

Reimagining Nation and Nationalism in Multicultural East Asia

Date: 24-25 November 2014

Venue: M3090, Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, City University of Hong Kong

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National identity and attachment to national culture have taken root even in this era of globalization. National sentiments find expression in multiple political spheres and cause troubles of various kinds in many societies, both domestically and across state borders. Some of these problems are rooted in history; others are the result of massive global immigration.

The problems and ongoing challenges of nationalism are very much alive throughout East Asia. East Asian societies are increasingly multicultural, inevitably forcing their governments to come up with new immigration and border-control policies, revisit their laws regarding labor policies, sociopolitical discrimination, socioeconomic welfare, and, more fundamentally, rethink the constitutional make-up of the citizenry and the ideal of social harmony, one of their most cherished political values.

Nevertheless, contemporary studies of nationalism, whether philosophical or empirical, are almost exclusively focused on cases in western cultures. One primary aim of this conference is to address this ongoing neglect of the East Asian perspective and explore new concepts and theories that are socially relevant in East Asia. Not only will this provide access to the particular experiences of nation, citizenship, and nationalism throughout East Asia but it will bring to bear philosophical concepts, approaches, and styles of reasoning about them that currently are not part of this critical debate. Providing an opportunity to hear these distinct and different East Asian voices and opening up these conceptual and methodological resources to scholars around the world will greatly advance the understanding and appreciation of nationalism. In addition, the conference will achieve two other novel, and important goals. First, by design, it will bring to bear a multi and interdisciplinary approach to the problems of nationalism. We are not privileging either conceptual or empirical studies in the organization of our conference and will bring together philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, and historians, making every effort to invite scholars who explicitly employ or are interested in exploring different and at times hybrid approaches. Second, we will draw together scholars from around the world: China, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, United States. Combining these two additional goals will enable us to organize a uniquely diverse conference, both in terms of intellectual discipline and national origin. Along with our primary aim of introducing East Asian voices and theories, this will make our event original, distinctive, and unprecedented in value. Our age is one in which it is unavoidable for people of different cultural backgrounds to live together in many different places. For the sake of justice and stability, a comprehensive re-examination of nationalism is both urgent and necessary.

This conference is supported by Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange.

Conference Program

Day 1: November 24, 2014 (Monday)

9:30-10:00	Welcome Reception	
10:00-11:00	Cultural Nationalism—A Survey of Four Strategies	<i>Hsin-wen Lee</i> City University of Hong Kong
11:20-12:20	Nationalistic Guo, Cosmopolitan Tianxia? Possibility of World Order based on Confucian Relational Ethics	<i>Sor-hoon Tan</i> National University of Singapore
Lunch Break		
14:00-15:00	Japanese Nationalism in the Age of Globalization: Towards an Earthy Universality	<i>Takahiro Nakajima</i> University of Tokyo
15:20-16:20	Politics of Nationalism in Strong Nation States: East Asian Experiences	<i>Jungmin Seo</i> Yonsei University
16:40-17:40	Developmental Multiculturalism and Articulation of Korean Nationalism in the Age of Diversity	<i>Nora Kim</i> University of Mary Washington

Day 2: November 25, 2014 (Tuesday)

9:30-10:00	Morning Reception	
10:00-11:00	Keynote Address : Nationalism's Grip on Modern Democracy	<i>Bernard Yack</i> Brandeis University
11:20-12:20	Can We Think about a Confucian Nation?	<i>Sungmoon Kim</i> City University of Hong Kong
Lunch Break		
14:00-15:00	Anti-Multicultural Discourses in Korea	<i>Byoung-ha Lee</i> University of Seoul
15:20-16:20	Indigenous Movement and Its Prospects towards Indigenous Nation-Building	<i>Awi Mona (Chih-Wei Tsai)</i> National Taipei University of Education
16:30-17:00	Open Discussion	

Cultural Nationalism—An Examination of Four Strategies

Hsin-wen Lee, City University of Hong Kong

Cultural nationalism holds that any national community, simply by virtue of being a national community, has a *prima facie* right to self-government. To justify this claim, one must explain what it is about a national group that warrants this right. In other words, one must answer the question raised by Allen Buchanan—“*What’s So Special About Nations?*”

In the literature, we can find many arguments supporting a nation’s right to govern itself. Depending on the strategy that an argument adopts, we can distinguish between four types of arguments for cultural nationalism—(1) those that appeal to the group’s claim to historical homeland; (2) those that demand the equal treatment of different national cultures; (3) those that appeal to the instrumental value of a national culture; and (4) those that appeal to the intrinsic value of a national culture.

In this paper, I critically evaluate these four different strategies. In particular, I examine the structure of rights justification involved in these arguments. I show that even when one acknowledges the values attributed to national groups, these arguments still fail to justify even a *prima facie* moral right of a national group to govern itself. After carefully examining these arguments, I show that none of them successfully justify the right of a national group to govern itself.

Nationalistic *Guo*, Cosmopolitan *Tianxia*?

Possibility of World Order based on Confucian Relational Ethics

Sor-hoon Tan, National University of Singapore

Among the many forms of Chinese nationalism today, Chinese cultural nationalists see the revival of Confucianism-centered traditional culture as vital to Chinese national identity. Yet, both familistic and cosmopolitan interpretations of Confucianism pose objections to modern attempts to ground Chinese nationalism on Confucian philosophy. This paper is concerned with Confucian approaches to the conflict between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Various parties in the debate, those who advocate Confucian nationalism, those who advocate Confucian cosmopolitanism, and those who believe a reconciliation possible, all have cited the “Great Learning” thesis of “cultivating the person, ordering the family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world” to make their respective case. The resulting discussions often assume that treating “*guo*” as the equivalent of “nation-state” in “*zhi-guo*” (governing the state) and “*tianxia*” as the equivalent of “the world” in “*ping-tian-xia*” (bringing peace to the world), though anachronistic, is a permissible and desirable part of modernizing Confucianism in seeking solutions to contemporary problems of our globalizing world. This paper challenges that assumption and suggests that, anachronism aside, Confucian understanding of human association varies significantly from the individual-or-group identity centered view that drives the contest between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. By exploring the roles of the concepts of *guo* and *tianxia* in the *Analects* and *Mencius*, this paper argues that Confucian relational ethics offers an alternative to choosing between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, or reconciling them, in the contemporary aspiration for world order.

Japanese Nationalism After *Fukushima*: Sovereignty and Locality

Takahiro Nakajima, University of Tokyo

After the disaster on March 11th of 2011 hit the nuclear reactors in Fukushima, Fukushima became *Fukushima* (*in italic*). Among various perspectives to explain the meanings of *Fukushima*, I would like to focus on two different approaches to do so. One is a discourse of sovereignty and another is that of locality. Japanese government (Democratic Party of Japan) regarded *Fukushima* as the crisis of national sovereignty. It concealed the capital information about radiation as a secret, because Japanese people as well as Fukushima citizens would get into a panic if they had come to recognize it. We could say that this was a typical reaction from those who took for granted that the sovereignty of the state took precedence over the sovereignty of the people. “National sovereignty” is an ambiguous term in East Asia, because it has been understood as the sovereignty of the state and that of the people at the same time. However, Japanese Constitution clearly indicates that “sovereign power resides with the people” to clarify the meaning of national sovereignty. The then Japanese government neglected the importance of the sovereignty of the people.

After *Fukushima*, there was a general election on December 16th of 2012, when both of Democratic Party of Japan and Liberal Democratic Party of Japan held up “Decisive Politics.” “Decisionism” based upon the sovereignty of the state came back to the fore. It resulted in an enhancement of Japanese nationalism such as the “Special Secrecy Law” and an “official visit to Yasukuni Shrine.” On the other hand, those who took refuge from radioactive area of Fukushima and those who decided to stay there are not taken care of in a sufficient way. Their damages and traumas are too serious to be easily healed. Confronting this serious situation, some local governments and NGOs started to support Fukushima people. By examining those local activities, I would like to find an alternative way to re-constitute local societies. The “locality” must be different from Japanese nationalism based upon the sovereignty of the state, even though it keeps some sort of complicated relation with it. I imagine that the idea of the “locality” could provide new transnational bondage today.

Politics of Nationalism in Strong Nation States: East Asian Experiences

Jungmin Seo, Yonsei University

This study argues that nationalism in a stable nation-state should be understood as a hegemonic discourse that produces the factuality of nation and conditions the modes of domination and resistance. While not discounting the significance of the state and the elites, I argue that we need to highlight the unique features of the nationalistic discourses circulated in a stable nation-state, especially in East Asian states (China, Japan and Korea). Being nationalistic does not necessarily mean being “pro-state” or “pro-government” in a stable nation-state because nationalists project their loyalty upon the nation, an abstract but absolute political and historical subject, not toward the state which is supposed to be an agent deriving its authority from the ultimate sacredness of the nation. Therefore, the form of political struggle in a stable nation-state is determined by nationalistic cognition of the world in which each agent tries to gain the right to represent the collective interest of the nation.

In general, the western nationalism scholarship has failed to provide an appropriate theoretical framework to interpret nationalisms in East Asian states. I believe this failure is caused by the following three reasons. First of all, the majority of nationalism theories consciously or unconsciously depend upon the top-down approach, based on a Eurocentric

historiography. Hence, the conventional nationalism scholarship has not been able to provide an adequate explanation on why East Asian societies many times resist against the states in the name of ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism.’ Secondly, the nationalism scholarship inherently subscribes the deep dichotomy of ‘modern’ and ‘tradition’ to explain the emergence of the nation state. I, instead, argue that the national identity in East Asia was an outcome of a long process of the negotiation between modern and traditional identities. Therefore, a strong national identity does not necessarily mean a strong and successful state project of nationalization since a successful osmosis between new discourses of nationalism and the traditional dynastic identity would create a strong/coherent national identity even without the state project of nationalization.

Finally, the nationalism scholarship has long sustained a negative connotation toward the practices of nationalism through consistent de-construction of national identities. I do not think that normative understanding of nationalism, either negative or positive, poses any serious threat to our analyses of nationalism. Nevertheless, when the normative judgment is associated with the efforts of unconditional deconstruction of the national identity, the nationalism scholarship fails to be an analytical tool to understand social phenomena. A nation as an imagined community does not mean that a nation is a false community. If political communities require an assumed collectivity beyond an individual’s actual life scope, political communities are real only when they are collectively imagined. Hence, to analyze the politics of nationalism properly, we need to go beyond a repetitive job of deconstruction. Rather, for analytic purposes, national identities should be treated as a social, political and historical fact through which public discourses are formed and shaped.

Developmental Multiculturalism and Articulation of Korean Nationalism in the Age of Diversity

Nora Kim, University of Mary Washington

I suggest addressing the puzzling embrace of multiculturalism in ethnically homogenous South Korea, by revisiting the relationship between nationalism and developmentalism. I argue that there are the dual facets of the development-nationalism nexus; nationalism promotes development but at the same time nationalism is (re)produced by developmental practices. Understanding this dual relationship between nationalism and developmentalism opens up new areas of inquiry on how changes in developmental practices leads to changes in the way the nation is imagined and articulated. The multicultural explosion in Korea demonstrates that even ethnic or cultural diversity may be promoted in the course of pursuing new sets of developmental practices. In addition, what looks like a puzzle at first glance makes more sense when we consider this dual nature of the nationalism-development nexus. Strong ethnic nationalism and the newly introduced multiculturalism are not antithetical to each other. Rather, they share the core instrumental value of supporting development. To highlight the dual nature of nationalism-development, I compare and contrast Korean government multiculturalism discourse with two other preceding state discourses in modern/contemporary Korea, modernization of the fatherland under the Park Chung Hee regime and globalization/internationalization under the Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung administrations.

Keynote Address: “Nationalism’s Grip on Modern Democracy”

Bernard Yack, Lerman-Neubauer Professor of Democracy, Brandeis University

This address considers nationalism’s relationship to democracy, especially with regard to its impact on cultural pluralism. The bad news that it delivers is that there is no way at this time for democrats to avoid not just the influence of nationalism on democratic politics, but some of the morally problematic forms of behavior associated with it. The good news is that national loyalty is not nearly as rigid and monolithic a force as its critics portray it to be. So while the first half of the paper highlights the reasons to be concerned about nationalism’s grip on democracy, the second half explains why that grip need not stifle support for cultural pluralism within modern states.

Public Culture and Democratic Nationalism: The Korean Case

Sungmoon Kim, City University of Hong Kong

One of the puzzling features about modern liberal democracy is that, quite often, it is saddled with strong nationalism. The puzzle is twofold: first, how is nationalism possible in a liberal democracy in which individual and associational rights and freedoms entertain almost a sacred moral status and second how is nationalism compatible in practice with entrenched value pluralism and pervasive moral disagreement, the defining conditions of modern liberal democracy? Can the civic-ethnic dichotomy, dominant in the nationalism literature, come to terms with this puzzling empirical phenomenon? While this puzzle constitutes one of the deepest empirical challenges in liberal political theory, it also raises interesting normative questions: Does the practical compatibility between liberal democracy (with its background conditions of value pluralism and moral disagreement) and nationalism merely signal an absence of a full-blown liberal democracy (or “unconsolidated democracy” as political scientists would call it) or is there something normatively attractive in such otherwise strange cohabitation? In this paper, I grapple with these, both empirical and normative, questions in the context of South Korea. My central claim is that (1) nationalism in Korea, despite the remarkable centrifugal forces of individual and associational plurality there, derives its centripetal force—the energy that binds Koreans who subscribe to different comprehensive doctrines horizontally—from their shared public culture and public moral sentiments embedded in it, rather than from their sheer ethnic homogeneity; (2) national sentiments as a kind of civil passion in turn help the Korean people who are massively diverse internally to maintain a coherent civic identity as citizens; and (3) this remarkable coexistence between strong nationalism and value/ethical plurality in Korea has great potential to make Korean democracy stronger, rather than weaker, in the societal context of increasing pluralism.

Anti-Multicultural Discourses in Korea

Byoung-ha Lee, University of Seoul

Korea has long been regarded as an ethnically homogeneous country with few foreign populations. Such demographic homogeneity has been strengthened by strong ethnic nationalism and strict definition of nationhood based on the purity of blood. Recently, however, Korea has been experiencing drastic demographic changes due to the influx of foreign migrant workers, the return of ethnic Koreans mostly from China, and the increase of international marriages between Korean males and international brides mostly from neighboring Asian countries. As a result, the number of foreign residents in 2013 reached

over 1.4 million, accounting for approximately 3% of the total Korean population.

To cope with this demographic change, the Korean government began to initiate multicultural policies in order to incorporate foreigners and immigrants into the Korean society. Especially, international marriage migrants and their multicultural family including mix-race children are the most important policy targets because they are the first settler type immigrants who are challenging demographic composition and ethnic nationalism in Korea. Since then, multiculturalism began to get attention of academics, civil society and the media. It brought so-called, ‘multiculture boom’ in Korea.

Along with the multiculture fever in Korea, however, anti-multicultural discourses also began to emerge. Some xenophobic groups become more vocal by posting anti-foreign messages online such as “we expect that Korean people will be disappeared on earth when wrong policy will be kept by government.” Further, they organize a series of protests against supportive policies for international marriage migrants and migrant workers. Although their activities are not critical enough to ignite xenophobia in the overall Korean society, it is worth examining this phenomenon because Korea may be relatively immune from xenophobia unlike European countries.

This study aims to investigate the content of anti-multicultural discourses in Korea, focusing on the activities of anti-foreign groups online. Analyzing their public statements and the messages on their bulletin boards, I will attempt to examine how ethnic nationalism in Korea is closely intertwined with anti-foreign discourses. By doing so, I expect that this study will reveal dynamics between nationalism and multicultural reality in Korea.

Indigenous Movement and Its Prospects towards Indigenous Nation-Building

Awí Mona (Chih-Wei Tsai), Ph.D. in Law, University of Washington
Associate Professor, National Taipei University of Education

Indigenous nation-building through self-government is a topic that has received considerable attention in recent years in Taiwan. Despite all this attention, the issue remains little understood by the general public. Who are the indigenous peoples? Why is the Taiwan government negotiating self-government arrangements with indigenous peoples? In order to construct a solid foundation for achieving indigenous empowerment, it is important for Taiwanese indigenous peoples to explore the sources of, and legal justifications for, indigenism.

In Taiwan, there are sixteen officially recognized indigenous peoples. The population of these groups comprises roughly two percent of Taiwan’s population. Throughout the Japanese occupation and Republic of China (R.O.C.) rule, government officials continued to profess a desire to protect indigenous peoples. In actual practice, indigenous communities were dispossessed of their traditional territory and generally relocated to areas considered undesirable by the non-indigenous population. According to the 2012 census, a number of key social and economic indicators have shown a huge gap in development between indigenous peoples and the general Taiwanese population. Despite the extensive natural resources situated within their traditional territories, indigenous peoples are the most impoverished minority groups in Taiwan. These social indicators reveal the relatively disadvantaged status of indigenous peoples in Taiwanese society. The combination of indigenous social, cultural, and economic deficiencies and the abundance of valuable resources within their traditional lands is absurdly ironic to indigenous peoples. Academic

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empirical studies have attributed these aboriginal deficiencies to two critical factors. One is the non-recognition of an inherent right to their collectivity as a Nation. Another factor is the general lack of indigenous control over, and effective participation in, their own affairs.

The objective of this paper is to document and analyze the interface between the R.O.C. modern indigenous jurisprudence and the traditional indigenous cultural conceptualizations of collective rights. An institutional ethnography that looks at both development discourses from above and the heterogeneous social logics of local actors is necessary to better understand the historical and social dynamics of colonialism, development, and local agency in Taiwan. I reason that by recognizing indigenous movement toward indigenous rights construction and affirming the right to nation-building is assumed. The basis of my argument is that indigenous peoples' rights will continue to be undermined and subsumed into a Han ideology of discrimination and assimilation, unless the right to self-government through indigenous nation-building is recognized and strengthened.