files relating to the lectures given at the E.P.H.E. from 1969 to 1997 [...] [which] could be used by young researchers", but he subsequently decided not to do so, so that only the works published by the Diény couple appear in the collection held by the BNUS. As I will describe in more detail below, and although this is not emphasised in the 2005 inventory, the collection includes ancient editions of works that fall into the various categories described above and which contribute fully to the value of the collection as a whole.

The donation to the BNUS

Jean-Pierre Diény took steps very early on to find a destination for the works on China that he had collected with his wife Colette Diény. His first move was to approach the political authorities, as evidenced by a letter from Catherine Trautmann, mayor of Strasbourg, dated 25th June 2001, which warmly acknowledged receipt of his proposal. In it, she noted the absence of a centre for Chinese studies in Strasbourg and undertook to discuss the bequest project with the President of Marc Bloch University,[10] at the time her friend, Daniel Payot. But it was a period of transition for both of them: Catherine Trautmann lost the municipal

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[10] The University of Strasbourg II, which became the 'Université Marc Bloch' in 1998, was merged into the University of Strasbourg in 2009.

elections in March 2001 and was from then on on the side of the opposition to the city government, while Daniel Payot (in office from 1998 to 2002) was due to step down as head of the university in the following year. He was succeeded by François-Xavier Cuche (in office from 2002 to 2007), who in all probability had to consider the proposal for a donation that Jean-Pierre Diény sent to the university on 8th October 2002, introducing it as follows:

> On the advice of my friends Francis Rapp and René Kappler, two renowned Strasbourg academics, I take the liberty of presenting to you a project that I think might be of interest to Marc Bloch University.
>
> As a former student at the École Normale Supérieure, highly qualified in Classical Studies, I taught the History and Philology of Classical China at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Section 4), as full researcher, from 1969 to 1997. I would like my sinological library, containing several thousand works, to be donated after my decease to an institution wishing to create and develop a new centre for Chinese studies.

> Sur le conseil de mes amis Francis Rapp et René Kappler, deux universitaires strasbourgeois de renom, je me permets de vous exposer un projet qui me semble pouvoir intéresser l'Université Marc Bloch.
>
> Ancien élève de l'École Normale Supérieure, agrégé de Lettres classiques, j'ai enseigné de 1969 à 1997 l'Histoire et la Philologie de la Chine classique à l'École pratique des Hautes Études (IVe Section), en qualité de directeur d'études. Je souhaiterais qu'après ma disparition ma bibliothèque sinologique, riche de plusieurs milliers d'ouvrages, soit offerte à une institution désireuse de créer et de développer un nouveau centre d'études chinoises.

So far, I could find no trace of the answer made to Jean-Pierre Diény's initial proposal. It would appear that the university did not accept Jean-Pierre Diény's offer, since later, in January 2004, Jean-Pierre Diény contacted the administrator of the BNUS, Bernard Falga at the time, to inform him of his plan to donate his library. Again, he explained that he had previously discussed the matter with Francis Rapp and Lucien Bronn (sic), who had encouraged him to do so. By referring to three intellectual figures from Strasbourg in his letters of 2002 and 2004, Jean-Pierre Diény was symbolically inscribing himself in the Alsatian university landscape. In 1955 Jean-Pierre Diény had left Strasbourg, where he was teaching the classics at the Lycée Fustel-de-Coulanges, to devote himself to the study of Chinese. This former researcher at the CNRS (1955–1959, 1962–1964 and 1966–1969), who was promoted *directeur des études* at the École pratique des hautes études (EPHE, 1970–1997), had settled in the Paris region. He had not lived in Alsace for a long time, and not without reason: Chinese studies were slow to take root in Alsace.[11]

Throughout his correspondence with the BNUS,[12] Jean-Pierre Diény emphasised his family and emotional roots in his native homeland. For example, he wrote twice in his letters of October 2002 and January 2004:

> My maternal grandparents came from Mulhouse and my paternal grandmother from Wissembourg. My paternal grandfather, whose name I bear, came from a line of pastors from the Montbéliard region. I myself was born in 1927 in Colmar, where my father taught history at the Lycée Bartholdi in the 1920s, before continuing his career in Strasbourg at the Lycée Fustel de Coulanges, and then in the Paris region. I myself taught literature at the Lycée Fustel from 1952 to 1955, before taking up the study of Chinese at the Fondation Thiers. For all these reasons, I am attached to my little homeland and I return there often.

> Mes grands-parents maternels étaient originaires de Mulhouse et ma grand-mère paternelle de Wissembourg. Mon grand-père paternel, dont je porte le nom, était issu d'une lignée de pasteurs du pays de Montbéliard. Je suis né moi-même en 1927 à Colmar, où mon père a enseigné l'histoire au lycée Bartholdi dans les années 20, avant de poursuivre sa carrière à Strasbourg au lycée Fustel de Coulanges, puis dans la région parisienne. J'ai moi-même été professeur de lettres au lycée Fustel de 1952 à 1955, avant d'entreprendre à la Fondation Thiers l'étude du chinois. Pour toutes ces raisons je suis attaché à ma petite patrie et j'y retourne souvent.

His mention of close friends such as Francis Rapp (1927–2020) and René Kappler (1922–2008) is significant: it highlights the enduring ties, with both family and friends (intellectuals as well), which Jean-Pierre Diény had forged in Alsace. Jean-Pierre Diény met the first early on in his life. Francis Rapp was to become an important figure at the University of Strasbourg II as a historian of the medieval period, and more particularly of Christianity, the Germanic countries, and Alsace.[13] The two men met when, as young *agrégés*, they were teaching at the

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[11] It was not until 2009, twelve years after Jean-Pierre Diény's retirement, that a position in Chinese Studies was opened at the University of Strasbourg. The appointment of an associate professor specialising in sinology paved the way to the opening of a Bachelor's degree in 2013.

[12] I was given access to the letters sent by Jean-Pierre Diény to the successive administrators of the BNUS dated 21st January 2004, 22nd March 2004, 18th June 2004, 17th October 2004, 2nd December 2004, 2nd January 2005, and 5th May 2006, as well as a note dated 20th September 2006. I also read the letter dated 8th October 2002, addressed to the President of Marc Bloch University, which Catherine Trautmann had mentioned to him in a letter dated 25th June 2001.

[13] He was a lecturer (1972-1974) and then a professor (1974-1991). About Francis Rapp, see Bischoff n.d. See also Rapp n.d. and Rapp 1997.

Lycée Fustel-de-Coulanges in 1952. They were both boarders at the Fondation Thiers, Francis Rapp in the 56th class (1953–1956) and Jean-Pierre Diény in the 58th (1955–1958). It was also at the Lycée Fustel-de-Coulanges that Jean-Pierre Diény met René Kappler, five years his senior, with whom he shared, in addition to a taste for walking and an attraction to unknown places, a "visceral love [...] for Alsace and the same attachment to the Protestant tradition of [their] families".[14] While Jean-Pierre Diény had left Alsace to study China, his friend, who like him had studied the classics, became a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts at Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg. It was not until the end of the 1960s, when René Kappler began to explore the writings of thirteenth-century travellers who reported on their experiences in Central Asia, China, and the Near East, that their intellectual affinities became more clearly apparent. In a way, the reference to these firm and lasting friendships served to guarantee the authenticity and solidity of the project that Jean-Pierre Diény presented to his Alsatian interlocutors.[15]

The donation, proposed by Bernard Falga, was accepted by the BNUS Board of Directors on 24th March 2005, as the administrator Albert Poirot informed Jean-Pierre Diény in a letter dated 27th September 2006. In the minutes of this meeting, it is associated with a deposit agreement for the personal libraries of former teachers at the Lycée Fustel-de-Coulanges. Unfortunately, the minutes do not specify whether this donation was accepted for its importance to the emergence of Chinese studies in Alsace, or because of the claim that Jean-Pierre Diény, to some extent, had as a former teacher at the Lycée Fustel.

Once the fate of his library was confirmed, Jean-Pierre Diény was able, as agreed, to keep the entire collection at his home so that he and his wife could continue their work. In spring 2014, the library was still at Orsay. Before its transfer in October 2016, the IHEC made an inventory of the rare books. Claire Diény, informed by her father of his wishes and with the help of the will, brought together all the works that were to be sent to the BNUS. This set of books represents the entire sinological collection belonging to Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény. The only items excluded were the works of Jean-Pierre Diény's students, his exchanges with them and his preparatory notes for his lectures at the EPHE. Since then, the work of organising and preparing the collection for cataloguing has continued. The collection is

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[14] See Diény 2010. A note at the end of this publication states that the full version of the text is available in the A-Ulm.

[15] The mention of Lucien Bronn (mispelled) is more awkward. It certainly betrays an occasional and superficial link with the philosophy professor Lucien Braun (1923-2020), whom Jean-Pierre Diény may have known in Strasbourg in the 1950s (but the sources do not allow confirmation of this). It is likely that, either directly or through his friends, Jean-Pierre Diény consulted Lucien Braun about his project. Braun was heavily involved in the activities of Strasbourg institutions, including the Université des Sciences humaines, which he chaired from 1978 to 1983, the Association des Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, and the BNUS, on whose board he was sitting in 2004 when Jean-Pierre Diény was writing his letter. About Lucien Braun, see Braun n.d. I would like to thank Pauline Lemaire who worked at the Association des Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg and Christophe Didier at the BNUS for their help in finding relevant biographical information. If, like René Kappler, Lucien Braun found refuge in Clermont-Ferrand at the beginning of the Second World War, it would be interesting to know in which high school and at what period he taught before joining the teaching staff of the Faculté de lettres in Strasbourg in 1960.

progressively being made available to the public and is identifiable by a stamp at the beginning of each work. The question of its visibility as a collection remains, in the age of closed stacks and electronic catalogues.[16]

From Afar, Still Close

The Diény collection naturally reflects the themes dear to Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény. It also highlights their work, both rigorous and meticulous, of academic research. I shall endeavour to highlight three major characteristics of Jean-Pierre Diény's contributions, with which I am more familiar, and which are embodied in the collection as preserved. The collection will probably provide an opportunity for future publications dealing more specifically with Colette Diény's contributions to the history of science in China, to the understanding of intellectual exchanges between China and the West through the Jesuits, or to the discovery of Japanese children's literature that was accompanied by her translations published between 1990 and 1995.[17] Since I am unable to cover the whole of this extensive collection, I will confine myself to highlighting three major characteristics of the approach taken by the sinologist Jean-Pierre Diény, as reflected in this collection. Firstly, a meticulous engagement with the texts; secondly, an anchoring in the pluridiscplinarity of Oriental studies; and thirdly, a regular effort to make sense of things in a wider context than just sinology.

Concern for the Text

Jean-Pierre Diény's work reminds us that the initial vocation of sinology is to study, translate, and analyse Chinese texts. Primary sources hence constitute the heart of Jean-Pierre Diény's books; they do not merely serve as illustrations of theories or justifications of arguments. Moreover, they are presented in all their complexity. This choice, although not unique, stands as an essential characteristic of Jean-Pierre Diény's work throughout his career.[18] In

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[16] In his correspondence, Jean-Pierre Diény repeats his desire to preserve the unity of the collection he is donating. 'We would also like this collection to retain its integrity,' he wrote on 2nd January 2005. And on 5th May 2006 he added: 'I would very much like to have the opportunity to meet you in order to review with you the conditions for carrying out this project and in particular to raise a question raised by Mr Falga concerning the possible dispersal of my library. As the inventory shows, the majority of my library consists of works in Chinese and Japanese, and there can be no question of dispersing them. But it would also be regrettable to separate from this collection works in Western languages relating to the same issues.' After long discussions with the family, librarians, and sinologists, it has been agreed that the collection will appear as one set by means of a note in the library catalogue, although the books are partly kept in closed stacks and dispersed between the Université de Strasbourg languages library and the BNUS. Book preservation and ease of access for students and advanced readers have been the key elements in this decision.

[17] I would like to thank Pierre-Henri Durand for sending me a list of Colette Diény's publications, which he has begun to collate.

[18] The two complementary studies by Yves Hervouet attest to this: Hervouet 1964a and 1964b. However, Jean-Pierre Diény

this connection, I will mention two major texts in his contribution to the study of classical Chinese poetry: the book *Les dix-neuf poèmes anciens* (The Nineteen Old Poems) and the paper "Contre Guo Maoqian" (Against Guo Maoqian).[19]

While the first might appear to be a translation of a series of nineteen poems considered to inaugurate the art of pentasyllabic poetry in China, it is in fact a close study of the text, its commentaries, and its palimpsests.[20] The book is divided into four parts. The first is a general introduction to this set of poems. It highlights the importance attached to these poems in early attempts at the history of Chinese poetry, in the *Shipin* 詩品 [Classification of Poets] by Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (ca. 468–518) in particular. It also presents some of the poems' characteristics and tackles the thorny question of their dating. This introduction, although very precise and useful for sinologists, is perfectly accessible to readers who are not versed in Chinese language, literature, or culture. The second part is an annotated edition of the poems together with their full translation. This critical edition of the Chinese text is based on a comparison of the versions of the poems provided in various Chinese and Japanese editions. It is no coincidence that the work was reprinted by the Belles Lettres in 2010, in the collection entitled 'Bibliothèque chinoise', which Anne Cheng, as director, likes to call the 'Budé chinois'.[21] What we have here is a book which, as a precursor, establishes a Chinese literary milestone in the manner of a text from Latin antiquity in the European tradition. It invites us to juxtapose the text and its traditional critical apparatus, which is displayed in a third part, the commentaries. This third part consists in a compilation of the main commentaries arranged line by line and supplemented by questions and additional insights for each poem. The interpretation of each poem is grounded by numerous references to the commentaries and interpretations to which these poems have given rise over time, from their inclusion in the great anthology of the *Wenxuan* 文選 (Selection of Refined Literature), compiled between 526 and 531, to the contemporary period with the work of sinologists in China and outside China. These very many references are listed in the last part of the volume, the bibliography, which is partially commented on. This invitation to the text is therefore based on a wide range of editions, studies, commentaries, and translations of the series of poems entitled *Gu shi shijiu shou* 古詩十九首 (Nineteen Old Poems). In the Diény family's library, the sources compiled in this book would translate into metres of works whose analysis and

would continue in this vein. The two examples cited in the following section (2.2) are a case in point.

[19] See Diény 1999. This long article is the development and amplification of two earlier studies. Cf. Diény 1968, and Diény 1979.

[20] I will deal with this aspect further on, but it is worth pointing out right away, immediately after the use of this term, which evokes Gérard Genette's contributions to the thinking on literature, that Jean-Pierre Diény's work seems to have very little to do with the theoretical reflections on text, literature, and literary history that marked the French intellectual space from the early 1950s to the late 1970s.

[21] The equivalent to the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics collection.

comparison has led to the creation of a new benchmark for the editing, translation, and analysis of the *Nineteen Old Poems*. While some might see this accumulation of editions referring to an identical text as redundancy, specialists will discern the signs of meticulous attention to sources.

However, as a philologist Jean-Pierre Diény went one step further when he published his article "Against Guo Maoqian", in which he challenged the chronological classification of related poems established by the great 11th-century scholar Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (1041–1099). Here again, Jean-Pierre Diény cites the poems he wishes to compare, compares the different versions in different editions, and draws on the commentaries of Chinese scholars from the imperial period. He shows that Ming and Qing scholars questioned some of Guo Maoqian's assertions, but that no one doubted his chronology. He then uses clues to reveal the weakness of some of the arguments made by the compiler Guo Maoqian, and demonstrates that poems can be read differently, that plain style and heterometry are not necessarily the sign of a popular and ancient stratum in the rewriting of poems. Jean-Pierre Diény finally draws some of the consequences of this "small revolution" for the reading of the poems under scrutiny. The meticulous philologist's concern for the text was not without consequences for subsequent representations of the history of Chinese poetry. For instance, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* is a study with a markedly different style, in which Stephen Owen (2006) takes up some of the arguments and reflections developed by Jean-Pierre Diény. In a way, with his highly declarative gesture, Jean-Pierre Diény positioned himself in direct dialogue with Chinese literati. He continued the tradition of keeping textual heritage under constant, minute, and critical scrutiny, and embraced a lineage present in his work as well as in his library.

The Legacy of Oriental Studies: Multidisciplinarity

For specialists in other disciplines, the place occupied by works of Chinese history and philosophy in the Diény couple's library may come as a surprise. In fact, it testifies to the erudition that, in contrast to a vulgar orientalism, underpins the scholarly sinology that dates back to the work of Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832). In other words, while sinophiles are enthusiastic about a certain exoticism they may find in China, the sinologists, in this case Colette or Jean-Pierre Diény, scrutinise one or other aspect of a distant culture and language that they endeavour to put into context.[22] Yet, because ancient Chinese texts can be characterised by the many allusions — by reference or quotation — to texts that formed the basis of

[22] On the lasting influence of Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat on sinology as a discipline, consult the various contributions to the colloquium organised by Pierre-Étienne Will on 11th, 12th and 13th June 2014 at the Collège de France (Will 2014). A number of introductions to the history of Chinese studies in France can be found in Bergère and Pino 1995.

the culture of a literate community, ancient texts form a web from which no part can be radically dissociated, for fear of rendering it foreign to itself.

This aspect of the Chinese textual tradition should be kept in mind when analysing the Diény couple's sinological library, which was focused primarily on texts. There are several reasons for this choice, which might be worth mentioning here. First, access to Chinese space was highly controlled and difficult from the 1950s to the 1980s. Consequently, the choice of studying texts rather than paintings, calligraphy, or archaeological sites may have been guided as much by pragmatic reasons as by personal taste. Also, texts hold a prominent position in Chinese cultural transmission, if we agree with Pierre Ryckmans' (1935–2014), alias Simon Leys', subtle assertion while evoking a text by Ming dynasty (1368–1644) scholar, Liu Shilong 劉世龍 (fl. ca. 1603):[23]

> In his essay, the author observed that many famous gardens of the past have entirely disappeared and survive only on paper in literary descriptions. Hence, he wondered why it should be necessary for a garden to have first existed in reality. Why not skip the preliminary stage of actual existence and jump directly into the final state of literary existence which, after all, is the common end of all gardens? What difference is there between a famous garden which exists no more, and this particular garden which never existed at all, since in the end both the former and the latter are known only through the same medium of the written word?

Both the library and the work of Jean-Pierre Diény bear witness to an acute awareness of the need to encompass the Chinese library with its four divisions, without arbitrarily dissociating sections of it. To achieve this, Jean-Pierre Diény has drawn on numerous catalogues and bibliographic guides. The latter have become a major part of philological learning in China.[24] The bequeathed Diény collection contains a large number of volumes of this kind, some of them very old.[25] These fundamental working tools complement and enrich more accessible compilations such as *Early Chinese Texts: A bibliographical guide* by Michael Loewe and Endymion Wilkinson's *Chinese History: A New Manual*, which are also included in the bequest.

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[23] See Leys 2011, p.251. A French version was published in Leys 1998, p. 753. In the same volume, the author describes the insurmountable obstacles he faced in the early 1970s, a few years after the Diény family's stay in Beijing, when he was looking for books and colleagues to talk to (see Leys 1974).

[24] Mulu xue 目錄學 [bibliography] is one among many other subject or speciality names, which end with the same suffix, as in dili xue 地理學 [geography] for example.

[25] See for instance the Shumu dawen buzheng 書目答問補正 [Enriched bibliographical guide], compiled by Fan Xiceng 范希曾 (1900–1930), based on the guide by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909), in a 1931 edition. This information is taken from Shum Wing-fong's cataloguing table of early works in the Diény library.

This impressive mastery of the Chinese corpus is reflected in works of great erudition. In particular, I would like to mention *Le symbolisme du dragon dans la Chine antique*[26] and *Portrait anecdotique d'un gentilhomme chinois : Xie An (320–385) d'après le* Shishuo xinyu (Diény 1993).

In the first book, Jean-Pierre Diény explores representations of the dragon in all categories of texts, from antiquity to the 3rd century AD, which marks the entry into the Middle Ages in Chinese historiography. His research is presented in two stages. He begins by listing in the form of a reasoned inventory the passages in which he has identified a symbolic dimension. This part is organised around various features (relating to the environment, behaviour, or relations with men and gods) under which quotations in the original language are grouped, with references and translations. Characteristic series gradually emerge, such as the one associating the dragon with clouds and rain. This first section is of particular interest to sinologists, who will discover many little-known texts. It also demonstrates the author's dexterity in handling concordances, encyclopaedias, collections, and anthologies, as well as in the art of translation. However, Jean-Pierre Diény's objective would not have been achieved without the second part, which he entitles 'tableau', and whose purpose is to identify, through analysis and selection of emblematic passages, the dynamics and articulation within the symbolic system built around the figure of the dragon.[27] Diény book is not solely based on primary sources, as it also draws on commentaries by scholars from the imperial period, as well as epigraphic data and iconography. Above all, this study sheds light on discussions related to certain characteristics associated with the dragon which were raised among scholars in China, Japan, Germany, the United States, and elsewhere. In a way, this work presents a research project in progress, collecting together its materials and its research questions, while offering suggestive avenues for response and reflection.

Jean-Pierre Diény excelled at compiling works of recension with a view to bringing new readings to light. His study of the collection of anecdotes entitled *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (which he translated "New Worldly Remarks")[28] and one of its most famous characters, Xie An 謝安 (320–385), illustrates his approach. The book opens with the following remark:

> Our ignorance of the aims of the book has led to a long-running controversy, which has not yet been resolved. Is *Shishuo* history or fiction? Was its mission to inform its readers about real events or to entertain them with fictional tales? The vast majority of the six hundred or so characters in the book are historical, and many of them well-

[26] Diény 1994. I place this element first, despite its later publication, because it seems to me to be the result of an approach already apparent in the article Diény 1981.

[27] In this respect, Diény's work differs from the simple anthology, which he criticises for its fragmented and tedious nature, which "prevents us from discovering, despite the cross-references, the concepts underlying the repetitive narratives". See Diény 1990, pp. 129-150, which relates more particularly to Mathieu 1989.

[28] Hereafter abbreviated to Shishuo.

known. This clearly indicates a concern for credibility, which seems inherent in the very genre of the anecdote. In China, it seems that it was not until the Tang dynasty that the imaginary anecdote was recognised as such and ceased to pretend to be true. Prior to that, the common ambition of collections of anecdotes was to be accepted as a 'complement to history'.

Notre ignorance des objectifs poursuivis a ouvert une longue controverse, qui aujourd'hui encore n'est pas close. Le *Shishuo* relève-t-il de l'histoire ou du roman ? Avait-il pour mission d'informer ses lecteurs de faits réels ou de les distraire par des récits fictifs ? La grande majorité des quelque six cents personnages qui peuplent le livre sont historiques, et beaucoup d'entre eux, bien connus. Ce fait annonce à l'évidence un souci de crédibilité, qui semble d'ailleurs inhérent au genre même de l'anecdote. En Chine, il faut attendre, semble-t-il, la dynastie Tang, pour que l'anecdote imaginaire se reconnaisse comme telle et cesse de prétendre à la véracité. Auparavant, l'ambition commune des recueils d'anecdotes est de se faire admettre comme « complément de l'histoire ». (Diény 1993, 3–4)

To extricate himself from an insoluble problem and an all too simple and sterile dichotomy, Jean-Pierre Diény has chosen to study the character most present in the anecdotes, namely Xie An. He explains:

Xie An lived from 320 to 385. History knows him well, but most of his biography recounted in chapter 79 of the *Jin shu* is taken from the anecdotes of the *Shishuo* or their ancient commentaries. Apart from a few additional anecdotes, all that is added are dates and details of his political career, mainly the offices he held. But I do not undertake to rewrite the biography of the historical Xie An. I admit that the man I am interested in belongs to legend as much as or more than to history: the fame he enjoyed from the 4th century onwards explains why imaginary words and behaviour were attributed to him. The overall portrait that emerges reflects the upheavals of a class, the literate aristocracy, traditionally destined to serve the State, but whose vocation exposed them to the greatest dangers in a time of turmoil.

Xie An a vécu de 320 à 385. L'histoire le connaît bien, mais l'essentiel de la biographie que lui consacre le *Jin shu*, dans son chapitre 79, a été tiré des anecdotes du *Shishuo* ou de leurs commentaires anciens. Ne s'y ajoutent guère, à part quelques anecdotes supplémentaires, que des dates et des indications sur sa carrière politique, principalement sur les fonctions qu'il occupa. Mais je n'entreprends pas de récrire la biographique du Xie An historique. J'admets que l'homme qui m'intéresse appartient

> à la légende autant ou plus qu'à l'histoire : la célébrité dont il a joui dès le IVe siècle explique qu'aient pu lui être attribués des propos et comportements imaginaires. Le portrait d'ensemble qui en résulte reflète les déchirements d'une classe, l'aristocratie lettrée, traditionnellement destinée au service de l'État, mais que cette vocation expose, en un temps de troubles, aux plus grands dangers. (Ibid., 8)

The demonstration that follows, which is thematically structured around the stages of Xie An's life, behaviour, attitude, qualities, and flaws as revealed in the anecdotes scattered throughout the book, highlights key values in 4th-century society. Jean-Pierre Diény builds on the hypothesis that the collection of anecdotes was intended to provide models for the art of conversation: the collection of anecdotes becomes a mirror for archetypes of expression, but also for behaviour, attitude, and character. In his reading of a very tedious text, Diény draws on editions, commentaries, and a manuscript presented in the introduction, as well as on modern studies, particularly Japanese. He is at once a philologist, a historian, and an expert on medieval literature, as well as a connoisseur of the currents of thought at the time. By breaking away from the question of the veracity of the anecdotes, he invites us to explore the world of representations, so crucial to cultural history.

These two examples paint the portrait of a researcher who anchors his work in the primary sources offered by the Chinese bibliography, concerned as much with the texts as with later research carried out around the world on the topics of interest to him. His approach is not only erudite but modern, as he sets out the materials on which he relies, showing the reader how he proceeds, without hiding the uncertainties or limitations he faces. The library stands as a reflection of the man himself, rich in elements from the past and the present, multidisciplinary and multilingual.

Comparison could be reason

Jean-Pierre Diény has not only set out to discover a distant corpus, with the constant idea in mind of getting as close as possible to the original texts with the help of a wealth of critical material, he has also acted as an intermediary. As we have seen, all his analytical work is based on numerous original translations. By contrast with the previous examples, his lighter *Jeux de montagnes et d'eaux. quatrains et huitains de chine* (Diény 2001) are limited to the original poems without variants, and their translation without annotation or commentary. His work *Pastourelles et magnanarelles. Essai sur un thème littéraire chinois* (Diény 1977), which combines a thematic study with translations and an enlightened comparative approach, is certainly more original.

Comparative literature is a fairly recent discipline, subject to violent attacks from René Étiemble's *Comparaison n'est pas raison* (1963) to the recent heated exchanges on the subject of World Literature, particularly between Emily Apter and David Damrosch. If a reading of

Jean-Pierre Diény's work leaves no doubt that his general knowledge extends far beyond the literature and history of classical China, it does not place him within the framework of the intellectual theories and constructs generally associated with France in the second half of the 20th century. As far as I know, there is no mention of structuralism, semiology, or deconstructivism in his writings. It is not possible to assert, solely on the basis of the sinological section of the Diény family library, that Roland Barthes or Gérard Genette were absent from it, but it seems unlikely, given the orientation of his studies, that Jean-Pierre Diény was particularly sensitive to the influence of the theoretical currents that these figures embodied. As a consequence, this work on so-called folk poetry from China and France in the early Middle Ages[29] should not be read with the disputes between different schools of comparative scholars set in the background. Nor does the book situate Jean-Pierre Diény as a successor or even a contradictor of a Chinese scholar like Guo Maoqian. Here, Jean-Pierre Diény fully assumes his position as an outsider in his approach to the Chinese heritage, inviting us to better place the works in their context by means of comparison:

> A thousand years before the appearance of the French *pastourelle* (pastoral), Chinese poetry featured its two main actors. Although the setting is different, the roles are similar. An unscrupulous traveller, not a knight but a mandarin, meets a country girl, not a shepherdess but a mulberry-picker, and tries to seduce her. This is not to boldly locate in China the origins of the *pastourelle*, which has been sought in vain on all sides, even in the Arab world. Nor even to attempt a rigorous comparison, at such a distance in space and time, between the productions of two very different civilisations. But when it comes to literature, the fields of study of the medievalist and the sinologist have certain similarities. Since the most difficult art is to question one's subject judiciously, it would not be without profit for these specialists to initiate each other into the problems of their respective disciplines.

> Mille ans avant l'apparition de la pastourelle française, la poésie chinoise met en scène ses deux acteurs principaux. Quoique le décor diffère, les rôles se ressemblent. Un voyageur sans scrupules, non pas chevalier mais mandarin, rencontre d'aventure une campagnarde, non pas bergère mais cueilleuse de mûrier, et il tente de la séduire. On n'aura pas ici le front de situer en Chine l'origine de la pastourelle, vainement cherchée de tous côtés jusque dans le monde arabe. Ni même de tenter une comparaison rigoureuse, à pareille distance dans l'espace et le temps, entre les productions de deux civilisations si différentes. Mais les champs d'étude du médiéviste et du sinologue présentent, en matière de littérature, certaines similitudes. L'art le plus difficile étant de

[29] Despite a common label, the "Middle Ages" point to two very distinct periods from the perspective of chronology depending whether it is applied to China (approximately the 1st millennium) or to France (roughly from the 5th to the 15th century).

> questionner judicieusement son objet, il ne serait pas sans profit pour ces spécialistes de s'initier mutuellement à la problématique de leurs disciplines. (Diény 1977, 1-2)

In this study, Jean-Pierre Diény suggests that researchers should open up to other disciplines, other linguistic and cultural areas, and other periods, in order to shed new light on their subject of study, to bring to light some of its characteristics and, as far as possible, to better understand how it fits into a given space and period. He illustrates this approach by studying the poem "Mo shang sang" 陌上桑 (In the Mulberry Trees) that was unique for its time, that some associate with a folkloric vein, although this idea is based more on intuition than on tangible elements, and whose reading, essentially moral or political, has shown its limits. Indeed, what do we learn about a poem when we either brandish it as a testimony to the resistance of the people to the dominant elite, or as a parody of righteousness? While a number of questions remain open, a closer look at the young woman in the mulberry field, inspired by Michel Zink's (1972) work on the *pastourelle* insofar as the genre is centred on the shepherdess and her sheep, allows us to identify the symbolic forces that make this emerging poetic model so powerful. In this way, the poetic piece is recontextualised, drawing on very ancient textual roots and references, at once heir to the imperatives of moral and political orthodoxy and reinvested with the primal temptations of freedom.

Although inspired by Western research on the *pastourelle*, this study is essentially based on material from sinology. Within the Diény library, this rich range of references can be found — it ranges from poetic anthologies with numerous historical commentaries, to studies written in in Chinese, Japanese, French, and English between the 1930s and the 1970s.

Resources for the future

Jean-Pierre Diény has opened up a number of avenues for sinological studies, particularly those relating to ancient and medieval Chinese poetry. Current and future research will build on this intellectual heritage, and will also be enriched by a more detailed analysis of the library gathered by Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény.

Towards an intellectual and cultural history

The collection appears to be a source of information and a starting point for a better understanding of 20th-century history. This article is a sketch of this possibility in two respects. It reveals how Jean-Pierre Diény had a triple, perhaps quadruple, grounding. His childhood, then his first experience as a teacher of literature at the Lycée Fustel-de-Coulanges in Strasbourg, and finally his long negotiations with various Alsatian authorities — the Strasbourg metropolitan authority, the Université Marc Bloch, and the BNUS — all remind us of the sinologist's identification with his homeland.[30] Naturally, his research work, like that of his wife, places him in the dual field of French sinology and, more broadly, Chinese intellectual history. Finally, a study of the biographies of Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény suggests that their stay in Japan played an important role, placing them, *de facto*, in almost closer contact with Japanese intellectuals and writers than they were with their peers during their stay in Beijing. There is undoubtedly much more work to be done to better understand how husband and wife evolved in each of these spaces, the people with whom they were closely connected, and the impact of these relationships on their own output.

Perhaps as an extension of this first line of enquiry, we could look at the traces left in the books — such as seals or autographs — by the relationships the Diény couple forged during their extended stays in Japan, China, and Hong Kong, of course, but more generally throughout their research activities. The numerous dedications found in many of the volumes bear witness to this. An analysis of these might help to sketch out the network of relations between sinologists in the second half of the twentieth century.

Also, one characteristic of Jean-Pierre Diény's contributions on ancient Chinese civilisation, and ancient and medieval poetry in particular, is that, however erudite they may be, they are largely written in such a way that they are accessible to non-specialists. At a time of general globalisation, one could find inspiration in Diény's work on mulberry field poems through the lens of *pastourelle* studies. One could just as easily, by including the materials and reflections made available to us by Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény in our intellectual and cultural space, make a detour to ancient China, and go there without any quest for exoticism, to perhaps better examine objects that are closer to us.

Finally, while the Diény collection focuses on material relating to textual studies of ancient China, it is far from being confined to this field. It embodies the openness to which it invites us. It is striking to see the large number of books on the history of Japan in this library, for example. The case of children's books is certainly an avenue worth exploring. There is, indeed, a very special segment in the Diény collection, that of children's literature, which provided food for thought for Jean-Pierre Diény's *Le Monde est à vous. La Chine et les livres pour enfants* (Diény 1971). This section of the collection will probably not provide reading material that is particularly well-suited to a young audience in Strasbourg, but it does constitute a particularly valuable and interesting collection of material relating to twentieth-century China. It is complemented by another unique collection, the translations of Japanese children's literature published by Colette Diény in the 1990s (Diény C. 1990; 1991a; 1991b; 1995a; 1995b; 1995c). This bridge between Asian studies and children's literature, which has gradually become a genre in its own right since the 1920s, is not insignificant and deserves a

[30] In the future, enriched editions of the Dictionnaire de biographie alsacienne could include a presentation of Jean-Pierre Diény.

specific study. It certainly says a lot about the way in which the couple viewed culture, education, and childhood. And it is probably related to the commitment of Geneviève Patte (1936–), Colette Diény's sister, to promoting reading as a source of discovery and connection for children.

Rare books in the collection

The documents that make up the Diény collection reflect intellectual activity and form a heritage in their own right. One hundred and fifty-eight *shanben* 善本 (rare books) are a particularly rich part of this heritage.[31]

These books cover a very broad thematic spectrum. They include editions and commentaries on the Confucian classics, historical works in the broadest sense,[32] anthologies and collections of texts that could be described as literary, encyclopaedias and other study books, calligraphic dictionaries, etc. The oldest of these works would be the *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話 (Night Sayings from the Freezing Studio) by the Song monk Huihong 惠洪 (1071–1128), in a Japanese edition of 1666. Among a large majority of works published after 1850, a few particularly rare and ancient works stand out.

A brief presentation of the variety of rare books included in the collection will precede a discussion on the research that the oldest items could inspire. The oldest works, whether printed in China or Japan, take the form of volumes sewn together using an accordion structure: the paper was too thin to allow printing on both sides, so each sheet was printed one after the other on a long strip of paper which is then folded in an accordion shape. Printing was based on the xylographic technique — movable type appeared not to be a practical option for a script with thousands of characters. Each engraved wooden plate could be used to print one sheet in series, and could be reused for several editions if the plates were well preserved, as we will see later. Lithography was introduced during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) by Westerners, who used it to distribute Christian tracts in particular, and it proved to be particularly well-suited to the production of illustrated books. This second method of reproduction, which coexisted with xylography in the 19th century, became very important in the early 20th century, as the Diény collection attests. It was also at the end of the Qing that another type of printing developed, that of metal movable type, which took older xylographic editions as its reference. There are many works of this type in the collection, most of which date from the 1920s and 1930s. They reflect the fact that this type of publishing was taking precedence over the previous two. These works sit alongside books printed using movable

[31] I rely heavily on the article by Liu and Cen 2017, but also on the additional information prepared for the publication of this article that Ms Shum (Cen) kindly sent me. I would like to thank her for this. I would also like to thank Jean-Pierre Drège for the explanations he kindly provided.

[32] Which, in traditional Chinese bibliography, include geography, to which astronomy and technology could perhaps be added.

type, whether in wood, metal or ceramic, many of which originated in Japan. The last group of antique-bound books consists of reproductions, usually based on photographs. These anastatic reprints, which are identical reproductions of older works, have made it possible to pass on to posterity, in perfectly identical form, documents that were difficult to preserve. This collection, put together by Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény, is all the more valuable given that many of the works that were still available in the 1960s when the Diény family was living in Beijing disappeared in the different *yundong* 运动 movements with tragic consequences that were successively launched in the People's Republic of China. Even though recent copies of older editions included in the Diény collection may not qualify as rare books in themselves, nevertheless some of them maintain access to ancient editions that have otherwise disappeared.

The collection thus assembled provides material for a study of book history or transmission, and the analysis of particular editions of texts printed in imperial China from the 17th century onwards. This is demonstrated by the sample presented by Liu Rui and Shum Wing-fong, who have carried out the most detailed analysis of the edition of the *Shi ji* 詩紀 [Poetic Memoirs] preserved in the collection. The text itself corresponds to a double collection, as complete as possible, of poems composed in the past. The first part, the *Gushi ji* 古詩紀 [Memoirs of Ancient Poems], covers the earliest part up to and including the Sui dynasty (581–618) and was written by the Ming scholar Feng Weine 馮惟訥 (*ca.* 1512–1572). The second, the *Tang shi ji* 唐詩紀 [Memoirs of Tang Poems], an expansion produced under the impetus of the scholar Wu Guan 吳琯 (active *ca.* 1585) covers, as its name suggests, the Tang period (618–907), considered to be the heyday of poetry. This work in 156 *juan* is divided into 120 volumes arranged in two cases. A seal indicates that the work belonged to the Meiji era Japanese sinologist Uzan Nagao 長尾雨山 (1864–1942). As the two specialists show in their article, the work was composed from plates that do not belong to the same series.[33] By identifying the taboo characters,[34] it is possible to date the plates of ancient poems fairly precisely to the very early Qing dynasty, *i.e.* the period 1644–1662. The section devoted to Tang poems alternates sections with pages of nine columns of nineteen characters with older sections of twelve columns of twenty-one characters — not to go into more details of the page layout. A study of marginalia and taboo characters has led the researchers to date the entire edition to the period 1662–1735. This edition is one of the half-dozen or so that have survived and, in the case of this work, can be dated back to the first half of the eighteenth century. It highlights the complex publishing practices involved. Other parts of the collection would merit a similar study.

[33] This edition thus results from the use of plates that were not all engraved at the same time: plates that had been preserved with a view to a possible republication were partly damaged.

[34] Because the emperor's personal name is sacred and therefore taboo, the characters that make it up are forbidden during his reign. This practice, which consists of replacing taboo characters with homophones, is particularly useful for dating editions.

Towards establishing sinology in Alsace

The prospects for study opened up in this way can only be realised if the collection held at the BNUS is brought forward (catalogued and made available to the public) and if researchers work on it. In other words, the very presence of the collection in Alsace augurs well for the development of Chinese studies in the region. Jean-Pierre Diény was particularly attentive to this. As he continued his research work in retirement, he turned to his roots with a view to passing on the collection of works on Asia, and China in particular, that he and his wife had assembled over the years. His aim, repeated throughout his correspondence with the BNUS, was to "encourage the creation and development of a new centre for Chinese studies".[35] He said as much in his letter of 5th May 2006 to BNUS administrator Albert Poirot:

> My strongest hope is that my library will be able to help set up a specific centre for Chinese studies in Strasbourg, for which it would be a prime support.

> Mon plus ferme désir serait en effet que ma bibliothèque puisse favoriser la création à Strasbourg d'un centre spécifique d'études chinoises, dont elle constituerait un premier point d'appui.

In other words, the bequest from Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény was not simply a gift to Alsace of a valuable collection of works. Their aim was to give impetus to sinological teaching and research in the region. Moreover, Jean-Pierre Diény was very attentive to the slow and belated progress of Chinese language teaching at high school level in Alsace, which he did not fail to mention, as is the case in his letter of 2nd December 2004 to BNUS administrator Bernard Falga:

> I am enclosing two newspaper excerpts which describe the remarkable progress made in the teaching of Chinese in high schools. Strasbourg has begun to follow suit. It is clear that this spectacular growth will eventually lead to the emergence and development of sinology courses in faculties. It is not too early to start thinking about it, and the arrival in Strasbourg of a library like mine should help the Strasbourg university authorities to move in this direction.

> Je me permets de joindre à cette lettre deux extraits de journaux qui exposent les progrès remarquables de l'enseignement du chinois dans les lycées et les collèges.

[35] Letter dated 21st January 2004.

> Strasbourg a commencé de suivre le mouvement. Il est évident que cet essor spectaculaire est appelé à déboucher un jour ou l'autre sur l'apparition et le développement de filières sinologiques dans les facultés. Il n'est pas trop tôt pour y penser, et la venue à Strasbourg d'une bibliothèque comme la mienne devrait aider les autorités universitaires strasbourgeoises à s'engager dans cette voie.

The many letters that Jean-Pierre Diény sent to Mr Falga over a year and a half reflected a twofold concern. The first was his need for a clear answer as to whether the BNUS would accept his offer, as he and his wife, who were still active, were concerned about the future of their collection and the burden it might place on their children after their deaths. The second, which was probably fuelled by the time taken by studies and consultations on the Strasbourg side, had more to do with the appreciation that this collection could arouse in an institution where Chinese studies were absent. However, his contacts were very sensitive to this argument, aware as they were of the paucity of collections in the field of Chinese studies in Eastern France. On 10th February 2005, for example, Bernard Falga thanked Jean-Pierre Diény for the inventory he had sent him a month earlier, explaining:

> I have received your letter of 2nd January 2005 enclosing the inventory of your sinological library, and I would like to thank you for it. This inventory clearly shows the wealth of this collection and the great interest it represents for the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, whose collections it will considerably enrich.

> Votre lettre du 2 janvier 2005, à laquelle vous avez joint l'inventaire de votre bibliothèque sinologique, m'est bien parvenue, et je vous en remercie. Cet inventaire montre bien toute la richesse de ce fonds et le grand intérêt qu'il présente pour la Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, dont il enrichira considérablement les collections.

In fact, the wide range of works in the collection meets the dual need for teaching and research in sinology. While all the research tools and major texts of classical Chinese culture are necessary references for studying sinology as well as for conducting research projects, more unique parts of the collection will underpin advanced research.

Conclusion

Chinese studies began to take root in Alsace in the early 2000s.[36] It was only in 2013 that a Bachelor's degree in Chinese language, literature, and civilisation was established within the Faculty of Languages and Civilisations at the University of Strasbourg. To train its students, in addition to language teachers and readers, the institution now relies on three teacher-researchers and increasingly rich documentary resources in Strasbourg. The Chinese studies library, housed in the Library of Foreign Languages, has seen its holdings increase considerably over the last decade, thanks to two initiatives. The first is, of course, the massive acquisition of books to provide students with the resources they need to learn the language, discover the civilisation, and handle the fundamental tools of sinological research. These acquisitions were coordinated to complement the collections of the University of Strasbourg's Documentation Services and the BNUS, which are also constantly evolving. The second lever consisted of a donation, comparable in size to the Diény collection, which was made by the Library of the Institut des hautes études chinoises of the Collège de France in 2017. These collections complement the holdings of the BNUS. As a whole, they include fundamental resources as well as more specialised documents and valuable works, and form a foundation whose development will, hopefully in agreement with Colette and Jean-Pierre Diény's will, support the growth of more advanced studies and sinological research in Alsace.

The Jean-Pierre and Colette Diény collection, which is the fruit of a lifelong gathering of books by two major French sinologists, provides the academic community with all the resources associated with the best publications. The research it has already enabled is a model for young researchers, who, by engaging with the texts and editions, will also find inspiration for new explorations of a rich collection that can be approached as a witness to intellectual history, as a resource for material history, or for literary, historical, intellectual, and scientific approaches, to name but a few.

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[36] Luca Gabbiani was a lecturer at the Institut d'études politiques de Strasbourg from 2005 to 2007. He taught Chinese history. But the students he taught were not fluent in Chinese and therefore had no access to primary sources.

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BOOK REVIEW

He Lu zhi si: 1831 nian zhenhan quanqiu de yiliao shijian 何魯之死：1831 年震撼全球的醫療事件

[The Death of Hoo Loo: The Medical Event in 1831 that Shocked the Globe]

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關鍵詞： 何魯，中英關係，外科史，熱帶醫學

As its title suggests, *The Death of Hoo Loo: A Medical Event in 1831 that Shocked the Globe* aims to narrate an entangled history through a single medical event. It is neither a mere history of medicine nor a study of a particular medical case. It can rather be defined as a monograph centred on a polemical incident—one that not only sheds light on medical practices of the time but also reveals how different cultural, political, and social forces intertwined to shape public discourse and historical narratives on a global scale. In medical practice, the decision either to remove the tumour through Western surgery or to manage it with traditional Chinese treatment was highly contested. Traditional Chinese medicine warns against resorting to the use of knife and removing such tumours. The case of the Chinese patient Hoo Loo, and in particular, his death during the surgery to remove his tumour, exposes the tensions that arose from these cross-cultural encounters. The book consists of an introduction, six chapters, an epilogue, and a "resonance." The six chapters are presented in chronological order, and organized into three parts according to main themes. The death of Hoo Loo is presented as an event in itself, an event in the press, and a myth.

Part I outlines the journey of Hoo Loo to Britain and details the process of his surgery. Hoo Loo from Canton was an unremarkable figure, whose voyage to Britain for treatment was hardly known in the local Chinese community. In 1828, he initially sought treatment for a large tumour on his scrotum at the Ophthalmic Hospital in Macao, founded by Thomas Richardson Colledge (1797–1879). The tumour weighed more than 50 pounds, equivalent to one-third of an average person's body weight. Chinese doctors had indeed encountered giant tumours, but following the teachings of ancient practitioners, they would never use a knife to cut, fearing that it might lead to fatal bleeding. Thomas Richardson Colledge refused to operate on Hoo Loo himself, but insisted that the tumour needed to be cut off. He sent a small plaster statue of Hoo Loo with the tumour to Guy's Hospital, and then arranged for the patient's voyage to Britain in due course. Guy's hospital was a teaching hospital built with investments from philanthropists, and had certain business ties with the East India Company. The surgery was held in an anatomy theatre with a capacity of 680 people. After one hour and forty-four minutes, Hoo Loo died on the operation table. It was only after the surgery that the name of Hoo Loo's disease was identified as scrotal elephantiasis. Analysis of the cause of Hoo Loo's death followed.

Part II focuses on news coverage of the Hoo Loo case and the metaphor of tumour in British politics. Reports on "poor Hoo Loo," the unfortunate Chinese who died in the fatal surgery, began to appear in newspapers soon after the medical event. The press attributed Hoo Loo's cause of death to his Chinese constitution. The view that Eastern and Western people have different constitutions originates from the works of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, who mentioned it in his treatise "On Airs, Waters, and Places". The impression that Easterners are less robust than Westerners was deeply ingrained in British perceptions, leading them to attribute Hoo Loo's death to this perspective of the geography of diseases. In May, around twenty days after the death of Hoo Loo, a political cartoon entitled "Hoo-Loo-Choo, Alias John Bull and the Doctors" by John Doyle (1797–1868) started to circulate in Britain.

In Doyle's design, the bloated figure of Hoo Loo was portrayed as John Bull, symbolizing a problematic British society in need of reform, with his enormous belly symbolizing the "tumour" harming the nation's economy. The group of people surrounding Hoo Loo represents the doctors who hold his fate in their hands, that is, the politicians of Britain. In the cartoon, the three Whig politicians led by prime minister Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (1764–1845), correspond with the three doctors who took charge of Hoo Loo's surgery, while the former prime minister Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769–1852) and leader of the Tory party, Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850), opposed the surgery. One of the demands made by politicians for reform was to strive to eliminate the "tumour" of economic monopoly.

The final part focuses on how the Hoo Loo case served to promote medical philanthropy and the missionary cause. Three years after the medical event, the press presented Hoo Loo as a "heroic" figure, who resolutely travelled to Britain for treatment, believing in science, trusting Western medicine, and fearing neither pain nor death. By bringing past events back into focus, the idea of medical philanthropy was promoted. This ultimately led to the establishment of the "Medical Missionary Society in China" in 1838 by Robert Morrison, Peter Parker and Thomas Richardson Colledge. The group was mainly composed of doctors, merchants and diplomats, all of whom were deeply involved in the network of the tense Sino-British relations on the eve of the Opium War. As Gao Xi argued, the goodwill of their medical philanthropy was beyond doubt, but it was also rooted in both national and commercial interests of Britain and the East India Company. By showcasing the advancements and achievements of modern medicine, they hoped to change the Chinese perception of them, thereby improving relations and facilitating smoother commercial activities.

The case of Hoo Loo demonstrates how seemingly unrelated aspects—such as social, political, medical, or cultural elements—interact, overlap, and influence each other, creating a multifaceted and intricate historical account. It also highlights the intersections of colonialism, public health and media sensationalism in the early nineteenth century. The Hoo Loo case has been studied within the paradigm of British imperial medicine, as it brings together a number of significant topics in the area, including "a disease of remarkable or unstoppable growth, a patient of an exotic race, a medical error, and the properly objective stance of a medical practitioner" (Kennedy 2008, p. 81). From this perspective, the narrative and visual portrayal of the case demonstrates a timely anxiety over problems of monstrous or uncontrollable growth at the edges of the British empire. *The Death of Hoo Loo* shifts the focus away from the nineteenth-century doctors' curious gaze on morbid oriental patients, and attempts to unearth Hoo Loo's own voice. Gao Xi points out that Hoo Loo's purpose for leaving China was quite different from the intentions of Thomas Richardson Colledge and the East India Company, who funded his journey to Britain. While Hoo Loo sought to improve his quality of life, their motivations were more complex: they aimed to enhance the image of Westerners in the eyes of the Chinese through charitable acts, use Western medical practices to demonstrate their superiority over traditional Chinese medicine, and gain the respect of the Chinese to dispel the prejudice of Westerners as barbarians—all of which would benefit the East India Company's commercial interests in China.

This shift in research focus is in line with the conceptual and methodological change in the history of Eurasian diplomacies, which emphasizes the interpersonal nature of international relations over the traditional state-centred view. Hoo Loo, as well as his doctor Thomas Richardson Colledge, were both agents who pursued their own personal interests, or those of their family, friends and clientele. It was through these agents that different civilizations and power relations got into contact. If we examine Hoo Loo's journey to the Britain as an example of nineteenth-century cultural exchange between East and West, it demonstrates how Hoo Loo, as a "go-between", created spaces for both understanding and misunderstanding between the two cultures and influenced their mutual interaction and exchange. The micro-historical focus on Hoo Loo provides a global perspective that transcends narrow geographies of the Qing empire by bringing entangled histories of Britain and China together under one lens.

In *The Death of Hoo Loo*, Gao Xi also weaves together research approaches from both the history of emotions and the history of art. Surgery before anaesthesia often subjected patients to intense pain and fear, affecting their mental and emotional states (Brown 2018). Chinese patients in the nineteenth-century were stereotypically described by missionary surgeons as "insensitive to pain" or "stoic", and in the case of Hoo Loo, "heroic". The narrative of heroism shaped Hoo Loo into a model patient who complied with the doctor's advice. In later descriptions of the case, Hoo Loo's painful cries on the operating table fulfilled the reader's vision of a heroic figure, evoking an emotional resonance. In the last chapter, Gao Xi included a painting of Hoo Loo labelled "a modern painting in the style of Lam Qua, late twentieth century by M. F. Allen" from the collection in Gordon Museum of Pathology and Guy's and St. Thomas' Charity. Lam Qua (also known as Guan Qiaochang, ca. 1801–60) painted medical portraits of Chinese patients with disproportionately large tumours for Peter Parker (1804–88)'s hospital in Canton. He was one of the best-known and successful Cantonese commercial painters of his generation. In the 1980s, the modern painter M. F. Allen used the existing image of Hoo Loo from *The Lancet* as a base, and added a background of blue skies, white clouds, mountains, rivers, rocks, and trees, thus transforming it from a medical image of a patient's death into an artwork in the style of Lam Qua. Gao Xi shows how the newly commissioned portrait of Hoo Loo continued the story of medical missionary in the late twentieth century.

The literature review of *The Death of Hoo Loo* is in the epilogue, which is slightly odd. It is understandable that the author would like to tell an engaging story by focusing only on the event, however, removing the literature review from the introduction makes it difficult for the reader to situate the book in an academic context, and to distinguish the author's contribution at the initial stages of reading the book. The case of Hoo Loo, initially diagnosed as Scrotal Elephantiasis (thought to be caused by miasma) and later redefined as Lymphatic

Filariasis, also reminds us how disease classifications and hypothetical aetiologies can contribute to the formation of stereotypes and stigma, even though much need to be better understood—a reality that persists even today.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Conscience of the Party: Hu Yaobang, China's Communist Reformer

By Robert L. Suettinger

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關鍵詞： 胡耀邦，中國共產黨，政治改革，威權主義，黨史

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Robert L. Suettinger's *The Conscience of the Party* offers a nuanced exploration of Hu Yaobang's political career, combining detailed biographical storytelling with incisive analysis of the structural dynamics within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during its reform era. Suettinger situates Hu's trajectory within the CCP's broader systemic challenges, notably its paradoxical reliance on reform to maintain legitimacy while resisting political liberalisation. This duality, as Suettinger demonstrates, exposed the tensions between adaptability and stability that shaped this transformative period in the Party's history.

At its core, the book examines how Hu navigated a political system defined by these contradictions. Suettinger argues that this tension not only framed Hu's career but ultimately led to his marginalisation. By integrating rich personal narratives with an analysis of the CCP's institutional and ideological evolution, Suettinger presents Hu's life as a lens through which to understand the challenges and complexities of reform in an authoritarian regime.

One of the book's key strengths lies in Suettinger's adept use of a wide range of sources, many of which are difficult to access. By drawing on memoirs of Party officials, internal documents, and journals such as *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, Suettinger constructs a detailed and nuanced portrait of Hu's political life. At the same time, he does not shy away from addressing the methodological challenges posed by restricted archival access and state censorship, critically reflecting on the inherent limitations of studying contemporary Chinese political history.

The book's well-structured narrative, organised into ten chronologically sequenced chapters, enables Suettinger to present Hu Yaobang's life not only as a personal journey but also as a reflection of the broader ideological and institutional transformations within the CCP. The opening chapters trace Hu's formative years in a rural Hakka village in Hunan Province, where his exposure to profound socio-economic inequalities and revolutionary upheaval shaped his enduring commitment to addressing systemic injustice. By linking these early experiences to Hu's later reformist vision, Suettinger establishes a compelling foundation for understanding how personal conviction and socio-political context shaped his approach to governance (Chapter 1).

A pivotal phase in Hu Yaobang's political journey, as Suettinger explores in Chapter 2, was his office-holding in the Communist Youth League. This formative experience served as a crucible for the development of Hu's pragmatic leadership style and his conviction that moral integrity and institutional renewal were inter-dependent. It was during this period that Hu cemented his reputation as a principled yet adaptable leader, equipping him with the skills to navigate the complexities of the CCP's evolving political landscape. Building on this foundation, Suettinger turns to Hu's early contributions in the nascent People's Republic (Chapter 3). Tasked with consolidating Party control during campaigns aimed at securing the CCP's authority, Hu encountered both the opportunities and the constraints of governance, experiences that would shape his approach to leadership while exposing him to the ideological orthodoxy and institutional inertia that would later constrain his career.

Suettinger's analysis of Hu Yaobang's responses to the Great Leap Forward, as detailed in Chapter 4, highlights how the catastrophic famine and growing disillusionment within the CCP deepened Hu's awareness of the Party's structural deficiencies, particularly its ideological rigidity and over-centralisation. Viewing these crises as a stark reminder of the need for reform, Hu adopted a pragmatic approach, focusing on addressing systemic flaws rather than managing symptoms. In the following chapter, Suettinger explores how Hu navigated the political turbulence of the 1960s, marked by factional struggles, ideological extremism, and instability. Despite setbacks and marginalisation, Hu displayed resilience and adaptability, maintaining Party loyalty while recognising the systemic inertia hindering reform. His temporary fall from favour and subsequent rehabilitation deepened his conviction in the need for institutional modernisation to stabilise the CCP and restore its legitimacy. Chapter 6 then turns to the Cultural Revolution, which Suettinger explores as a profoundly destructive yet transformative chapter in Hu's political development. The chaos and violence of this period forced Hu to confront the CCP's entrenched dysfunctions while enduring personal and professional hardships.

The central chapters of Suettinger's book (Chapters 7–9) focus on Hu Yaobang's tenure as General Secretary during the 1980s, a period marked by his ambitious efforts to address the CCP's structural and ideological deficiencies. In Chapter 7, Suettinger explores the immediate challenges Hu faced upon assuming leadership, particularly the need to rehabilitate victims of the Cultural Revolution. This effort was not only a moral imperative but also a strategic move to restore the Party's legitimacy and heal the divisions caused by years of ideological excess. Suettinger meticulously details how Hu initiated anti-corruption campaigns and sought to enhance transparency and accountability within the Party's ranks. These initiatives reflected Hu's broader vision of a CCP capable of modernising governance while maintaining ideological coherence, ensuring its continued relevance amid China's rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape.

Chapter 8 delves deeper into Hu's reformist agenda, highlighting his efforts to tackle systemic injustices and modernise governance structures. Suettinger emphasises how Hu's reforms extended beyond administrative adjustments to encompass a fundamental rethinking of the Party's role in society. By addressing historical wrongs and advocating for more inclusive and participatory governance, Hu sought to adapt the CCP to the demands of a rapidly changing China. However, Suettinger also illustrates how these efforts increasingly alienated conservative factions within the Party, who perceived Hu's initiatives as destabilising threats to their entrenched power and the Party's ideological unity.

In Chapter 9, Suettinger examines the culmination of these tensions, as conservative factions, wary of the risks posed by Hu's reforms, systematically undermined his authority. These factions adeptly weaponised ideological narratives – most notably accusations of "bourgeois liberalisation" – to frame Hu's initiatives as existential threats to Party stability. Combined with calculated procedural manoeuvres, these efforts led to Hu's political marginalisation. Suettinger's account of Deng Xiaoping's shifting stance is particularly incisive, showing how

Deng initially supported Hu's reformist vision but recalibrated his position as conservative elements consolidated their influence. Deng's eventual withdrawal of support is presented as a decisive moment in Hu's downfall, underscoring the precariousness of reform efforts in the CCP's rigid hierarchy.

Through these three chapters, Suettinger vividly illustrates the precarious balance reformers like Hu must strike between personal conviction and systemic constraints. Hu's steadfast advocacy for transparency and accountability frequently clashed with the Party's reliance on secrecy and centralised control, exposing the inherent contradictions within his reformist vision. By chronicling Hu's resignation in 1987, Suettinger highlights the factional resistance and institutional inertia that stymied reform within the CCP, making Hu's political trajectory emblematic of the challenges faced by reformers in rigid authoritarian systems.

The concluding chapter examines Hu Yaobang's death in 1989 and its far-reaching consequences for both the CCP and Chinese society. Suettinger situates Hu's passing within the broader political and social tensions of the reform era, highlighting how the unprecedented wave of public mourning became a focal point for widespread discontent. This reaction, Suettinger argues, transformed Hu's legacy into both a rallying cry for reform and a symbol of the CCP's entrenched structural resistance to substantive change. By linking Hu's death to the unresolved contradictions of the reform era, Suettinger underscores the enduring resonance of his reformist vision and its implications for China's political trajectory.

In *The Conscience of the Party*, Robert L. Suettinger achieves a remarkable synthesis of biographical insight and systemic analysis, crafting a study that transcends the confines of a traditional political biography. By portraying Hu Yaobang's life as both a personal odyssey and a reflection of the ideological and institutional currents within the CCP, Suettinger offers a compelling framework for understanding the complexities of reform within authoritarian regimes. This dual approach elevates the book to the status of a landmark contribution to the study of modern Chinese history and authoritarian governance.

A particular strength of Suettinger's work lies in his ability to balance vivid narrative detail with incisive theoretical analysis. His nuanced depiction of Hu as a reformer driven by ethical leadership and personal conviction is juxtaposed against the structural realities of the CCP – a party that consistently prioritised stability over substantive transformation. By exploring the tensions between individual agency and systemic inertia, Suettinger not only illuminates the challenges faced by reformers such as Hu but also sheds light on the broader dynamics that constrain change in authoritarian systems.

The book's ability to transcend the particularities of Hu's career and illuminate the universal dilemmas of reform in constrained systems solidifies its position as an essential resource for scholars of Chinese politics and comparative governance alike. By capturing the intricate dynamics of reform and resistance, *The Conscience of the Party* stands as a profound contribution to the broader discourse on political transformation in authoritarian contexts.

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BOOK REVIEW

Germany and China: How Entanglement Undermines Freedom, Prosperity and Security

By Andreas Fulda

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Whoever believes that de-coupling from China is the right decision to be made by the German government and the EU will read Fulda's book as a comprehensive choice of arguments backing this belief. Alas, whoever does not believe this to be the right decision will not be convinced by what he or she reads in Fulda's book. Instead of trying to convince those who are wrong according to Fulda's views, Fulda's intervention only deepens the divide between the "China Versteher" (meaning that whoever tries to understand what is going on in China is unwilling or unable to criticise China), and those who criticise China. With this approach, he follows a recent trend in the discussion of how to deal with China: people of different opinions do not speak with each other but shout at each other.

Fulda's book is a hybrid publication. Its theoretical framework gives the reader the impression that it wants to be read as an academic work. However, Fulda's inability to use the theoretical framework as a guide to analysis shows that he does not go beyond the journalistic mode of presentation. I, therefore, choose to take this book as part of an ongoing debate within academic circles and the politically interested public in Germany. As Fulda has been very active in publicising his ideas recently, it seems worthwhile to understand and discuss his views on matters more thoroughly.

Fulda's argument starts with the assessment that the policy of "rapprochement through interweaving" and "change through trade" which the German government has been pursuing for decades vis-à-vis the former Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China has been proven to be wrong (p. 26) by the ongoing war in Ukraine. At first glance, this argument sounds convincing, however, Fulda does not take potential counter-narratives seriously enough to decipher the inherent logic of what decision-makers at the time had to consider. Germany's Ostpolitik was part and parcel of a fundamental change in the ordering of the world undertaken in the crisis-ridden 1970s when Nixon decided to go for *détente* vis à vis the Soviet Union and China. Willy Brandt and his adviser Egon Bahr took this opportunity not because they hoped for a regime change in the GDR or the Soviet Union, but because they wanted to normalise the relationship with the USSR to counterbalance the strong grip that the US still had on the Western part of Germany. As maybe hoped for but not made explicit then, Ostpolitik also aimed to test the chances of reunifying Germany. In other words: Nixon's change of strategy offered Germany the rare opportunity to pursue its vital interests without harming its relationship to the US! From today's perspective, Germany's Ostpolitik was successful as it made Germany's re-unification possible and contributed to ending the Cold War. That might have caused German decision-makers not to question the validity of their policy. The same is true for the dissolution of the USSR which seemed to have proven the feasibility of regime change in Communist countries. When Reagan embarked on his SDI project hoping to drive the SU into a major economic crisis he finally had to change strategies and embark on yet another round of détente with Gorbachev. From today's perspective, all this could only be successful because of NATO's "rearmament with medium-range missiles and the rapid modernization of the US military" (p. 26). In other words, Western agendas can only be successful if forwarded through military threats. However, at the time, the fear of war was still strong enough in Europe to hope that a *modus vivendi* could be found through diplomatic channels.

What Fulda calls a dogma to which Germany's decision-makers stubbornly adhered was, as a matter of fact, in the eyes of those who had to make the decisions at the time, a form of "creative learning" by transferring experiences from collaborating with the Soviet Union to the case of China. Fulda refers to Buzan's warnings from the 1990s which were aimed at relativising the efficiency of a "change through trade" policy. Buzan was right to predict that the PRC government would not allow for a "peaceful" change in China. But this does not imply that engaging with the PRC was wrong already at the time. Although journalists and politicians visiting the PRC would time and again stress the human rights issue as something the PRC needed to be criticised for, politicians were mostly interested in preserving stability in the PRC and benefitting from trade and investment. At the same time, globalisation was seen as a peace-preserving mechanism. As long as the economies of the US and Germany were entangled with China the possibility of war was assessed to be minimal. Fulda wonders why Steinmeier in his capacity as Germany's foreign minister did not respond to warnings articulated at the time (p.40), but he does not take the pains to understand that according to the overall consensus in Germany at the time, politicians were doing everything on behalf of Germany's freedom and prosperity. Fulda argues that the inability of Germany's policymakers to learn from the past is due to the dominance of the business elite over political decision-making (p. 203). He discusses the role of the German Eastern Business Association (Ostausschuss der deutschen Wirtschaft) at length stating that it has "vigorously defended Germany's pro-business approach to China" (p.42). However, he also follows Karnitschnig in arguing that then chancellor Helmut Kohl was responsible for opening "the door to China only to throw away the key" letting "Beijing use it to bind them to an economic relationship they could not escape" (p.79). Apart from being unclear about who has to be made responsible for the "failure" of collaborating closely with the PRC: the economic or the political elite, Fulda falls again into the trap of looking at things from today's perspective without taking the historical constellations into account. Against the background of the economic crisis of the 1970s, engaging with the PRC was instrumental in saving our part of the world, today commonly called "the West", and in preserving social stability by economic growth for decades to come. Not embarking on this course would have meant that the German economy lost international competitiveness as early as at the end of the last millennium.

In the second part of his book, Fulda discusses several case studies showing that his arguments are sound. The case studies range from the failures of Germany's solar panel and automotive industries to blindness to technology theft and technology transfer, from uncritical reliance on Chinese collaborators by the German development aid agency to naivety in scientific collaboration and dual-use issues. For Fulda, all cases are signs of policy failure as well as due to the unwillingness and inability to learn from past mistakes. For these fallacies, he makes “principle-agent dilemmas” responsible: “Principal-agent relationships marked by information asymmetry (…) can jeopardize German sovereignty when individuals or organizations start representing the interests of China’s one-party state instead of working towards enlightened or material German interests” (p. 210). Interestingly, Fulda makes the German side responsible for the failures, going so far as to reproach those who have been active on behalf of companies such as Volkswagen, Daimler, BMW, and BASF to fulfil the wishes of the Chinese side to the detriment of German interests. Although he tries to argue that the Chinese state is a threat to freedom and prosperity in Germany, his disgust towards international companies engaged in China drives him to put the responsibility for our “dependence” on China on the shoulders of Germany’s business elite. This again is an argument that is derived from today’s conflicts between mainstream tendencies among the political elites and the representatives of those international companies based in Germany that tend to invest in China or in the US rather than in Germany. Before the US decided that the PRC was the only country willing and able to challenge the hegemonic position of the US in the world, the political and economic elites in Germany were for the most part not in conflict over their China strategies. As a matter of fact, the strategies pursued by the German and the US elites aligned with each other. Under this precondition, the political and economic elites in Germany were acting in consensus. But today’s situation is different: Germany is sandwiched between China and the US. No longer can Germany pursue its economic interests without harming its relationship with the US. Consequently, the interests of the political elite (which heavily relies on benign relations with the US) and the economic elites (which cannot do without China) fall apart. They cannot act in consensus anymore.

Fulda concludes: “I would argue that Germany can no longer afford not to learn from past failure. This is especially so because Xi’s growing security state is casting an even longer shadow over Western liberal democracies. If Germany remains entangled with autocratic China our freedom, prosperity, and security will be further undermined” (p.210). I would agree that decision-makers and investors in Germany did not understand early enough that the CCP under Xi Jinping’s leadership is no longer the same CCP we encountered under previous leaderships. They continued to rely on China’s business interests being identical to their own interests and did not observe closely enough how the CCP under Xi’s leadership shifted from putting the economy in command back to Mao’s “putting politics in command” (*zhengzhi guashuai*). With this change in priority, the identity of interests no longer exists. Xi’s “China dream” is the dream for China to rise to world power status and European political leaders as well as business elites overlooked that this implies that China would no longer succumb to the US as the one and only world power, but instead would do everything to make the US and its friends in the “West” understand that the time for unquestioned Western hegemony will soon be over.

The reason why this important turning point in PRC history was overlooked is the fact that investors have still been making a lot of money in China, and with the kind of profits they are making in or by way of collaborating with China, they cater to the needs of their shareholders. Fulda rightly points to the problematic side of German investments and trade with China, but he forgets to mention how Germany's engagement with China brought prosperity to Germany in times when security and freedom seemed well protected by the US dominating the post-Cold-War world. Instead of complaining that the German China policy has always been a failure, he should have instructed his readers on how to identify the moment of change. Leaving political arguments aside, German investors could have observed like their Japanese counterparts, already during the first decade of the 21st century that Chinese businesses were moving into countries like Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia because their return on investment no longer fulfilled their expectations as wages started to rise.

The so-called "dependency" which Fulda defines as four different forms of dependency, i.e. the dependency on raw materials, intermediate products, revenues, and "psychological dependencies" (p. 214) is, as a matter of fact, a mutual dependency which makes China much more vulnerable than Fulda admits. With the current economic problems in the PRC, we can observe in real-time how tariffs and indirect sanctions such as the US CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 have hurt the business environment in China. The fact that China is part and parcel of this de-globalising globalised world means that the regime change some people are hoping for as the best solution to end China's rise to world power could be the result of China's economy running low for a prolonged period of time. China's economic malaise can eventually result in an incremental loss of social stability leading to a split of the political elite. These two ingredients are exactly what a regime change needs as its precondition for success. This is the reason why the "psychological dependency" is observable on both sides, not only in the form of the German angst but also in the form of the CCP's fear of regime change. According to Fulda, people do not dare to criticise or take harsh actions against, for instance, the violation of human rights because they fear retaliation by China. Vice versa, Xi Jinping reiterates that China is being "encircled" by enemies. China's threat perception stands between the PRC and the rest of the "Western" world just as much as the threat perception makes it difficult for us to understand what is going on in China. This mutual perception problem is extremely dangerous and generated moments of near-nuclear war between the US and the USSR several times in the past. In this situation, China specialists like Andreas Fulda should use their in-depth knowledge to help overcome this dangerous constellation.

In the case study dedicated to the debates colleagues from the field of China Studies have been pursuing recently, and in which Fulda has been quite pronounced the book does not present any new insights. Rather than explaining to the non-Sinologist reader what this debate is about, Fulda reiterates the arguments and cites from his and his friends' statements exchanged in German newspapers and on X. He argues that it is "incumbent on China scholars to begin questioning rule-stabilizing, culturally relativistic and culturally essentialist as well as anti-praxeological traditions in Chinese studies" (p. 217). If I understand correctly, Fulda is trying to convince the field of China Studies to come to a consensus on how to deal with China. This consensus implies that we should contribute to destabilising China by criticising it from a "Western" point of view. This approach has its historical roots in the very beginning of China Studies with the Institut für Orientalische Sprachen acting as a training centre for colonial officers deployed in China. From my point of view, there are not only two ways of dealing with China. Instead, the freedom entailed by academic research and teaching should allow us to pursue multiple options. We do not need more China experts if they all align with the same idea. The complexity of the issue we are dealing with necessitates that we research multiple issues with divergent methodologies and theoretical frameworks. To reduce the agenda of the field of China Studies as per Fulda's suggestion would be the next mistake to make.

At the end of the book, Fulda makes seven suggestions on how to deal with China in the future. Some of them are quite abstract, such as his suggestion to overcome the "German angst" and his warning against the danger of "provocative weakness" (p.215), i.e. the provocation of coercive action because of obvious weakness. Others are quite concrete. He advises German party foundations to immediately leave China, and the government to strengthen the Foreign Office vis-à-vis the Chancellery, to contain corporate lobbying, and to implement rigorous outbound investment screenings. While I would agree that it is necessary to put naivety aside, I would suggest investing our knowledge and understanding of the country to come up with suggestions more sophisticated than the idea of getting rid of China as a powerful competitor.

Fulda's book was quite obviously written under time pressure with lots of citations from his writings and quite a few typos. The author is replete with what he calls "strategic culture", but unfortunately not patient enough to carefully develop his argument. The most important weakness of the book, however, lies in its isolating Sino-German relations from the overall geo-political setting. Some of what Fulda qualifies as "inability to learn" or lack of "strategic culture" is closely linked to Germany's geo-political position in Europe and the world at large.

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- **Book reviews**: Max. 3000 words. We are particularly interested in publishing reviews of books published in languages other than English, so as to increase the visibility of some of the less frequently quoted European languages in Chinese studies. Book reviews are to be submitted on a solicited basis only. Proposals from authors, editors, publishers and potential reviewers are welcome and should be sent to jeacsbookreviews@chinesestudies.eu for consideration by the editors. Review articles undergo an open peer review, i.e. members of the editorial team review the contributions.

- **Translation reviews**: Max. 6000 words. Generally preference will be given to reviews of translations Chinese into a European language other than English. By making this our general rule we want to emphasize that translation plays a significant role in the hermeneutic process of understanding China and Chinese culture as well as draw attention to the fact that Sinology and Chinese studies in Europe must be considered a multi-layered process based on a diversity of languages and academic traditions and a long an historically complex intellectual relationship between Chinese and European worlds. Review articles undergo an open peer review, i.e. members of the editorial team review the contributions.

- **Dissertation abstracts:** Information on recently defended PhD theses informs our scholarly community on new research carried in Europe by early career scholars. A list is published on an annual basis.

- **Special section introductions**: Max. 6000 words. These are prepared by the invited (guest) editors of a special section, and undergo an open peer review by the editorial board.

- **Editorials:** Editorials introduce an issue as whole, and are prepared collaboratively by the editorial board.

All word limits include abstracts, notes and bibliography.