2012

JOINT U.S.-KOREA ACADEMIC STUDIES

ASIA AT A TIPPING POINT: KOREA, THE RISE OF CHINA, AND THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

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Vol. 23

KEI KOREA ECONOMIC INSTITUTE
한 미 경 제 연 구 소

Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies

2012
Volume 23

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Regional Community Formation: National Identity, Migration, and the Rise of China

A Cognitive Approach to Ethnic Identity Construction in the Korean Enclave in Beijing

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With increasing economic interdependence between South Korea and the PRC since the 1990s, in recent years, over two million South Koreans are reported to cross the sea for tourism and employment opportunities in China each year.[1] Many of the first South Korean grass-roots entrepreneurs who ventured to the PRC in search of opportunities for upward mobility in the early 1990s sought out the help of bilingual Korean Chinese ethnic minorities in setting up their entrepreneurial firms. But before long, co-ethnic relations between the South Korean immigrants and their Korean Chinese workers became wrought with tension and conflict. Today, the Korean ethnic enclaves in the PRC are institutionally and socially bifurcated.[2] This is rather unfortunate considering the fact that the damaged relations between the South Korean immigrants and the Korean Chinese rural migrants present significant barriers to upward mobility for both parties.

Explanations for why the Korean Chinese and South Koreans have failed to establish ethnic solidarity in China are, indeed, complex. This chapter focuses on one important dimension of this problem. In the proceeding pages, I analyze how cognitive schemata based on narrow and insular understandings of Korean-ness among the South Korean immigrants in the enclave have acted as significant barriers in propagating trust and harmonious interactions between the two groups of co-ethnics. At the chapter's end, I elaborate on the implications of my findings to an understanding of "national identity gaps" in East Asia.[3] The data I use for this analysis stems from ethnographic field research and formal interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 with South Koreans, Korean Chinese, and Han Chinese living and working in the Korean enclave in Beijing.

A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY

In the chapters of this volume, scholars have grappled with how economics, culture, and politics interact to account for failed institutional integration within East Asia.[4] On the surface, East Asia possesses many of the structural traits necessary for regional integration. Aside from geographic proximity, these countries share a historical tradition of Confucianism, similar trajectories of rapid economic growth, and increasing economic interdependence in recent years. For the most part, scholars have attributed the lack of regional integration to cultural explanations. In particular, they have pointed to the lack of a collective identity, the resurgence of nationalism, and the adverse impact of historical memories on diplomatic relations as the major reasons accounting for failed regionalism.

As Gilbert Rozman in this volume argues, however, the existing literature fails to provide a systematic and empirically rigorous explanation for why East Asia continues to struggle with institutional integration despite the slew of conditions that seem to favor it. In this chapter, I argue that in order to address this problem more directly, we need to make use of current sociological theories on culture and, more specifically, the study of boundaries and classification in the social sciences.

In their influential article, "Ethnicity as Cognition," Rogers Brubaker and his associates point out that studies of nationalism have experienced a general "shift from definitions of nationhood in terms of common language, territory, history, economic life, political arrangements, and so on to definitions that emphasize the subjective sense of or claim to nationhood."[5] The authors reference the canonical work of Norwegian anthropologist, Frederik Barth, who argued that ethnicity was not a "matter of shared traits or cultural commonalities, but rather practices of classification and categorization."[6]

In accordance, I argue that in order to understand why nationalism in the East Asian region has overshadowed the formation of a collective identity, we need to understand why nationalism is framed in the way that it is and the contexts in which these ideas are manipulated, rather than fixating on the actual "content" of nationalism itself. One important methodological tool that cultural sociologists have relied on to study how cultural objects and events are framed is the concept of cognitive schemata. Schemata are mental structures, or clusters of pre-conceived ideas, that shape how knowledge is acquired, stored, recalled, and activated.[7] For the purposes of this chapter, I focus the scope of my analysis on the study of schemata as processors of information.

While psychologists have found that when sufficiently motivated, individuals can "override programmed modes of thought to think critically and reflexively," such modes of thinking are rare as deliberative thinking is highly inefficient considering the overwhelming complexity of social stimuli in our everyday lives.[8] Instead, cognitive theorists argue that in our routine interactions, individuals rely heavily on existing schemata, or structured clusters of concepts, to organize the vast amount of information we encounter. For instance, many cognitive theorists give the example of a "restaurant schema," in which individuals habitually follow a sequence of actions including "ordering, being served, eating and paying for food at a restaurant."[9] Schemata also overlap with chains of events that are associated with particular racial stereotypes, as in the schema of "being-watched-in-the-store-as-if-one-were-considered-a-potential-shoplifter" for African Americans in the United States.[10]

Paul DiMaggio highlights four important traits in the copious literature on schemata that I would like to reiterate here for structuring my analysis. First, he notes that when faced with vast amounts of information, "people are more likely to perceive information that is germane to existing schemas." Concepts that are schematically irrelevant often go unnoticed. Second, "people recall schematically embedded information more quickly." Laboratory subjects were reported to have remembered more "longer lists of words, or interpret ambiguous stimuli more accurately" if the information was embedded in recognizable schemata. Third, "people recall schematically embedded information more accurately." Finally, "people may falsely recall schematically embedded events that did not occur" in order to avoid cognitive dissonance (discomfort due to conflicting ideas).[11]

I demonstrate below how dominant schemata play a major role in drawing in-group and out-group boundaries among Korean co-ethnics in the Korean enclave in Beijing. Due to limitations in scope, I focus primarily on how South Korean schemata constrict interpretations of Korean ethnic identity.[12] I argue that insular understandings of Korean ethnic identity that privilege mainstream South Korean views marginalize the Korean Chinese from joining South Korean social circles, networks, and organizations in the enclave. Moreover, such exclusionary views of Korean ethnic identity also actively contribute to the formation of tensions and animosity between South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese minorities in the enclave.

DATA AND METHODS

Interview and Ethnographic Data

I analyzed twenty-eight hours of transcription manuscripts of forty-five semi-structured interviews with Korean Chinese and South Korean individuals who work and live in Wangjing, the Korean enclave in Beijing. Each interview ranged from thirty minutes to two hours. I conducted these interviews in a variety of settings including bars, restaurants, churches, coffee shops, streets, stores, and private residences. I used the snowball method with multiple entry points to recruit Korean Chinese and South Korean interviewees. These different entry points correspond to the various roles I assumed while conducting ethnographic fieldwork, including a major South Korean conglomerate where I worked, a Korean Chinese ethnic church where I taught English, a South Korean church where I served as a translator and keyboardist, a Korean Chinese-run tea shop I frequented, and a small Korean Chinese-run clothing shop where I also worked part-time. I made an effort to interview individuals of varying ages, gender, marital status, educational levels, and socioeconomic status. Because I experienced difficulty recruiting men, individuals of lower socioeconomic status, and individuals over fifty among both Korean Chinese and South Korean populations, the reader should be cognizant of this demographic bias.

Survey Data

I also administered a survey with a team of Korean Chinese and South Korean college students between 2010 and 2011. We mainly targeted Korean ethnic churches as well as public spaces in the enclave such as popular parks and shopping centers. Our team offered an honorarium of thirty RMB (a little less than five US dollars) or a USB port as an incentive to participate in our survey. We were able to obtain 381 South Korean and 417 Korean Chinese participants. Questions on the survey covered basic demographic traits such as educational background, hometown, years in Beijing, and income, as well as nature of work environment, relationships and networks, and attitudes on inter-group relations in the enclave. The National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant provided funding for the data collection of this project.

DISCUSSION

Broken Solidarity and Trust in the Korean Enclave in Beijing: Broad Empirical Trends

Results of an originally conducted survey of nearly 800 Korean co-ethnics provide overwhelming evidence of feelings of alienation and disconnect between the South Koreans and Korean Chinese in the Korean enclave in Beijing. To briefly cite trends here, results indicate that despite the fact that South Koreans come into extensive contact with Korean Chinese minorities in the workplace and elsewhere in the enclave, few develop personal relationships with each other. Of 381 South Korean respondents in the enclave, only 23% socialized with Korean Chinese minorities outside of the workplace. Fifty percent of respondents reported that they knew no Korean Chinese minorities whom they could ask for help during a time of need and another 19% only knew of one Korean Chinese person they felt comfortable contacting. These figures are striking in light of the fact that only 4% of the same group of people knew of no South Koreans and only 34% knew of no Han Chinese to rely on during trying times. This is to say that South Koreans are more isolated from the Korean Chinese community than they are from the Han Chinese in Beijing.

Furthermore, responses to attitudinal questions reflect strong trends of distrust and tension between the two waves of co-ethnics. Only about one-fifth of the population answered that they believed that South Korean entrepreneurs who collaborated with Korean Chinese minorities were more likely to succeed in their businesses. Only about ten percent of South Koreans surveyed reported that they trusted Korean Chinese minorities more than the Han Chinese. And only about a third of the population regarded the Korean Chinese as members of their in-group.

Empirical evidence of South Korean and Korean Chinese animosity extends beyond the survey responses that I have produced above. Through my experiences conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Beijing from 2010 to 2011, I have found that the Korean enclave is deeply bifurcated institutionally, separating the Korean Chinese organizations from those of their South Korean co-ethnics. South Koreans and the Korean Chinese live in distinct neighborhoods within the Korean enclave. They do not shop at the same shopping malls. They do not socialize together outside of the workplace. They attend separate churches, hold separate annual sports and cultural events, and congregate in separate business organizations.

Interview transcripts and field notes provide deeper insight as to how and why the South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese minorities have come to develop such strong feelings of animosity towards each other. Here, I delve only into the implications of one important trend, arguing that the lack of a cognitive schema or conceptual framework that is inclusive of both South Koreans and the Korean Chinese minorities plays a powerful role in contributing to the bifurcation of the Korean ethnic community in Beijing. The lack of a broad and inclusive Korean ethnic identity schema is not only indicative of discursive barriers in describing more inclusive interpretations of a Korean ethnic identity, but it also reflects the

lack of a means to cognitively grasp the notion of a Korean ethnic identity that expands beyond insular understandings of South Korean ethno-national identity as propagated by the mainstream South Korean media.

Cultural Differences and Group Boundary Construction

During many of my interviews, I asked Korean Chinese and South Korean migrants in my field site why they thought the enclave was so noticeably fragmented. Many responded that they thought that it was because the South Koreans and Korean Chinese had evolved to embody different forms of Korean ethnic culture over the five decades of isolation they experienced. As one Korean Chinese lawyer to whom I spoke put it:

> In the very beginning… in the early nineties when the South Koreans first came over to China in large numbers, they were so excited to meet us [Korean Chinese]. They saw us as co-ethnic brothers who they were reunited with after a long period of separation. But the more they got to know us, the more they realized that we were so different. It's as if there is always something a bit off… something a bit inauthentic about us… We eat kimchee, just like they do, but something about our kimchee is a bit too sour. We speak Korean just like they do, but we speak Korean with a strong regional dialect… it's closer to North Korean than South Korean speech. We are filial to our parents and respect our elders, just like South Koreans are… but something about our Korean culture is different. Everything is slightly off. I mean it's inevitable that it would be since there was no contact between South Korea and the PRC for over fifty years before [Sino-South Korean] normalization.

Culture is, indeed, dynamic and constantly evolving. And certainly, few would argue that all ethnic Koreans inherently share only one authentic Korean culture. Rather, scholars by and large have argued that the ways in which Korean culture is understood and manifested depend on the contexts in which it is practiced. Thus, I was, on the one hand, surprised by the nuanced and sophisticated understanding of culture that the Korean Chinese lawyer and others I interviewed in the enclave seemed to have. But on the other hand, I believe that even such sophisticated understandings of culture fall short of capturing the actual reasons why the Korean Chinese and South Koreans fail to get along in the enclave. I argue below that it is precisely because culture is such a malleable social construct that it serves conveniently as a mechanism for understanding difference in the enclave.

What do I mean by this? The fact that the Korean Chinese and South Koreans in China practice different forms of Korean culture as a result of having framed different understandings of Korean culture after many years of isolation is certainly true. However, if this "difference" in culture were to actually account for the social and institutional bifurcation of the Korean enclave, then we would also expect further fragmentation along regional lines. Koreans from Pusan, a major city in South Korea, for instance, also speak with a distinct regional accent and are known to have particular mannerisms. Similarly, Korean Chinese minorities

from Yanbian, the Korea Autonomous Prefecture in China, speak a strong North Korean accent while those from Heilongjiang, a province in China located north of Yanbian, speak with a distinct South Korean regional accent.

While one can argue that the cultural "distance" between South Koreans from Pusan and Seoul is much closer than that between South Koreans and the Korean Chinese collectively, we soon run into ambiguous territory as to where to draw the line in how much "difference" justifies demarcation of distinct cultural groups. Indeed, some would even argue that the Korean culture that the Korean Chinese practice is no more different from the regional distinctions between Koreans from Pusan and Seoul. Thus, it is much more likely that culture is used as a means for South Koreans and Korean Chinese to retroactively rationalize the driving force behind their internal conflicts. It is much more likely that for the Korean co-ethnics living in the enclave, differences between South Korean and Korean Chinese culture is used as a vehicle for explaining and understanding why the two groups cannot get along. The actual cause of fragmentation within the enclave, however, is more difficult to discern.

Previous sociological accounts of ethnic identity construction demonstrate that the boundaries of in-group and out-group membership vary by the circumstances that individuals are in. In the canonical works on immigrant adaptation in America, scholars find that Polish peasants and rural lords, who had little in common in the homeland, came together and formed ethnic communities upon landing in the United States.[13] Along similar lines, the ethnic enclave hypothesis, for instance, argues that a common structural position of disadvantage creates a sense of "common fate" among ethnic minorities who might have previously seen themselves as belonging to disparate backgrounds in the homeland.[14] Upon immigration to the United States, these ethnic minorities construct a new collective identity and community based on a shared ancestral heritage and native language. As Portes and Bach argue:

> [Ethnic] culture is not a mere continuation of that originally brought by immigrants, but is a distinct emergent product. It is forged in the interaction of the group with the dominant majority, incorporating some aspects of the core culture, and lending privilege to those from the past who appear most suited in the struggle for self-worth and mobility. 'Nationalities' thus emerge among immigrants who shared only the most tenuous linkages in the old country. They are brought together by the imputation of a common ethnicity by the core society and its use to justify their exploitation.[15]

This line of work argues that immigrants reconstruct boundaries of what is considered in-group culture according to the contexts and structural positions that they are in.

From this perspective, we can argue that one critical reason why the South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese have been unable to manipulate Korean ethnic identity schemata such that they are inclusive of both groups of co-ethnics in the enclave is due to the sharply distinct structural positions the Korean Chinese minorities and South Korean immigrants hold in Chinese society. The South Korean immigrants, as foreigners in the PRC, have precarious legal statuses. While

those elite expatriate businessmen who are dispatched by large South Korean conglomerates such as LG, Samsung, Hyundai and the like have access to proper legal documents that allow employment in China, the vast majority of grass-roots South Korean entrepreneurs do not have access to such a luxury. These immigrants arrive in China on short-term tourist visas and set up their small shops without proper legal documentation for their entrepreneurial activities in the enclave.

In contrast, the Korean Chinese rural migrants do not face the same risks for deportation nor the same legal barriers in setting up businesses due to their status as PRC nationals. As a result, in the early years of Sino-South Korean diplomatic normalization, South Korean entrepreneurs often partnered with Korean Chinese rural migrants in order to gain access to various licenses and legal documentation required to establish their entrepreneurial firms. But rather than stories of co-ethnic partnership, stories of co-ethnic betrayal have since started to circulate around the enclave. Many of the South Korean entrepreneurs I interviewed claimed that their businesses had failed because they were blackmailed by their Korean Chinese managers. One South Korean entrepreneur I met provided me with one rendition of such a story of co-ethnic betrayal:

> Most of the South Koreans here don't trust the Korean Chinese. They've come to be that way through personal experience. Even though there are some people who have not experienced being deceived by the Korean Chinese, when people first arrive here in Beijing and we South Koreans tell them about what it's like to live here, we let them know right away about this situation... Let's take, for instance, that you wanted to start a restaurant here in Beijing. South Koreans have enough money or other financial capital to start a business here... However in situations where the CEO is really unfamiliar with Chinese culture and cannot speak Chinese, and only invests his money in his business, the businesses have all failed. The Korean Chinese are blinded by money. They see that they can earn money really quickly and easily without trying very hard... If they are able to fool the owner even for just a moment, money just flows into their pockets... those Korean Chinese who are not educated try to just deceive South Koreans. They act as intermediaries, fool their bosses, and try to slip money from between the cracks. And because they speak Korean, they seek out problems that South Koreans struggle with most and scheme South Koreans into giving them money.

Whether these stories are actually as far-reaching as they purport to be is difficult to verify. But suffice it to say that they act as further empirical evidence of distrust between the South Korean immigrants and the Korean Chinese minorities in the enclave.

In the Korean enclave, there is less of a sense of "common fate" binding the Korean Chinese minorities and South Koreans together, of which Portes and Bach speak in their study of Latin American immigrants in the United States. This lack of a common consciousness of shared disadvantage in Chinese society helps us understand why the Korean co-ethnics in the enclave have failed to manipulate

schemata related to Korean ethnic identity such that they are more inclusive of both themselves and their co-ethnic brethren. Along these lines, we can argue that one's structural position compels individuals to perceive "differences" or "similarities" in ways that allow them to successfully consolidate and mobilize resources within their in-group. Here, culture plays an important role in acting as a mechanism for justifying boundary-marking behavior separating members of the in-group from the out-group.

South Korean Discursive Marginalization of the Korean Chinese Minorities in Beijing

South Koreans in Beijing grapple with understanding how to define the Korean Chinese minorities in the enclave. On the one hand, the Korean Chinese are co-ethnic brethren and as co-ethnics they should be considered part of their in-group. But on the other hand, as Chinese nationals who spent the majority of their lives in the Chinese countryside, many South Koreans feel that recognizing the Korean Chinese as members of their in-group implicitly threatens their privileged status as wealthy and "civilized" South Koreans. Thus, for these immigrants, perhaps the most socially acceptable way of describing the ambiguous identity of the Korean Chinese is as Chinese people who can speak Korean. One South Korean man I worked with closely at a major South Korean church in the Korean enclave in Beijing illustrates this tendency particularly clearly. During an interview, he stated:

> I was really curious about what kind of people the Korean Chinese minorities were [prior to coming to Beijing]. Why do they know how to speak Korean? How are these people able to carry a conversation with me even though they are Chinese [중국사람]? How come they are in China? I was curious about things like that but, honestly, because I didn't really have many opportunities to come across them [in Korea], so I was more or less indifferent about their existence.

Prior to coming to the PRC, South Korean immigrants are largely ignorant of the existence of the Korean Chinese minorities despite the fact that these ethnic minorities have in the past decade become a significant minority population within South Korea, as well. According to South Korean mass media sources, in 2011, 500,000 Korean Chinese were reported to live in South Korea and over half were found to reside in Seoul. As a result of such ignorance and indifference towards the Korean Chinese ethnic minority, many South Koreans fall susceptible to mainstream media depictions of the Chinese and the Korean Chinese in forming their impressions of these groups.

This leads us to ask: what then, are the nature of the cognitive schemata that South Koreans hold towards the Chinese, and by default, the Korean Chinese, as well. When I asked a South Korean woman in her thirties who worked for a large South Korean firm in the enclave, why she had come to have such a negative image of China before she arrived, she answered:

Like from the Internet and other forms of mass media. For instance, you know how we use a lot of products…and foods from China, right? So if something was made in China, we expect it to break really fast. Or, if we buy food imported from China… from the media, we are exposed to a lot of weird stuff… to give you an example, like chicken feet… they were showing Chinese women eating chicken feet… but how can I explain it… they were ripping off the skin of the chicken and the way they were filmed, they really looked very uncivilized. It was kind of disgusting. There were a lot of pictures of those women on the Internet. Or, there was this news story about a sandwich that was imported from China, and from the outside, it looked like there were eggs and ham like any other ordinary sandwich, but once you opened up the sandwich, there was nothing inside. There were only the trimmings of eggs and ham, on the outside that it looked like an ordinary sandwich to people at first glance. So most of the pictures and news stories on China I came across on the Internet and TV were along these lines. It's really common for Koreans to associate their impressions of the Chinese with something that is uncivilized, low-quality, underdeveloped, inferior, boisterous and so on.

To many of the South Koreans I interviewed, China represented an all-encompassing image of something that was "uncivilized, low-quality, underdeveloped, inferior and boisterous." Moreover, schemata were not distinguished according to the type of object, but included a whole slew of diverse cultural symbols that ranged from individuals to customs to commercial products to a country.

Due to this lack of differentiation, one negative comment made about Chinese customs, for instance, is also easily interpreted as a negative comment about their people and the country, itself. And because the Korean Chinese are primarily seen as "Chinese who can speak Korean," the Korean Chinese have come to interpret negative stereotypes that South Koreans hold towards the PRC as indirect, yet deeply personal, affronts. An excerpt from a recorded conversation with my Korean Chinese research assistant illustrates this dynamic.

I know it's not fair of me, but I react more sensitively to things that South Koreans say to me. I think it's because I have a bias that they look down on us Korean Chinese. Once, I was leading a group of South Korean tourists around major sites in Beijing, and one of the men in my group said something like, 'Wow, I never knew that there were so many nice European cars in Beijing, too.' I was really offended by what he said because he seemed to imply that China was still backwards and underdeveloped. But then later on, he said that he had visited Beijing ten years ago, and back then, there were a lot of bicycles and not as many cars. I thought about it and what he said made sense. I know that I was being a little over-sensitive with him because he

was South Korean, but I can't help it. When a South Korean starts to make a comment about China, it kind of makes me put my guard up instinctively. That's just the way things are for us Korean Chinese.

Here, we can see how a Korean Chinese woman admits that her initial interpretation of the South Korean man's observation of the surprising number of luxury vehicles in Beijing was negative. Upon hearing his comment, she immediately assumes that the South Korean is implying that China is a poor, underdeveloped country. Moreover, she automatically connects the notion that China is underdeveloped to South Korean views on Chinese people in general. Later on, by speaking to him at more length, the woman realizes that he was making a simple empirical observation rather than unfavorably comparing China to South Korea.

Assumptions that the South Koreans look down on the Korean Chinese as PRC nationals and as outsiders, who cannot be trusted, complicate social interactions between the South Koreans and Korean Chinese in Beijing. In many cases, it causes the Korean Chinese to react more sensitively to comments that in more neutral settings would be interpreted as innocuous. This tendency also creates hypersensitivity on the part of South Koreans to act cautiously when interacting with the Korean Chinese. As one South Korean man put it:

> When I see a Korean Chinese person, sometimes I want to go over and start a conversation with that person. But then, I think to myself, what if he thinks that I am suspicious or strange for wanting to talk to him for no apparent reason. What if he realizes that I am South Korean and feels intimidated by me? I want to go over and talk to them and become friends with them not because I want them to help me with something, but because they know how to speak Korean, but I often feel silly for feeling these things. I feel like I would cause more problems if I did.

What is interesting about the interview excerpt above is the fact that he assumes that it is strange and out of the ordinary for a South Korean to want to act friendly towards a Korean Chinese minority with no ulterior motive. In a sense, this is because throughout my interactions with both Korean Chinese and South Korean individuals in Beijing, I have found that the vast majority of relationships between South Koreans and Korean Chinese are born out of necessity. South Koreans seek out the help of the Korean Chinese in order to navigate the foreign environment that is China and the Korean Chinese allow themselves to enter into relationships with the South Koreans despite knowing that they are considered outsiders and as inferior due to material gains that close networks with South Koreans potentially provide. Nonetheless, the two excerpts I have presented above demonstrate how derogatory South Korean schemata of the Korean Chinese as primarily "Chinese people" rather than as co-ethnics can lead to significant barriers in forming personal relationships. Such personal relationships are necessary for the eventual modification of these rigid and exclusive schemata that continue to bifurcate the Korean ethnic community.

During a different interview, a highly educated Korean Chinese woman elaborated on why she thought there was a lack of distinction in perceptions of individuals and the countries from which they come. She said the following:

> How should I explain this? Let me give you an example. A lot of Korean Chinese women get married to South Korean men. But even though a lot of these women actually bring home a higher salary than their husbands, they are still looked down upon by their South Korean mothers-in-law even if she didn't work at all. We're mistreated for the sole reason of being Chinese and it doesn't matter how hard we work at trying to please the South Koreans… When I read South Korean newspapers, there are so few articles that have anything positive to say about China. They proactively publish a lot of articles that portray China in a bad light because mass media is closely related to politics. I don't remember one time when they talked about how developed China had become or how it was to live here.

As this woman articulates, the ways in which individuals perceive each other in the enclave are not shaped so much by individual-level characteristics such as socioeconomic status or economic background. Rather, one's nationality plays a more potent role such that the stigmas that are related to one's national identity trump the concrete backgrounds of the individuals involved in the social interaction.

A South Korean woman I interviewed further demonstrates how this dynamic blocks intimate relationships between the Korean Chinese and the South Koreans from forming in the Korean enclave in Beijing.

> In the eyes of South Koreans, the Korean Chinese only appear subordinate to them. They do not feel that they are on equal terms with the Korean Chinese no matter how poorly educated a South Korean is. At our church, there is a young Korean Chinese woman who is married to a South Korean man. She graduated from a very elite university in Beijing. When she goes back to her hometown, they have banners with her name and university on it because they were so proud of her accomplishments. Even people as elite as her are looked down upon by South Koreans by virtue of being Korean Chinese. When they speak, the South Koreans have these types of facial expressions [she crinkles her forehead and squints]. You can tell from their facial expressions [that they are prejudiced]. To other people they are so warm and friendly, but they are brusque towards the Korean Chinese and walk past them. I think this behavior comes from a sub-conscious prejudice that South Koreans have that the Korean Chinese are of a lower class.

The prejudice that the South Koreans hold towards the Korean Chinese acts as a negative feedback loop in causing the South Koreans to continue to avoid associating with their Korean Chinese counterparts as members of their in-group for fear that they, too, will be treated as inferior by doing so.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY GAPS

In reaching these series of findings, I am able to provide empirical evidence that Rozman's concept of national identity gaps affects not only the nature of diplomatic relations between the PRC and South Korea at the macro-sociological level, but also that they play a palpable role in blocking cross-cultural relations between immigrants and locals at the micro-sociological level. Here, I define national identity gaps as perceptions that one's nation is markedly different from another, or in this case, the notion that South Korea for various reasons is distinct and, thus, superior to the PRC. In this section, I analyze how the analytical framework of the cognitive schema might develop existing understandings of national identity gaps on two major levels.

First, one can show that the perceptions of difference and superiority that individuals hold at the grassroots level are strongly shaped by the mass media. National identity gaps are so deeply entrenched and resistant to modification according to new, and often more accurate, information obtained from actual social interactions with the "Other" precisely because they are enacted via cognitive schemata. Hence, my findings show that national identity gaps shape social interactions and the formation of networks rather than the other way around. This implies that in order for trust to form between two parties that are characterized by animosity, change needs to occur on the level of national identity discourse, particularly in the media, such that similarities are stressed. Moreover, when this change is complemented by structural changes such that the legal statuses of South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese minorities in the PRC become more comparable with each other, it is more likely that Korean co-ethnics will begin to interpret schemata on Korean ethnic identity to emphasize similarities over differences. However, increased social contact on its own will not necessarily lead to closer, more harmonious relations between two groups if this contact is not accompanied by change at the discursive and structural levels.

Second, my case study demonstrates that in the case of China and South Korea, national identity gaps are used not only to distinguish the Han Chinese from the South Koreans, but also, to distinguish the South Koreans from co-ethnic Korean Chinese rural migrants despite the fact that the two groups of co-ethnics clearly share an ancestral heritage. I argue that one major reason why the South Koreans are motivated to do so is because the Chinese upbringing of the Korean Chinese potentially threatens the symbolic superiority of their South Korean status. In the eyes of the South Korean immigrants in the enclave, the Korean Chinese are viewed as an economically disadvantaged group due to their Chinese background, and thus, associating with them as members of an in-group threatens their self-perceptions that they are a group that is economically privileged in contrast to the Chinese.

Here is a case that demonstrates how national identity gaps do not necessarily function along clearly demarcated boundaries of nation-states—which in this series of papers, includes South Korea, the PRC, and Japan—but they also powerfully work to distinguish the in-group as unique from ambiguous "Others," who according to different historical and social contexts could just as easily be framed

as members of the in-group. Individuals utilize these "perceptions of difference" in their everyday lives to achieve strategic ends—to preserve the sanctity of their self-image as superior. But by doing so, the South Koreans unfortunately miss out on an important opportunity to collaborate more effectively with the Korean Chinese to secure successful businesses in Beijing.

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3. See Gilbert Rozman, Ch. 9, "South Korean National Identity Gaps with China and Japan," in this volume.

4. Here, I refer specifically to South Korea, Japan and China.

5. Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman and Peter Stamatov, "Ethnicity as Cognition," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 33 (2004), pp. 31-64.

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12. In my doctoral dissertation, I discuss the process of ethnic identity boundary construction in more detail. In particular, I examine how the South Koreans and Han Chinese manipulate dominant schemas in their daily interactions and how the Korean Chinese ethnic minorities resist these schemas in constructing their own understandings of self and ethnic identity in their daily lives.

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14. Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

15. Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, *Latin Journey*.

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