



Student Journal of International Liberal Arts

08.

2021 August
Akita International University



Akita International University



In memory of Dr. Paul Iida, AIU Professor, Editor-in-Chief of Akita International University Global Review, and Faculty Advisor of the Student Journal of International Liberal Arts

Message from the journal staff

AIU's *Student Journal of the International Liberal Arts* has come together once again with the efforts of AIU students and faculty to assemble exemplary pieces of writing to showcase AIU's identity and qualities in the liberal arts. The student journal is a student-led editorial board with active student involvement every step of the way, so it is our pride to continue to present the works and the research of AIU students.

In this issue of the student journal, we have increased our efforts in encouraging submissions by rewarding outstanding pieces in both academic essays and creative writing. Every piece published in the journal has been deemed outstanding and exemplary by the editorial team, and we hope to encourage more students to write such pieces or submit their work by rewarding excellence. After much discussion, the editorial team selected "Single-Mother Families and the Acceptance of Family Diversity" by Mai Sato as deserving of praise for its relevant and poignant subject matter. Social change and progress are after all very close to what the liberal arts can achieve, and the first place to start is in how we see the world and think about issues in both our societies and in the global community. "The Sino Dash to Africa—An Empirical Analysis" by Emmanuel Marvin Maseruka and "The Influence of Discounts, Reviews, and Ratings in Hotel Booking" by Rin Saito were chosen as runners up.

For the first time in a while, we have worked towards including creative pieces of writing by AIU. The creative writing editors for this issue chose Ellie Olstad's poem "Anemoi" as winner for the Editor's Choice Award and K. Kohno's story "Rock Throne and Snowdust" as runner-up. About "Anemoi," the editors especially enjoyed Olstad's style of distinguishing the characters of the four deities with different tones and word choices for each. Illustrating these deities with magnificent images gives readers an original vision of mythology.

We wish to thank our designers, Ayaka Kasai and Anh Nguyen, both recent graduates of AIU, for their continued help with this important aspect of the journal. As the Student Journal grows and improves, we wish to have your continued support with your submissions or with your interest in joining the editorial team as an editor or as a designer. We hope you take some of your time to look at the pieces and enjoy this collection of excellent writings.

Thank you for reading!

Lead Editors: Luis Daruiz and Judy Wu

Designers: Ayaka Kasai and Anh Nguyen

Editorial Team: Anh Nguyen, Ayuna Yukihiro, Sae Tomiyama, Manami Yaoita, Shohei Tsuchiya, Kakeru Oikawa, Kazuki Fujii, Rin Saito, Kei Torio

Faculty Advisors: Lee Friederich and Joel Friederich

Cover photo by: Rino Miyamoto

Table of Contents

Academic Writing

Japanese Bilingual Education: Why not Reform Plan 2020 and Other Foreign Languages?	
Melissa Modi	7
Single-Mother Families and the Acceptance of Family Diversity	
Mai Sato	13
Judicial Review on Same-Sex Civil Marriage - Is the restriction of same-sex civil marriage constitutional or unconstitutional?	
Isana Tsuchiya	22
How to make Donald Trump the appealing alternative	
Sakura Kina	32
Mass Shootings: Weak Gun Control and Preventions in the U.S.	
Kakeru Oikawa	37
Social responsibility for crimes with psychopathic juvenile offenders	
Leona Yanagi	47
The Sino Dash to Africa—An Empirical Analysis	
Emmanuel Maseruka	54
Possibility of Female Migration Stimulated by Education for Socio-Economic Development in Zimbabwe	
Hana Tomioka	68
Regarding Mothers as Individuals, not as Tools: Issues of Surrogacy	
Miwa Nakada	86
Elective Cesarean Section: Safe and Painless?	
Kana Himeno	91
Religion and Children	
Miyu Ota	98
Textile Waste Management: Cradle-to-cradle Design	
Satoshi Nakao	104
Meet and Eat new Meat: Insects	
Sae Tomiyama	115
The Influence of Discounts, Reviews, and Ratings in Online Hotel Booking	
Rin Saito	122

Creative Writing

Anemoi (Poem)	
Ellie Olstad	133
Rock Throne and Snow Dust (Story)	
K. Kohno	135
Knock Knock (Story)	
Ellie Olstad	137
Kitchen (Poem)	
Kazuki Fujii	140
Blood (Poem)	
Ayuna Yukihira	141
Shade in Peace (Story)	
Kazuki Fujii	142
Alone Together (Story)	
Kei Torio	147
My Milk Mug (Poem)	
Anh Nguyen	149
It's a Monochrome World (Story)	
Anh Nguyen	150
Unspoken Tale (Poem)	
Ayuna Yukihira	155
Winter Tree (Poem)	
K. Kohno	158
Dear Friend (Poem)	
Ellie Olstad	160

Japanese Bilingual Education: Why not Reform Plan 2020 and Other Foreign Languages?

Melissa Modi

Melissa Modi is in the Global Business program. Her essay “Japanese Bilingual Education: Why not Reform Plan 2020 and Other Foreign Languages?” was written for her ENG 330 “Global Communication” course under Professor Naoko Araki’s supervision at AIU. Melissa’s interest has been in bilingualism and the cognitive minds of bilinguals since she entered AIU, where she has met various bilinguals with diverse backgrounds.

Introduction

Once again, Japan has beat its worst record with the EF Standard English Test — an internationally recognized test conducted for non-English speakers— conducted this year; out of the 100 non-English speaking countries and regions, Japan came in as 55th place. This result places Japan in the “low” band in its English proficiency, despite its reasonably equipped educational environment (EF Education, 2020). Surprisingly, this result is not rare for Japan; the country has been struggling for years in English education (Margolis, 2020). In response to such negative evaluation Japan is receiving, the Japanese government is finding necessity in rearing “globally-minded individuals” with “intercultural perspectives” and “high communication skills in English” (MEXT, 2019). In 2014, the government had proposed an English education reform plan for development in the education field (MEXT,

2014). It was set to prepare Japanese citizens for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020; hence, the plan is referred to as the Reform Plan 2020 (MEXT, 2014). Probably, the most debated plan within the reform plan 2020 is advancing the year to begin learning English; it was brought two years forward (MEXT, 2014).

Nevertheless, this paper’s focus is on secondary school education, which is also required to have a drastic transformation. Before implementing such radical reforms, there are countless issues and matters to consider. Students are not trained with their speaking skills, and the reform plan 2020 is said to be unrealistic. With the discussion of the reform plan 2020, this paper looks into the general issue in Japanese bilingual education as well: the prestige in English is too high. Through these two topics, which are the reform plan 2020 and the language power-balance, the paper strives to find Japan’s requirements to enhance in the globalized society.

Emergence of the Reform Plan 2020

- Lack of Speaking Skills

The current English education in Japan practices a grammar-translation method for teaching (Yamaoka, 2010). This grammar-translation method is the most “demotivating” method, while being the most mainstream one simultaneously (Osterman, 2014). Ultimately, students come to dislike the language itself; according to Benesse (2009), 57% of students responded that they dislike English in general, especially grammar. As a result, students become unwilling to communicate in English (Yamaoka, 2010). Interestingly, these are the exact opposite sort of students from what the Japanese government aspires to produce.

According to Yamaoka (2010), the grammar-translation method derives from the traditional attitude of Japanese dealing with foreign languages. Ever since the Meiji restoration, it was a common understanding that foreign culture can be efficiently learned through reading books. Hence, the government and schools required students to gain such comprehension and translation abilities to learn the foreign culture, resulting in setting up entrance exams requiring such “passive skills” (Yamaoka, 2010). Even the government believed that speaking and listening skills were “neither sophisticated nor necessary” at the time, in the 1970s. As international exchanges became frequent in the 1990s, the Japanese government realized how crucial speaking and listening skills are. They started reviewing the nation’s education system; the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) program was launched, and textbooks were refined to increase dialogues

to build Japanese students’ speaking and listening skills (Yamaoka, 2010). Communication skills increasingly began to get attention as time passed; by 2010, English teachers were trained in extra sessions for improving class content, and a listening test was introduced in the National Center Test³ (Yamaoka, 2010). Due to such progressive transformation and globalization, voices to prioritize speaking and listening skills have been raised for a couple of decades.

Taking this into consideration, experts evaluate that the government’s reforms do have a positive influence; the past reforms have proved to transform English education positively, in various aspects (Yamaoka, 2010). However, the reform plan 2020 is majorly criticized by the media that it is not and will not be sufficient. Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) and some researchers show a positive attitude towards the new reform plan, believing that it could alter Japanese citizens’ English abilities (Japan Times, 2019). Nevertheless, most of the opinions seem to be quite pessimistic and doubtful of the reform plan 2020. These critical comments are mainly based on two aspects: university entrance exams are not changing, and that the reform is relatively ineffective. Through some investigation of the reform plan 2020 and the current education situation, the next section analyzes the reason and backgrounds of the two arguments raised.

Two Criticisms to the Reform Plan 2020

Upper secondary schools’ aims towards English education is heavily based on “whether the students pass the university exams or not.” Hence, with the uni-

versity exams not adjusting their exams to more speaking and listening skill gradings, there is no point in learning all four skills (Miller, 2014). Researchers argue that the additional time spent for learning speaking and listening skills would deprive the hours to study other subjects (Miller, 2014).

The reason for such a claim comes from the past experiences in the education field. In the 1970s, when speaking skills were remarked as “not sophisticated,” teachers who were motivated to adopt speaking did exist. Nevertheless, they mentioned how they could not alter the conventional education style styles, due to the “pressure of entrance exams” (Yamaoka, 2010). This hesitance towards transforming the education style is observed in the current education field as well. Teachers blame the unchanging education style on the university entrance examinations’ content (Margolis, 2020). With the university exams focused on reading and writing, the teachers are forced to lead the students to learn grammar (Margolis, 2020). Hence, it is inevitable for the teachers to use this method unless the entrance exams change their form. Thus, without any enforcement or movement in the university English examinations, it is quite challenging for teachers to widen their focus on speaking and listening skills. Lowe (2020) believes that such a change in the university exams cannot be prospected for now – it is too complicated for the universities to adjust their private examinations accordingly, in such short-term.

Next, the reform plan of 2020 is criticized for being inappropriate, and needs reconsideration. According to the Ministry of education, culture, sports, science,

and technology (MEXT), the reform plan 2020 includes “conducting classes in English in principle” from secondary school (MEXT, 2014). Nevertheless, Sawa (2020) mentions that it is meaningless to practice communicative English without the base of English reading and writing skills. Moreover, a professor at Meikai University, Yukio Otsu (2013), notes that the mother tongue, Japanese, needs to be completed to an appropriate level before communicating in a foreign language. Without the strong base comprehension of the mother tongue, English education in Japan may be not what the government aimed it to be.

Baker (2011) raises the “three essential components” for bilingual education in his textbook, which are “second language instruction for non-native speakers, content-area instruction in the home language, and primary language support.” This statement indicates how bilingual education can be most effective with both languages present in the classroom. Hence, although the additional language, in this case, English, could be the medium for teaching, there must be support to the students in Japanese in the content aspect. Baker (2011) also mentions how bilingual education focuses on the cognitive development as well as linguistic development for the students to become “contributors to the economy.” Thus, solely advancing the students’ speaking abilities may not be the appropriate solution; a balance between the two languages’ learning must be present.

Language prestige in English

The second concern of Japanese English education is the strong emphasis on English.

In an educational reform conducted in 2003, the Japanese government emphasized the importance of communication skills; they stated that the Japanese education system will be altered to raise citizens with high communication skills (Jones, 2019). Simultaneously, the government attempted to coordinate English education to the communicative concept. MEXT (2002) mentions the children should acquire communication skills “in English” because it is the “common international language.” This is where the emphasis on English had begun in the education field. Although MEXT’s policy statements and guidelines use the term “foreign language,” the reality is that the foreign language taught in public schools is English (Jones, 2019). Mizuta (2009) analyzes that this is due to the government considering the U.S. economy as a vital asset. To improve Japan’s position in the global economy where the United States is dominating, it is inevitable for Japanese people to acquire English.

The Japanese government promotes and has the students learn English to be “contributors” in the global society (MEXT, 2014). In a way, this attitude may be considered as a promotion of the concept of “language as a resource” (Baker, 2011). With the mindset of English being a resource, the government conducts bilingual education in Japan. Being bilingual is undoubtedly an “asset,” states Baker (2011), indicating that they accompany economic, cultural, and communicative resources. In the textbook, languages are also regarded as tools to “bridge” various social groups. Additionally, balanced bilinguals are proved to be beneficial in the labor markets and are likely to be employed

more than monolinguals (Baker, 2011).

Nevertheless, the crucial point is that the “bilinguals with additional languages” do so, not merely English-speaking bilinguals. It could be said that the Japanese government holds an “English-only” attitude when it comes to foreign-language acquirement. Margolis (2020) states that this “national obsession” towards English derives from experiencing success after learning from Western countries. In other words, the history of getting accustomed to Western nations and obtaining successful new skills have built a bias in Japanese citizens’ minds. Other foreign languages are rarely an option for Japanese children to learn throughout their lives; however, according to Baker (2011), English’s mindset of being the best language to learn is somewhat “outdated” in Western countries. Baker (2011) also mentions that high English proficiency does not lead people to equal amounts of jobs and employment. Considering this aspect, some researchers state that English should not be pressuring upon the students, especially if it is merely making them dislike the language and depriving their mother tongue (Kameda, 2013).

Nonetheless, according to Mizuta (2009), the recent economic rise of non-Western countries such as China and Korea are gradually altering the Japanese conventional mindset. People who wish to learn Chinese and Korean are increasing, and the market share is expanding as well (Mizuta, 2009). With such a change in the trend, Japan’s conception may change little by little. There may be a day with options in the language we acquire at schools; all we need is time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper criticizes bilingual education in Japan through two different aspects: the reform plan 2020 and the overview of foreign-language education in Japan. The reform plan 2020 exposed the necessity of change in the university exams and some readjustment to reconsider the excessive focus on speaking skills. Then, the paper shows how English may be overrated with its prestige in Japan, from the overview of Japanese bilingual education. Nevertheless, this power-balance in foreign languages may be relieved in the near future, with the economic rise of the non-Western countries.

The content of the reform plan 2020 is debatable; however, it is not that the reform plan 2020 is “meaningless.” There are readjustments needed considering the current English education environment, especially considering the time needed for such drastic transformations. Nevertheless, this

does not mean the education field needs to wait; nothing is likely to change without any movement. With some refinement in the university examination systems and curriculums, Japan will definitely be able to strengthen its citizens’ additional-language’s proficiency. Simultaneously, there could be some reconsideration on the power-balance in foreign languages Japan currently has; this could gradually lead Japan to a more open-minded and global country. In short, university exams’ reconstruction and perception evolution towards foreign languages are required. Hence, there are several major transformations needed in the Japanese bilingual education. With this change, Japanese society should develop into a firm and diverse one. The advanced speaking skills and availability to various foreign language could rear the students into individuals, especially ones with “globally-minds” and high communication skills.

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Single-Mother Families and the Acceptance of Family Diversity

Mai Sato

Author's Note

Mai Sato is a sophomore student who will major in Global Business. Her essay "Single-Mother Families and the Acceptance of Family Diversity" was submitted in Professor Joel Friederich's Composition 1 class. Sato has had a special interest in gender issues, especially in gender issues related to the conventional views of gender roles in Japan. She learned that in addition to cultural issues, the unfair financial distribution to Japanese women in the workplace also became a hindrance to the elevation of the status of women in Japan. Based on this perspective, she would like to accumulate knowledge of the financial system of Japan and try to find the solution so that every individual can enjoy the same financial opportunities regardless of their gender.

"Major cause of the problems of the cities is the dissolution of the family," (p. 88) stated Dan Quayle, the vice president of the United States in 1992, according to Webber (2009). At that time, American society was disturbed by the Los Angeles riot, one of the worst series of domestic riots throughout American history. Quayle attributed this disturbance to the transition of the family structure. He especially stigmatized the increasing number of single-parent families, explaining it hampered economic and social success. His remark intensified the debate over family values between conservative and liberal parties in the U.S. Conservative people advocated Quayle's vision based on the traditional family values, saying the families comprising biological two parents and their children are "ideal" (Hong, 2003, p. 7). Meanwhile, many liberal people support

the idea that a single mother is "just another lifestyle," as described by Murphy Brown, the imaginary character of an American TV drama at that time who was portrayed as a highly educated single mother (ibid). Even though this debate caught fire nearly 30 years ago in America, it is still continued beyond America, as the single-mother family seems to be a typical current family style in Japan.

Today, the reason for becoming a single mother varies from person to person, including divorce, unintended pregnancy, and adoption. However, many people, including sociologists and psychologists, particularly point out that being a single mother by divorcing has negative effects on children for scientific reasons aside from the stereotype that single mothers are a stigma in society. They argue that single parents are liable to fall into poverty, and they hamper children's

mental development. Despite what appears to be a logical claim, they seem to spotlight the downsides of single mothers' families too much and fail to appreciate them fairly. In fact, single motherhood is not always harmful to children. Neutral understanding of single-mother households will be particularly significant for college-aged people brought up by two biological parents in blood ties since they are prone to be influenced by negative stereotypes against single-mother families. As they would form families in the near future, the change of their perspective will be the crucial step not only to elevate the social status of single mothers but also to build up societies that accept diverse family forms. Therefore, first of all, this essay discusses the poverty of single-mother families and possible solutions, then argues that the deleterious effects of domestic violence on children's development can be more severe than family separation, and finally highlights that the quality of association between parents and children is crucial for children's psychological well-being regardless of family forms.

Most people who consider that a single mother is undesirable for children would argue that a single mother is more likely to make their children poor since single mothers are the only income-earners among their family members. Taking Japan as one of the examples, the following three factors would underlie the issue of poverty of single mothers: low income, the lack of higher education, and the lack of child support attributed to the flaws with the Japanese divorce law in terms of custody.

The wage of Japanese single mothers tends to be low due to their gender and their

employment status. According to a survey by the Japanese Institute of Labour and Training (2019), 51.4 percent of single mothers' household income was below the poverty line, less than the median household income, and 43.8 percent of single mothers work as temporary workers (the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2017). Yuasa, a professor at the University of Tokyo and the executive of a nonprofit organization for children, analyzes the cause of the plight of Japanese single mothers in the article, "The Two-Tier Wage Structure Holding Single-Parent Families Back" (2019). He underlines that Japanese single mothers are suffering from "a double disparity," the wage gaps between female and male workers and between regular and nonregular workers. He revealed that temporary single mother workers earn only two-fifths of the salary of permanent male workers per hour even if both of them do the same amount of work (Mochida, 2019). In this way, single mothers in Japan tend to be in poor circumstances because of the double disparity.

As a result, most single mothers cannot afford to invest much money into higher education for their children. The Cabinet Office (2016) cited by Chin (2018) showed that although 73.2 percent of Japanese children move on to college in total, the ratio of single-parent children who go to college drops to 41.6 percent. Concerning this data, Grunpiza et al. (2013), the members of the Eurostat of the European Commission, discuss the inheritance of poverty. They highlight that "the education level is one of the most important individual factors for adults in reducing the risk of poverty and being able to

secure acceptable living conditions for themselves and their families” (p. 2). Their statement seems to be rooted in the idea that if children do not receive enough education, single mothers will fail not only to support the children’s education but also to teach the importance of education to them, which can lead to a vicious circle of poverty. Along with Grunpiza et al., the president of Asian Institute of Technology, Nukulchai (2018), stresses the importance of higher education, stating that “[lifelong learning] is a must in today’s context since the wisdom which a person has today will become obsolete pretty fast due to rapid changes in technology” (para. 12). He predicts that human jobs that require basic education might be replaced by technologies within a few decades. If that happens, less cultivated people might have more difficulties getting a job than ever before. Both Grunpiza et al. and Nukulchai stress how crucial education is to overcome poverty from different perspectives. Pondering the deep association between poverty and education, children raised by single mothers might be pitiable in that they may inherit poverty to the next generations as well as they may suffer from poverty throughout their life.

While resolving the poverty of low income and the lack of higher education for single-mother households in Japan might not appear to be feasible, one amendment of the Japanese divorce law could make a considerable difference. Many other regions outside Japan tackle this issue by enforcing non-custodial husbands to pay child support for their children. America is one of the examples, and the guidelines of more than half of the states give birth fathers obligations to

pay child support until children are financially independent (Wolf, 2020). Lee et al. (2020), the professors of human development and family studies, argue that “child support payments are a vital income source for these children and their custodial parents” (p. 1), revealing that it accounts for 26.7 percent of a total low-income family income. Although Japan also implements child support systems, about 56.5 percent of single mothers have never received child support (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2016). This high rate can be attributed to the characteristics of Japanese divorce law. According to Japan’s Justice Ministry, Japan is in the minority of countries where only one parent who mainly takes charge of child-rearing can take custody after the divorce, while most countries, including Canada, China, and Russia, allow both parents to be given joint custody even after divorce (Jiji, 2020). This Japanese divorce law would decrease the responsibility as a father of former husbands, who do not take care of children, or the incentive to financially cooperate to raise children between parents after divorce, which can be the factor of the scarcity of child support. Under these circumstances, if the Japanese divorce law forces dual parents to be in custody after the divorce, these husbands will retain their responsibility as a father after divorce. This amendment would also motivate two separated parents to economically support each other to provide a sufficient living for their children. As a result, single mothers would be able to invest more money into the education of their children. Therefore, by both parents having responsibilities to rear children, single mothers

have the possibility to give opportunities to receive higher education for their children as well as children in two-parent families.

Another main concern that people think parents should not divorce for their children is that single parenting negatively affects children’s mental development. In America, people have traditionally interpreted a description of “the best interest of the child” as maintaining a good relationship between parents for children (Findlaw, 2018). Many parents likewise seem to believe that family separation is morally wrong, and it undesirably affects the behavior of their children. Their ideas are supported not only by their presumptions but also by scientific experiments. Schmuck (2013), a professor of Brigham Young University, delineates that the experience of “traumatizing events” (p. 120), including divorce in early child life, are liable to trigger behavioral problems such as depression, anxiety, and withdrawal. While the reports the overall undesirable influences of family separation on children’s mental health, Bidakowska et al. (2020), a member of PEDAL Research Centre and faculty of the University of Cambridge, shed light on the importance of the role of a father on children’s development with specific experiments. They revealed that fathers are usually more engaged in physical play such as tickling or bouncing with children than mothers, contributing to “children’s social, emotional and cognitive outcomes” (p. 14 & 15). This study indicates that children nurtured by single mothers can show lower development in social, emotional, and cognitive skills than children in dual-parents families. Schmuck and Bidakowska et al. have in common that

they prove the side effects of family separation on psychological or even brain development of children. Regarding their studies, single mother parenting can hamper the healthy mental development of children.

While the qualitative data by Schmuck and Bidakowska et al. are reliable, both sides seem to overlook the serious impacts of domestic violence on children. Many people might think that domestic violence would occur only in particular families, and the majority of families are indifferent to it. Unfortunately, domestic violence is familiar with a larger number of families than they would expect. According to Kunen (2013) and the World Health Organization (2017), about one-third of women have experienced physical or sexual domestic violence in America, which was the almost same results as the global trend, and half of the husbands who frequently abuse their wives also exercise violence to their children. The significant difference of possible damage brought by domestic violence from family separation is that not only can it undermine both the physical and mental health of children, but also is there a high possibility that their children also become abusers when they become adults. To illustrate, the boys who witness their mothers as victims of abuse by their father are ten times more likely to assault their future wives, in addition to showing health issues such as depression, anxiety, heart disease, and poor self-esteem (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). This data implies that the decision of not divorcing does not always benefit children. Brown (2001), a member of the law firm of Harris, points out that people should take domes-

tic violence into account in terms of the description of the best interest of a child in the U.S. family law, emphasizing that “domestic violence cases are contrary to the best interest of the child standard” (p. 306). His statement can be interpreted that parents should prioritize protecting their children from violence because pretending to have a good relationship between the mother and the abusive father has an adverse effect on children.

Similar to the gist of the findings shown by Brown, Gager et al. (2016), professors of Family Science and Human Development of Montclair State University also indicate that divorce would be a healthy decision for children in particular situations, describing that family dissolution is a strategy to reduce the severe effects of long-term family conflict. In this way, given the extreme outcome of domestic violence, young generations, especially college-aged generations in dual-parents families, who are supposed to have a family in the near future, may believe that marriages should always remain intact, no matter what the cost. However, they might need to keep in mind that a mother’s breaking up with a husband can be in the best interest of the physical and mental health of children.

College-aged people who grew up in the typical family would also need to understand that even though children in a single-mother family cannot interact with the two parents, these children can build up a more solid relationship with their mother than two parented children. Upon doing interviews with 58 young adults who were raised by divorced mothers, Arditti, the professor of Human Development, emphasized that children and their mother share “the

sense of equality, closeness, and interdependence” (Nixon et al., 2012, p. 144). Other studies also observed that children of single mothers relate to their mother closely, and they can play a role as a confidante for their mother (ibid.). These results can be interpreted as a possibility to develop high-quality parent-child relationships even in single-mother families. Although some people might criticize that these results are interfered with by the third person’s perspective, the testimonies of children in single-mother households would be the conclusive evidence showing the strong bonds of a single mother’s household. According to Nixon et al. (2012), psychologists, in an interview to assess the relationship between mothers and children, a 16-year-old girl living with her mother and her brother explained, “I just feel a lot closer to her because it’s only her” (p. 147 & 148). She added that she was the sole intimate partner for her mother and this reality enabled them to develop a strong relationship. Another 15-year-old boy in a single-mother family analyzed the relationship with his mother as well, saying: *She’s been like both my parents all my life, so, like, some people wouldn’t talk to their mum about something, they wouldn’t talk to their dad about somethings, but she’s both so I talk about all things with her. So then she pretty much knows everything about me (p. 148).*

The statements of those two children suggested that children who grow up in a single-mother family seem to show a strong connection with their mothers as single mothers are only recipients for their children. The solid sense of closeness can be the incentive for the children to be more supportive of

their mother. Nixon et al. reported that since these children understand the physical and emotional burden of single mothers, the children voluntarily assist her by helping with housework or making a cup of coffee for her more frequently than children in conventional family forms (ibid.). The active cooperation with children and their single mothers will strengthen their firm relationship, which can be a privilege for single-mother households, whose members have experienced financial or emotional hardships together. In this regard, the bonds between single mothers and their children seem to be unique and steady. Although the negative aspects of single mothers’ families often tend to be highlighted, appreciating these positive sides would be helpful, especially for people aged around 20 years old who would have their own family in the near future.

In addition, the solid parent-child relationship of single-mother households is likely to contribute to the high level of children’s psychological well-being, which will definitely be the positive sides of single-mother families. The definition of well-being is diverse, but this essay focuses on psychological well-being to shed light on children’s satisfaction with their life. Ryff, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, defined psychological well-being as “a process of self-realization, consisting of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. There is some discussion on the six-factor structure” (Weiss et al., 2016, p. 2). Suldo et al. (2015), Ph.D., demonstrated that “parent-child relationships co-occur with optimal

psychological well-being in children and adolescents” (p. 131) based on their study targeting 1,034 adolescents from 11 countries and making them assess their satisfaction of their life and parental relationships. Combined with the definition of well-being, it can be inferred that closer association between children and parents is the key element to enrich a children’s life. Applying the study by Suldo et al. to the research by Nixon et al., I deduce that children who grow up in single-mother homes can maintain a high level of well-being as they are firmly connected with their mothers. A similar deduction is also retrieved from other studies. Olivia et al. (2018), school psychologists of the National Association, illustrated that when children perceive the strong association with their parents, children of singles mother experience “robust psychological well-being” (p. 101) compared to children in two-parent households and grandparents’ households. They take the firm position that children can lead a satisfactory life even in a single mother’s family, corroborating the studies of Nixon et al., Suldo et al. In other words, how parents and children interact with each other in daily life can outweigh the superficial family forms for children’s well-being. In this sense, it would be unreasonable to determine that single mother parenting is harmful to children without considering the high quality of parent-child relationships, which improves children’s psychological well-being.

In conclusion, single-mother families need to be neutrally appreciated without being tethered by the ideological family structure, which will contribute to raising the tolerance of family diversity as well as lift-

ing the social status of single mothers. Even though this essay criticizes people who consider being single mothers by divorce negatively affects children, it does not mean that being single mothers by divorce always benefit children. Given that numerous reports have proved that single mothers' families are likely to face financial difficulties and divorce, and the absence of fathers can inhibit the healthy mental development of children, it might be valid to think children born in a single-mother family have disadvantages. However, many individuals, including experts, seem to be short-sighted to conclude that single mother-parenting is deleterious to children without deliberating their positive sides. In fact, there is room to abate the poverty of single-mother homes by strengthening child support systems, and divorce can be the optimum option for children considering the disastrous impact of domestic violence on children. Moreover, single mothers and their children are usually united by exceptionally robust family bonds which contribute to gaining children's psy-

chological well-being more than two-parented children. This study will be dominant evidence to confirm single mothers do not always undesirably affect children. Current college-aged generations who are nurtured by two biological parents especially need to understand both of these negative and positive aspects of single mothers' households. They might evaluate family based on the traditional structure, but increasing their capacity to admit family diversity will directly lead to building up a society where various family structures are accepted. "[Perhaps] it's time ... to recognize that, whether by choice or circumstance, families come in all shapes and sizes. And, ultimately, what really defines a family is caring and love" (Kohler, 2018), suggested Murphy Brown, the American TV drama character. Although this drama was broadcasted about 30 years ago, her remarks will entail crucial lessons for present college students who have grown in the conventional family and have their own families soon, in this equity-oriented age.

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Judicial Review on Same-Sex Civil Marriage —Is the Restriction of Same-Sex Civil Marriage Constitutional or Unconstitutional?

Isana Tsuchiya

Isana Tsuchiya is a senior student majoring in Global Studies. His essay "Judicial Review on Same-Sex Civil Marriage: Is the Restriction of Same-Sex Civil Marriage Constitutional or Unconstitutional?" was written under the supervision of Professor Tetsuya Toyoda. Tsuchiya has had a keen interest in Japanese and international law, especially the Japanese constitution. After taking the course the Japanese Constitution and Laws, he became interested in the Japanese marriage system, which was under trial in Hokkaido District Court. He would like to analyze the constitutional judgment on the restriction of the surname system for married couples by the Supreme Court (2021).

Introduction

If people submit a marriage notification to local public entities, they are legally recognized as married, but how about sexual minorities? In Japan, local public entities do not accept same-sex couples' marriage notifications. Marriage For All Japan, an organization that aims to make Japan legally accept same-sex marriage, has been against the marriage system.

Marriage For All Japan presented petitions to Sapporo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Tokyo District Court in 2019. It claims what same-sex couples are not accepted their marriage notifications is an unreasonable restriction of their freedom of marriage. In Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution, so it institutes a suit against

the state. It uses the international trend which other states start to make same-sex marriage legal as one of the reasons.

On the other hand, Tokyo High Court gave a decision concerning sexualities and marriage in Case (wa) No.30 (2020). It clarified that same-sex marriage can be recognized as a common-law marriage but not civil marriage, even though local public entities do not accept their marriage notifications. Common-law marriage is that a couple who does not submit a marriage notification but is recognized as being married based on social customs. Conversely, a couple who submit a marriage notification and local public entities accept it is a civil marriage. The judgment also shows that the international trend of accepting same-

sex marriages is a mixture of accepting the civil marriage and common-law marriage.

Thus, these two cases have the difference at a point of an international trend, whether accepting same-sex marriage as civil marriage or common-law marriage. Firstly, how will a case submitted by Marriage for All Japan be judged based on Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020)? For this research question, this research considers two perspectives, the international trend and the restriction for same-sex marriage. Secondly, how does the judgment by Tokyo High Court affect future cases concerning freedom of marriage for same-sex couples? The purpose of this research is to reconsider the future of same-sex marriage in Japan from the judgment by Tokyo High Court.

Discussions of Each Case

Adopting the same surname.

Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution says “marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.” Article 24, paragraph (2) of the Constitution shows “with regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile, divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes.” Marriage is freely based on individual autonomy, which is freedom of marriage. Laws have to be established for freedom of marriage. In Case (o) No.1023 (2015), the Supreme Court clarifies how Article 24 of the Constitution is treated. The Diet has dis-

cretionary power to enact a legal system of marriage based on the request of Article 24.

In Case (o) No.1023 by the Supreme Court (2015), it is discussed whether Article 750 of the Civil Code, which requires married couples to adopt the same surname, is unconstitutional. Article 750 of the Civil Code states “a husband and wife shall adopt the surname of the husband or wife in accordance with that which is decided at the time of marriage.” In other words, a marriage certification without choosing the surname is not legally accepted. The reason why it is considered unconstitutional is that women, who often adopt husband’s surname, have damages coming from Article 750 of the Civil Code, which violates their freedom of marriage. Thus, it is claimed that Article 750 of the Civil Code restricts women’s freedom of marriage without reasonable grounds, and exceeds the Diet’s legislative discretion permitted under Article 24 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court judged as constitutional, Article 750 of the Civil Code does not violate freedom of marriage unreasonably, and is under the Diet’s legislative discretion of Article 24 of the Constitution. The judgment has three dimensions. The first dimension is how Article 24 is interpreted. The second dimension is the limitation of judicial review for Article 24. The third dimension is the examination of the existence of the reasonable ground.

According to the judgment of Case (o) No.1023 by the Supreme Court (2015): determination as to whether or not said provision can also be accepted as being also in compliance with Article 24 of the Constitution should be made by examining the pur-

pose of the legal system [Article 750 of the Civil Code] and the influence that may be derived from adopting the legal system, and by considering whether or not the provision in question should inevitably be deemed to be unreasonable in light of the requirement of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes and be beyond the scope of the Diet’s legislative discretion.

It means that freedom of marriage in Article 24 is an abstract human right, so the Diet has to make the right actualize by establishing laws. The time that the Court can judge as unconstitutional is only when the laws prohibit freedom of marriage without reasonable ground. Thus, requirements that are necessary for civil-marriage, such as submission of marriage certificates and sexuality, are decided by-laws made by the Diet. The judicial review is limited only when laws restrict freedom of marriage without reasonable ground.

The judgment also shows how the existence of reasonable ground is checked. The petitioners argue that Article 750 of the Civil Code violates Article 24 of the Constitution since a wife often adopts her husband’s surname in reality even though Article 24, paragraph (1) states the mutual consent of both sexes and having equal rights. The judgment states:

The same surname system does not prohibit people from using their pre-marriage surname even as their by-name after marriage. Recently, it has become popular among members of the public to use their pre-marriage surname as their by-name after marriage. The abovementioned disadvantages [a loss of identity due to the change of the surname or suffer disadvantages in that

such change would make it difficult to maintain the person’s credit, reputation, fame, etc. as an individual, which have been established through the use of his/her pre-marriage surname] can be eased to some degree as such use of the pre-marriage surname as the by-name after marriage becomes popular.

The adaptation of surnames has disadvantages mainly for women because they tend to adopt their husbands’ surnames recently; however, using pre-marriage surnames even after their marriage can lessen the disadvantages. Thus, the restriction by Article 750 of the Civil Code does not discriminate or violate their freedom of marriage, which means that it has reasonable ground and is under the Diet’s legislative discretion. In the same way, the existence of reasonable ground in restrictions of freedom of marriage can be judged from whether disadvantages due to the restrictions are eased or not.

To sum up, Case (o) No.1023 (2015) provides three dimensions concerning judicial review on Article 24 of the Constitution. The first dimension is that freedom of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1) is actualized by-laws that regulate the system of civil marriage including marriage certificates and sexuality from the request of Article 24, paragraph (2). The second dimension is that the Courts can do a judicial review of the laws only when they have no reasonable ground and exceed the Diet’s legislative discretion. The third dimension is that the existence of a reasonable ground for restriction of freedom of marriage can be judged from easing disadvantages coming from the restriction.

Same-sex common-law marriage.

Although a couple does not submit a marriage certificate to local public entities for reasons, such as denial to adopt husband's or wife's surnames, they can be recognized as married, which is common-law marriage. Regulations related to the Employees' Pension Insurance Act show requirements for common-law marriage. The first requirement is that a couple has mutual consent to establish the relationship recognized as marriage based on social customs. The second requirement is that a couple notices the relationship in the first requirement. Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) clarifies same-sex couples can be recognized as a common-law marriage, as the same as an opposite-sex common-law marriage. The judgment of this case has three dimensions. The first dimension is how the international trend concerning same-sex marriage is acknowledged. The second dimension is the relationship between Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution and same-sex marriage. The third dimension is the origin of the restriction of same-sex marriage.

The judgment states the international trend concerning same-sex marriage. The international trend is not only accepting same-sex marriage as civil marriage but also as a common-law marriage. Additionally, in Japan, local public entities start to establish same-sex partnership systems, and the international and domestic trend concerning same-sex marriage is a judicial cognizance. Thus, the judgment defines the international trend of same-sex marriage as the mixture of civil marriage and common-law marriage, and the interna-

tional trend is generally accepted in Japan.

The judgment mentions how Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution is enacted. At the time when the Constitution is established, same-sex marriage is not just anticipated as one of the forms of marriage. As the international and domestic trends show, marriage has been changing depending on transformations of values and lifestyles. Thus, from social changes and the international and domestic trends, Article 24, paragraph (1) does not mean that same-sex marriage is prohibited and can provide same-sex couples legal protections as a common-law marriage.

Acknowledging that a definition of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1) can be changed based on social trends, a restriction of freedom of marriage due to sexualities is established by the Diet's legislative discretion, not originated from Article 24, paragraph (1) itself. In other words, the origin of the restriction for same-sex marriage is from laws established by the Diet, such as Article 739 and 750 of the Civil Code. Thus, the judgment indicates that the laws which restrict freedom of marriage can be judged as unconstitutional for Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution in a case when they do not follow social trends of the definition of marriage, in addition to the evaluation criteria Case (o) No.1023 (2015) provides.

To conclude, Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) provides three dimensions concerning the legal nature of same-sex marriage. The first dimension is that the international and domestic trends of same-sex marriage are accepting not only as civil marriage but also as a common-law marriage. The second dimension is that a defini-

tion of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1) has been changing based on social trends and same-sex marriage can be included. The third dimension related to the second dimension is that the restriction of same-sex marriage comes from laws rather than the Constitution so that the restriction can be judged as unconstitutional when disconnected to the definition of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1).

Argument by Marriage for All Japan.

Although Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) judges that same-sex marriage can be accepted as a common-law marriage, same-sex marriage is not accepted as civil marriage now. Marriage for All Japan (2020) argues that the restriction of same-sex marriage is unconstitutional for Article 24, paragraph (1), since the restriction, which local public entities do not accept same-sex couple's marriage certificate, has no reasonable ground. As the reason, it uses the international trend that other countries start to accept same-sex marriage as civil marriage.

Marriage for All Japan uses the judgment of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015). The judgment declares that State laws that prohibit same-sex civil marriage are unconstitutional for Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. It states the right to marry is a fundamental human right that belongs to individual autonomy, and marriage is an essence of social order. Besides, as a result of legally accepting same-sex civil marriage, children among same-sex couples can be protected. Thus, same-sex couples have the same right to civil marriage as opposite-sex couples, and State laws prohibiting same-sex civil marriage are unconstitutional. In addi-

tion to the United States, European countries start to accept the same-sex civil marriage, for example, France, and the United Kingdom. Thus, the international trend of same-sex marriage is accepting the civil marriage.

To sum up, Marriage for All Japan, who is the petitioner arguing same-sex civil marriage, considers accepting same-sex civil marriage as an international trend. In other words, from the second dimension of the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020), the view of the international trend indicates that a definition of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution has already changed into accepting same-sex civil marriage based on the international trend.

Comparison of The Cases

A fundamental difference between Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) and the argument the petitioner Marriage for All Japan provide is how they see same-sex marriage. Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) sees that same-sex marriage should be recognized as a common-law marriage. On the other hand, the argument the petitioner Marriage for All Japan provides sees that same-sex marriage should be recognized as civil marriage. The reason why the difference appears is that they have a different understanding of international trends. Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) thinks the international trend is the mixture of civil and common-law same-sex marriage, but the argument considers only civil same-sex marriage.

In addition to the difference of recognition of the international trend, they also

have differences concerning an unjust infringement for freedom of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1). Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) shows that only not accepting same-sex common-law marriage is an unjust infringement. In other words, whether accepting the same-sex civil marriage or not is under the Diet's legislative discretion. On the other hand, the argument of Marriage for All Japan states the restriction of same-sex civil marriage is an unjust infringement that exceeds the Diet's legislative discretion.

Therefore, their fundamental difference, legal treatment for same-sex marriage, arises from two dimensions. The first dimension is the recognition of the international trend. The second dimension is the range of the Diet's legislative discretion. How these two dimensions of the cases are interpreted, combined with the logic of Case (o) No.1023 by the Supreme Court (2015), reveals how the argument by Marriage for All Japan is judged in Tokyo High Court.

The International Trend

The international trend of same-sex marriage is judged as accepting civil and common-law marriage based on Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020). The reasons come from how other states and local public entities in Japan treat same-sex marriage.

According to the Equal Marriage Alliance (2020), European states, such as France, Germany, and the U.K., and Taiwan accept the same-sex civil marriage. On the other hand, other states, such as Italy, and Switzerland establish a same-sex partnership system, which is similar to same-

sex common-law marriage accepted in Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020). Additionally, according to Kazuki (2016), same-sex couples are neither accepted as common-law marriage in China. Kogawa (2020, March 4) states that the draft of the Amendment of the Constitution includes the negation of same-sex marriage. Thus, the international trend is the mixture of accepting civil and common-law same-sex marriage, rather than only accepting same-sex civil marriage as Marriage For All Japan claims.

In addition to the international trend, the domestic trend of same-sex marriage follows the international trend. According to NHK (2020, November 5), more than 60 local public entities have established the same-sex partnership system. The judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) states about the establishment by local public entities as the judicial cognizance. Thus, the domestic trend, the establishment of same-sex couples partnership system by local public entities, and the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) correspond to the international trend.

To conclude, the international trend is defined as the mixture of same-sex civil and common-law marriage, since legal treatments defer from each state. Japan follows the international trend since the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) accepts same-sex marriage as a common-law marriage and the establishment of same-sex couple partnership systems by local public entities.

Reasonable Restriction

The restriction of freedom of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution for same-sex couples is not an unjust infringement, based on the logic of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) and Case (o) No.1023 by the Supreme Court (2015). The reason is that disadvantages due to not accepted same-sex civil marriage is eased by recognized as a common-law marriage.

Marriage for All Japan claims that the restriction of same-sex civil marriage produces disadvantages, an unjust infringement since it thinks that the international and domestic trend is accepting the same-sex civil marriage and the definition of marriage of Article 24, paragraph (1) includes same-sex civil marriage. On the other hand, the establishment of same-sex couples partnership systems by local public entities and the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) accepting same-sex common-law marriage ease the disadvantages. According to Maeno (2016, May 24), common-law marriage can receive legal protections almost the same as civil marriage, except for some rights such as exemptions for dependents. Thus, legal protections are provided to same-sex marriage, accepted as common-law marriage in the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020), and are almost the same as civil marriage. Additionally, as a result of the establishment of same-sex couples partnership systems, same-sex couples can get social credibility and approval as the same as opposite-sex civil marriage. For example, if a same-sex couple receives partnership certification of same-sex couples partnership systems by local public entities,

life insurance companies, such as Nippon Life Insurance Company (2015) and Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company (2015), can set their partners as receivers of death insurance. Thus, by accepting the same-sex common-law marriage and the establishment of same-sex partnership systems, the differences of legal protections, social credibility, and approval between opposite-sex civil marriage and same-sex marriage are diminished, which means that the disadvantages due to not accepting same-sex civil marriage for same-sex couples are eased.

To sum up, the restriction not accepting same-sex civil marriage is not an unjust infringement for freedom of marriage for same-sex couples in Article 24, paragraph (1), since the disadvantages due to the restriction are eased by almost the same legal protections, and social credibility and approval. In other words, not accepting same-sex civil marriage is a reasonable restriction that is constitutional for Article 24, paragraph (1).

What Effect Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court Has

Through the discussions of the international trend and reasonable restriction of same-sex marriage, the effect which the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) is that making a possible judgment which states the restriction of same-sex civil marriage as unconstitutional can take much time. The effect comes from the definition of marriage in Article 24 which does not include same-sex civil marriage defined by the judgment, and almost the same legal protections, social credibility, and approval same-sex common-law marriage have

to compare to opposite-sex civil marriage.

The judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) shows that the definition of marriage in Article 24, paragraph (1) of the Constitution as accepting opposite-sex civil and common-law marriage, and same-sex common-law marriage based on the international and domestic trend, and be decided by-laws under the Diet's legislative discretion. The Diet decides the definition by not accepting same-sex marriage certification under its legislative discretion. In other words, the judgment clarifies that a social transformation of accepting same-sex marriage as one of the forms of civil marriage has not happened all in the international and domestic communities yet, through setting the definition of marriage. As a result, the restriction of same-sex civil marriage does not exceed the Diet's legislative discretion until the definition of marriage changes depending on the social transformation. Thus, to judge the restriction of same-sex civil marriage as unconstitutional for Article 24, can take much time due to waiting for the social transformation which changes the definition of marriage.

Accepting same-sex common-law marriage by the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) reduces the disadvantages which same-sex couples have, which leads to a possible judgment of constitutionality of the restriction of same-sex civil marriage. At the time when same-sex couples were not accepted the common-law marriage, they could not receive legal protections, social credibility, and approval, because they were not considered as couples or officially and socially married; however, by accepting them as common-law,

now they can get legal protections, and social credibility and approval, which are almost the same as opposite-sex civil and common-law marriage. Thus, even not accepted civil marriage for same-sex couples, they receive fewer disadvantages than before the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020), which avoids a possible judgment of unconstitutionality on the restriction on same-sex civil marriage.

To conclude, as an effect of the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020), the judgment can avoid a possible judgment of unconstitutionality on the restriction of same-sex civil marriage. Seeing that a social transformation that changes the definition of marriage in Article 24 of the Constitution, and giving legal protections, social credibility, and approval for same-sex couples as almost the same as opposite-sex common-law and civil marriage by the judgment, the effect of avoidance of the possible judgment is produced.

Conclusion

This research reveals that the restriction of same-sex civil marriage can be judged as constitutional from the international trend and easing the disadvantages which same-sex couples receive, based on the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) in response to the argument which the petitioners Marriage for All Japan have. From the possible judgment on the restriction of same-sex civil marriage, the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) can avoid the Courts to judge as unconstitutional for the restriction on Article 24 of the Constitution. The effect of

the judgment comes from defining that a social transformation that changes the definition of marriage in Article 24 has not happened yet, and legal protections, social credibility, and approval for same-sex couples by accepting common-law marriage which eases disadvantages due to the restriction.

Even though the acceptance of same-sex common-law marriage by the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) reduces the disadvantages for

same-sex couples, sexual minorities, including same-sex couples, suffer from discriminations, according to the Ministry of Justice (2016). Additionally, the judgment of Case (wa) No.30 by Tokyo High Court (2020) also infers that declaring as same-sex couples is one of the requirements of same-sex common-law marriage. We should focus on how opinions on same-sex marriage change to reconsider how same-sex couples should be legally treated.

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How to make Donald Trump the appealing alternative

Sakura Kina

Sakura Kina is a sophomore student. The essay "How to Make Donald Trump the Appearing Alternative" was submitted in the Composition I course under the supervision of Professor Yuki Togawa. She has been mindful of the systems and effects of mass communication. Amid of the U.S. presidential election 2020, advertisements for the two candidates, which reflected contrasting views and positions toward the chaotic circumstance due to the pandemic, drew her strong interest.

As the 2020 U.S. presidential election day gets closer, the race between the two candidates: Donald J. Trump and Joe Biden, is heating up more and more. The measures for COVID-19 and economic recovery are the main issues of the election amid the crisis. As Hockmuth expresses as a "magnetic person" (personal communication, October 28, 2020), the Republican candidate and also the current U.S. president, Donald Trump strongly fascinates enthusiastic supporters. On the other hand, other American citizens beg for him not to be elected again. Some people may consider Trump as an aggressive, illogical, and impulsive person who claims America First Policy. In the advertising video, "Laughed At" (Joe Biden, 2019), launched by the Democratic nominee Joe Biden, Trump makes himself the laughing stock with his erratic behavior in an international public place. Yet, he intentionally manipulates the audience with various logical fallacies. Notwithstanding its collapsed logics, the campaign video, named "card," does not lose a function as an

advertisement. On the contrary, it perfectly succeeds in making use of logical fallacies and agitating the voters' mind strategically.

The campaign video, "cards" (Donald J Trump, 2020), which calls for a vote for Trump, begins with a scene of a woman sitting on a bed. From beginning to end, she does not speak a word as if to embody a silent majority of the U.S. She flips cue cards, which the woman's inner feelings are written on, like in the famous scene of Love Actually (Graves, 2020). Instead of a confession of love, the cards convey her concerns about Biden's administration. She is a woman of color who appears to have four children and make her living on a tight budget, like an American citizen of the middle class. The dimly-lit room and doomy background music raise the specter of the desperate future. Altogether, the advertisement aims to criticize and give a negative impression toward the opponent candidates' policy.

To begin with, the advertisement attacks the opponent's character instead of arguing

over political matters of substance. In the short video, the woman shows the 2nd note card: “Joe Biden worries me. He’s weak” (0:03). As Smith, a former director of Trump White House message strategy, admits, healthiness is one of Trump’s selling points, and he often shows off his physical strength likewise he flaunted a rapid recovery after contracting COVID-19 (Poole, 2020). Conversely, he often criticizes the opponent as frail. During the 2016 campaign, Republican candidate Trump assailed his counterpart, Hillary Clinton, as one who was not suited for the presidency due to the lack of energy, unlike him, from time to time (Vitali, 2016). Although the claim has no evidence to prove that Biden is weak, it incites doubt about his reliability among the audience. Macagno (2013) discusses that “even though unreasonable, ad hominem attacks can be extremely powerful because they may not simply consist of one argument” (p.339). In this case, by simply criticizing the opponent’s character as “weak,” the advertisement raises questions whether Biden is powerful enough to be the leader of the U.S. As a complex structure of ad hominem that Macagno points out, at the latter part, the video exaggerates and distorts facts to fortify the first strategy: ad hominem.

The video has the ad hominem, followed by an exaggerated argument over the opponent’s political position, which bolsters up the previous strategy. The claim regarding Biden’s political ideology is merely setting up a straw man to beat; the message exaggeratedly describes his position and makes it easier to attack him. The first argument over the Democrats nominee is “Biden embraced the policies of the far left” (0:06). In reali-

ty, Biden has been described as “moderate” compared to other democratic candidates. Considering his political ideology from his votes recorded by DW-Nominate, he ranked as the 31st liberalist and the 50th conservative among the members of the Senate from 2009 to 2011 (Biden, Joseph Robinette, Jr. (1942-), n.d.). He can be classified as the middle, or slightly liberal in the Democrats. “He has historically positioned himself in the center of the Democratic Party, between the party’s most liberal and most conservative members” (Bacon, 2020, para.4). It may also be true to say, however, that Joe Biden will lean to the left. That is because the position of the Democratic Party is currently likely to shift towards liberal ideas than before due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Bacon, 2020). As a consequence, Joe Biden, who has always flexibly reflected the party’s policies, would support pro-liberal policies; he might launch measures that are more left-wing, whereas the expression, “far-left,” is too excessive to describe his ideology. Furthermore, the depiction of Biden, who seems to blindly obey the Democrats and the left-wing party, reinforces the image of his powerless character. The argument against Biden’s political position would be evaluated as an overstatement for the facile critique, at the same time, it also functions as a component of ad hominem in spite of its factual twist.

Next, the woman discloses her concern about the tax raise plan by the other candidates (0:09), then indirectly provides false information. The woman briefly states that Biden will implement a tax-raising measure, and misleadingly expresses her disgust at it (0:09). Her facial expression implicitly

communicates that American citizens, especially those who now have financial difficulties, like her, a mother of four, would suffer further burden if Biden were to be elected. However, this prediction is inaccurate because Biden’s tax plan will not impose an additional tax on the working-class citizens, who annually earn below 400,000 dollars, but on affluent companies or households (The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 2020). Despite the fact that the tax policy that targets the high-income class should have less impact on those middle-income earners, the video suggests an incorrect outcome by cutting one part of the information. Although the card gives a reason the opponent is not preferable, the assertion is based on misinformation.

Ultimately, The campaign video concludes that if Biden is elected for the 2020 U.S. President, this inauspicious future will come true, but, this dramatic and tragic anticipation can be considered as a slippery slope fallacy. The advertisement claims that the future of the U.S. is hopeless due to Biden’s weak personality and wrong measures. However, the logic of anticipation which is supported by personal attack, exaggeration, and false information, does not work because of fallacies in the evidence itself as discussed above. Throughout the entire advertisement, the campaign ad for Trump also coherently exhibits alarming factors about the future in the U.S. It appears to make the audience feel more insecure amid the COVID-19 crisis by fear appeals. In addition to the messages on cards, the room where the woman shows up is sunless, and the background music played there is ominous as if they were a sign of an

undesirable future. As Brader (2005) proves in his study, elements of advertisement other than its content, such as music, images, color, can work to control the audience’s emotions. His experiments demonstrate no evidence if negative approaches in advertisements capture more attention or not, but confirm that “fear ads are dramatically more effective at persuading viewers” (Brader, 2005, p.399). While a negative advertisement is as much arousing as a positive one, the former is more memorable albeit misunderstandable sometimes (Bradley et al., 2007). On the other hand, as for the counterpart, Biden, there is a campaign ad named “Kimberly” (Joe Biden, 2020) which is starring a woman of color of the middle class as the “cards” (Donald J Trump, 2020) does. Although she shares how she has struggled to cope with the pandemic, and complains about the current administration (0:00-0:50), the campaign video keeps holding a positive atmosphere all the way. The advertisement for Biden does not contain any personal attack nor misinformation. Overall, it applies a positive approach and is more logical than the other. To sum up, the campaign video for Trump which manipulates viewers’ emotions well succeeds as a political advertisement than the other for Biden which is more logically advanced.

To conclude, Donald Trump’s presidential campaign ad is full of logical fallacies; yet, his strategies successfully manipulate the audience’s emotions. It displays why Trump is a superior candidate to the other through ad hominem, straw man fallacy, and misinformation. Most importantly, for Trump, who utilizes logical fallacies without concerns about information credibility,

it can be said that a negative approach is the best method for his campaign. Both candidates criticize their counterparts without a clear statement about their own measures and try to appeal to the significant segments in contrasting manners. Simple and threatening claims straightforwardly stir up anxiety over the opponent candidate's policies.

As a result, regarding the 2020 U.S. presidential election that is taking place amid this COVID-19 crisis, voters can be manipulated easily. The current U.S. president Trump can be evaluated as a strategic politician who makes maximum use of the chaotic situation which he himself had made.

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Mass Shootings: Weak Gun Control and Preventions in the U.S.

Kakeru Oikawa

Kakeru Oikawa is a sophomore student majoring in Global Business. His essay “Mass Shootings: Weak Gun Control and Preventions in the U.S.” was submitted in Advanced Research Writing under the supervision of Professor Mark De Boer. Oikawa has virtually studied abroad at the University of New South Wales in Australia for a term. He always had interests in business management, psychology, and criminology. After living in the United States for several years, he was shocked by the number of mass shootings that occur in the U.S. each year, leading to this paper of U.S. mass shootings. As for Oikawa’s future research endeavors, he is looking forward to updated mass shootings occurrences in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Abstract

Many studies have found causes and other factors affecting the outbreaks of mass shootings in the U.S. However, the existing research does not necessarily connect some of the variables that are causing such crimes. The current study asks for the leading cause and prevention strategies of mass shootings and further restrictions to be implemented in addition to the existing laws. Participants included high school and college students in numerous countries. Results revealed that the leading cause of mass shootings is most likely the gun control laws in the U.S. in relation with people’s mental health state. Furthermore, many Americans are eager to even ban all guns in the country. Hopefully, these results and the new restrictions proposed will make changes in American society. Consequently, the present study hopes for the reduction of the rate of gun crimes in the future.

Key words: mass shooting, gun law, mental illness

Introduction

One of the deadliest mass shootings in the U.S. is considered to be the Las Vegas mass shooting in 2017, which left 58 people dead, and about 700 injured (“Mass shootings,” 2020). The present study highlights the leading cause of mass shootings, mainly based on gun control laws, in addition to mental conditions shown by the suspects, as well as possible preventions of such crime. The current study builds upon the existing mass shooting and gun violence researches and presents a new insight into this issue by shifting the focus to the voices from people with different backgrounds. Gun Violence Archive (GVA), showed that, by the end of 2019, there were 417 mass shootings in the U.S., which is more than one per day on average (Silverstein, 2020). The situation in the U.S. is crucial to look at as, in 2017, “there were just 6 gun-deaths [in Japan], compared to 33,599 in the U.S” (Low, 2017). When I lived in the U.S., numerous news media had reported a number of mass shootings, school shootings, and public shootings. As these numbers show, such crime as mass shooting causes a tremendous amount of deaths and injuries and, therefore, it is necessary to reveal the leading cause and possible preventions of this issue.

Literature Review

A criminologist states that mass shootings are “a multiple, firearm, homicide incidents, involving 4 or more victims at one or more locations close to one another” (Berk, n.d.). OLR Research Report has revealed that firearms that are most often used in mass shootings comprise semi-automat-

ic pistols, calibers, handguns, and shotguns (Leduc, 2013). Assault weapons refer to “a class of semi-automatic firearm specifically designed to kill humans quickly and efficiently” (“Assault Weapons,” 2020). Additionally, high-capacity magazines refer to those with a “capacity of more than 10 rounds of ammunition” (“Large Capacity,” 2020). The possible factors affecting mass shootings occurrences are gun control laws and mental illness shown by the suspects. It is a question whether the former is the leading cause of mass shootings. In this section, I will be introducing some contradictory arguments surrounding this issue.

Gun control laws should be stricter

Some advocate for stricter gun laws in the U.S. A study shows that “implementing universal background checks could reduce firearms deaths by 56.9%; background checks for ammunition purchases could reduce deaths by 80.7%; and gun identification requirements could reduce deaths by 82.5%” (Kalesan, Mobily, Keiser, Fagan, & Galea, 2016). Moreover, gun licensing will also decrease firearm homicides by 14%.

Furthermore, the current U.S. gun laws do not cover guns such as those with high-capacity magazines, which is a problem. An investigation has shown that “high-capacity magazines were used in at least 50% of the 62 mass shootings between 1982 and 2012” (Follman & Aronsen, 2013). Therefore, some argue that restricting more of those high-capacity magazines will be more effective.

Gun control laws are effective enough

Contrary to the first argument, there are people who support the current gun laws and think that they are effective enough for the citizens. For instance, a study found that “assault weapons bans did not significantly affect murder rates at the state level” and “states with restrictions on the carrying of concealed weapons had higher gun-related murders” (Gius, 2013). Although this data does not include the details of how those things were measured, it is possible to suspect that simply banning assault weapons may not be the solution because it may even increase the rate of murders in the U.S.

Furthermore, some people presume that gun laws infringe upon the right to self-defense. According to the National Rifle Association (NRA), guns are used for self-defense around 2.5 million times a year (Association, n.d.). Moreover, Pew Research showed that 61% of men and 56% of women surveyed said that stricter gun laws would make it “more difficult for people to protect their homes and families” (Goo, 2019). Lund, a professor at George Mason University School of Law, has stated that “the right to self-defense and to the means of defending oneself is a basic natural right that grows out of the right to life” and “many [gun control laws] interfere with the ability of law-abiding citizens to defend themselves against violent criminals” (n.d.). This is a moral aspect of the gun laws in the U.S. that some people are concerned about.

Some also presume that gun control laws do not prevent criminals from obtaining guns or breaking laws. In Chicago, despite the state having had banned gun

shops, shooting ranges, assault weapons, and high capacity magazines, in 2014, Chicago had 2,089 shooting victims including at least 390 murders (Ali, 2014). This explains the deadly situation in Chicago despite the state’s stricter restrictions on gun laws.

Mass shootings are preventable

Mass shootings are preventable by imposing several new laws in addition to the current gun laws in the U.S. For example, secured firearm storage laws and educational programs would raise awareness about the importance of secure storage (“Extreme Risk,” 2020). Other means would be to raise the age to purchase semiautomatic firearms to 21, and “requiring background checks on all gun sales so that minors and people with dangerous histories cannot evade [their] gun laws.” Thus, some believe that such mass shootings can be prevented if the laws were to cover more grounds.

Mass shootings are not preventable

Frum argues that mass shootings are not preventable because there is no one law that would prevent all mass shootings (2015), i.e., there are too many factors contributing to the causes of mass shootings. Despite the stricter gun control laws, people could purchase illegal guns, and therefore, there cannot be any laws or policies that would prevent the next mass shooting.

Gun laws and mass shootings internationally

In Japan, “there were just 6 gun-deaths, compared to 33,599 in the US” (Low, 2017). Unlike how it is in the U.S., to own a gun in Japan, there are many restrictions that make it almost impossible for a regular citizen

to own a gun such as needing to take courses, tests, mental health and drug tests. These strict policies may be the reason why the rates of mass shootings are lower in Japan.

In Brazil, with its higher rates of gun crimes than that of the U.S., the laws specify and regulate private ownership of guns stricter than the U.S. does (Alpers, n.d.). Alpers states that only licensed gun owners can lawfully acquire and possess firearms or ammunition. With Brazil ranked world number seven in the number of violent gun deaths, they take on such measures to combat this issue.

Based on some of the arguments revolving around this issue, it has become even clearer that there are multiple sides and oppositions among the citizens in the U.S. Some agree that gun control laws should be stricter while others say otherwise. In addition, some argue that mass shootings are preventable by restricting the use of guns even more, while others say otherwise. From the comparison among the U.S., Japan, and Brazil in terms of gun laws, it has been revealed that the Japanese laws prohibit many aspects of guns and ownership of guns for citizens which substantially affects the lower rates of gun crimes.

From what I discovered so far, I will need to conduct primary research, focused on high school and college students, as they are the growing generations and will become a significant part of the society in the near future. This will also be in addition to their knowledge and understanding of mental illness as it is also a factor that may become an incentive for the suspects. Therefore, my research question is: *What serves as the leading cause*

of mass shootings, and what are possible realistic preventions?

I will be conducting a survey among high school and college students in multiple countries to collect data that are as variable as possible. In specific, I will be asking them for their opinions, views, and stances regarding this issue, as to understand what the young people think about this issue today.

Methodology

In this research, I will be collecting information regarding mass shootings, gun laws, and mental illness from various perspectives. The research will be covering the fundamental aspects of mass shootings in the U.S. as I will be looking at this issue from multiple perspectives. More specifically, I will be taking samples from high school and college students in multiple countries including Japan, the U.S., South Korea, and some European countries. Such information will be based on the respondents’ pre-existing opinions and knowledge of this issue. First of all, the respondents’ descriptive information will be obtained to identify where they came from and what kind of experiences and knowledge they have obtained throughout their lives. These will be important when analyzing the results based on their responses. More importantly, through their lenses, I will be collecting each country’s statistics on mass shootings (if any), relevance of this issue to each individual, causes of mass shootings, reactions from different races/nationalities, gun laws, whether or not they support the policies, mental illnesses they are aware of, whether or not people with such mental illness should be allowed

to own firearms, whether or not people with such mental illness tend to be more violent, whether or not mass shootings can be prevented, and if so, in what ways they can be prevented. These categories of data will enable me to collect sufficient information to get an overview of how the U.S. is different from other countries in terms of mass shootings occurrences, why that is the case, and what actions and modifications can be taken to prevent further mass shootings.

The target audience of this research includes both male and female high school and college students in countries such as the U.S., Japan, South Korea, and some European countries. The reason for this selection is that the best way to come up with possible realistic preventions is to ask the general public. In specific, people that are currently attending high school or college tend to have strong opinions and insightful knowledge as they are in the process of learning about the world and issues revolving it. In addition, taking samples from multiple locations will enable me to gain more personal information not only from the U.S. but from other countries in which the laws either allow or not allow people to own and use guns.

Google Form will be utilized to distribute surveys evenly to people in the countries mentioned. The reason for conducting a survey is that the public opinions also matter, and it is the most efficient way to collect them. Regarding this issue, it is true that the experts' insights like those from criminologists, psychologists, doctors, and professors, are significantly relevant. However, as I looked into this research, I have found numerous papers and organizational web-

sites that clearly express their arguments and explanations. This signifies that other means such as interviews with some experts may not be as effective. Therefore, it would be the most effective that I conduct a survey among high school and college students to collect the non-experts' insights into this issue as this research looks for realistic preventions as the final conclusion.

Results

The present study has seen the trend where most people (n=45) often hear the word 'mass shooting' in their daily life. However, despite their numerous encounters with the term, not many were aware of any news regarding this issue in their place of residence. Most of the people that were aware of some news regarding mass shootings were residents of the U.S. Interestingly, most people feel uncomfortable and unsafe when they hear the word 'gun' with an exception of one person feeling happy. Despite the impacts mass shootings have on American people's lives and their wide coverage on news media, not many, that reside outside of the U.S., were aware of one of the deadliest mass shootings in the U.S. history, which took place in Las Vegas, in 2017. Of those that were aware of this shooting, many of them showed the tendency to support for stricter gun laws in the U.S. to possibly prevent the next mass shooting.

The current study has revealed that nearly all of the respondents agree that the current gun laws should be stricter to prevent the next mass shooting. Some also presume that guns should be banned, and only then, mass shootings could be prevented. On the

other hand, some of them have stated that proper education is the key to preventing mass shootings, instead of making the laws stricter. Another response from a few respondents were that people's mental health conditions should be taken care of in wider perspectives such as supporting for mentally-ill people. This, in turn, will help people emotionally which might also prevent mass shooting, according to the data. This comes from the fact that some people have responded that the leading cause of mass shootings stems in people's mental health conditions such as their mental illness and relationships with others. It also includes some hatred toward the world or specific groups of people. In their spectrum, current gun laws are effective enough and the problem lies in a different area. It can also be concluded that in many countries outside of the U.S., people do not have to pay much attention to this issue, as it does not largely affect them on daily basis. More specifically, Japanese students tended to state that they were mostly not aware of this issue, or even if they were, they knew very little about it. Something that the previous research has not shown, which was indicated in the present study, was that guns should be regulated, especially among those with mental conditions. In fact, more than half of the respondents have specified that people with mental conditions could act more violently than those without any, especially those with schizophrenia, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. They were categorized as 'harmful' and 'dangerous' by the majority of the respondents. This aspect is something that was not neces-

sarily covered by the previous researchers.

Discussion

Even though Frum has stated that mass shootings are not preventable (2015), all of the respondents in the current study have stated that they are preventable in different approaches. This has essentially disproved the study conducted by Frum. Contrarily, the present data supported the data shown by EveryTownResearch, which had indicated that further imposing certain laws would raise people's awareness which will work for preventing mass shootings ("Extreme Risk," 2020). Furthermore, Kalesan, Mobily, Keiser, Fegan, and Galea have revealed the percentage decreases in firearms deaths if the U.S. gun laws were to be stricter than the current ones (2016). The data have shown that as much as 82.5% of gun deaths could be reduced by further regulating the ownership and use of guns, which corresponds with the data collected in the present study.

The current study examined the leading cause of mass shootings and possible preventions of the next shooting in the U.S. in general, with the data collected through the research. It was revealed that to be able to make changes in a society, it requires one to have certain levels of understanding and knowledge of the particular issue or event. Without understanding the problem, it is difficult to bring solutions to the table. This is what is happening in some places regarding mass shootings. Particularly in the U.S., it seems fairly common to acknowledge the issue and have a variety of opinions in many states. In fact, many American respondents have answered 'yes' when they were asked

about particular cases of mass shootings that they were aware of. As a result, more Americans tended to have stronger opinions about the issue, whether it be to support the gun control laws or to oppose them.

The data mainly showed the tendency to support some of the previous researches such as the one where the researchers showed that making the current gun laws stricter will reduce the rate of gun crimes in the U.S. by about 82.5% (Kalesan, Mobily, Keiser, Fagan, & Galea, 2016). The data in the present study has suggested that most of the respondents presumed that the current gun control laws are not strict enough to regulate all areas such as types of guns, people with mental illness, and the purpose of using guns. Many suggested that the law should be designed to limit the purpose of using guns to self-defense, as many claimed that the main purpose of owning guns is supposed to be for defending oneself or those who are personally related to them. However, the reality is much different from the expectation. Mass shootings are still happening today in the U.S. Despite the fact that the guns were supposed to be for protection of people, millions of people's lives are lost each year because of the weapon. Therefore, some of the respondents have stated that the best way to prevent the next mass shooting is to completely ban the flow and ownership of guns in the U.S. Another way of revising the laws would be to restrict the use of guns among regular citizens. This was also a popular opinion in the study as many have stated that only the government officials, police, and the military personnel should be allowed to own guns. As the initial gun law, the Second Amendment, had

specified, a "well-regulated Militia" should be the ones to own and use guns in case of emergency ("The 2nd Amendment," n.d.). Since this was the first ever gun law that was passed in the Constitution, people nowadays still support it by trying to convey the message that the guns are only for those who are licensed to and approved by the government.

In spite of the positive trend for making changes in the current gun laws, some still had presumed that the gun laws should be as they are. As a result, the data from Pew Research (2019) was supported because those who support the current gun laws justify themselves by the possibility of not being able to protect people without guns in the house.

Missing regulations in the U.S. gun laws

In the process of answering the research question, the most efficient and clear-cut way to do this is to create or re-design the gun control laws in my own words. Therefore, there are several new restrictions that I believe should be added to the current gun laws in the U.S.

How can a regular citizen own a gun?

First, the ownership and use of guns should be available for regular citizens after strict inspections of the applicants, including mental health check by health organizations; background check by the police (e.g., criminal records); lectures on what types of guns there are, how they should be used, why they should be used, and where they should be used; trainings of the applicants (e.g., how to properly handle a gun); interviews on what their purpose is; and licensing the applicants only if they satis-

fy all the conditions. Unless otherwise, a person should not be allowed to own a gun.

What types of guns are legal?

Second, the types of guns that should be accessible by regular citizens should be very limited unless the purpose is for hunting or sports. All guns with high-capacity magazines, as defined in the present study, should be banned among regular citizens. The only type of gun that is allowed for regular citizens is handgun.

What about those with mental illness?

Third, regardless of criminal records, people with any sign of mental illness should not be allowed to own a gun.

Black market?

Fourth, any existing black market for guns will be regulated and seized by the police and government, and those who are caught will be punished accordingly.

What are the consequences of violating the law?

Lastly, the applicants should agree that if they use guns to harm others or themselves, no matter how serious the circumstance is, they will be sentenced for life without any discussions.

For the future

These additional restrictions combine all the suggestions made in the process of data collection and give a chance for the rate of gun crimes to be reduced in the future. Even though some argues that guns should be banned, it would not be a realistic solution as the data show that there exist black markets for guns and the flow of guns cannot be

prevented by simply banning all guns legally.

Conclusion

The present study has focused on the issue of mass shootings in the U.S., specifically on their leading cause and preventions. The situation in the U.S. is yet to get any better after numerous additional restrictions have been implemented to make the laws stricter than they were back when the Second Amendment was passed. Mass shootings occur more than once per day on average in the U.S. alone. Therefore, it was necessary to consider further regulations on guns as suggested by most of the respondents in the study. Without this additional implementation, the rate of gun crimes in the U.S. could easily increase just as it has been for the past several years. There are many flaws in the current gun laws in the U.S. and that is something to pay close attention to. Many people find it somewhat easy to own guns in the U.S. because it is, in fact, easily accessible by even teenagers in the country. Indeed, perhaps the prevention of a next mass shooting is difficult, but not impossible as the growing generation today suggest that there are several ways to go about this issue.

The research was comprised of a survey and not interviews, which may have caused some problems in getting more in-depth information. A set of interviews with some experts on gun crimes, gun control laws, and mental health may have added further useful information to be discussed in the study. Regarding the proposal made in the present study, it is crucial to test its validity before putting it in place officially. Therefore, a future research on whether

those five additional restrictions are effective will either prove or disprove the effectiveness of the new policies. Overall, the research has involved the growing generation in various countries who carry strong opinions on many social, political, economic issues today, and the results have revealed what may be the answer to stopping the next mass shooting from happening.

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Appendix

Here, the research instrument can be found online where a survey was conducted among high school and college students in numerous countries that served as the primary research for this study. The link here can lead to the survey: <https://forms.gle/TTpBR8b4QTwdPsf7>

Social responsibility for crimes with psychopathic juvenile offenders

Leona Yanagi

Leona Yanagi is a sophomore student. Her essay “Social Responsibility for Crimes with Psychopathic Juvenile Offenders” was submitted in the ENG101 Composition 1 class under the supervision of Professor Joel Friederich. Yanagi has had a keen interest in sociology, especially the childhood environment and related behaviors, since she took sociology class at AIU. After learning about sociological imagination, which refers to the quality of mind to think that individuals and social factors are strongly linked to each other, she became intrigued in seeing the influence of society and history that lie beyond one’s personal control. This interest led to this paper connecting childhood environments and psychopathy. As for Yanagi’s future research endeavors, she would like to narrow the focused interest from social behavior to environmentally friendly behavior, by incorporating the perspectives of green consumers and compact cities.

As Tokyo ranked first and Osaka ranked third in the world’s safest city index conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2019, it is safe to say that crime is not closely associated with Japan’s image. In fact, Japan’s crime rate is very low, and it is showing further improvements where the number of reported crimes decreased 62.2% from 2013 to 2018 (Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2020). This trend also applies to juvenile crimes, as young convicts declined 64% from a peak in 1965 (Washino, n.d.). However, in spite of the fall in the crime rate, Japan is recently giving convicts a more severe punishment. According to a scholarly report written by an Education and Sociology major, Japan amended its law to pass stricter sentences for crimes in nine categories with-

in six years, including homicides, indecent assault, and accidental homicide in the conduct of business. Also, the death sentence is more frequently handed down these days (Shiraishi, 2011). Shiraishi (2011) shows that more than ten people have been sentenced to death every year since 2004, compared to no more than seven people in the 1990s. Furthermore, the most controversial issue now is deciding whether or not Japan should also apply severe punishments to juvenile offenders. This year, in 2020, Japan introduced a bill to lower the criminal age of responsibility from 20 to 18 (Nikkei news, 2020). Although the Diet decided to shelve the bill, they agreed to serve stricter punishments on 18 and 19-year-old offenders (ibid.). Despite the trend, penalizing convicts

with stricter punishments can never improve the situation. Rather, it remarkably increases the recidivism rate and the number of psychopathic juvenile offenders. According to the Ministry of Justice of Japan (2020), the recidivism rate has increased by about 17-18% from 1999, reaching 47% in general and 37.1% for juvenile crimes in 2016. Also, the study conducted by Washino, a former instructor at a correctional facility, reveals that developmental disorders related to psychopathy have increased rapidly among juvenile inmates (Washino, n.d.). Considering that these two factors, the recidivism rate, and the number of juvenile psychopaths, have rapidly increased since Japan emphasized more on penalization, it is safe to say that stricter punishments are conversely causing social insecurity towards crimes. Therefore, I believe that Japan should focus more on rehabilitation rather than retribution to reduce recidivism rates and promote social safety.

What differentiates my paper from others who researched this topic is the focus on juvenile crimes and psychopathy. I discussed both general and juvenile crimes in the previous paragraphs in this paper, but from now, I will focus on juvenile offenders, who have the potential to become productive members of society even after committing crimes. If Japan manages to reduce the recidivism rate among juvenile offenders, it not only can ensure future public security but also sustain the aging society’s working population. In addition, the amendment of juvenile laws is the most recent controversy in Japan’s Crime and Justice sector, so I narrowed my target to juveniles. All in all, I will focus on juvenile offenders with indi-

vidual psychological disorders, or psychopaths, who are often considered natural evils, because not many experts have yet agreed with the idea that psychopaths also need rehabilitation as with offenders attributed to social factors like relative poverty. By doing so, I aim to convince people in Japan, who support the amendment of juvenile law, to acknowledge that rehabilitation is more critical than retribution even for psychopaths, and propose the idea of what individuals, especially the teenagers, can do to make a rehabilitative society: first by clarifying the possible treatments for psychopaths, second by arguing the social responsibility for stimulating psychopathic states, and third by showing public perception of rehabilitation.

Psychopathy is characterized by impulsivity, superficial charm, egocentricity, poor judgments, inhumane fearlessness, the incapacity of self-control, and lack of remorse or shame (Martens, 2014). Because psychopaths are 4 to 8 times more likely to recidivate violently than non-psychopaths, urgent treatments are required (Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011). However, as many researchers show, it is believed that psychopaths are “resistant to most forms of treatment,” and “there is evidence that some kinds of treatment make matters worse” (ibid.). For example, psychopaths “who received group therapy actually had a higher violent recidivism rate than those who were not treated at all” (Harris, 1991). Due to this desperate data, there is a dogma that psychopathy is untreatable. However, some kinds of treatments have succeeded. Kent A. Kiehl and Morris B. Hoffman, the professors of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of New Mexico, argued

that Caldwell's decompression treatment, a specific treatment program sophisticatedly designed for psychopathic juvenile offenders, successfully reduced recidivism rates but failed to reduce that of adult offenders'. Their published article "The Criminal Psychopath: History, Neuroscience, Treatment, and Economics" (2011) supports the idea by showing that the recidivism rate was 70% for control groups receiving no treatment, while it was only 10% for those who received Caldwell's treatment. More importantly, they suggest that "treatment might work if juvenile psychopaths are treated early enough, intensely enough and for long enough." This emphasizes the importance of early treatment. To develop the idea of making a designed program, Joseph Ketron, a professor of criminal justice and legal assistant studies at the University of Tennessee, suggests that observing the frequency of animal cruelty actions helps find the most suitable treatment for each convict. In his experiment report, "Childhood animal cruelty motives and their relationship to recurrent adult interpersonal crimes," Ketron mainly studied four motives for committing animal abuse: for fun, anger, hatred for animals, and imitation of others, and concluded that "none of the motives were found to be predictive of later violence against humans" (p.25, para 2). Here, he means that not the reasons, but the frequency is the crucial indicator of the convicts' treatment. Both Kiehl and Ketron suggest that micro-level treatments suited to each psychopath can actually rehabilitate them effectively. More specifically, Kiehl focused on why rehabilitation for psychopaths is important, while Ketron focused on how it can be implementable. By

combining those two authors' opinions, I suggest that observing the frequency of animal cruelty behavior may help design a specific rehabilitative treatment for each juvenile convict, further reducing the recidivism rate. This approach differs from many other researchers who still believe psychopaths are incurable, and therefore, deserve retribution.

As my first argument suggests, psychopathy is treatable, but why should society take responsibility for rehabilitating them? Cary Federman and others, who are experts of Political Science, declare that psychopathy is widely recognized as a medical problem, a philosophical problem of evil and responsibility, or an individual problem. However, this assertion is incorrect. In fact, psychopathy is a mental illness generated by a broad range of social factors. Because norms and structure of the society itself are virtually unchangeable, psychopathy derived from those factors seems difficult to change. However, since social factors are a cause of psychopathy, offenders with psychopathic states should receive rehabilitation as well. In a journal, "Handbook of psychopathy: The successful psychopath," written by Jason R. Hall and Stephen D. Benning, who are professors of psychology at the University of Minnesota, argues that almost all people have some kinds of psychopathic states, but the ways they are displayed are different. By examining the difference between non-criminal psychopaths and criminal psychopaths, they found that "psychopathy is in fact a rational and adaptive survival strategy that is only defined as pathological when it occurs among the socially disadvantaged" (p.462, para 1). What they mean here is that there

is an authority who determines what is normal and abnormal in society known as the "power elite" in sociological terms. Therefore, when those who have less power show deviant behaviors, it is regarded as psychopathic and wrong, whereas when those with power and status show abnormal behaviors, it is sometimes even regarded as heroic, just because they are capable of shaping society's norms. Along with Hall and Benning, another respected individual who argues that the community forms psychopathy is Gleen D. Walters, a criminal justice professor at Kutztown University. In his experiment report, "Animal cruelty and bullying: Behavioral markers of delinquency risk or causal antecedents of delinquent behavior?", Walters argues that animal cruelty and bullying behaviors "not only serve as early behavioral markers of delinquency risk but also play a potentially important role in delinquency growth and persistence." He analyzes that early psychopathic behaviors build a future delinquent identity because those acts are officially and repeatedly labeled as "insane behaviors." In sociology, this process is called "labeling theory." Walter believes that labeling theory applies to this situation because the continuation of labeling themselves as psychopaths stimulates juvenile's proactive criminal thinking and moral disengagement. Hall, Benning, and Walter emphasize the intense social pressure and norms deeply ingrained in society as the causes of psychopathy, and therefore, society should take responsibility for rehabilitating the psychopaths. To be specific, Hall and Benning describe power inequality embedded in society as the cause, while Wal-

ter suggests that others' reactions through interactions make juveniles with pre-psychopathy believe themselves as psychopaths or criminals. These two authors differ from those who argue that society does not need to take measures for psychopaths because individual psychological problems lead to psychopathic disorders. The major difference between juvenile crimes and general crimes in this perspective is that juveniles are more susceptible to those social forces. People exposed to social inequality from a young age are more likely to believe they are psychopaths, which results in cultivating the psychopathic and criminal states more intensively (Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011).

My first and second argument state that society should support rehabilitation for psychopathic juvenile offenders because psychopathy is treatable with specific programs, and being psychopaths is not their fault but society's. This means, to prevent recidivism, society needs to realize its responsibility for all the juvenile convicts, regardless of whether they are psychopathic or not. Here, I am not suggesting that raising awareness is important. I am advocating that showing the willingness to accept the concept of rehabilitation itself is important. I understand that many people would still agree with the law that penalizes convicts with stricter sentences even after reading my arguments because there is a psychological motivation for Japanese people to reject criminals. Thus, lastly, I will introduce the Japanese public perception of rehabilitation by comparing it with the American culture and identifying the very last challenges of putting rehabilitation into practice.

The public opinion polls in Japan and the U.S show the prominent differences in the citizens' perception of rehabilitation for juvenile offenders. The majority of people in Japan disagree with rehabilitation, while the majority in the U.S support it. This difference can be explained by how people are attached to others and society. As I showed in my introduction, Japan has recently attempted to amend its juvenile crime law to focus more on penalization, suggesting that rehabilitation is not a prevailing idea among Japanese people. In her journal article "The relationship between public opinion and penalization of juvenile delinquency" (2017), Tomoko Takemura, a Japanese professor of sociology and education, argues that the number of people who support or somewhat support rehabilitation for juvenile offenders decreased from 98% in 1950 to 61% in 2005. By analyzing the social background, Takemura suggests that the detachment of individuals from society is the primary reason for the public's disagreement. Specifically, in 1950, people were tolerant of juvenile crimes because they believed that an unstable society drove young people to be offensive. However, around 2005, people started to believe that juvenile crimes are the individuals' responsibility. This disconnection between juvenile offenders and society makes it difficult for Japanese society to accept rehabilitation fully. On the other hand, peer-reviewed research article, "Perceptions of Rehabilitation and Retribution in the Criminal Justice System: A Comparison of Public Opinion and Previous Literature," written by James Bernard and others, who belong to the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Gonzaga Universi-

ty, revealed that "the majority of people favored rehabilitation over retribution 89.25% of those surveyed" (p. 7, para 3) and "87.24% of people thought that publicly funded rehabilitation programs are a good idea" (ibid.). Although this is focused only on the topic of drug-use, this data indicates that people in the U.S support not only rehabilitation but also the idea of funding it because they feel responsible for juvenile crimes. Both Takemura and Bernard analyze the public perception of juvenile crimes on the basis of the connection between individuals and society. By comparing the two contrasting ideas, we can say that the very first step of Japan to accept rehabilitation is to make more people feel more attached to society like the U.S society is. This idea differs from others who see juvenile crimes and rehabilitation from the perspective of victims and offenders. Before specifying the point only to the people involved, Takemura and Bernard's research supports the idea that Japan should approach restorative practices by dealing with the disconnection between individuals and society.

In conclusion, Japan is currently penalizing convicts with stricter sentences, and as a result, it has increased the recidivism rate. To reverse the trend, rehabilitation will be more important than retribution, even for psychopaths. Generally, psychopaths are regarded as untreatable or despairing, but in fact, psychopathic states can be controlled at a young age with suitable rehabilitation programs. Considering that psychopathic identities are built and fostered by the power elite and labeling theory, society should try to rehabilitate them. The most challenging part of it will be realizing this idea. Because

individuals in Japan are detached from society, people are unwilling to accept the rehabilitation system for juvenile crimes. Therefore, instead of pointing out minor incidents, it is important to see individual problems as social problems and approach them with a more powerful force. In sociology, this process is called "sociological imagination,"

and I believe this is the key to promoting rehabilitative juvenile justice. To promote this, the very first step that individuals can do is to increase physical communication with their family members, friends, and community. It might seem to be a trivial action, but it can eventually lead to future rehabilitative treatments and future public security.

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The Sino Dash to Africa—An Empirical Analysis

Emmanuel Marvin Maseruka

Emmanuel Marvin Maseruka is a senior student majoring in Global Business. His essay “The Sino Dash to Africa—An Empirical Analysis” was submitted as research for the Advanced Research Writing Class under the supervision of Professor Lee Friederich. Emmanuel’s keen interest in how East-Africa should position itself in the global community to enhance the fruits of globalisation and spur economic development in the region was the major impetus behind this research work.

Abstract

The varied and at times conflicting public opinion on China’s activities in Africa necessitate an investigation backed by comprehensive data as opposed to sentiment. This paper seeks to investigate whether China is seeking to become a hegemon in Africa. There are a lot of skeptics and optimists on the issue of a strengthening bond—dash—between China and Africa. Conversely, there is a line of thought that suggests that the China-Africa cooperation has existed for a long time and as such, China is not dashing to Africa. By relying on bi-lateral trade data between Africa and China, this paper discovers that China is increasing its engagement with Africa, thus qualifying the argument that China is actually dashing to Africa. Contrary to that, however, foreign direct investment data collected negates that China is trying to control Africa’s economy in a colonial-like manner as Western nations still possess the majority of financial assets in Africa. This paper goes ahead to uncover that the natural resource and energy sector of Africa is China’s primarily target. Therefore, this paper argues that mineral rich African countries are more at risk of a poorly guided China-Africa relationship. Since the research data availed shows that Chinese non-state actors as opposed to China’s state actors are leading the China-Africa engagement, this paper makes recommendations on how African governments, particularly those of mineral rich Africa, should regulate China’s non-state actors based on the guidelines set by African Union in the Agenda 2063 policy.

Introduction

The African Union reported that, with a sustained annual growth rate of 4.9% since 2000, Africa is on track to become the fastest-growing region worldwide (African Union, 2013). This economic growth on the continent is partly fueled by two factors. The first catalyst for Africa's growth is a population boom, projected to double to 2.2 billion people by 2050 (United Nations, 2016), and the second is the 30% of the world's natural deposits underneath Africa's soil, which has contributed to a third of Africa's growth (Rielaender, 2013, pp. 1-2). Consequently, as African economies leapfrog to development, enormous opportunities have mushroomed for foreign countries seeking to participate in the African bonanza. China—a nation experiencing stagnant economic growth rates (Congressional Research Service, 2019) and an increasing need for geopolitical supremacy—is headlining the contemporary exodus to Africa. China's primary goal in its cooperation with Africa is "mutually beneficial" trade and the spreading of its "One China policy" gospel. Having surpassed the United States as Africa's leading trade partner (Winton, 2013, p.100) and in addition to aligning all but one African country to its "One China policy" (Chen, 2011, p.104), China has been projected as a probable hegemon in Africa.

This noticeable footprint of China across the African continent has divided opinions on whether the marriage between these two regions should be greeted with skepticism or optimism. Skepticism arises from the fact that Africa, a former prey to colonial rule by foreign powers in the 19th Century, should be wary of falling again to neo-colonial

domination by another external force. The proponents of this argument claim that Africa risks undoing its progress if subjected to foreign control in the modern era. The optimism, on the other hand, is hinged on the fact that for Africa to attain sustainable growth, seeking partnerships abroad who can provide loans, trade and investments to boost its economy is a prerequisite. The emergence of China as a major partner avails more options for African governments to explore as they seek to implement their development programs (Edoho, 2014, pp. 120-121). Conversely, a line of thought that queries the existence of a Chinese "dash to Africa" also exists. The backers of this argument believe that China has always been Africa's partner dating as far back as the 19th Century (Dijk, 2009, p.9). It is for this reason that peddlers of this argument regard China as a long-term partner as opposed to a newcomer trying to penetrate the continent today.

These three parallel opinions about China in Africa necessitate synthesizing and mediating by mainly relying on secondary analysis of loan, trade, and investment data. Trade data will help show whether China is doing fair business transactions with Africa while investment data will show the rate at which Chinese actors are starting up production units in Africa. Lastly, the China-Africa loan advancement data will help highlight which sectors China is focusing on aiding. With this foundation laid, it is safer to conclude whether or not China has shifted focus to Africa before going ahead to investigate whether the scale of its impact is positive or negative. This paper will then culminate into proposing how Africa

ought to position itself in regards to its foreign policy with China in order to lessen the fears of China-skeptics and at the same time maximize the benefits of collaborating with China as proposed by the China-optimists.

Literature Review

Historical links between China and Africa

The presence of a contemporary Sino dash to Africa is widely negated by historians. Historians alike view China as a nation that was present in Africa as early as the 19th Century. China, a country that also experienced the horrors of colonial exploitation, was a major partner and supporter of African liberation movements to help usher in a new independent Africa (Dijk, 2009, p.9). China's historical links to Africa also manifested in the cold war era. At the height of the cold war, China, under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, funded infrastructure developments on the continent when capitalist regimes in the Western world turned their backs on socialist Africa (Dijk, 2009, p.10). The construction of the Bequela railway in Angola and the TAZARA railway in Tanzania in the 1960s with funding from China are additional standing examples presented to prove China's historical presence in Africa. However, while there is proof of historic links between China and Africa, it is important to note that China, as it mutates into a global superpower today, is fast-tracking its presence in Africa. As a result, it is outcompeting the previously dominant foreign forces in Africa. China, for example, boosted its trade with Africa by 130% between 2000 and 2010, thereby surpassing the United States as Africa's leading trade partner with-

in a space of only ten years (Winton, 2013, p.100). Therefore, while China and Africa have a history together, it is noticeable that present-day China is dashing to Africa.

Understanding China's role in Africa requires one to categorize China into two groups of actors: the state and non-state actors (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 112). State actors refers to China's players in Africa that are under the direct control of the government of China, for example state owned enterprises (SOEs) and the government itself. On the other hand, the non-state actors are the Chinese players, typically private businesses that are doing business in Africa. While these two main actors originate from the same country, China, their actions and intentions in Africa are distinct and at times conflicting (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 100). Because of this, opinions about China in Africa vary (Edoho, 2014, p. 110). A Chinese actor one chooses to investigate will draw a different conclusion as to whether China's dash to Africa should be welcomed with optimism or skepticism.

Analysts that focus on investigating the Chinese state actors normally arrive at a positive conclusion that China is not a threat to Africa, thus yielding optimism (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 111). The Chinese government, which is the leading state actor, has strategic geopolitical and economic interests in Africa and as such aims to sustain a long-term relationship with Africa. China has advanced soft loans to African governments, which has helped in development of infrastructure (Dijk, 2009, p.10). That aside, the Chinese government's first foreign military base is located in Djibouti, a country located in the horn of Africa. The aim of its establishment

was to combat Al-Shabaab militants and pirates operating in the Indian Ocean. These pirates intercept merchandise and thus are a source for insecurity in the region, which hampers trade. With China's military base present in the area, security has improved.

In addition to this, China has maintained a non-interference stance into internal affairs of African states (Tull, 2006, p. 459). This is in line with Article 2 (7) of the United Nations Charter, which stipulates that a state shall not interfere into the internal matters of another state (United Nations, 1945). This is particularly important because a number of foreign donors to Africa normally advance conditional aid that stipulates how African governments should run their states. An example is the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP's) guidelines, which are issued by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as a condition for loan advancements (International Monetary Fund, 2019). SAPs coerced African nations to privatize their national assets of which some, if not most, were acquired by wealthy western companies (Shah, 2013). Critics suggest that these SAPs were aimed at making Western powers gain control of African state enterprises. With this background of interference by foreign powers, China-optimists argue that China is a better partner for Africa. To sum up, the emergence of China as a major partner to Africa has diminished the unilaterality of Africa dealing solely with western powers (Edoho, 2014, pp. 120-121). Today, African governments have the liberty to choose from a variety of donors or partners.

On the other hand, analysts that focus on investigating China's non-state actors in

Africa often emerge with anti-China sentiments. This is so because, unlike the Chinese state that has long-term interests in Africa, Chinese private businesses have a short-term interest of profit maximization (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 113). Chinese private contractors work on a number of infrastructure projects in Africa funded by the Government of China. These contractors choose to hire mainly fellow Chinese people (Zhao, 2014, pp. 1043-1044), which turns out to be problematic given the fact that youth unemployment is rather high amongst Africans. When Chinese businesses choose not to hire Africans, negative sentiments are bound to arise. In addition to this, there is an issue of "dumping." Dumping is an economic term which refers to a situation in international trade where the exporter (Chinese businesses) lower the price of their goods to unfairly compete with local goods produced by the importer (Africa) (Barone, 2019). Dumping of Chinese goods on African markets makes locally produced goods lose market value, which leads to African businesses suffering losses (In On Africa, 2014, p. 1). That aside, Chinese private businesses, in the search for precious natural resources, forego set international environmental protection standards (French, 2007, p. 130). The disregard for the environment as Chinese business focus on hunting for raw material is unprecedented, according to China-skeptics (French, 2007, p. 130). From this, it is clear that there is a contradiction between the Chinese state actions and non-state actors' actions. The fact that it is these Chinese private businesses that are on the ground in Africa, makes them a significant determinant of the impres-

sion people hold towards China as a whole.

This divergence between the role played by China's state and China's non-state actors cultivates distinct conclusions as to whether China is a friend or foe to Africa. Depending on which angle one chooses to digest the implication of China's presence in Africa, the results are bound to differ (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 100). The position of President Xi Jinping's government is predominately one of close long-term cooperation with Africa in the fields of geopolitics and economy. China needs Africa as much as Africa needs China. However, since the Chinese government relies on Chinese private businesses to foster this cooperation between the two regions, negative sentiments towards China in Africa erupt as these Chinese private state actors carry out their sole goal of profit maximization with little regard towards the feelings and wants of Africans.

Research Methodology

In order to address the negative feelings towards China, a deeper analysis of China's presence is necessary to better understand the areas in which China has interests in Africa. The research carried out therefore seeks answers as to whether China is interested in Africa, and if yes, which sectors China is interested in. The first research question, therefore, is, "Is China really scrambling

for Africa?" This research question necessitates presenting data that unearths the scale of China's presence in Africa in comparison with other foreign actors. The paper will study data trends of China-Africa trade, foreign direct investments' (FDIs') inflow from China in comparison with other foreign actors present in Africa. This will validate the hypothesis that China is interested in Africa.

Upon reaching a consensus that China is or has been penetrating Africa historically for some time, the second part of analysis will seek to answer the second research question—"What sectors, in Africa, does China have vested interested?" To answer that question, the balance and composition of trade between Africa and China will be accessed. As a sum-up, research data is presented to illustrate which Chinese actor, state or non-state, is the most active on ground in Africa.

Research Question 1:

Is China really shifting focus to Africa?

Trade with Africa: China vs United States.

The graph on the next page illustrates the comparison between U.S-Africa and China-Africa total trade volume between 2000 and 2013. The United States was Africa's major trade partner since 2000 until it was overtaken by China in 2009 as illustrated in graph 1. Today, China stands as Africa's leading trade partner.

Graph 1



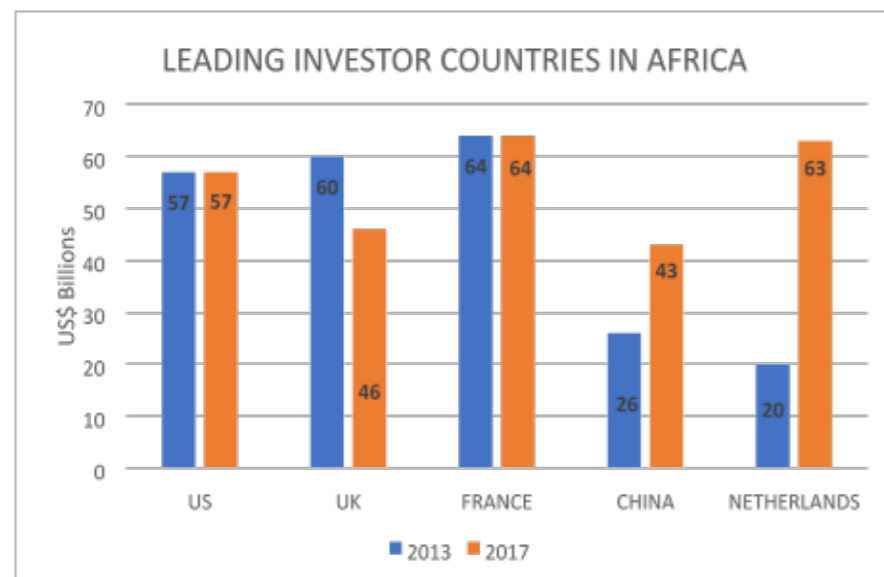
Retrieved by: Yun (2014) as cited in U.S.Census Bureau and Global Trade Atlas (2014).

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa: The Big five.

FDI, in this context, refers to investments made by foreign countries in Africa. FDI is a common benchmark used to find out which foreign countries have economic interests in a given region. Graph 2, retrieved from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, represents the total FDI

investments of Africa’s top five foreign investors as of 2013 and 2017. According to graph 2, among Africa’s top 5 investor countries, China does not compete favorably as it lags behind four other nations. However, the growth of China’s investment figure in Africa rose by 65%, an increase greater than the other nations apart from Netherlands, which sharply increased its investment by 215%.

Graph 2



Data Retrieved from: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2019)

Interpretation of Research Question 1

The quantitative data on trade and FDI tabulated in Graph 1 and 2 respectively illustrate a sudden increment in Chinese interests in Africa. While this is not enough to conclude that China has a firm grip on the continent, it is safe to state that, with increasing Chinese interests in Africa, the China-Africa bond is strengthening.

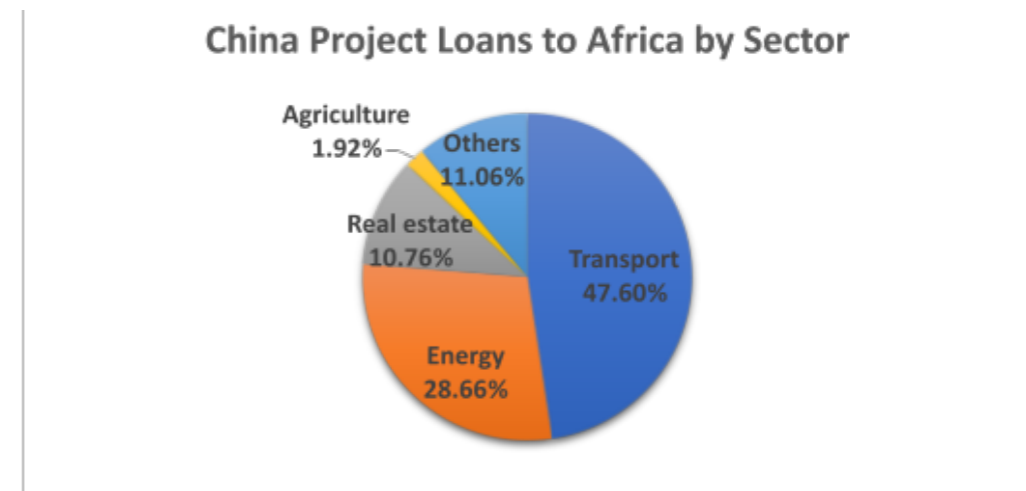
Research Question 2: What sectors, in Africa, does China have vested interested in?

The following section will conduct a deeper analysis of China’s activities in Africa, seeking to identify whether China’s eco-

nomic activities with Africa positively contribute to sustainable development in Africa.

China’s Sectoral loan advancements to Africa. As highlighted earlier, China is advancing a good amount of loans to Africa to finance different projects. Chart 1 gives an in-depth look into how the loans are appropriated across different sectors in Africa. Based on the information mapped by the chart, close to half of what is loaned to Africa is spent in the transportation sector, which entails road, port and railway construction. That aside, a quarter of the loans from China are spent in the Energy sector which includes oil refineries, dams, and power stations.

Chart 1



Data Retrieved from: American Enterprise Institute (2018)

Balance of China-Africa trade.

While Graph 1 focuses on China trade with Africa, Graph 3 gives a deeper perspective of how much Africa earns from trading with China. Graph 3 trade data suggests that Africa has a trade deficit with China. This means that China earns more income than Africa from bi-lateral trade exchanges. Between 2017 and 2018 alone,

there was a widening trade deficit as China sells more goods to Africa than it buys from Africa. Nonetheless, sustaining this bi-lateral trade is of paramount significance because Africa, however little the income, still earns from trading with China. Africa, within one year, increased its exports to China, thus reducing the trade imbalance between the two regions to US \$5 billion.

Graph 3



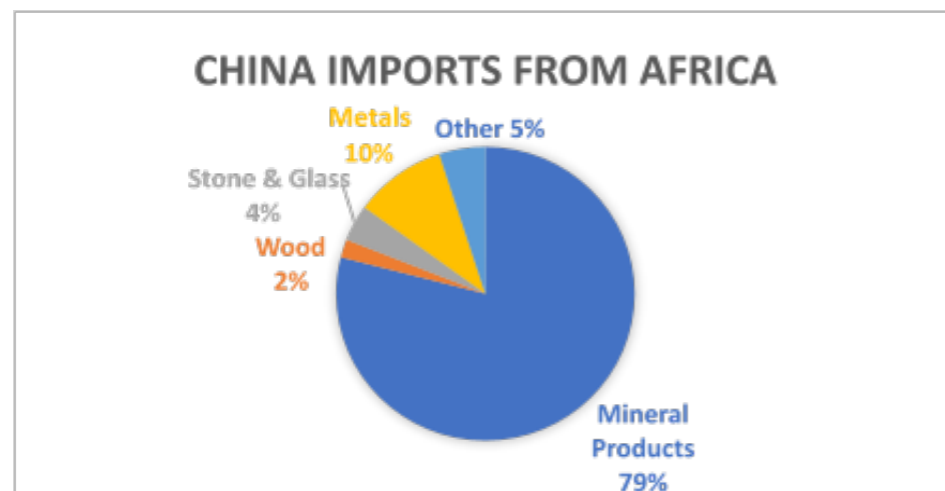
Data Retrieved from: Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China (2018)

Composition of Trade:
China's Imports from Africa.

Chart 2 amplifies which type of goods China is purchasing from Africa. China's

primary focus is importation of Africa's mineral resources. These resources come from a select few mineral-rich African countries as opposed to coming from the entire continent.

Chart 2



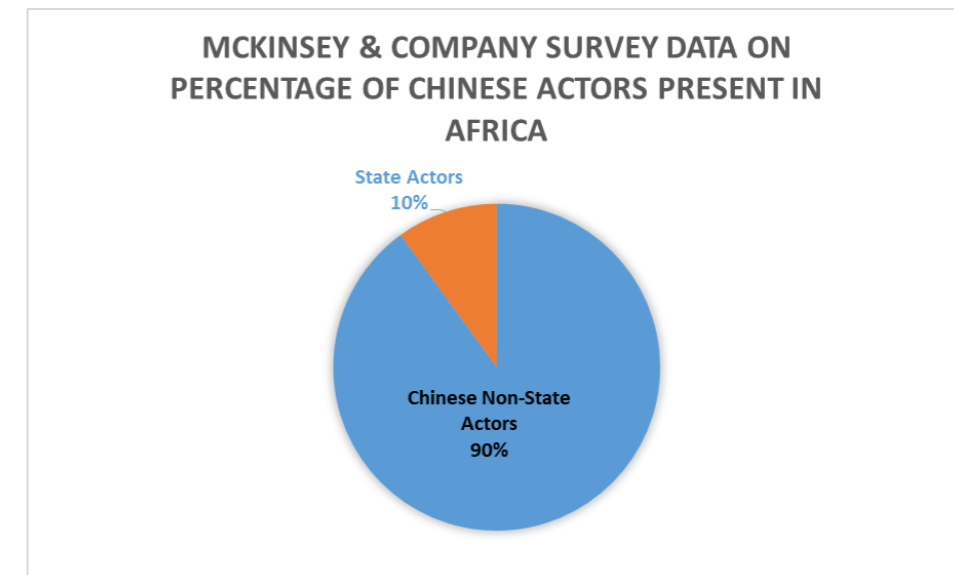
Data Retrieved from: Africa Research Initiative (2012)

The China actors:

Who is responsible for China's moves in Africa? At this stage, it is important to investigate which particular Chinese actors are responsible for the groundwork Chi-

na is doing in Africa. The data retrieved by McKinsey & Company on the fieldwork it carried out in Africa points to the fact that it is mainly China's non-state actors directly engaging with Africa (Jayaram, Kassiri, Sun (2017) as shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3



Data Retrieved from: McKinsey & Company (2017)

Interpretation of Research Question 2

The data collected clearly illustrates a sharp interest China has for Africa's mineral resources. Loans advanced by China to Africa are channeled to access mineral and energy resources. The Transportation sector, a major recipient of Chinese loans, is a vehicle to reach mineral deposits in remote African regions. That aside, as the China-Africa trade volumes expand, China will continue to acquire Africa's mineral resources. African countries, without a large stock of mineral deposits, may not necessarily reap benefits from expanding China-Africa bi-lateral trade volumes. Incidentally, the Chinese state accounts for little when it gets to direct engagement with Africa as it is the non-state

actors taking up most initiatives in Africa.

Discussion & Argument

China: A colonizer?

Firstly, it is important to note that China's "grip of Africa" is partly inspired by the West, which views China as a threat to its values (Hirono & Suzuki, 2014, pp. 443-461). This is so because the investment data indicator points to the fact that China does not have the highest economic interests in Africa. In fact, it is France with the largest investments in Africa. In addition to that, the Netherlands is the nation rapidly increasing its investments in Africa. The Netherlands grew its investment in Africa to be almost twice as much as China between 2013

and 2017 alone. This raises a question. Why is negative criticism of “China’s grip on Africa” more audible? There is one argument to respond to this question. It is probable that criticism against China in Africa, which is aired in the media, largely owned by the West, is not entirely about what wrongs it is doing in Africa; rather, it is inspired by the wider global discourse about China challenging the Western world as global powerhouse (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 106). Therefore, China, according to data availed, is not necessarily aiming at having a firm grip on Africa.

Stakes are higher for mineral rich African countries.

In contrast, China is in Africa primarily for mineral resources to get raw material that will enable production, which will give its economy a boost. This is evident if one analyzes the loan advancement and trade indicators. The energy sector, which partly comprises natural resources, is a major recipient of loans advanced from China to Africa as shown in Chart 1 above. On top of that, minerals are also a medium through which Africa pays back loans from China. For resource backed deals, Africa gets monetary assistance and has to pay it back with mineral resources (Nyabiage, 2019, p. 3). When it comes to trade activity, China is mainly importing mineral resources from Africa.

It is evident that the common denominator in the China-Africa relationship is natural resources. At this point, it is safe to change the statement from “China’s dash to Africa” to “China’s dash for Africa’s mineral resources”. Upon uncovering this fact, it is safe to state that China’s activi-

ties are largely concentrated in mineral rich African countries because not all African countries have a large stock of minerals.

China seeks a number of natural resources from Africa, for example, iron ore and diamond. However, crude oil is the major mineral China seeks in Africa. This oil is processed to make fuels essential in the production process of industrious China. China gets 30% of its oil from Africa (Poplak, 2011, pp. 1-2). Of this 30%, the majority of it, 70%, comes from only four African countries, namely Angola, South Africa, Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (Winton, 2013, p. 101). Surprisingly enough, these four African nations also double as the largest consumers of Chinese loans. As the number of activities between Africa and China continue to grow, these four nations are bound to feel China’s presence more compared to the other 49 African countries. There is already concern about China’s disregard for the environment as Chinese companies (non-state actors) excavate minerals from African soil. In addition to that, China’s non-state actors doing work in these mineral rich countries usually hire Chinese people in strategic management positions. Furthermore, Chinese non-state actors purchase most of the products they use during projects from China (Kai-Chen, 2016, p. 109). As a result, African locals in these mineral rich countries do not benefit in terms of employment, technical skills development, nor sales of their local products.

Recommendations

Creating a better China-Africa partnership

To this point, this paper has established the three following points:

- China’s main goal is seeking African minerals.
- Four African countries with large mineral deposits, especially crude oil, are more exposed to the risk of a mismanaged relationship with China.
- Mainly for-profit Chinese businesses (non-state actors) peddle negative criticism against China.

In order to improve China-Africa relations, the above points are essential guides to make recommendations.

This paper will make recommendations based on “Agenda 2063.” The Agenda points out environmental conservation, human capital development, and a reduction in foreign aid dependence as key pillars of achieving a desirable Africa by 2063 (African Union, 2015). The recommendations suggested below encourage African governments, particularly the mineral rich African states, to observe these principles in order to cause sustainable development and a better friendship with China. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Mineral rich African countries ought to ensure that China’s operations in their territories observe international environmental standards. This enables the birth of sustainable communities for future generations. China’s non-state actors that do not pass this benchmark should have contracts terminated. By doing this, China’s image would be improved, as it would not be negatively tainted by Chinese businesses seeking short-term profits especially because China seeks long-term cooperation with Africa.

2. Mineral rich African countries could legislate a quota on the number of Chinese allowed to work on different projects in order to give room for employment of locals. This would ensure skills acquisitions by locals underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation essential for upping productivity in Africa.
3. Lastly and most importantly, the China-Africa loan advancement scheme should be aimed at ensuring that Africa, in the end, takes full control of financing its own budget as opposed to continuous relying on foreign aid, as is the case today. A self-sustaining Africa should be the end goal.

Conclusion

China requires natural resources, particularly crude oil, to fuel its economic growth. Butler (2019) argues that, “Oil has become inseparable from economic activity and is essential to satisfying the consumer needs of China’s growing middle class” (p. 2). China—the world’s largest importer of crude oil—is mainly increasing its presence in Africa to access this natural mineral partly because its major supplier, the Middle East region, is facing instability due to the on-going Iran-U.S economic war. This is a major reason behind China’s dash to Africa. Therefore, it is misleading to suggest that the Chinese government intends to assert a colonial-like strong hold on Africa. However, it is important to note that China’s non-state actors, driven by short-term profit-making motives in mineral rich African countries, pose a substantial threat to the China-Africa relation-

ship. China's search for natural resources should neither debt-trap Africa nor negatively impact the environment. In addition, Chinese firms ought not to neglect Africans' quest for employment opportunities. Since African governments are the custodians of Africans' interests, they ought to pave better pathways for the Sino-Afro engagement. With the guidance of recommendations highlighted herein, African governments could enact the same to give birth to self-reliant Africa and a sustainable mutual-beneficial friendship with China.

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Possibility of Female Migration Stimulated by Education for Socio-Economic Development in Zimbabwe

Hana Tomioka

Hana Tomioka is a senior student majoring in Global Studies. Her essay “Possibility of Female Migration Stimulated by Education for Socio-Economic Development in Zimbabwe” was submitted in the Global Studies Capstone Seminar under the supervision of Professor Satoko Horii at AIU. Her interest is in social development, especially focusing on the evolution of developing countries from political, cultural, geographical, and socio-economic perspectives. After studying in the U.K. about the relationship between migration and social development in Sub-Saharan Africa, she became interested in multidisciplinary approach to the complex issues in social development. As for Tomioka’s future research endeavors, she would like to combine her studies with other related subjects such as history and anthropology, acquiring a broader understanding of the challenges that the country faces.

1. Introduction

Africa is a region of immense diversity in terms of history, culture, colonial experience, socio-political systems, economy, population size, ecology, and patterns of development. Countries in the continent are often argued to be underdeveloped. However, looking at the street view of Harare, a capital city of Zimbabwe, for instance, there are skyscrapers, advanced transportation systems, and business-people coming and going to the city centre. Zimbabwe is a Southern African country with approximately 13.5 million people. With the rapid growth of its economy, Zimbabwe has been capturing the global attention of development stud-

ies. Many critical development studies have highlighted the increasing number of immigrants after the independence of Zimbabwe, rising literacy rates, and increasing of labour population. The majority of the existing research focused on the socio-economic development driven by males, reflecting the traditional gender disparities within the nation. However, few of them focused on the linkage between women’s education and increasing female migrants, or the female migrants’ contribution to the socio-economic development in Zimbabwe. In fact, currently, Zimbabwe is the largest country of emigration in the region (Crush, Dodson & Tevera, 2017), and more females than ever are mi-

grating and breaking away from male-dominant traditions. Therefore, this paper set the research question: “what is the contribution of educated female labour migrants to the socio-economic development in Zimbabwe?” hypothesizing that educating women encourages them to voluntarily migrate and that the migration enhances the socio-economic development in Zimbabwe through remittances and skills acquisitions in labour markets.

By studying the intertwined relationship among gender disparities, education, and migration in Zimbabwe, this paper argues that the education empowers women to overcome the traditional gender disparities in Zimbabwe by challenging the gender roles within households, and pushes them to migrate, which ultimately stimulates socio-economic development through remittances, and skills and knowledge acquisitions. The study was entirely based on existing studies conducted by qualified researchers. In addition, to examine the migration behaviour, education levels, and gender issues in Zimbabwe more in detail, this paper referred to the data provided by the United Nations and its relevant agencies. This research will help fulfill the gender gap in education by emphasizing the significant contribution of female migrants who have received an education. This study also provides a key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

2. Literature Review

2-1. Defining the Key Term, “Socio-Economic Development” within the Context of Zimbabwe

Socio-economic development is often defined as a state in which people’s lifestyles are improved through improved infrastructure, skills, technologies, health care, nutrition, education, incomes, and employment. It is measurable with indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), literacy rate, life expectancy, employment rate, improvements of poverty reduction, and income levels per capita (Cortina & Ochoa-Reza, 2013; Lucas, 2004; McGranagan, 2971; Rontos & Vavouras, 2018). In addition to those criteria, the Human Development Index (HDI) is often referred to when discussing a nation’s development, which assesses the quality of healthy life, standard of living, and access to education (UNDP, 2019). In the case of Zimbabwe, the country ranked in 150th out of 189 countries is categorized as medium human development (UNDP, 2019).

At the governmental level, infrastructure is often regarded as one of the major aspects that contribute to a country’s socio-economic development and per capita growth with its role to support sustained functionality of households and business sectors. Concerning the current state of Zimbabwe’s overall infrastructure, the country ranks among the highest in relatively low-income countries in Africa. However, focusing on water supply and sanitation in rural areas in Zimbabwe, for example, only 31% of the rural population can access improved latrines, and the rest of them are dependent on springs

and wells. In other words, many of the rural Zimbabweans are still exposed to unsafe sanitation (Pushak & Briceno-Garmendia, 2011). The situation turned worse over the last 15 to 20 years because of the soaring price of ingredients for latrines. In terms of roads, Zimbabwe has intended to extend its road networks to play a key role as a transit country in regional trade with neighbouring countries such as Botswana and Zambia, and expand paved roads across the country. However, the quality of most roads has deteriorated over the last two decades; approximately 65% of roads require reconstruction (Pushak & Briceno-Garmendia, 2011).

At the individual household and national’s level, various criteria are applicable such as educational attainment, life expectancy, employment rate, or per capita income level. Although conventional studies have assessed a nation’s socio-economic development with those criteria, they are complex, impractical to evaluate, and may lead to contradictory research results in this study. Since each study needs to assess development in its context, this paper applies more cogent concepts that focus on gender disparities, individual households’ economic levels, and labour market: gender inequalities and the level of women’s empowerment within Zimbabwean society and education, poverty levels at individual households, and employment experience.

2-2. Zimbabwean Women in Households, Society, Labour Market, and Education

Gender inequality is one of the major issues of social development in Zimbabwe. The gaps are attributed to tradition, culture, social norms, and colonial history in Zim-

babwe. On the one hand, males have been expected to engage in paid-employment and become bread-winners. On the other hand, most females have stayed in the kitchen and farms in rural households. Focusing on the employment market, for instance, although the gap between male and female workers is currently narrowing, 85.0% for males and 73.8% for females, there remains more than a 10% difference (World Bank, 2020). Regarding the female working population rate targeting age 15 to 24, although the rate has decreased compared with that 30 years ago, still 62.3% of young females are in employment (World Bank, 2020). That is, when females are in their late teens and early twenties, they are supposed to work rather than study at schools.

In terms of education, gender discriminative perspectives and difficulties in physical access to schools are also the major obstacles to equal educational opportunities in Zimbabwe. Although the females’ literacy rate in Zimbabwe reaches approximately 96% and is comparatively higher among other sub-Saharan African countries, the rate that girls drop out of school remains as high as 54% while that of males is 44% (UNESCO, 2015). Particularly, although 90 % of female Zimbabweans complete primary education and there is almost no gap between boys and girls, which is slightly higher than that of males, only 69 % of girls complete lower secondary education (UNESCO, 2015). Moreover, regarding upper secondary education, as few as 11% of females graduate from the school. UNDP (2019) supports this series of data by indicating that although the expected years of schooling in Zimbabwe is

10 years, females on average finish schooling in 7.6 years while males finish in 9.0 years. The major difficulties for girls in accessing full education are, for example, poverty, early marriages, and pregnancies, sanitation issues at schools, or religious, cultural, and traditional beliefs (Kanyenze & Kondo, 2011). Especially in Zimbabwe, there are structured gender discriminations in the whole society, which often emerges in rural areas; for example, some rural parents believe that spending on their daughters for education is a waste of resources as they will ultimately engage in households when they marry (Mawere, 2012). Another misbelief is that the ability to read and write in daily life proves a girl educated enough. In other words, some parents assume that special knowledge is not necessary for females. (Mawere, 2012; ZIMBABWE: Thousands of girls forced out of education, 2011). Particularly focusing on the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of educational attainment, while almost 100% of urban students complete primary education, 85% of urban children graduate from primary schools regardless of their genders (UNESCO, 2015). Besides, only half of them complete lower secondary education, while 88% of urban children can finish it (UNESCO, 2015). More importantly, approximately 10% of rural Zimbabwean children never attend schools (UNESCO, 2015). As a result, those girls who have dropped out or who never study at schools are constrained in employment in informal sectors (Adepoiu, 2008).

2-3. Migration

2-3-1. Background: changing patterns of migration in Zimbabwe

Since Zimbabwe achieved its independence in 1980, the number of Zimbabweans who have traveled from Zimbabwe to Southern Africa seeking employment has increased. The background factor was the relocation of European-owned lands fostered by the governments' programme, which resulted in the loss of farms and mass migration from rural to urban areas within the country (Crush & Tevera, 2006). The internal travel fostered further migration both from rural to urban within Zimbabwe and from rural to another Southern African country. Consequently, Zimbabwe has come to the top net sending country between 2000 to 2020, with 121,000 emigrants among sub-Saharan African countries (UN, 2019). Although until currently, most of Zimbabwean migrants were male. As a current trend, however, the number of female migrants has increased. Conventionally, Zimbabwean females had intentionally chosen not to leave their homes for fear of unsafe, long journeys (Kane & Leedy, 2013); they were more vulnerable than males in terms of risks and challenges such as discrimination, sexual abuse, violence, and physical health (Caritas Internationalis, 2004). Even when women migrated, it was simply for a family reunion (Adepoiu, 2008), and they were still dependent on their family members and husbands for household incomes. However, as more women out of urban cities have received secondary education, the number of women who move to the cities has increased in search of better

employment (Gugler & Gudrun, 1995; Hiralal, 2015). Consequently, approximately 45 percent of recent Zimbabwean migrants are independent women (Crush & Tawodzera, 2016). As more women replace men within their households and become breadwinners, feminization in Zimbabwean migration challenges the conventional gender disparities and empowers migrant women to obtain independence, confidence, and freedom over decisions within families (Mbiyozo, 2018).

In addition to feminization, more and more Zimbabweans from poor households are migrating. At the same time, most of them are experiencing intra-African migration, specifically to Southern Sub-Saharan African countries. Dzingirai et al. (2015) have found that the majority of Zimbabwean migrants are from households that live below the food poverty line. Indeed, poverty is currently a serious issue in Zimbabwe; 62.6% of the population are below the poverty threshold, and 16.2% are in extreme poverty (UNDP, 2015). For economically poor migrants, migrating to Southern Sub-Saharan African countries saves the travel costs, and provides better employment opportunities and living conditions (Hiralal, 2015). Concerning the family ties of migrants, approximately 80% of emigrants from Zimbabwe maintain regular contact with their families at home, and almost 60% of Zimbabwean migrants send remittances to support their family incomes. Along with financial support, they also provide other material support such as clothes or food (Hungwe, 2017).

2-3-2. Migration in socio-economic development: pros and cons

The role of migration in terms of socio-economic development in the developing world is often at the centre of discussions in development studies because the consequence of migration is a double-edged sword. Major positive results brought by migration are economic stimulation through remittances, brain gain, alleviation of pressures on labour markets and reduced unemployment rate, and more intimate links among sending and receiving countries. All of the positive aspects of migration contribute to reducing poverty (Masunungure & Shumba, 2014). The most notable and influential aspect among them is the positive socio-economic development facilitated by remittances from migrants to their home countries. It not only provides financial support to migrants' families but also stimulates the economy of the sending country. At the household level, remittances are a major source of income, especially for poor and vulnerable households. Additionally, for low-income families, remittances help them recover from unexpected crises (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005). At the national level, recently remittances have contributed a 10% increase in national annual incomes in a number of countries (Beath, Goldin, & Reinert, 2009). Remittances connect countries and therefore costs for the transactions will decrease (Docquire, Lohest, & Marfouk, 2007). It turns easy for migrants to send money to their homes and more remittances are expected to be sent. Besides, Masunungure and Shumba (2014) have found that during the global financial crisis in 2008, "[r]emittances have remained

more resilient relative to other categories of resource flows to developing countries and have thus become more important as a source of external financing in many developing countries” (p. 176). When more money is sent, banks and other financial institutions can gain new customers for their business with remittance services (Gruescu, 2010). Thus, remittances are argued to contribute to the socio-economic development in the sending countries. Along with the remittance, brain gain is another expected beneficial result in human capital. Brain gain is more likely to happen with low-skilled workers. It provides the home country with improved and new technology, skills, education, and knowledge, although there seems to be no research data that present Zimbabwean migrants’ contribution to Zimbabwe’s skills and technology improvement. To maximize the benefits of brain gain, a group of migrants must effectively use their newly gained skills, knowledge, and education when they returned to their homes (Hart, 2009).

Despite the positive aspects of migration, there are several counterarguments toward them: negative results produced by remittances, decrease in the productive population, rejection of migrants in host countries, and limited opportunities to migrate for the poor. Although the potential of remittances for home’ countries’ socio-economic development, there are several missing points that are significant to consider but not have been addressed by most of the existing studies in detail; remittances can cause the economic dependency of immigrants’ family members (Sirkeci, Cohen, & Ratha, 2012). When considering sustainable development in the

contemporary context where sustainability matters, the economic independence of migrants’ families should be maintained. Furthermore, remittances are beneficial to home countries at a national level only when the money is sent through the formal financial sectors such as banks. Indeed, the situation is opposite in most cases and migrants send remittances through informal sectors because the informal financial sectors often offer the service more quickly with lower transfer fees (UN WOMEN, 2017); therefore, informal remittance channels are more attractive to the poor migrants who cannot afford formal remittance networks (Dzingirai et al, 2014). Within the informal sector, the majority of senders rely on their acquaintances or relatives rather than commercial companies, which produces distinct forms of informal sectors (Bracking & Sachikonye, 2006). Bracking and Sachikonye (2006) argue that the distinct forms “in turn relate to the social positioning of recipients, and feed into political economies of corruption, collapse, rentierism and externalization of funds in failing states” (p. 27). In other words, the remittances out of formal channels limit the potential of remittances (Maphosa, 2007). Therefore, remittances are not always advantageous for home countries’ development.

Another negative consequence of migration is brain drain or decrease in the population of productive ages in sending countries. In terms of skilled migrants, especially focusing on Zimbabwe, both push and pull factors result in brain drain; push factors are, for example, declining currency rates and unsatisfactory employment opportunities, while pull factors are better educa-

tion opportunities, and attractive salaries or working conditions (Brock & Blake, 2015). Brain drain is a serious issue in Zimbabwe today, particularly among medical workers. In Zimbabwe, a number of medical staff such as doctors, nurses, or technicians travel to another Southern African country seeking better working conditions or payments. The shortage of those workers has resulted in the government’s cut in health care expenditure. Therefore, the price of drugs and medical services has risen drastically and been unaffordable for more families (Kanyenze & Kondo, 2011). Based on this fact, one can argue that brain drain negatively influences not only a nation’s skilled worker population but also, in Zimbabwe’s case, the quality of public health care services.

Regarding the negative views of migration from the perspectives of the locals of host countries, there has been a conservative belief that immigrants steal their jobs or negatively influence the economy of the host society, which leads to racism and xenophobia toward immigrants and causes integration difficulties and friction within their local environment. The results of the empirical research conducted by Bakewell and Landau (n.d.) reveal that even if migrants acquire citizenship certificates, those certifications do not necessarily translate into inclusion or belonging. In other words, the genuine meaning of integration is far more complex, and integration issues among African migrants and the local people of host countries remain under debate. However, several studies have proved that the impacts of immigrants on the labour market are extremely small and that they do not influence the native popula-

tion; rather, immigration is more beneficial than harmful in many cases (Docquire, Lohest, & Marfouk, 2007). Despite this finding, xenophobia and friction between the local population and immigrants can easily happen, resulting in the unexpected early return of migrants to their homes before they gain any skills or education. In addition to those negative perspectives, migration is often regarded as cost-demanding, especially for the poor. This is true because those who attempt to emigrate need to pay high prices for passports and legal permission on migration together with the remittance charge when wishing to financially support families (Murrugarra, Larrison & Sasin, 2010). Therefore, countries must lower costs and expand opportunities for migration in order that the countries enhance migration. For example, countries can lower the migration cost by negotiating bilateral migration agreements. New Zealand and several Pacific Island countries, for example, have agreed to provide the seasonal worker program to work in New Zealand with lower charges (Murrugarra, Larrison & Sasin, 2010).

2-3-3. Impact of migration on individual and national economic levels, livelihoods, and employment

As examined in the last part about the negative aspects of migration, especially about the mobility out of Zimbabwe, it is necessary to explore the potential impacts of migration in more detail, specifically for labour purposes. IOM (2018) argues the impact of migration on individual and national economic levels, livelihoods, and employment. At the national level, the sending country

can promote transnational loans and mutual funds through the bilateral connections between the sending and receiving countries if the country's access to the international capital market is limited. In the case of Zimbabwe, the country is ranked 132nd out of 144 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index report in 2012-2013 (African Development Bank Group, 2013). In other words, Zimbabwe's economic competitiveness is still weak in the world; therefore, migration can boost the country's economy by strengthening bilateral relations. More importantly, focusing on the increasing number of female voluntary migrants, IOM (2018) asserts that the feminization of migration can contribute to the economy at both national and individual levels. According to IOM (2018), female migrants send more money more frequently to their homes than male migrants, and thus, migration can "enable women to construct secure livelihoods despite restrictive conditions in the country of origin" (IOM, 2018, p. 54). IOM's research has revealed that there is a positive linkage between remittances and individual consumption, education, health, welfare, poverty alleviation, and risk mitigation. For instance, a recent study has confirmed that the living conditions or economic levels of households with migrants are better than those without migrants, because of the financial support of remittances (Crush, Chikanda & Tawodzera, 2012). Another example is, regarding poverty alleviation, Adams and Page (2003) have proved that remittances mitigated the poverty in 71 developing countries, including Zimbabwe, by 3.5% on average. However, the relationship between

remittances and extremely poor households has not been researched in depth. In terms of emigration for employment, it has been almost impossible to track Zimbabwean emigrants' employment at destinations due to practical difficulties. However, clearly, not all the Zimbabwean emigrants can engage in the formal sector employment; rather, they are often employed in informal sectors or informalized sections of formal sectors (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

3. Results and Analysis

3-1. Zimbabwean Females: Education, Employment, and Migration

3-1-1. Gender disparities

The research revealed that Zimbabwean females underwent disadvantageous experience within households, education, and employment because of the traditional gender perspective and social norms within Zimbabwean society. The traditional view had expected the gender roles; while males were supposed to work outside for family incomes, females were to stay homes and engage in housework. The view also discriminated against women in education. Although the gap between males and females in education was filled compared with the situation a few decades ago, and the gender gap between boys and girls at the primary level was close to zero (UNESCO, 2015), girls were still forced to drop out of school. Zimbabwe marked almost 90% of girls' attendance in primary schools, yet, 54% of them drop out of school, which was 10% higher than boys' (UNESCO, 2015). There were various factors for the gender gap in education, such as traditional views toward

gender and education (Mawere, 2012; ZIMBABWE: Thousands of girls forced out of education, 2011), traditional culture as presented by early marriage and early pregnancy (Kanyenze & Kondo, 2011), or poverty issues at individual household levels. Looking at the female working population, 62.3% of females aged 15 to 24 were working (World Bank, 2020). Since only the data of females was available, the research could not compare and contrast with that of males. However, considering the schooling ages which were mostly from 6 or 7 to late teens or early twenties, obviously, more than half of Zimbabwean girls dropped out of school, or did not go to school at all. Those females who did not receive education, on the one hand, were more likely to engage in employment in informal sectors. On the other hand, those who received were more likely to obtain opportunities for employment in formal sectors and better living standards. This gap in educational attainment was linked not only to their future career and living conditions but also to the poverty cycle. The poverty cycle created another gap in their children's education due to the households' lower incomes and economic vulnerability (Adepoiu, 2008). Therefore, gender disparities within Zimbabwean society produced female's vulnerable conditions by leading females to lower attendance in schools, vulnerability in employment, and lower incomes.

3-1-2. Intertwining relationship between women's education and migration

The series of existing research has proved that education was a catalyst for female migration and empowerment for Zimbabwean

women. Education provided Zimbabwean females with more opportunities and options in terms of employment and living conditions outside of Zimbabwe. Females who received education presented more tendency to migrate seeking employment opportunities to urban areas within or outside of Zimbabwe (Gugler & Gudrun, 1995; Hiralal, 2015). In addition, the change in migration destination turned migration more accessible to females. Most of the female migrants traveled to another sub-Saharan African country, especially the southern part, because of its proximity and lower travel costs. Thus, considering the feminization of emigration in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean education improved both qualitatively and quantitatively, one could surmise the positive interlinkage between education and migration. Moreover, the increased educational opportunities among women proved the changing roles among genders within individual households. Recently, there have been more women who were the main wage earners, which was demonstrated by the increasing number of independent female Zimbabwean migrants (Crush & Tawodzera, 2016). Therefore, with the positive linkage between education and migration among females, women's education provides them with not only wider choices of employment and their own lives but also the confidence to challenge the gender disparities within Zimbabwean society (Mbiyozo, 2018).

However, to maximize the positive effect of education on females' migration, mitigation of gender inequalities should be prioritized. As several research results have revealed, there remain gender dis-

criminations against women, which prevented them from studying at schools, or forced them to drop out of school. For example, in the case of poor households, parents chose not to allow their children to go to school but to ask them to work for households. Even educated female migrants were still vulnerable in terms of employment, sexual abuses, violence, and gender discriminations (Caritas Internationalis, 2004; Crush & Tawodzera, 2016; Kane & Leedy, 2013). The research confirmed that social development issues including education need a comprehensive approach.

3-2. Migration Contribution to Socio-Economic Development in Zimbabwe

3-2-1. Benefits at an individual household level

The existing research examined in the last section argued that, at an individual household level, the major beneficial consequence was brought by remittances to migrants' families in home countries. Concerning remittances sent to home countries, as a negative result, migrants' families became highly dependent on remitted money for their household incomes (Sirkeci, Cohen, & Ratha, 2012). This tendency was clearer among poor households. The research presented, however, that a household with migrant(s) were better-off than that without migrant(s) (Crush, Chikanda & Tawodzera, 2012). There was a study result that remittances alleviated poverty by 3.5% on average in 71 developing countries including Zimbabwe (Adams and Page, 2003), and increased national annual incomes by 10% on average (Beath, Goldin, & Reinert, 2009). Furthermore, in relation to

the female migration, IOM (2018) revealed that female migrants sent more money more frequently to their families than male migrants. The study, however, could not obtain any results that presented the co-relation between extreme poverty and remittances. Murrugarra, Larrison, and Sasin (2010) suggested that migrants often needed to pay several charges for passports, legal permission on migration, and remittance. In other words, the cost-demanding migration was not accessible to extremely poor households.

3-2-2. Benefits at a national level

The literature review presented that migration was beneficial not only for individual households but also for sending countries. The major expected positive consequences were financial and political benefits through remittances, and brain gain. Remittances contributed to supporting not only individual households but also the national economy. The expected results of remittances at the national level were positive if migrants send money through the formal remittance channels (Maphosa, 2007). Yet, the reality was that the majority of migrants sent through informal routes because of its quickness, cheap commission fees, and familiarity despite the risks of unsafety (Dzingirai et al, 2014; UN WOMEN, 2017). Thus, it was significant for the government to establish safe remittance agencies that transferred more quickly with affordable charges. Furthermore, transferring money internationally promoted both sending and receiving countries to establish bilateral connections (IOM, 2018). The benefit of migration for a country was more substantial if the country's economy

was comparatively weak; in the case of Zimbabwe, the country ranked in 132nd in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index report in 2012-2013 (African Development Bank Group, 2013). Therefore, remittances in developing countries stimulated the national economic growth in addition to migrants' family incomes.

4. Discussion

4-1. Education for All: Policy Implications and Recommendations for Overcoming Gaps in Education

Socio-economic development issues are intertwining with various aspects, and approaches are different from country to country. By featuring the case of Zimbabwe with its education and migration issues, this paper has proved that socio-economic development issues are not simple and clear-cut but more complex and vaguer than one expects. Therefore, this paper implies the importance of understanding and examining social development issues comprehensively. For example, concerning the gender inequality issues in education in Zimbabwe, there have been various aspects that intertwine with each other such as traditional gender perspectives, underdeveloped infrastructure, and poverty issues in the country as major obstacles. Particularly, concerning the sanitation issue, if lavatories at schools are inadequate and lack privacy, teen-aged girls can hardly attend schools when they are on their period. Menstruation also prevents girls from attending schools every day because of the issue of soiling school uniforms and stigma from schoolmates. Relating to poverty issues, poor households cannot afford

proper sanitary products, and girls need to endure the monthly cycle by uncomfortable and improper means such as rags, old pants, tissues, grasses or leaves. In addition, menstruation is often regarded as a sign of an end to girlhood, and a sign of maternity, implying early marriage (Kirk & Sommer, 2006). Since the subject of menstruation is culturally taboo, many girls cannot talk about the relevant difficulties and some school girls end up dropping out of school (Mafoko, 2017). In terms of the road as a part of the infrastructure, if the way to schools is unimproved or inadequately constructed, it is difficult for children to go to school. Especially in the case of Zimbabwe, the literature review presented that about 65% of roads are improperly constructed or need reconstruction. These issues, femininity, poverty, rurality, and underdeveloped infrastructure, are only a part of the factors that cause the gender gap in education. An approach to social development issues requires addressing various complex issues simultaneously.

Based on the results and analysis of the study, this paper provides two recommendations: improving infrastructure, and providing free school meals. First and foremost, to address the major obstacle to equal education, the improvement of infrastructure is a crucial goal to be achieved. The research pointed out that underdeveloped infrastructure is one of the obstacles. For instance, it is necessary to construct adequate lavatories securing privacy, safe roads, and schools accessible to rural children. Particularly, the construction of proper lavatories removes pubertal girls' physical unease and uncomfortableness. Safe roads allow children, es-

pecially girls, to go to school without any dangers. Also, since proximity is a central concern for rural children who live far from schools, constructing schools in rural areas can increase the number of students who can access schools. Since constructing and opening one school costs substantially, the scale does not necessarily need to be large as long as the accessibility for rural children and basic functions, such as classrooms and lavatories, are considered. By sponsoring the investment for the construction, Zimbabwe can also protect and enhance the work, business, and lives in the country. The second recommendation claims the vital role of free school meals. In some poor households, parents believe it is more profitable for households to have their children work rather than sending them to schools. However, if schools provide free meals every day, parents find that their children can eat meals for free if they go to school. In addition, school meals improve children's nutrition. In other words, school meals are more profitable for promoting children's attendance in schools because parents do not have to pay for their children's meals, and children can learn at schools with proper nutrition. Additionally, the school meals should be cooked with local agricultural products in order that local agriculture is also protected and stimulated. Taking advantage of school meals, therefore, children obtain the opportunity to attend schools.

4-2. Migration and Modern Slavery

As existing research presented, migrants often fill in informal sectors or informalized sections of formal sectors (International Organization for Migration, 2018). Modern

slavery exists in those employment as an oppressive trap, which forces vulnerable workers to work in harsh working conditions with fairly low incomes. Many migrants are likely to fall into modern slavery for two reasons. One reason is that because, currently, approximately 70% of employment in most African countries is informalized, and employers of informal sectors "[prefer] to recruit migrant people as they were more blackmailable and cheaper than native workers" (Vianello & Sacchetto, 2016, p. 302); therefore, it is easier for migrants to start working in informal sectors than in the formal sectors. The other reason is that migrants wish to flee poverty, improve their lives, and financially support their families far away; therefore, they believe working is better than not regardless of employment sectors. Once migrants are caught in slavery, they are treated as property and lose control over their employment conditions. As a consequence, many migrants are constrained in informal employment sectors and the slave status will be passed down to migrants' children. In other words, without any effort to abolish modern slavery, there remains large-scale and long-term marginalization in labour market. If a receiving country is going to rely on and take benefits from migrants as labour forces for the country, the receiving country needs to launch regulations that protect vulnerable migrants.

4-3. Implications to Further Research for Future: Research on 'Africas', not 'Africa'

Through the research, the author has found two issues to be mentioned: an overgeneralization in many African studies and gender-biased research data. Concerning the

first issue of the overgeneralization, many of the existing research regard African countries as one whole unit with the stereotypical perspectives, or as one developing world, paying less attention to each of the particular countries. Specifically, the author encountered many pieces of literature that focused on 'Sub-Saharan Africa' or 'Southern Africa' on social development topics. However, African countries are diverse, and each of them has its own culture, religion, political and economic systems, history, tradition, etcetera. In other words, researchers can never generalize about the African continent as a whole. Although it is true many countries are facing numerous problems in socio-economic development, developing countries are also pursuing their own ways to improve society and economy; therefore, the level and strategies for development differ from country to country. With that point, this paper suggests that future research on social development in African countries should not regard all of Africa as one united subject because there is a diversity in each African country's culture, ecology, colonial history, politics, economy, and issues relevant to the society. Rather, Africa should be regarded as 'Africas', which consists of 54 different and characteristic countries.

5. Conclusion

This paper set out to document, analyze, and approach the current gender disparity issues in Zimbabwean society. Specifical-

ly, by focusing on the gender gap in education and possible positive results of women's education brought by their migration, this paper intended to answer the research question: 'what is the contribution of educated female labour migrants to the socio-economic development in Zimbabwe?'. Throughout the research, this paper emphasized the significant contribution of educated female migrants to socio-economic development in Zimbabwe. The paper answered the research question and argued that empowering women through education is a push factor for females to migrate, which consequently stimulated socio-economic development through remittances and skills acquisition.

As remarkable findings of this research, there was a positive correlation between women's migration and education, and between migration and socio-economic development. With the increasing number of female migrants, more and more women have become independent and replaced males within households to challenge the traditional social norms. Remittances were one of the most notable positive effect, despite the issue that migrants' family members tended to be dependent on them. To encourage more migration and remittances in Zimbabwe, there were two policy recommendations: improvement of infrastructure and free school meals with local agricultural products. With the end of modern slavery, it is possible that migration can positively influence Zimbabwe's socio-economic development.

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Regarding Mothers as Individuals, not as Tools: Issues of Surrogacy

Miwa Nakada

Miwa Nakada is a sophomore student at AIU. Her essay “Regarding Mothers as Individuals, not as Tools: Issues of Surrogacy” was submitted in Composition 1 course under the supervision of Professor Naoko Araki. Issues in saving women’s rights are part of her interest, and she discussed surrogacy from the perspective of surrogate mothers in this essay. As for the future outlook, she would like to explore gender issues and family diversity in current society in the Global Studies Program.

In 2001, a Japanese celebrity couple, Aki Mukai and Nobuhiko Takeda, received a child through surrogacy in the U.S. as Mukai had cancer and could not bear children (Yanagihara, 2020). Yanagihara (2020) reports that Mukai tried to register herself as their child’s biological mother in Japan, which was not successful since it was against Japanese law. The news was broadcasted through TV programs and other media every day, allowing the viewers to become more aware of surrogacy, a new reproductive technology that Japanese people are unfamiliar with (Yanagihara, 2020). Just as Mukai, some people may not be able to produce children themselves, but they still want to become parents even if they cannot have biological relationships with the baby. Surrogacy is one of the possible options for such couples. People who support surrogacy, however, may be blind to issues faced by the surrogate mothers, although childbirth cannot be achieved without their cooperation. It is questionable if the current surrogacy sys-

tems ensure the safety of pregnant women who are essential in the practice of surrogacy. In particular, commercial surrogacy would have a risk of exploiting surrogate mothers’ health and well-being since the focus could be placed more on the financial benefits and the child being born through surrogacy.

Surrogacy is one of the assisted reproduction technologies (ARTs), which helps infertile couples to have children (Deonandan, 2012). Surrogate mothers are women who can reproduce children for other couples. The client couples often have limited or no options to have a natural pregnancy due to illnesses or sexual identities. Surrogate motherhood is classified into two types by whose eggs are used: traditional surrogacy and gestational surrogacy (Deonandan, 2012). In traditional surrogacy, or ovum surrogacy, a surrogate mother’s eggs are artificially fertilized with a sperm in her womb; on the other hand, the eggs of commissioning women fertilized outside their bodies are implanted in surrogate mothers’ uteruses in the case of

gestational surrogacy (Deonandan, 2012). Infertile couples can choose either method according to their conditions. Regardless of the types, surrogate mothers are often paid for their childbirth, which is specifically called commercial surrogacy. Commercial surrogacy is conducted with the engagement of intended parents, surrogate mothers, medical practitioners, and surrogate agencies (Saravanan, 2013). Agencies hire women as surrogate mothers and work as gatekeepers between the intended parents, surrogate mothers, and clinics. The intended parents pay the surrogate mothers and the agencies, including medical-related costs for the mother and baby. In other words, medical practitioners and intermediate agents gain profit through surrogacy. The financial gap between the people involved and the following risk of exploitation become an issue since “surrogate mothers in Asia, South America, Europe, and Africa usually live in impoverished conditions” (Fronek, 2018, p. 13). These financial concerns would make commercial surrogacy a problem as it troubles the surrogate mothers both before and after childbirth.

Surrogate mothers may experience challenging pregnancies that affect their physical and mental health because of the business aspects of commercial surrogacy that focus chiefly on financial profits. The safety of the mother and the child in normal childbirth at hospitals would be the first priority. When problems occur in the process of pregnancy or childbirth, doctors and families will make a decision that is the best for saving the mothers’ lives and bodies. Surrogate mothers’ health, however, may not always be maintained properly. Lozanski and Shan-

kar (2018) describe that surrogate mothers’ bodies are sometimes regarded even as “empty space to be rented” (p. 53) in commercial surrogacy. Under this condition, the attention given to the health and well-being of surrogate mothers would be dubious. Deonandan et al. (2012) explain that the intended parents are the clinics’ customers, and doctors might prioritize their own benefit and efficiency instead of ensuring the quality of the treatment for surrogate mothers, whose healthy childbirth may be negatively impacted. Also, their mental health may not be paid enough attention to. During the gestation period, women are emotionally sensitive and often feel depressed because of hormone imbalances and stress. Pregnant women would require both medical and emotional care; however, the payment from the clients for surrogate mothers often covers only the physical part of the treatment (Deonandan et al., 2012). This would mean counseling or other mental care programs may not be offered to surrogate mothers despite the need to address the mental health issues that may follow pregnancy. The heavy physical and mental burden on surrogate mothers due to the nature of commercial surrogacy would be undesirable. This concern may not disappear even after they finish playing their roles as surrogate mothers.

Surrogate mothers would keep suffering from the bodily burden and mental load after childbirth since in many cases they are not supported by agents or healthcare once the transaction ends (Fronek, 2018). After the delivery, the surrogate’s body does not recover quickly. It takes a certain amount of time for them to become as active as they were

before pregnancy, but they may not receive enough treatment during the period of recovery. Without adequate medical support, surrogate mothers would not be able to deal with the health problems that might follow childbirth, such as severe anemia and inert states of organs. Similarly, mental issues may remain unresolved. Women after childbirth are likely to experience strong anxiety or unusual wavering of mind, which is called post-partum depression (Deonandan et al., 2012). In commercial surrogacy, the support for surrogate mothers in post-partum depression are not included in the contracts (Deonandan et al., 2012). It can cause unwanted outcomes where surrogate mothers might suffer from long-term post-partum depression. Another mental concern would be for the relationship between surrogate mothers and children. One significant case that illustrates this issue would be the Baby-M incident in 1985, where a surrogate mother insisted on her custody right after having a girl despite signing a contract to pass the child to the client (Haber- man, 2014). The surrogate mother stated that she had “a biologically determined sacred bond” (Peterson, 2016, p. 119) with the newborn child and persisted in staying with the baby. Like the woman in the Baby-M case, who came to develop a special bond with the child she bore, some surrogate mothers might feel attached to the baby. Being separated from their surrogate children while having attachments to them would involve severe psychological pain. The Baby-M incident may also demonstrate that this emotion can arise unexpectedly, even if the surrogate mothers and the clients had reached a consensus. In addition to the stress of pregnancy and child-

birth, surrogate mothers would have to deal with emotional and physical damages after completing their roles as pregnant women.

Although commercial surrogacy may negatively impact surrogate mothers for a long time, some people argue that commercial surrogacy does not have to be regulated and that surrogate mothers can take responsibility for their participation from the perspective of liberalism. Becoming surrogate mothers could be regarded as voluntary because they choose to be involved in surrogacy. Some women might view commercial surrogacy as a way of making a living or gaining financial support since they can receive money from the practice. It is reported that low-skilled, financially challenged women in India could improve the lives of themselves and their families by giving birth to children as surrogate mothers (Patel et al., 2018). As this report illustrates, the compensation might be an unquestionable benefit for surrogate mothers. As long as they can earn money, some females may be willing to become surrogate mothers. Patel et al. (2018) state that “it is a woman’s right to enter into a contract and to make decisions regarding her own body” (p. 215). From this viewpoint, surrogacy can be accepted as an option for such women. This idea of respecting the rights of choice is well explained by Deonandan (2019), which can also be found in the principles of Western liberalism. Deonandan (2019) further discusses that the ideology basically places importance on individual choice; therefore, it is supportive of conducting surrogacy. From a liberalist’s point of view, it might be possible to claim that the women themselves are responsible for addressing

whatever concerns they may have since they choose to become surrogate mothers. In other words, becoming surrogate mothers could reflect their freedom of choice. This idea may be preventing the potential exploitation of surrogate mothers and the need for better systems from being widely discussed.

While the idea of self-responsibility of surrogate mothers may be understandable, legislations on commercial surrogacy would still be desired, considering that not all women would be capable of understanding or making fair contracts. Since women in the middle- and low-income countries are often uneducated or even illiterate, they may not fully understand the contents of contracts due to a lack of medical or legal knowledge (Fronek, 2018). It would be immoral to hire those women who do not have the ability to recognize a fair and proper contract, depending merely on their responsibilities. Judging from the fact that many surrogate mothers are struggling financially, the government might want to establish rules to support those women. Regulations on commercial surrogacy based on careful examination of the perspectives described in this paper can save women from being exploited. In addition, the actual consequences the surrogate mothers face may not always be fully understood before they sign the contract. Under the current, inadequate regulations, the integrity of the contracts may not be guaranteed. Especially, surrogate mothers might not be ensured of satisfactory payments. Saravanan (2013) reports that clinics tend to be paid more than surrogate mothers. Fronek (2018) points out the possibility that surrogate mothers could not receive rewards

if the baby did not meet the demand of the clients. These mothers “do not always get the compensation promised, or do not get paid at all if a child is born with a disability” (Fronek, 2018, p. 17). If the child were refused, the surrogate mothers may have to take care of the child even if they are not paid, which would be an additional burden on them. If detailed regulations that include penalties for those who violated the contract were adopted and maintained, the payments for surrogate mothers would be more secure. If the laws on commercial surrogacy were maintained and governed under judicial powers, gatekeepers would ensure safe and honest transactions. Again, appropriate regulations can reduce the risks of exploitation of women and promote fair transactions between the clients and surrogate mothers.

In conclusion, current commercial surrogacy can cause a heavy burden for surrogate mothers despite the financial benefits they may receive. Surrogate mothers are not always ensured of a safe pregnancy and well-being because the delivery of the child to its new parents and money can be prioritized in commercial surrogacy. Even after these transactions, surrogate mothers may keep suffering from both physical and psychological disorders. Although females are the ones who choose to become surrogate mothers, regulations should be prepared so that their choice would not result in sacrificing themselves. While women could help others with childbirth, it would be unethical to consider them as tools to reproduce children. Ensuring the health of their body and mind would be as important as providing couples with a broader choice

of having children. Surrogacy can be a silver lining to the people who are infertile but cannot give up their hope for parenthood; however, the negative aspect needs to be examined at the same time. Today, people’s lives have become increasingly diverse, and more people are likely to achieve

their wills. As many new technologies have been introduced to support people’s various choices, surrogacy may become more widely accepted in the near future. In order to conduct safe surrogacy without any exploitations, not only the advantages but also the risks should be discussed now.

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Elective Cesarean Section: Safe and Painless?

Kana Himeno

Kana Himeno is a sophomore student. Her essay “Elective Cesarean Section: Safe and Painless?” was submitted in the Composition I course under the supervision of Dr. Paul Iida. Kana has had an intense interest in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) since she learned about it in sex education classes at her high school. The topic of her essay, for and against having a medically unfit cesarean section, was inspired by her experience of volunteer activities in a maternity hospital in Brazil, which has the highest cesarean section rate in the world. Kana received Dr. Paul Iida’s generous support in her academic writing.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2018), over the last few decades, the proportion of women who choose the Cesarean section (C-section) has continued to grow at an unprecedented rate. From 1990 to 2014, the C-section implementation rate tripled from 6.9 percent to 19.1 percent (WHO, 2018). One of the causes of the increase is the maternal request for a C-section (Panda et al., 2020). Originally, C-section is the surgical childbirth method for mothers who cannot have a vaginal delivery for some medical reasons, but in recent years, a large number of C-sections have been performed on demand, instead of for medical reasons. For instance, in Norway, approximately 14 to 22 percent of elective C-sections are performed at the request of pregnant women (Wolf, 2018; Kolås et al., 2003). A large number of women voluntarily request a C-section because they consider it less painful and healthier than vaginal delivery (Tatar et al., 2000). However, this paper does not suggest

having a C-section as the painless and safer way of childbirth because a planned C-section could be riskier for both the mother and the fetus than vaginal delivery, and most of the mothers who prefer to choose a planned C-section to avoid labor pain do not know the post-delivery pain caused by C-section and other safer ways to relieve labor pain.

The disadvantages of vaginal delivery in terms of health

Some women believe that vaginal delivery involves uncertainty for mothers and the fetus’s health, and thus prefer to have elective C-sections. Uncertainty in vaginal delivery specifically means the following possibilities: an emergent C-section may have to be performed during childbirth, and a woman may have a pelvic disorder and sexual dysfunction after a vaginal delivery.

Some women believe that a planned C-section is safer than a vaginal delivery because a vaginal delivery sometimes leads to

an emergent C-section. If a doctor makes the judgment that it is difficult to continue a vaginal delivery due to the mother’s health condition during childbirth, an emergent C-section must be performed, which has a higher maternal mortality rate than a planned c-section. (Marshall & Guise, 2011). According to Zimmo et al. (2017), the proportion of pregnant women undergoing an emergent C-section during a vaginal delivery varies from hospital, but it is estimated approximately 5.8 percent to 22.6 percent for among primiparas. As this data mentions, many women encounter emergent C-sections, which threaten maternal health more than planned C-sections. Therefore, some women with conditions that are likely to induce an emergent C-section, such as advanced age or obesity, think that a planned C-section is a safer delivery method. Avoiding the emergent C-section is one of the reasons why the number of C-sections without accepted medical indications has been increasing.

A planned C-section is also preferred by mothers because it can reduce the risk of pelvic damage and sexual dysfunction to mothers. (Zakerihamidi et al., 2015; Dabiri et al., 2014). Maternal postnatal pelvic damage leads to serious problems in women’s daily life, such as a urinary incontinence in which urine leaks regardless of one’s will. A vaginal delivery has a higher risk of urinary incontinence compared to a planned C-section. Specifically, the risk of developing urinary incontinence after a vaginal delivery is 33 percent. On the other hand, there is only a five percent risk of developing urinary incontinence after an elective C-section. Furthermore, an elective C-section has a low risk of causing post-

partum sexual dysfunction (Hannah, 2004). The incidence of sexual dysfunction depends on the severity of perineal trauma (Signorello et al., 2001; Buhling et al., 2006). A perineal trauma is a skin injury between the vaginal outlet and the anus caused by a fetus passing through the birth canal; about 78 percent of women in Iran have physical and sexual problems after a vaginal delivery (Noorizi et al., 2005). The planned c-section has no or minimal risks of a perineal trauma because a fetus does not pass through the birth canal (Faúndes & Miranda, 2020). Therefore, the risk of sexual dysfunction is also considered to be low in a planned C-section. Sexual dysfunction harms the sexual life of women after childbirth. It means that vaginal delivery threatens a woman’s safe and satisfying sexual life. Preventing sexual dysfunction is one of the main reasons why women choose a C-section (Dabiri et al., 2014).

The disadvantages of the C-section in terms of health

Although some women consider a planned C-section to be a reliable and safe delivery method, it actually has a higher risk of severe complications such as a thromboembolism for mothers during the short period after childbirth than that of a vaginal delivery. According to the statistics, the risk of serious complications caused by a planned C-section for mothers is about 3.1 times greater than by a planned vaginal delivery (Armson, 2007). According to WHO (2018), one of the complications whose incidence rate is increased by C-sections is thromboembolism. Thromboembolism is a disease in which a blood clot in a vein obstructs the

blood flow, narrowing and inflaming the blood vessels. After a cesarean section, blood congestion because of recumbency tends to occur, which causes a thromboembolism. (Kobayashi & Kawabata, 2009). According to Evangelista et al. (2018), the incidence of thromboembolism after a vaginal delivery is one in 1,000 people, but that of after a C-section is three in 1,000. This means that the risk of developing thromboembolism is three times greater with a cesarean section than with a vaginal delivery. Thromboembolism can occur anywhere in the body. If it appears in the lungs, it will cause respiratory distress and increase maternal mortality (Kobayashi & Kawabata, 2009). According to Kobayashi et al. (2005), about 85 percent of thromboembolisms occurring in the lungs are developed after a C-section. The occurrence of pulmonary thromboembolism caused by a C-section is about 22 times higher when compared to a vaginal delivery. Therefore, C-sections have a higher risk of threatening the mother's life in a short period after a parturition than a vaginal delivery.

A planned C-section also carries long-term risks of having negative consequences for future pregnancies. One of the typical long-term risks of C-sections for future childbirth is placenta previa. Placenta previa is a condition in which the placenta covers parts or all of the internal uterine ostium that can cause massive bleeding during childbirth. A study indicates that placenta previa tends to be caused by the scar of the uterus because of the previous C-section surgery. According to Majeed et al. (2015), the incidence of placenta previa in a non-scarred uterus is 2.45 percent, whereas the incidence of a placenta

previa in a scarred uterus created by C-section was 67.45 percent. In other words, an elective C-section increases the risk of developing placenta previa and massive bleeding in subsequent pregnancies. A planned C-section poses a long-term risk not only to maternal health but also to fetal health. Specifically, it increases the risk of asthma in children. Mrcog et al. (2015) reported in the American Medical Journal JAMA that children delivered through elective C-sections have an approximately 22 percent higher risk of developing childhood asthma than children delivered through vaginal deliveries. Comparing the risks of both a vaginal delivery and a planned C-section, it is evident that elective C-section does not only cause more severe threats to maternal health during childbirth, but also leave a serious impact on women's future pregnancies and fetuses' health.

The disadvantages of vaginal delivery in terms of pain

According to Shaaban et al. (2017) more than half of the maternal requests for elective C-sections are performed to avoid the pain of delivery. The pain of the delivery refers specifically to that of uterine contractions, which is caused by the expulsion of the fetus's head through the vagina (Faundes & Miranda, 2020). In addition, if perineal laceration occurs when a fetus passes through the birth canal, the pain in the maternal perineal area would last for the first few weeks after the delivery. However, in fact, women undergoing C-sections do not experience these pains during delivery because they are anesthetized. Furthermore, in an elective C-section, since the child does not pass

through the birth canal, pain in the mother's perineal area rarely occurs. According to Chang et al. (2015), women who had a C-section had a significantly lower score for perineal pain in the first few weeks after delivery than women who had a vaginal delivery. Therefore, the elective C-section is considered to be an effective childbirth method to prevent the pain of labor and perineal pain.

The disadvantages of the planned C-section in terms of pain

While the C-section causes little pain during labor, it causes severe postoperative pain, which lasts for months to a year. Most women who perceive an elective C-section as a childbirth method to avoid pain might not know about the long-term pain caused by an elective C-section (Faundes & Miranda, 2020). Therefore, despite choosing a planned cesarean section to avoid pain, some women feel that the long-term pain caused by a planned cesarean section is more painful than the short-term pain during and after vaginal delivery. In fact, the majority of women who have experienced both a vaginal delivery and an elective C-section feel that the postoperative pain caused by an elective C-section is more painful than the pain that occurs during a vaginal delivery. Specifically, according to Osis et al. (2001), when asked about preferred delivery methods for women who had experienced both a vaginal delivery and an elective C-section, 90.4% of them answered that they preferred a vaginal delivery, and 45% of them said their main reason was that a vaginal delivery caused less pain than a planned C-section (Faundes & Miranda, 2020). Therefore, it is not rea-

sonable to recognize a planned C-section as an effective childbirth method to prevent pain because a planned C-section causes severe and long-lasting pain after the delivery.

In addition, the lack of knowledge about painless delivery methods other than an elective C-section, such as a labor analgesia, is one of the reasons for the increase in maternal requests for a planned C-section. Pain caused by a vaginal delivery can be relieved by using local anesthesia or acupuncture (Aksoy et al., 2014). It is revealed that the lack of knowledge about how to relieve labor pain increases a woman's fear of vaginal deliveries and boosts the demand for planned C-sections (Aksoy et al., 2014). In fact, women without knowledge of a labor analgesia are more likely to be afraid of a vaginal delivery than women with knowledge of a labor analgesia (Aksoy et al., 2014). There is also data that shows about two-thirds of those who desired to have an elective C-section because of the fear for the pain caused by a vaginal delivery stopped requesting a planned C-section and preferred a vaginal delivery after gaining knowledge about a painless delivery (Aksoy et al., 2014). In other words, the majority of maternal requests for a planned C-section caused by the fear of pain stemming from a lack of knowledge about other painless delivery methods. Women should be well informed and health care providers should be required by law to explain all birthing methods to the mother prior to deciding on how to give birth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, women should have more information if they are planning a C-section with no medical justification. In recent years, the number of maternal requests for an elective C-section has increased due to the misbelief that an elective C-section is healthier and painless, but in reality, there are more disadvantages to an elective C-section compared to a vaginal delivery, both in terms of health and pain. Most women are afraid of the risk of an emergent C-section during a vaginal delivery leading to pelvic disorders and a sexual dysfunctions. Therefore, an elective C-section without these risks is considered a healthier delivery method than a vaginal delivery. However, compared to a vaginal delivery, an elective C-section has a much higher risk of developing high

mortality complications, such as thromboembolism, within a short period after surgery. In terms of pain, an elective C-section is perceived as a childbirth method that can avoid pain, because it uses anesthesia during childbirth. However, women suffer long-term pain that lasts for months to a year after cesarean section surgery. Knowledge of means of pain relief during childbirth other than an elective C-section would significantly reduce the number of women seeking for less painful deliveries. Therefore, the maternal demand for an elective C-section can be attributed to the maternal lack of knowledge about the disadvantages of an elective C-section. Raising maternal awareness of the disadvantages of an elective C-section may curb the continuous and unprecedentedly rapid increase in the number of medically unfit C-sections in recent decades.

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Religion and Children

Miyu Ota

Miyu Ota is a sophomore student planning to major in Global Studies. Her essay, “Religion and Children,” was submitted in Composition 1 under the supervision of Professor Naoko Araki. Miyu has had a strong interest in religion and how that affects people's life. As for Miyu's future research endeavors, she would like to investigate how various cultures and religions influence contemporary issues we face.

Parents often control their children's choice of religion. In the United States, “the rates of intergenerational transmission of religious affiliation were 82 percent in Jews, 85 percent in Muslims... and 43 percent in Catholics” (Chen et al., 2018, p. 2355). According to Sherwood (2018), 84 percent of the global population, moreover, has a belief in a particular religion. These data demonstrate how common it is to believe in religion and to transmit beliefs through generations. Believing in religion means parents might consider religion as faith and/or ‘guiding light’ of their life. They often regard that religion as playing a significant role in children's lives, and at the same time, some parents may rely on spiritual support from religion for their parenting. Although it might be convincing that religion can improve a child's well-being, it might also hinder their physical conditions due to religious misbeliefs of science. Therefore, passing on a particular religious belief to descendants might sometimes be inappropriate. To make people consciously judge between what is ethical and what is not, they should be set free from the strain of religion

at an early stage. This does not imply to ban young people from believing in religion ultimately, but to provide youths the ability to think critically, time to consider religion, and to let them choose their suitable religious affiliation when they turn to adult age.

People believing in religion might not be able to realize the negative aspects of religion, which non-religious people can recognize. I was still six when I was first exposed to religion. I went to an Indian International school in Japan, where the majority of the students were Indian people who believed in Hinduism. There, most students could not eat meat due to vegetarianism and due to the idea of Hinduism that a cow is considered a holy animal, not for consumption. Another Indian religion, called Jainism, was also common in the school, and people who believe in that religion could not eat root vegetables and meat. This means that they can only eat vegetables that grow on the ground. Their diet is mostly distinct from the diet of non-religious groups. Other than the strict diet regulation, students were educated about a rigid caste system coming from Hinduism.

People believing in Hinduism accept their low caste as ‘karma’ and believe in reincarnation. Karma refers to the results of what people have done in past lives (Khan Academy, n.d.). The lowest level in the caste system is called “untouchables,” and there are more than 160 million Indian people who are considered as “untouchables” (Mayell, 2003). Mayell (2003) adds that they are “publicly humiliated, paraded naked, beaten, and raped.” Although they are treated brutally and unfairly, people believing in Hinduism consider that they should accept their fate and put effort into living morally justifiable so that they will be allowed to leave from the recantation cycle. The wretched condition here is that newly born babies, who are inevitably affiliated with Hinduism by their parents, have no choice but to accept their fate of following Hinduism. Depending on the caste level they are born at, children might face a tragic destiny, including being labeled as “untouchables” due to the caste system in Hinduism. In fact, this is only one of many examples of how religion strongly impacts a child’s life both positively and negatively.

On one side, children’s participation in religious rituals might be beneficial to their well-being and psychological health. A renowned neurologist, Sigmund Freud, referred to religion as an illusion that children can have security and forgiveness (Perham, 2018). His saying implies that religion gives children a place to ease themselves and a chance to exonerate their sins. A study, in addition, conducted by Chen et al. (2018), demonstrates that children attending religious affairs often have a stronger sense of volunteering, forgiveness and

lower vulnerability to drug use and sexual activities than children who do not participate in religious matters. The authors assume that religion plays a vital role in educating children on what is considered ethical and promoting how to meditate to cope with the difficulties they face in life (Chen et al., 2018). Statistically, according to a research study done by Chiswick (2013), 85 percent of religious children had a higher standard of overall quality of health than nonreligious children, with only 79 percent of children having a healthy life.

Religious people can also find a purpose in life and help find the meaning of why people experience defining moments in life (Villani et al., 2019; Krok, 2015). This process is called “religious coping [meaning that religion can serve as a] process of understanding and dealing with critical life events” (Krok, 2015). To be more specific, Villani et al. (2019) and Holmgaard (2018, p. 311) elaborate on the idea claiming that religion can give meaning to life events, such as natural disasters. For instance, in the New Testament of the Christian bible, it is scribed that flood occurs due to God’s retribution for human sin (Schmalz, 2017). Suppose religious people believe that natural disasters are a punishment from God. In that case, people might be able to deserve the tragedy as a positive opportunity to look back on what they have done in their life. Returning to the issue, most children might be more sentimental to sudden catastrophic events than adults (Children and Disasters, 2016). Throughout experiencing events such as parents’ divorce, parents’ death, and others, children might need something to rely on and might be curious about

why misfortune falls on them. In that case, religion can serve as their lifeline. As religion can teach people the purpose of defining moments in life, children might be able to grow up to be a person who can find hope for the future rather than lingering depression.

Despite the positive aspects of religious influence on children, some religious beliefs might evoke misinterpretations of science, which might hinder children’s physical health. A particular Christian group, Jehovah’s Witnesses, can represent the issue. It is a religion that was separated from orthodox Christianity in the late 1800s, and one of the controversial beliefs is the idea of rejecting blood transfusion [even though the treatment can save one’s life] as they believe it is against God’s will (Neffinger, 2018). In fact, the treatment of blood transfusion is commonly used for medical purposes, including cancer treatment, fighting anemia, cell disease, and more, so it is life-saving (National Heart, n.d.). As for parental consent, in most states in the United States, children under 18 have to have parental consent when having medical aid (McNary, 2018). This regulation of parental consent might be applicable to most countries. If parents believe in Jehovah’s Witnesses and their children require immediate medical attention of blood transfusion, their life might be in danger. For instance, there is a case that the parents’ decision of rejecting their daughter’s blood transfusion treatment for beta-thalassemia major ended up in her death (Conti et al., 2018, p. 103). To a broader extent, Muslims often misinterpret that they are immune to diseases such as cervical cancer, so they reject HPV vaccination, which is

an immunization injection (Rebekah et al., 2019). When considering these illustrations of parents’ decisions on denying medical assistance, it becomes apparent that people believing in a particular religion treasures religious belief instead of their children’s life. From the perspective of a non-religious person, one might find it difficult to understand why people affiliated with religious belief choose to reject medical treatment that is proven to be life-saving. Still, from the perspective of religious people, they might think that they are rational enough to justify their decisions. The research being conducted by Friedman et al. (2018) has concluded that religious people prefer to rely on religious belief rather than evidence that is scientifically proven. According to Friedman et al. (2018), religious individuals, including Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, feel confident about their beliefs, although it contradicts science because religious ideas are firmly rooted in their emotions. On the contrary, atheists instead rely on empirical evidence rather than their emotional feelings (Friedman et al., 2018). Based on these outcomes, it can be inferred that religious people might lack the ability to make a quick and correct judgment when it comes to medical matters. Generally thinking, deciding a child’s fate based on the parent’s religious beliefs is not ethical, since it can result in the disregard of children’s will and freedom.

Taking the negative and positive aspects of religious influence on children into consideration, a suggestion of parents waiting for their children to be mature enough to make their decision of religious affiliation sounds reasonable. It would be ideal if parents can

teach children about the religion they believe in and other religions available, and they avoid forcefully brainwashing a specific belief to their children. Parents can moreover raise their children by teaching how religion plays a significant role in society and its greatness and darkness (Diab, 2009). If a child acknowledges a religion is worth thinking of, they can choose to believe, but if not, they can have choices either to be non-religious or choose another religion to believe in. Despite the idea, it might be unrealistic to universally avoid parents from transmitting their beliefs due to state religion. The state religion is the religion that is endorsed and favored to believe in by a country (Barro et al., 2005, p.1331). It is estimated that there are around 20 percent of the countries in the world, where it endorses a particular religion, and Islam is the religion that is advocated by governments the most (Sherwood, 2017). Sherwood (2017) further explains that most countries in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East have Islam as an official state religion. As countries with state religion enforce public schools to teach a designated religion and prohibit people from believing other religions, it might put a heavy strain on people's freedom of choice of religious affiliation. Accordingly, there are cases when parents cannot do anything to pull their children apart from religion. In that situation, guardians can nurture children's critical thinking ability until they become adult age. Shenhav et al. (2011), based on their study, assumes that teaching people to think intuitively makes them likely to believe in God. On the other hand, children who are taught to think logically and

critically are unlikely to believe in God (Gervais et al., 2012). Presumably, if a child becomes one who can think critically, they can make their finest choice of religious affiliation when they become grownups. Although some parents might think that it is a part of their parental guardian to associate children with religious beliefs, it might be better if parents understand that children also have the right to choose and shape their own lives.

In conclusion, affiliating children with religion can be advantageous, but can also be disadvantageous to children. On one premise, religion can be valuable in terms of a child's psychological health, as religion can teach children how to cope with challenges and give meaning to why critical life events occur. Religion can, however, negatively influence the parent's decision-making process in an urgent situation. The fact that they rely on religious ethics rather than doctors' advice based on scientific studies may put a child's health in danger. Thus, compelling children to practice their devotion to a particular religion can sometimes be unprincipled. It might be preferable for religious people to find ways to make benefits and eliminate the non-benefits of faith. Nonetheless, some concerns might arise. One is the state religion promoting civilians to believe in a specified religion. This makes people difficult to expose to concepts of other religions. Then the other troublesome factor is the conflict between the parental guardian and the children's right to choose their beliefs. While parents try to protect and educate children by using religion, at the same time, parents should respect their children's choice of religion as religion plays a pre-

dominant role in people's lives. As in Hinduism, through parents' transmission of the concept of caste system to descendants, they need to live in a specified social class all their lives. In order to eliminate these issues, people and institutions surrounding children might need to encourage children to think outside of the box. Eventually,

they might be able to realize that religious practices can be both ethical and unethical. When children grow up to the age they can make a conscious judgment, parents need to leave the decision of religious affiliation to them. Regardless of age, ethnicity, and religion, people should have the right to choose how they want to live their one-time life.

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Textile Waste Management: Cradle-to-cradle Design

Satoshi Nakao

Satoshi Nakao is a junior student majoring in Global Studies. His essay "Textile Waste Management: Cradle-to-Cradle Design" was submitted in the Advanced Research Writing under the supervision of Professor Mark de Boer. As the concept of sustainability has recently become common, Nakao got more interested in the field and decided to have research with an approach from a daily life point of view. He focused on the sustainability issue in the fashion industry, highlighting the management of increasing textile waste.

Abstract

This paper investigates sustainable textile waste management to address environmental problems. In this paper, textile waste refers to unwanted garments disposed of by the users after consumption. Textile waste is rapidly increasing and causing environmental impacts due to the recent trend of mass production and mass consumption in the fashion industry, as the fast-fashion business model represents. To address this issue, this paper focuses on the feasibility of developing an infinite recycling model of textile waste based on Cradle-to-cradle design. Cradle-to-cradle design, advocated by McDonough (2005), takes a biomimetic approach to design and aims to create a society where every material used in any products and services is in infinite circulation without causing environmental impacts. As the primary research, this paper looked for technological issues for recycling textile waste from the interview with a recycling venture company, JEPLAN, and the possibility of manufacturers' contributions to establish the system from observation into UNIQLO's sustainable campaign. The primary research revealed that recycling technology is developing, and manufacturers have the potential to engage in the infinite recycling system based on Cradle-to-cradle design through sustainable manufacturing. The most important finding was the necessity to build a trilateral cooperation among recycling companies, manufacturers, and consumers and for them to work collaboratively. This paper suggests concrete roles each of the three actors can do and how they can cooperate. Even though recycling alone cannot solve the whole problem of increasing textile waste, this recycling innovation can convey greater societal and environmental value to society as a new paradigm to cope with environmental problems.

Key words: textile waste, textile industry, cradle to cradle, recycling, fast fashion

Introduction

Clothing is indispensable, but people constantly consume and dispose of it at some point. However, the amount of clothing people consume has been on the rise for decades, coupled with the popularity of the fast-fashion industry (Cooper, 2018). Due to the increasing consumption, textile waste¹ is also increasing. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency report (2015), textile waste has increased by 811% since 1960, and almost all of it has gone into a landfill. Textile waste has harmful effects on the environment when buried underground as landfill, thus problematic from environmental perspectives. Even though recycling contributes to reducing the amount of textile waste, the current recycling system is ineffective, and the recycling rate is very low (Beall, 2020). Since environmental problems caused by textile waste are global issues, seeking solutions for reducing textile waste to diminish environmental effects seems worth researching. This paper investigates the background for the increase in textile waste, environmental effects of textile waste, and current situations and the possibility of innovations of recycling to reduce textile waste.

Literature Review

This paper illustrates the discussions about the fast-fashion industry, which contributes to an increase in textile waste, and the current recycling system of textile waste to cope with environmental issues. The term textile waste has extensive definitions, ranging from textile waste generated in the manufacturing process to textile

waste from unsold clothing. In this paper, however, textile waste refers to unwanted garments, being disposed of by consumers.

Benefits of Fast-fashion

In this paper, the term fast fashion refers to "inexpensive clothing produced by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends", following the definition by LEXICO dictionary (n.d.). The fast-fashion industry has evolved since around the mid-2000s, responding to increasing global demand, especially in emerging markets such as Asia and Africa (Kock, 2020; Assoune, n.d.). Fast fashion makes clothing more affordable and accessible to the public (Lloyd, 2018). Lloyd (2018) explains that many retailers and brands offer fast fashion clothing at inexpensive prices, so it became easier for people to obtain.

Environmental Problems of Fast-fashion Industry

While the fast-fashion industry has evolved and met the global clothing demand, it produces a lot of textile waste. The business model of fast fashion is designed to sell cheap clothing that is disposable by mass production and encourage consumers to frequently purchase new clothing to stimulate more consumption (Kalkat, 2020; "MPs to investigate", 2018). Research by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in 2017 says that global clothing production has doubled in the last 15 years (as cited in Cooper, 2018). On the other hand, the industry largely contributed to increasing textile waste; textile waste produced in a year reached 100 billion garments, coupled with quick turnover of fast-fashion clothing (Lloyd, 2018). The

average number of times a garment is worn before being thrown away has decreased by 36% in the last 15 years due to the popularity of fast fashion ("Ellen MacArthur", 2017, as cited in Leonard, 2019). The fast fashion industry contributes to increasing textile waste by its mass production, mass consumption, and people's throwaway culture.

Increasing textile waste is causing environmental problems. Textile waste is most likely to be burned and turned into a landfill (Leonard, 2019). Burning textile wastes requires much energy, such as coal and electric power, and produces large amounts of pollutants as emissions. According to the United Nations Environmental Program, the fast-fashion industry is responsible for 20 percent of the global wastewater and 10 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions (Koch, 2020). Data of McKinsey in 2016 estimate that CO₂ emissions by the fast fashion industry will rise by 77% and water consumption by 20% from 2015 to 2025 (Assoune, n.d.).

Furthermore, textile waste has environmental effects when they become a landfill, depending on the fibers' materials used in clothing. While natural fibers and animal fibers are biodegradable, synthetic fibers, such as polyester and nylon made from petroleum that are often used in fast fashion garments, do not biodegrade and remain intact underground forever (Eberle, 2004, as cited in Weber, 2015). Plastic remaining underground has a risk of leaching harmful chemical substances that spread into groundwater (Knoblauch, 2020).

Recycling: Method to Cope with Textile Waste Problems

Recycling can reduce textile waste and its environmental costs. The term recycling is defined as "the process collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products" by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (n.d.). Reducing textile waste has the potential to save energy; reducing 1 kilogram of textile waste can cut carbon dioxide emissions by 3.6 kilograms and save 6000 liters of water (International Recovery Bureau, 2008, as cited in Xue et al., 2014).

There is an underlying concept of recycling, called "Cradle-to-cradle design". The idea was introduced by McDonough (2005), which takes a biomimetic approach to the design. Cradle-to-cradle design considers that all materials should be recyclable in potentially infinite circulation and aims to create a society where every material used in any products and services is in infinite circulation without causing environmental harm. Once material is excluded from recycling circulations, it can be non-reusable waste and can harm the environment. Recycling textile waste based on Cradle-to-cradle design concept formulates circulations of resources and prevents the increase of a landfill, which is not reusable anymore.

Difficulties of Recycling

Despite the benefits, the recycling rate remains very low at the current situation. According to a report from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (2015), only 2.63 million tons out of 16.22 million

tons of textile waste produced in a year in the United States was recycled. Beall (2020) explains technical reasons for low recycling rates as; complex combinations of different fibers, accessories, plastics, and metals used in clothing make it difficult to separate them for effective recycling. Sorting textile waste into various fibers and materials by machines is complicated and needs an intensive, slow process by hand (Beall, 2020). Only less than 1% of textile waste is ultimately recycled and turned into new garments because of complexity (Cooper, 2018).

Moreover, some researchers cast doubts on recycling, claiming that recycling is not the fundamental solution for the environmental problems of increasing textile waste. Ekström and Salomonson (2014) explains that "even though reuse and recycle are important actions to reduce textile waste, they still are not sufficient for dealing with the detrimental effects that increased consumption has on the environment" (p.394). Coverly et al. (2008) say that "strategies such as 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' are essential but only partial solutions to the growing waste mountain, since they tackle the symptoms, not the cause" (p.299).

However, the technology of recycling based on Cradle-to-cradle design is gradually advancing; there are companies trying to cope with the environmental problems of textile waste by technological innovations of recycling. An article issued by the Public Relations Office of Japan (2020) reports that JEPLAN, a venture company in Japan, succeeded in formulating "material to material" recycling; turning used polyester into quality clothing product equivalent to

a brand-new clothing product. If technology advances and recycling circulation, as mentioned in Cradle-to-cradle design by McDonough, is established, it directly contributes to decreasing textile waste.

Research Questions

The fast-fashion industry has popularity in affordability and accessibility of clothing products, but the industry has the structure of mass production and mass consumption, contributing to the massive increase in textile waste. Most textile waste turns into a landfill, and it has harmful environmental effects. Recycling of textile waste is conducted to cope with these environmental issues, but the recycling rate remains low due to technical problems. Assoune (2018) argues that the current fast fashion industry is not sustainable and claims the necessity of implementing new technologies and innovation in business models, manufacturing, and waste management to deliver greater economic, societal, and environmental value. The recycling system based on Cradle-to-cradle design proposed by McDonough has the potential to contribute to reducing a landfill by formulating sustainable circulation of resources. Therefore, I reached the following research questions:

1. What kinds of technologies are necessary to formulate an infinite recycling model of clothing based on Cradle-to-cradle design?
2. What can manufacturers of the fast fashion industry do to contribute to realizing the infinite recycling model?

In order to answer these questions, I will be examining the technological feasibility of forming an infinite recycling

system of textile waste and efforts by manufacturers as outlined in the following section. I will conduct an interview with a recycling company and an observation on a recycling campaign initiated by a fast-fashion company as primary research.

Methodology

Based on my research questions, I seek the feasibility of formulating infinite recycling programs of clothing and the possibility of contributions manufacturers can make to realize this model.

To address the question regarding its feasibility, I need the information on the obstacles to realize this recycling model and possible solutions to them. Currently, the technology of infinite recycling system of clothing has not been established yet, so identifying the technological and non-technological barriers is the first step. For example, the cost of establishing and running might be one of the non-technological barriers. On the other hand, I need to get information on the latest technology that can overcome the current obstacles and can help realize sustainable recycling models of clothing; it can give me clear insights into the prospect of how the infinite recycling model can be established.

I also need information about manufacturers' current efforts and possible efforts they can make in the near future to help formulating an endless recycling program of clothing based on Cradle-to-cradle design. For example, information on the potential to utilize recyclable materials in producing new clothing will be helpful. Some companies in the fashion industry have their original recycling programs, and I might get information

about their effectiveness. Considering efforts and possible efforts manufacturers can make for an infinite recycling program will give a new insight into the problem of increasing textile waste from the manufacturers' side.

I set the target audiences to JEPLAN and UNIQLO. JEPLAN is a Japanese venture company, which is developing a cutting-edge technology of recycling textile waste into new clothing and fuels for cars. I will ask JEPLAN about the technical issues of realizing the infinite recycling system and prospects of this since JEPLAN has knowledge and expertise on recycling technology of clothing. On the other hand, UNIQLO is the suitable target audience to get information from the manufacturer's perspective. UNIQLO is a leading and influential company in the fast-fashion industry and currently initiating its original recycling program. I can obtain information on the program's effectiveness and how UNIQLO is contributing to the recycling system as a manufacturer. For these reasons, JEPLAN and UNIQLO seem the most appropriate target audiences for my research.

I will conduct online interviews with JEPLAN and UNIQLO. Interviews allow asking different questions spontaneously, depending on the companies' responses. Online interviews have merits in convenience since distance does not matter. Taking account of the current situation of the Covid-19, having interviews online seem safe and convenient. Synthesizing the results from the two interviews will give insights into the answers for the research questions.

Results

I conducted an online interview with JEPLAN on November 26, 2020. It lasted for 30 minutes and Zoom, an online meeting system, was used. On the other hand, I could not have an online interview with UNIQLO due to declination for the interview. Instead, I conducted an observation of a TV program that I found, "Gaia no yoake", which focused on the sustainable campaign by UNIQLO. The TV program was broadcasted on November 10, 2020 from TV TOKYO Corporation.

Technological Barriers

There are technological barriers, which has not been overcome yet to realize an ideal infinite recycling model. According to the interview with JEPLAN, it is impossible to cover every material in one recycling facility. Also, before recycling, the process of separating clothing depending on materials is required. This process requires human tasks since the machines cannot sort clothing into categories currently.

Advance of Recycling Technology

According to the interview with JEPLAN, recycling technology is advancing. JEPLAN has developed the technology of recycling clothing made by polyester, which used to be difficult to recycle. Polyester is widely used and its need is on the rise, but it has more environmental burden. It produces more carbon dioxide compared to other materials, but recycling polyester will be helpful. JEPLAN succeeded in developing chemical recycling system. Chemical recycling utilizes chemical reactions and breaks down polyester fibers into monomer, the smallest component molecule, then returning monomer into

recycled polyester after removing impurities. It does not require a process of removing impurities perfectly before recycling by hand, so it is more efficient. Chemical recycling system is relatively new technology, but it enables recycling without losing a quality of original substances. Mechanical recycling, the conventional way of recycling, heats materials and change them into new forms, but it downgrades the quality of materials after recycling in many cases. JEPLAN succeeded in developing chemical recycling of polyester, producing recycled polyester in high quality, and diminishing environmental effects.

Non-technological Barrier: Cost Issue

Recycling costs money since there are complex procedures to recycle. According to the interview with JEPLAN, recycled materials tend to be more expensive than new materials made by oil. Producing clothing exclusively from recycled materials is expensive and not attractive for customers in terms of the price. Trying to seek more manufacturers that consent to use recycled polyester to some extent for sustainability in their products is important. The CEO of UNIQLO says that it is worthless to tackle with sustainability by merely raising prices. The sustainable campaign should also be well-balanced with business. Otherwise, the sustainable campaign does not last long.

Efforts by Manufacturers

In the interview, JEPLAN pointed out that manufacturers can contribute to recycling by using recycled materials and recyclable materials as responsibilities of manufacturers. The TV program introduced the sustainable campaign led by UNIQLO.

Discussion

In this research, I have sought to find out the kinds of technologies that are necessary to formulate an infinite recycling system of clothing based on Cradle-to-cradle design and what manufacturers can do to contribute to realizing the system. This section addresses the feasibility of an infinite recycling system of clothing based on Cradle-to-cradle design and what is required for this achievement in the future.

Cradle-to-cradle Design: Importance

McDonough (2005) introduced Cradle-to-cradle design: all materials used in products should be safely recyclable and potentially infinite circulations. An infinite recycling system of clothing is one model of Cradle-to-cradle design. It enables circulating resources, saving energy, and reducing textile waste, which turns into a landfill. Therefore, it has the potential to diminish environmental impacts. Assoune (2018) argues the necessity of implementing innovation in manufacturing and waste management to create economic, societal, and environmental value. An infinite recycling system of textile waste based on Cradle-to-cradle design could be a challenge to realize the innovation.

Technological Development for Infinite Recycling System

There are still technological obstacles for constructing an infinite recycling model. As Beall (2020) argues, clothing is made of complex combinations of different fibers and materials, so the process of sorting clothing depending on materials has been an obstacle for efficient recycling. An interview with JEPLAN revealed that currently, this process

UNIQLO is trying to be a frontier company that tackles with environmental sustainability in the fast fashion industry. UNIQLO initiated Re:UNIQLO campaign; UNIQLO gathers used clothing at shops and reuse for refugee support and recycle for producing recycled materials. UNIQLO embarked on producing 100% recycled down jackets by collecting and recycling used UNIQLO down jackets from customers. UNIQLO has a partnership with TORAY, a textile company in Japan to facilitate recycling feather used in down jackets. UNIQLO tries to adopt recycled materials into other products as well, utilizing its original collecting project.

Need to Formulate Recycling System

In the interview, JEPLAN pointed out the importance of formulating recycling system connecting recycling companies, manufacturers, and consumers. Developing technology is important, but involving more manufacturers and consumers in recycling is more important, according to JEPLAN. Even if recycling technology is developed alone, it does not bring full advantages of recycling. More manufacturers that adopt recycled and recyclable materials, and more consumers who contribute to recycling their used clothing are essential. Admittedly, there is a limit of recycling to address with the problem of increasing textile waste due to mass production and mass consumption. However, JEPLAN hopes that establishing the infinite recycling system can spread the value of recycled products and inspire the society to tackle with sustainable issues.

cannot be conducted without human tasks. Therefore, developing the technology of sorting clothing automatically based on materials can make this process smoother and facilitate more recycling in the near future.

On the other hand, JEPLAN stressed in the interview that the technology of recycling textile waste is gradually developing. JEPLAN established the recycling technology of polyester clothing by developing a chemical recycling system that is different from mechanical recycling, which is conventionally used. JEPLAN successfully recycled polyester used in clothing and turned it into new clothing with high-quality thanks to this technology. The technology has the importance since polyester is created by oil and has more environmental impacts than other materials. As this case illustrates, technology is developing, and technological advance can potentially remove the current technological barriers and help realize the infinite recycling system of textile waste.

Necessity for Trilateral Cooperation

However, the issue of cost exists as a barrier to realize the infinite recycling system based on Cradle-to-cradle design. The interview with JEPLAN revealed that recycling requires cost and recycled materials tend to be expensive, and customers might not choose the products made by recycled materials if it is expensive. For both recycling companies and manufacturers, keeping the balance between sustainability actions and their business is an essential but difficult issue; neither the business nor the sustainable projects will last long otherwise.

Moreover, recycling alone cannot solve

the environmental problems due to increasing textile waste. Researchers admit that recycling is a beneficial action, but it is not enough to address the detrimental effects of increasing textile waste due to mass production and mass consumption in the fashion industry (Ekström & Salomonson, 2014; Coverly et al., 2008). The interview with JEPLAN also mentioned the limitation of the recycling system to address the enormous problem. Kock (2020) argues the growth of the fast-fashion industry coupled with the increasing demand for inexpensive clothing, so the trend in the structure of mass production and mass consumption can be here to stay.

Therefore, trilateral cooperation among recycling companies, manufacturers, and customers is indispensable to cope with the enormous problem and to achieve Cradle-to-cradle design in the fashion industry. Only efforts by recycling companies and few manufacturers do not have significant impacts on society and cannot realize the model. Recycling companies, manufacturers, and consumers each need to clarify their role in the cooperation system, which consequently encourages more engagement of the three actors in facilitating the infinite recycling system based on Cradle-to-cradle design.

Sustainable Society: Cradle-to-cradle in Fashion Industry

It seems worth tackling to realize an infinite recycling system based on Cradle-to-cradle design, considering the possibilities of diminishing environmental impacts and the value it can convey to society. The infinite recycling system can turn textile waste into reusable recycled materials and new

products and diminishes the environmental impacts arising from increasing textile waste. As the interview with JEPLAN illustrates, the technology of recycling is gradually advancing and can potentially overcome the current technical obstacles soon. Therefore, constructing the infinite recycling system in society will be more critical.

To formulate the system, it is necessary for recycling companies, consumers, and manufacturers to understand their role and work collaboratively. Regarding recycling companies, they can contribute to the system by recycling technology; they can recycle collected textile waste and turn it into valuable materials and products. They need to find more manufacturers that consent to adopt recycled materials and put the cost of producing recycled materials lower by having more partnerships, thus encouraging the recycling system. Regarding manufacturers, more manufacturers should contribute to the system by adopting recycled and recyclable materials into their products as much as possible. According to observation into the TV program, UNIQLO is producing 100% recycled down jackets and trying to adopt recycled materials into their products as a pioneering company in the fast-fashion industry. Also, retailing stores of manufacturers can set more collecting stations of textile waste for recycling. Consumers can take their textile waste to the collecting stations for recycling, not the garbage. There seems much room to improve engagement not only from manufacturers and but also from consumers. I suggest that manufacturers appeal the value of recycling actions and their recycled products to the customers when selling their products.

For example, notifying consumers by stating that "the product is made from recycled and recyclable materials, and this is also recyclable. Please turn back to the recycling box after using up" will be possible. It can stimulate the customer's awareness of sustainability issues and encourage them to engage in recycling, thus connecting consumers with recycling companies. Once a cooperation system among the three key players is established, it will help facilitate an infinite recycling system based on Cradle-to-cradle society.

As Ekström & Salomonson (2014) argue, recycling alone cannot instantly solve the problem of increasing textile waste due to mass production and consumption. However, the importance of constructing the infinite recycling system of textile waste potentially goes beyond the practical effects of recycling. The recycling system's innovation can diminish environmental impacts by saving energy and resources and convey greater societal and environmental value as a new paradigm. This paradigm can work in the long run and change the current structure of the fashion industry of mass production and mass consumption in the future when the societal view is changed towards sustainability.

Conclusion

Increasing textile waste has enormous impacts on the environment. The research found out that formulating an infinite recycling system of textile waste based on Cradle-to-cradle design is crucial to cope with the problem. To achieve this goal, building a trilateral cooperation system among recycling companies, manufacturers, and consumers is necessary in addition to tech-

nological development of recycling. The primary research focused on the perspectives of manufacturers and recycling companies, and thus this research has limitations in the extent to which the consumers' viewpoints are reflected. In the future research, as well as finding out the effectiveness of the implemented system, it is essential to focus on how the consumers can contribute to the promotion of recycling and the solution for the environmental problems of textile waste.

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Meet and Eat new Meat: Insects

Sae Tomiyama

Sae Tomiyama is a sophomore student. Her essay “Meet and Eat new Meat: Insects” was submitted ENG100, Composition I, under the supervision of professor Joel Friederich. Thanks to the instructor who loves poetry, she came up with the rhymed title. She is interested in food, and she came up with this topic because restaurants and supermarkets have started to offer food that substitutes meat and protein, such as, soy meat, artificial meat, and insects. As for Tomiyama’s future research, she wants to study about the psychological and marketing approaches to spread such novel foods for the next generation.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announced that global average surface temperature would increase by approximately 2.0 by 2050 and 4.8 by 2100 in the worst case. The temperature rise has countless impacts; destruction of the ecosystem, abnormal climate, and risks for diseases, including malaria and dengue fever (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2018). Around 2050, some current university students would build their careers, and others would raise their children. In 80 years, in 2100, our descendants would follow such life plans. To avoid the worst scenario and protect the earth for the next generation, it is time to change our habits. The easiest means is changing our eating habits, especially meat consumption. Meat is an essential ingredient for everyday meals, and a source of protein; however, livestock emits methane and nitrous oxide, harmful substances for global warming. The emission of those greenhouse gases by livestock accounts for 14.5 % of the total (Gerber et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the demand for meat has been increasing due to the in-

crease in population and the change in food preferences. For example, in China, one of the developing countries, meat consumption has been increasing rapidly (Ritchie, 2017). Therefore, we have to consider ways to shift the demand for meat or protein away from animal meat, and to supply enough protein while reducing the environmental impacts. In other words, we have to consider substituting meat with other foods.

In response to such a situation, there are three potential alternatives; plant-based meat, cultivated meat, and insects. Firstly, plant-based meat is food that looks and tastes like real meat without any animal-based ingredients. For example, Beyond Meat, a famous plant-based meat company in the United States, uses soybeans and brown grains for proteins, cacao, coconut, and canola for fats. Beyond Meat sells various types of plant-based meat products, sausages, beef crumbles, and patties for hamburgers (Beyond Meat, n.d.). Secondly, cultivated meat is food that looks and tastes like meat; however, it is grown in laboratories. The process

is the following; exacting muscle cells from cows, causing the same process as muscle’s creating new muscle in cows’ bodies, and arranging the appearances into patties (Mosa Meat, n.d.). Thirdly, insects are the exact bugs we know, for example, grasshoppers, caterpillars, beetles (Huis et al, 2013). They do not look and taste like meat; however, they can be a source of protein.

Now, plant-based meat and cultivated meat attracts attention as a promising business. Many major food companies have launched plant-based meat businesses. Bruce Friedrich, who runs the Good Food Institute, an organization that advocates plant-based substitutes, says in The New York Times article, that “When companies like Tyson and Smithfield launch plant-based meat products, that transforms the plant-based meat sector from niche to mainstream,” and “They have massive distribution channels, they have enthusiastic consumer bases, and they know what meat needs to do to satisfy consumers” (Yaffe-Bellan, 2019). In other words, thanks to giant meat companies’ entering into plant-based meat markets, plant-based meat would gain a popular position. Also, since Dr. Mark Post of Maastricht University created the first cell cultivated meat, many researchers and companies have started to work on the project. In “Five companies at the forefront of the cultured meat revolution”, Michael Dent (2020) stated that “Over the last few years, start-ups around the world have been racing to bring the first cultured meat products to market”. To his point, the competition for cultivated meat is so fierce that rapid growth is expected. Therefore, plant-based meat and cultivated meat are dominant. However, I

disagree. I believe that insects are the most promising as a meat alternative. Firstly, insects are eco-friendly in that they emit fewer greenhouses and save natural resources, including land, water, and feed. Secondly, insects do not contain unhealthy and harmful substances; rather they are rich in nutrition.

From the viewpoint of environmental impacts, more specifically, greenhouse emission, and the use of natural resources, water, land, and feed, insects have many advantages. In the first place, animal meat imposes a heavy burden on the environment because not only does it emit a large amount of greenhouse gases as I have shown above but also uses a significant amount of water and land. For 1 g of protein, cows use 112 L of water, and 254 m of land, including land for feed production and animal rearing (Miglietta, De Leo, Ruberti & Massari, 2015; Hinder, 2016). Therefore, to gain a substitute position for animal meat, the alternatives should emit fewer greenhouse gases, and use less water and land. At a glance, all the three alternatives look to meet the requirements because plant-based meat and breeding insects do not deal with livestock and cultivated meat requires muscle cells instead of cows themselves.

However, unfortunately, plant-based and cultivated meat does not meet the expectations because the former needs soybeans, whose production is one of the causes of deforestation, and the latter requires a large amount of plastic materials in the process. Growing beans for plant-based meat would lead to accelerating deforestation. According to WWF (2014), from 2000 to 2010, 24 million ha area in South America were converted into cultivation, of which soy-

bean accounts for 20 million ha. Furthermore, it would be almost impossible to increase the production of soybeans because there are already demands for soybeans from food and fuel. If plant-based meat requires more soybeans, it will drive deforestation. Therefore, plant-based meat cannot be a potential alternative because it has an unfavorable impact on the ecosystem.

Also, Eric Muraille, a biologist, Immunologist Maître de recherche au FNRS, Université Libre de Bruxelles in “Cultured meat could create more problems than it solves” in *The Conversation* (2019) reveals that cultivated meat uses a significant amount of plastic materials. Cultivated meat needs plastic materials by nature because it does not have the immune systems that normal animal cells have. To make highly sanitary environments for cultivated meat production, disposable plastic materials are indispensable. Recently, the global community asks to refrain from using plastic materials because of the environmental impacts, for example, releasing harmful substances into the air on disposal and marine pollution (Ujeh, 2020). Therefore, the shift to cultivated meat means going against the recent eco-friendly trend. Both sources point out the environmental effects of plant-based meat and cultivated meat. However, they show the impacts from different viewpoints; plant-based meat requires land for farming, which causes deforestation, while cultivated meat requires plastic materials. Therefore, those alternatives have environmental effects equivalent to the conventional meat industry, and they are not likely to replace animal meat.

On the contrary, insects emit significant-

ly fewer gases, requiring less water and land. For 1 kg mass gain, mealworms and crickets emit one-hundredth of CO₂ beef cattle do (Huis et al, 2013). Moreover, mealworms use 23 L of water for 1 g protein, one-fifth the amount of water cows require, and crickets use 8 m² of land, one-thirty the land cows require (Miglietta, De Leo, Ruberti & Masari, 2015; Hinder, 2016). Furthermore, insects have a high feed conversion efficiency. To produce insects that are equivalent to 1 kg, it requires one-eighth the amount cows require (Huis, 2013). A high feed conversion efficiency contributes to reducing the use of energy and CO₂ emission on trading. The production of animal feed relies on particular countries, and many countries import feed from them. For example, Japan imports 30 million tons of grass hay, corn, and barley, for livestock feed (Fujinosan, n.d.). Therefore, if we can reduce the amount of animal feed, we can also reduce CO₂ emission in this viewpoint. In these ways, insects can solve many environmental concerns that animal meat and other alternative meat have.

Moreover, insects are superior to the other two alternatives because insects do not contain unhealthy and harmful components, rather they are rich in nutrients. Jessica McGee, the Food and Nutrition Services Clinical Nutrition Manager at Children’s National, (2020) points out the positive and negative effects of plant-based meat in “Is fake meat good or bad for kids?”. Because plant-based meat is made from beans and grains, it contains antioxidants and fiber compared with other alternative meats and even animal meat. Furthermore, plant-based meat has a low-risk of diseases caused by raw food, includ-

ing Salmonella or E.coli infection, because plant-based meat has already been cooked and heated. On the other hand, she is concerned about extra nutrition in plant-based meat. Plant-based meat contains a large amount of sodium. For example, per 100g, ground beef contains 75 mg of sodium, while one famous plant-based meat, Beyond Meat, includes as much as 398 mg per 100 g. In other words, plant-based meat contains approximately five times the amount of sodium. Excessive intake of sodium could increase blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which trigger heart disease or stroke. Therefore, because plant-based has risks for lifestyle disease, it cannot be a promising alternative.

Along with McGee, Muraille, the same biologist introduced earlier in the same article, warns of more serious health impacts of cultivated meat. He argues that cultivated meat can trigger endocrine disruptors. In his view, “Unless the use of plastic in the production of meat by cell culture is tightly controlled, the meat could be contaminated with endocrine disruptors and other substances before it is even packaged.” His point is that cultivated meat involves risks for disturbing human bodies’ growth, development, and condition because cultivated meat is exposed to plastic materials not only in packing but also in production. Both McGee and Muraille mention the adverse effects caused by the common point that plant-based meat and cultivated meat are artificial.

From the viewpoints of health impacts as well, insects prevail over the two alternatives because they do not contain unhealthy and harmful ingredients, rather insects contain multiple nutrients. And also, the con-

cerns for diseases can be solved by traditional practice of eating insects. Because insects are natural organisms, they do not contain unhealthy and harmful components as two authors above concerns for. According to Huis et al (2013), dried grasshoppers have approximately twice the amount of protein of maize. Furthermore, insects contain plenty of copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium, and zinc; therefore, they supplement various nutrients. In regards to a risk of diseases, people do not have to care about it. Huis et al (2013) mentioned that under the same sanitary condition as other foods, there are not cases of transmission of diseases or being parasitized. This suggestion would be supported by the traditional habits of eating insects, entomophagy. For example, Asian, South American, and African countries have been familiar with insects as food for a long time (Holland, 2013). Considering these facts, insects are worth eating because they are natural stuff, rich in nutrition, and the safety is proven by traditional practice.

Although I strongly praise insects as alternative meat in terms of environmental and health impacts, insects have a fatal flaw; disgust. Castro and Chambers, researchers on sensory analysis and consumer behavior in Kansas State University, (2019) revealed that for people who are not willing to eat insects, the two most vital reasons are the appearance and negative image that insects make them sick. However, those barriers can be eliminated with familiar cuisine using insects. These days, some companies and restaurants offer products and cuisine derived from insects. For example, Ryohin Keikaku Co., Ltd has sold Cricket Crackers,

and one ramen shop in Tokyo sells ramen with cricket powders and fried crickets on the surface (Ryohin Keikaku Co., Ltd, 2020; Ozawa, 2020). As these examples show, there are many opportunities to try to eat insects with processed forms and familiar cuisine.

Furthermore, throughout those experiences, insects can take root in people who do not eat insects now and in their culture eventually. Massimo Reverberi, a Bangkok-based expert of edible insects (2018), argued that it is possible to make insects familiar as time goes because human behavior depends on the behavior around them, called a social proof theory. In other words, with the movement of eating insects, the trend would spread. Also, historically, people have been adapting to new ingredients. Raw fish in western countries is a good example. In Western culture, people did not have a custom of eating raw fish; however, after introducing sushi, they have started law fish (Feng, 2011). The two sources suggest the possibility of acceptance of insects as food from human behavioral and historical viewpoints. Therefore, trying to eat insects in familiar ways would dispel disgust, and such movement would con-

tribute to making insects familiar in society.

In conclusion, the young generation should consider insects as the most promising substitute for meat because it emits few greenhouse gases, requires little water, land, and feed. Moreover, insects contain multiple nutrients and do not have risk for diseases. Even though I support insects, I do not support insects only, and I also recognize that some people are not willing to eat insects right now. Instead, my present proposal is that people should intake proteins from various kinds of food, including animal meat, plant-based meat, cultivated meat, and insects, in a good balance, and be open-minded to eating insects. To make insects more familiar, I propose that schools and universities serve optional lunch meals using insect food fairs. For example, Don Bigito held events that serve five-course edible insect meals (Don Bigito, 2018). Throughout these events, students who hesitate to eat insects can be motivated by their friends to eat insects. With such opportunities, the day will come when people eat and enjoy meals using insects around the dinner table.

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The Influence of Discounts, Reviews, and Ratings in Hotel Booking

Rin Saito

Rin Saito is a graduate of the year 2020/2021, who was majoring in Global Business. Her essay "The Influence of Discounts, Reviews, and Ratings in Hotel Booking" was submitted in the Global Business Capstone Seminar under the supervision of Professor Sungkyu Lee. Saito has had a strong interest in digital marketing in tourism. She specifically became intrigued with the consumers' decision-making process on hotel booking sites because she has questioned the design of hotel booking sites, which hotel operators have little control over. Her goal is to help small and mid-sized enterprises prosper in the competitive hotel industry with the minimum cost on the advertising budget because they usually have limited budgets. As for Saito's future research endeavors, she would like to study the influence of certain attributes on booking sites, especially ratings and reviews, with elaborated models and data collection.

Abstract

Hotel booking has become a common tool for tourists due to technology development. During the decision-making process, consumers look at booking websites' attributes to ensure the quality of rooms and services. Ratings and reviews, in particular, are the criteria that the tourists chiefly consider. Besides, the discount level is another vital factor that affects consumers' booking intention. In this paper, the influence and relationship of three attributes, ratings, review volume, and the discount level, were analyzed to understand how consumers build trust in a hotel, which ultimately leads to a booking. This paper mainly concerns why the attributes are the determinants of consumers' booking intention. The effect of review volume and discount on the hotel rating's trustworthiness is also discussed. A within-subject research design was used to compare eight combinations of the three attributes: 2 (high vs. low rating) x 2 (high vs. low number of reviews) x 2 (high vs. low discount rates). Fifty-one participants answered a survey via Google Form. The majority of participants were college students. This paper's main finding is that a high discount is ineffective when a hotel has a bad rating on a booking website. A high discount attracts consumers when a hotel is rated high regardless of the review volume.

1. Introduction

In light of globalization, the tourism industry has been expanding as people are keen to encounter new cultural experiences, which is caused by the emerging low-priced supplementary goods and services. Many countries have expected positive economic impacts from tourism for the last decades, considering that tourism has positively contributed to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, tourism's business volume is now equally or even more than that of oil exports, food products, or automobiles (The World Tourism Organization, 2011). In 2019, UNWTO reported that international tourists increased by 5% in 2018; that is, 1.4 billion arrivals were recorded in total that year (The World Tourism Organization, 2019). The reasons behind the expansion of tourism are "a growing middle class in emerging economies, technological advances, new business models, affordable travel costs and visa facilitation," the report states (p. 2).

As the number of tourists rises, the hospitality segment, which serves guests with the provision of food, drink, and accommodation (Slattery, 2002), needs a change to adjust to new demands. Among the three main hospitality venues, there are various branched categories. Hotel is one kind of accommodations. Hotels can be classified into different segments based on prices, locations, and management styles. The diversification of accommodation types has occurred due to various demands from consumers who have different preferences or purposes for their trips, such as business and leisure (Kim et al., 2020; Read, 2019)

The process of selecting hotels also var-

ies these days. Relatively old generations prefer the traditional way to book hotels; for instance, visiting travel agents or making a call directly to hotels. Meanwhile, on the other hand, young people who are familiar with new technologies prefer booking on the internet (Boto-García et al., 2021). Offline channels are still in use. However, online travel agents (OTAs) have become viral thanks to technological development. Cazaubiel et al. (2020) consider that once consumers utilize OTA, they would choose to keep finding hotels online. Even when their preferable hotels are absent, they would try another OTA instead of switching to traditional direct channels. The number of tourists reserving hotels by telephone has declined by 44.1% between 2005 and 2016 (Boto-García et al., 2021).

To respond to the growing demand for OTA, online consumer behavior and decision-making have been studied. Researchers have discussed how attributes on hotel booking sites, such as price, room quality, service, food quality, discounts, or brand familiarity, may affect travelers' purchase intentions (Kim et al., 2020; Hu & Yang, 2020). A.R. Golmohammadi et al. (2012) claim that tourists' online behavior is highly influenced by perceived risks and Word-of-Mouth (WOM). Consumers stop using certain websites if they find untrustworthy factors within the system or public negative comments.

There have been studies about the importance of hotels' representation on third-party websites, as written above. However, the relationship between discount rates and the customers' evaluation has not been fully discussed yet. Considering the vulnerability of hotels due to the difficulty of controlling us-

ers' evaluation, hotel management needs to minimize this risk. Moreover, proper offering of discounts is crucial because consumers may associate a significant discount with lower service quality (Hu & Yang, 2020). Hotel management sectors should understand the appropriate and practical range of discounts. To define the relationship between consumers' evaluation of hotels and the effectiveness of discounts, this paper will discuss the roles that discounts, review volume, and ratings play in hotel booking by conducting a survey and analyzing the correlation of the research model's primary constructs.

2. Literature review and Hypothesis

2.1. Online Consumer Reviews and Trustworthiness

It is not easy for consumers to effectively find products that meet their expectations because they need to deal with a tremendous amount of information on the internet (Gavilan et al., 2018). Thus, Online Consumer Reviews (OCR) are a critical factor for consumers to consider (El-Said, 2020). OCR refers to former users' "any positive, negative, or neutral comment, rating, ranking" of goods and services or brands, which are shared on any type of online platforms (Filieri, 2016, p.47). Nowadays, OCR can easily be found on Social Network Services, third-party's websites, or online booking sites. Lien et al. (2015) discuss that the key factor that leads consumers to book a hotel is the trustworthiness shown in either verbal and numerical reviews. Accordingly, the high credibility which consumers detect from OCR eventually enhances booking intention, especially when hotels are not orig-

inally trusted by customers. Although the definition of trustworthiness varies in this context, Filieri (2016) defines a trustworthy review as "a review that is perceived by the reader as the honest, sincere, truthful, and non-commercial opinion of a customer who has experienced a product or a service" (p. 48). Given that evaluations are trustworthy, consumers choose to purchase a product or refuse to do so if the hotel lacks credibility.

2.2. Ratings and Reviews

In the hotel industry's OCR, the rating is a useful evaluation for consumers using online hotel booking systems. Gavilan et al. (2018) explain the decision-making process in hotel booking. During the first stage of the purchasing process, consumers look at the overall ratings to narrow down their choices. At this moment, bad ratings are more trustworthy than good ratings because consumers unconsciously believe that deceitful motivation is not involved in negative content. More specifically, the review volume's moderating effects exist in the relationship between the number of ratings and its trustworthiness. That is, low ratings would be trusted regardless of the number of reviews. On the other hand, consumers only trust high ratings if there is a high number of them.

Reviews are needed as proof of the real staying experiences, thus the same thing can be said for review content. Negative evaluations are trusted more than positive evaluations (Filieri, 2016; El-Said, 2020; Casalo, 2015; D. Gavilan et al., 2018). El-said (2020) argues that consumers actively look for negative comments to understand possible characteristics of a particular hotel that

they might dislike in advance. On the contrary, positive reviews are more likely to be ignored because they bring a sense of marketing or promotion done by hotel managers.

From the managers' perspective, it is crucial to check reviews and ratings on online booking sites because consumers are sensitive to other users' opinions (El-Said, 2020). Although the negative reviews have a more substantial impact, consumers build trust and sympathy for hotels if they find managers answering negative comments to solve a problem (Casalo, 2015). However, most importantly, hotels need a good rating supported by a high number of reviews to attract potential customers. Additionally, the content of reviews should be positive.

2.3 Discounts

The hotel industry is vulnerable because it feeds on tourism. The demand fluctuates dynamically, especially during crises. Even without such a severe condition, hotels have less demand during off-peak. Thus, hotels use discounts to offer the most satisfying experiences for customers and maximize the profits from the present demand (Hanks et al., 2002). There have been studies to understand how consumers react to individual discounts on a particular product.

Sheehan et al. (2019) studied how consumers respond to discounts throughout an entire shopping trip in an online environment to understand an overall optimal discount structure. It found that consumers' purchase intentions are not influenced by discounts at the beginning of their shopping experience. The authors created a lead structure (15%, 30%, 45%) and a build

structure (45%, 30%, 15%) as a set of discounts. A build structure was found to raise purchase intention. It boosts the effectiveness of discounts more than a lead structure because consumers' expectations are broad at the beginning of a shopping experience. By being exposed to different ranges of discounts, consumers are gradually influenced to increase their purchase intention.

Since consumers are skeptical about whether the price they see is the lowest among shops or websites, they have a high search intention to seek an even better discount level. Moreover, search intention is higher for price-conscious consumers because they want a better deal regardless of the discount level (Alford & Biswas, 2002). However, it is not effective to implement random high discounts. There are different arguments about the practical discount level. Hu & Yang (2020) state that discounts do not always stimulate hotel bookings because it may urge consumers to doubt the hotels' quality by associating significant discounts with lower service quality.

Similarly, Carlson & Kukar-Kinney (2018) found that hotels' perceived credibility reduces as the magnitude of discounts increases on an advertisement, which ultimately lowers consumers' booking intentions. Hanks et al. (2002) also argue that discounts should be as deep as possible to stimulate consumers but not so deep that they lose the attraction to a particular hotel. On the other hand, Alford and Biswas (2002) state that "low price guarantee may serve as a signal of a retailer's confidence that their price is the lowest available for a given product" (as cited in Urbany, 2002,

p.782). In sum, discounts are generally used to lure consumers to shopping, and the effectiveness may differ depending on the level and the way consumers perceive them. Besides, there is no "correct" discount level.

3. Hypothesis

Taking the previous studies into consideration, this paper set up hypotheses about how consumers select hotels based on three attributes: rating, the number of reviews, and the magnitude of discounts. Hypothesis 1 and 2 are designed to see if the study follows what the existing studies have discovered: consumers prefer booking hotels with good ratings, and hotels are perceived as more trustworthy when they are supported by many reviews (Gavilan et al., 2018). Therefore,

H1: Hotels with good ratings are more likely to be booked than hotels with bad ratings.

H2: Hotels with good ratings and a high number of reviews are more likely to be booked than hotels with good ratings but with a low number of reviews because consumers associate high review volume with high trustworthiness.

Consumers are sensitive to a high level of discount because they become skeptical about the hotels' credibility due to the perceived risk (Hu & Yang, 2020; Carlson & Kukar-Kinney, 2018). Thus, consumers may prefer having a significant discount if ratings and the number of reviews assure the high quality of hotels because high ratings can be trustworthy for consumers when supported by a high number of reviews (Gavilan et al., 2018). Therefore,

H3: If the number of reviews is high, significantly large discounts stimulate booking intention when the rating is good because consumers associate high review volume with high trustworthiness.

On the contrary, consumers perceive risks when a hotel is rated good yet did not receive an adequate number of reviews. In this case, a considerable discount may not work because consumers would already be skeptical of hotels' quality, as Gavilan et al. (2018) discuss. Therefore,

H4: If the number of reviews is low, significantly large discounts do not stimulate booking intention even when the rating is good because consumers associate low review volume with low trustworthiness.

Consumers prefer hotels with higher ratings. The number of reviews does not affect hotel selection if ratings are generally low because consumers trust low ratings regardless of the volume of reviews (Gavilan et al., 2018). A considerable discount may give hotels a "boomerang effect," which means that a high discount increases a hotel's negative image when it has a lousy rating rather than boosting the number of bookings (Hu & Yang, 2020, p. 23). Therefore,

H5: Significantly large discounts do not stimulate booking intention when the rating and the review volume are low.

4. Methodology

To test the influence of the rating, the number of reviews, and discounts on hotel selection, this paper applied a within-subject research design for 2 (high vs. low rating) x 2 (high vs. low number of reviews) x

2 (high vs. low discount rates) (refer to Figure 1). This model is partly derived from Gavilian et al. (2018). A new independent variable, the level of discount, was added.

3.1 Stimuli

Participants looked at a fictitious hotel booking site and were asked to rate attributes of eight stimuli. Its basic design imitates one of the largest booking sites, Booking.com, because consumers consider the information offered by well-known OTA as more useful and reliable (Casalo et al., 2015). Each stimulus has the main three attributes, the valence of ratings, review volume, and discount rate. Besides, four basic information are derived from an example of a hotel profile from Hu & Yang (2020): a hotel's photo, hotel's name, original price, and listed price. There is also information about location, room type, and free cancellation (refer to Figure 2). Since this paper focuses on the valence of ratings, review volume, and discount rate, all attributes except these three remain constant. Each hotel represents a different combinations of the three attributes (refer to Table 1). High is described as "H." "L" represents low to simplify the display. For example, hotel 1 is described as HHL, which means the hotel has a high rating, high review volume, and a low discount rate. This abbreviation system is adapted in other tables too.

Hotel's photo: Derived from google. An illustration was used to prevent participants from guessing the quality of hotels, which eventually may affect the hotel selection.

Hotel's name: Named as fictitiously as possible, so the reader's familiarity with any hotel is not considered.

Original price: Average price for a double occupancy room in Rome is €134 according to Budget Your Travel (n.d.). Based on the exchange rate between Euro and Yen as of November 5th, 2020, the original price is set up as ¥16381.

Listed price: Calculated the original price with discount rates.

The valence of rating: Ratings were made based on Gavilian et al. (2018). The authors calculated the average ratings from each of the first and fourth quartiles on an online booking website. To elaborate the rating system, a 1-10 scale was adopted in their research. However, this paper adopted a 1-5 scale because it is often used among hotel booking sites. Thus, their ratings are divided by 2. Therefore, a high rating is 4.6, and a low rating is 1.6.

Review volume: A high number of reviews, 1000, was derived from Hu & Yang (2020). A low number of reviews is set as 10 to differentiate from the former one.

Discount rate: To emphasize the difference between high and low discount rates, this paper selects 10% as the low and 60% as the high.

3.2 Data collection

Participants (N=51) voluntarily answered the questionnaire. The survey was conducted via Google Form and had a short description of a scenario. The scenario is "You are going to spend your holidays in Europe with your friend/partner for seven days. Now you are looking at a hotel booking site to book a hotel in Rome for one night. You will see eight choices of hotels like the picture below. Please look at them carefully. For your

information, the location of the hotel and the room type are all the same." Then participants were asked to answer how they perceive ratings, review volume, and discount rates of eight hotels with three levels of response: high, low, and neither of them. They also evaluated the trustworthiness of ratings, quality expectation, and booking intention with a scale of one to seven. At the end of the questionnaire, there were questions about participants' demographic characteristics, such as travel frequency, budget for a hotel, and leisure in general.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic characteristics and Analysis techniques

Males accounted for 28%, while females accounted for 70% of the 51 participants. Others represented 2%. The average age was 22.8. 33% of participants' monthly budget for leisure was up to 15,000 yen. 27% of them set it up to 30,000 yen. The maximum price of a hotel for one night was 5,000 yen among 33% of participants, while 45% answered up to 10,000 yen. Travel frequency varied. However, the most popular answer was three to four times a year (31%). The average was 3.8 times a year.

To analyze the impact of attributes, pooled data (n=408; 8 stimuli x 51 participants) was sorted by evaluations (high or low) of each attribute into eight patterns (refer to Table 2). The answers "neither of them" were excluded from the data analysis. In this way, the result can reflect the participants' actual perception of the eight patterns. For instance, Hotel 5 is designed to represent HHH. However, some of the participants

may evaluate it as LLL. However, Pattern 1's aggregated data purely represent a hotel that is perceived as HHH by participants. Since the number of participants was limited in the study, the sorting was done to analyze the attributes' relationship with each other.

4.2 Results of hypothesis

Each hypothesis was tested with independent samples t-test to compare the means of patterns. Hypothesis 1 concerns only ratings; thus, it aggregates the data of Pattern 1, 2, 3, and 4 for hotels that have high ratings. As for hotels with low ratings, the data of Patterns 5, 6, 7, and 8 were aggregated. Hypothesis 2 concerns high ratings and a low number of reviews. Therefore, the aggregated data of Patterns 1 and 2 were used to represent a hotel that is rated high and receiving many reviews. For a hotel that is rated high and lacking reviews, the data of Patterns 3 and 4 were also aggregated.

Table 3 displays each test result (Abbreviation such as H/H/H refers to High rating / High review volume / High discount level). In Hypothesis 1, the means of booking intentions were statistically significant at 1% between hotels rated high and hotels rated low ($M_{H/_/_/intention} = 4.612$ vs. $M_{L/_/_/intention} = 1.936$; $p < 0.01$). Although the means of trustworthiness were statistically insignificant, Hypothesis 1 was supported ($M_{H/_/_/trust} = 4.633$ vs. $M_{L/_/_/trust} = 4.396$; $t = -1.475$). There was a significant difference between hotels with high ratings and a high review volume and hotels with high ratings and a low review volume, in terms of booking intention and the trustworthiness of ratings at the 1% level ($M_{H/H/_/intention} = 5.319$ vs. $M_{H/L/_/intention} =$

3.92; $p < 0.01$: $M_{H/H/_/trust} = 5.582$ vs. $M_{H/L/_/trust} = 3.73$; $p < 0.01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. From Hypothesis 1 and 2, the data collected for this survey followed the previous studies' theories that consumers prefer hotels with a good rating rather than the ones with a bad rating. Besides, the review volume contributes to the trustworthiness of ratings (Gavilan et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 3, 4, and 5 were aimed to analyze the effectiveness of high discounts. The result had unexpected findings. Hypothesis 3 and 5 were supported, whereas Hypothesis 4 was not. Hypothesis 3, which concerns how a high discount affect booking intention when a hotel has a good rating and many reviews, proved that Pattern 1 and 2 were statistically significant ($M_{H/H/H/intention} = 6.094$ vs. $M_{H/H/L/intention} = 4.48$; $p < 0.01$: $M_{H/H/H/trust} = 5.79$ vs. $M_{H/H/L/trust} = 5.16$; $p < 0.05$). A high discount level is effective when the rating is good, and many reviews support it.

Hypothesis 4, concerning Pattern 3 and 4, expected that high discount rates do not stimulate booking among consumers because the trustworthiness should be low due to its low review volume. However, means of booking intention and trustworthiness were statistically different between Pattern 3 and 4 ($M_{H/L/H/intention} = 4.434$ vs. $M_{H/L/L/intention} = 3.4$; $p < 0.01$: $M_{H/L/H/trust} = 4$ vs. $M_{H/L/L/trust} = 3.267$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, a high discount level possibly stimulates booking intention even if a good rating lacks a high number of reviews as reinforcements. Hypothesis 5, which was aimed to understand the effectiveness of a large discount when the rating is low and the review volume was low, was supported. The t-score of each booking intention and trustworthi-

ness showed that pattern 7 and 8 were statistically insignificant ($M_{L/L/H/intention} = 2.052$ vs. $M_{L/L/L/intention} = 1.743$; $t = -1.439$: $M_{L/L/H/trust} = 3.690$ vs. $M_{L/L/L/trust} = 3.743$; $t = 0.159$). Therefore, a large discount may not increase bookings when hotels lack many reviews.

5. Discussion

The result was consistent with the previous study where consumers prefer hotels rated high and supported by many reviews (Gavilan et al., 2018). Although the scale of ratings differs among hotel booking sites, hotels listed on these platforms should improve the ratings because they directly influence consumers' booking intentions. As El-Said (2020) discussed, consumer behavior is positively affected by opinions from others. The trustworthiness of ratings is higher among hotels with many reviews. Consumers tend to choose options that are recommended by others so that they can minimize the risks.

The effectiveness of high discount rates was found to vary in this paper. First, significant discounts are useful for hotels rated high and received many reviews (H/H/_) when trying to increase bookings. However, this type of hotels have possibly already gained credibility and popularity on the internet. For example, resort hotels near tourist destinations or business hotels near stations and airports may always have guests if their quality is acceptable. Assuming that these companies run their business well, significant discounts may not be essential to boost bookings. Besides, discount rates do not influence ratings' trustworthiness if hotels have a good reputation. If needed, hoteliers can implement significant discounts during

the off-season to attract new customers.

Second, hotels rated high with low review volume would benefit from setting a high discount rate. The empirical result shows that a high discount rate would increase trustworthiness and booking intention. It is opposed to a theory that says significant discounts are not effective if hotels lack credibility due to their few volumes (Carlson & Kinney, 2018). However, as Alford and Biswas (2002) cited, a high discount level can sometimes show a firm's confidence. If the result is accurate, hotels offering a good quality of rooms and services but are newly opened can advertise a high discount to attract customers. Since they lack guests with staying experiences, they tend to have fewer comments. If hotels are in this situation, a high discount rate may work as an advertisement on booking websites. Even if consumers do not expect these hotels to have a high quality, hotels can alter the consumers' perspective once they experience the services. Thus, this paper recommends this type of hotels to implementing a significant discount to attract consumers who surf the internet.

Third, hotels with low ratings and review volume can hardly benefit from high discount rates (L/L/_). It is because hotels with low ratings are not chosen by consumers regardless of the number of reviews (Gavilan et al., 2018). One unexpected finding is that people's expectations of the hotel are higher when the discount level offered is high. Considering the survey participants' features in this study, youngsters may prefer cheaper hotels while traveling. Thus, high discount rates could prove that business owners' care for the hotel, which leads to consumers have

a slightly better impression. Consumers may try to maximize their benefits by choosing the cheapest one if they want to save money. Price-sensitive customers may look into the potential to have a good experience at hotels even if websites show low ratings which are supported by a few comments. Therefore, the consumers' expectations of hotels would decrease if little effort was made to improve their business' quality management.

6. Limitation

This paper has some limitations. The participants of the questionnaire were mainly university students in Japan who are relatively price-sensitive. Also, the data collection was done on Facebook. Therefore, most participants were students of Akita International Students. Since the university requires one year of study abroad as a mandatory requirement for graduation, students have travel experiences abroad. Another demographic concern is an unbalanced gender ratio. Women would possibly prioritize safety and cleanliness; thus, the result might differ if the portion was balanced. It would also be better if different participants evaluated a couple of stimuli, not eight of them. Because of its repetitive questions, participants might be influenced by stimuli that they had seen previously.

This paper only concerns the volume of reviews. However, the content of reviews is highly influential to customers. A high discount rate, which was 60%, might have been excessive, although it was employed to emphasize the significance. Therefore, future studies should look into the range of discount rates that

would show the same result or better.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, this paper analyzes the influence of discounts, ratings, and reviews in hotel booking using an individual sample t-test to compare eight versions of hotels. The main finding is that a high discount rate is useful for hotels with good ratings on hotel booking sites. Therefore, popular hotels may use a high discount rate to increase booking during the off-season. On the other hand, hotels rated low and lacked reviews receive less benefit from those rated high. Newly opened hotels that lack review volume can advertise themselves with a large discount to boost bookings. A high discount rate still works

positively among low-rated hotels because price-sensitive consumers find it attractive. Lastly, what the hotels should do before setting significant discounts is to improve the quality of rooms and services to receive good ratings on online booking websites. Also, it would be efficient to provide incentives to users to write reviews on those platforms. Although putting a considerable discount level is a quick way to increase bookings in the short run, it does not guarantee the business owners' long-term benefits. The discount needs to be implemented strategically, not randomly. Hoteliers should consider how their hotels' evaluation on booking websites shapes the consumers' booking intention and how discount levels can contribute to it.

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Ellie Olstad

Anemoi

I fly with the force of a thousand stallions.
I bite
tear
beat
bruise
those who cannot face me
are feeble
fragile
weak souls.
What is the world without the strength I carry?
I freeze time,
the ground, I shake
in my wake
winter breaks.

Whereas, I
release the flowers
from their sedated slumber
those whom you buried
deep in cold
yearn to reach the sun
Benign beings brought back by my breath.
For the children of spring
I soothe
I sing
Heed my call
For to thee I deliver
The warmth for which thy essence aches

Now hush
To you they shan't listen
For one is brutish
the other brittle
You can fly forcefully
or sing softly
Yet none can match
the heat I bring,
the water I carry,
the crops I raise.
In auburn and orange
the world ablaze.

Hah

You can mock each other, in disdain
Your contempt is shallow
Set side by side to the seas
on which I feast
Beware sailors,
I will claim thee.
I gobble and gulp
No one can help
Unlike you, I bring no season,
As I am the storm.
Unlike you,
I am ubiquitous.

So go ahead,
continue your senseless squabble.
For while you bite
Or sing
Or ignite
I will be soaring.

K. Kohno

Rock Throne and Snow Dust

The view from the top was indeed magnificent.

In a confined space barely enough for an oak tree to stand, human beings - barely higher than two meters - stand on the head of the 8000-meter giant. Below are eight billion people, and a trillion species of animals, fish, insects, and a dozen more categories. A handful of the brave ones are above all of those creatures. But how many kings are there in human history? Surely, no matter how high a man may climb, and whichever summit one may conquer, the same throne had been seated thousands of times by thousands of people.

'I am the only King, and will always be!'

The roar of the lion echoes through the Himalayas, the voice soars through the morning breeze.

The man who calls himself The King has given out his words to all his inferiors far below. So far below that The King cannot see. In fact, a distinct border, a curtain of clouds, is a veil between the secular ground and the royal sky.

The King faces the sun, which sprays His Highness with its golden beam as if raining petals of yellow daisies. The warmth of the sunlight keeps The King's fresh optimistic grin like the groom's at a wedding. He wishes to expose his full nudity and absorb what the sun has to offer. However, the last time he did so, his body froze to an icy sculpture; he would rather be given a sculpture rather than becoming one.

The tradeoff for his personal throne was enlistment to death row.

After leaving his life as a Swiss banker, as well as his wife and kids, he has climbed hundreds of steep mountains, sailed across the Atlantic, eaten foot-sized rabbits on the North Pole; just to shout 'I have conquered nature' at some point. But immediately afterward, he sees phantom images of numerous people who have made the same achievements and howled the same words. This was certainly a disgrace for The King. He never hopes to become 'a king'; he craves to become *The King*.

And he had finally, albeit accidentally, found his own throne; where he can monopolize the sun's fortune, where he can look down upon flocks of birds, and where death constantly

whispers the remaining sand of his hour-glass. It was his eighth day of food deprivation.

A wind carrying microscopic fragments of ice rushes across The King's wild mane. As The King has been above the Earth's surface for 1250 days, his grizzly colored beard, mustache, and hair have grown like tentacles of an octopus, with pieces of ice coating instead of wax. The King feels the wind constantly; the 7500 meter point where he stands is quite turbulent. But this time, he senses something special. The sense keener than ever in his life, through more than a month of mountain survival, and a week of being trapped, he was able to assimilate himself to the nature he owns, the messengers have brought him a message: men are coming.

Soon, he starts to hear sounds of shoving air, as obnoxious as the buzz of bees and the whining of mosquitoes combined. *Helicopters!* He realized. *People of the underworld have come to throw me down to the ground! Shove me off of my throne!*

As the helicopters come close enough to be seen by his naked eyes, the sound is so loud he can barely hear the shouting of its passengers. For The King, who had been standing with barely any sleep or food, and clutching onto a bulge of the mountain surface for almost 200 hours, is seeing things. He sees two revolutionaries on a war machine attempting to seize the tyrant.

"Get back fools, you will never get me alive!"

King Whitman growls, yells, and cusses. Resisting the apprehension, he attempts to attack the hovering mechanical dragons by throwing his icy sculpture. The heartless iron cloud-cutters dissipated into the clouds below, along with the statue of his past glory.

"You will never get me alive! This is my throne! The only man in history ever to rule this sovereignty!"

From around the third day of his captivation, he had started hearing voices whispering all the pity in his self-satisfaction. What a pity to declare success in conquering nature which could put him to death anytime it desires, to consider himself king of a land of nobody and to be alone abandoning everything to fulfill his hollow dreams.

They are just jealous of how I am The True King of history. I'll prove it! Someday soon, the people below would drag me down from the cliff to retrieve my castle.

Is this happiness? He asked the sky. The Sun shot a daytime spotlight right above his head. The maternal warmth after such a territorial dispute brushed down his dust-and-snow-covered skin, as if to say, *If it isn't, I don't know what is.*

A middle-aged widow, a young adult man and a teenage girl were waiting in front of the heliport. As the crew brought in the looted mummified body of an iceman, the man muttered "Yes, that's him."

Ellie Olstad

Knock Knock

Pulling up in the driveway, the car came to a halt. It let out a loud croak as Niamh pulled the handbrake. She sat still, resting her head on the steering wheel. A 10 hour shift later, and she was finally back home for the night. “I just really need a cup of tea...maybe a whiskey.” A bundle of her red curly hair was coming undone from the bun at the nape of her neck. Her skin pale, mapped with freckles, was more transparent than usual with dark grey circles creeping up under her hazel eyes. “Man, I need to stop taking these late shifts,” she mumbled into the steering wheel’s cold plastic.

The petrol station in town where she worked was run down and filthy, but the pay was decent. Though occasionally the local crackheads’ over-the-top compliments were worth more than her pay. The likes of “HOT MAMA! How you doin’ love?” and “If I had any money, like I mean any, I’d buy you a beer, but I spent my last one on one myself.” It did add some flavour to the otherwise uneventful and stale job.

Niamh brought her pale slender fingers to her face, pushing the crows’ nest of her cinnamon hair back into its bun. She touched the smoky quartz pendant resting against her chest and let out a long breath. Grabbing the keys from the engine and the small bag from the passenger seat, she pushed the door open with her dirty combat boots and hopped out of her car.

She hurriedly made her way to the oak door, only the hollow sound of her boots filled the cool midnight air. Her house was at the end of the lane, all small brick cottages - thatch roof, white walls - unassuming and surprisingly normal. Key in lock, Niamh glanced over her shoulder as she turned the key. Inside was dark, except for a dim shine from the outdoor lamp next to the door. Rushing inside, she quickly locked the door and turned on the small light in the hallway.

She listened.

Her relieved sigh was swallowed by silence.

Niamh sank down at the door, her hand trembling at the lock. One breath. Two breaths. She stood up, pushed her shoulders back to turn around. She fumbled to put her keys on the small shelf - they rattled when they hit the small dish, resting against a few obsidian pebbles. Again, she listened.

She was alone.

The living room was dimly lit, shining on the little furniture she had. After saving up for several years, she finally had her own space, albeit still a work in progress. Pulling her grey uniform from the small bag, she shook it out, sniffing it to see whether she needed to wash it before tomorrow’s shift. Niamh shrugged and threw it over at the ramshackle armchair in the corner; it croaked at the impact. She did not like to go home in her uniform, so she always changed in the back before leaving the petrol station, especially during night shifts. Maybe she was just paranoid, but she did not fancy hosting any unwanted crackhead.

She ran the shower, staring at herself in the mirror. She noticed the circles underneath her eyes had become more pronounced, her face had sunken into itself. *I really need to sleep more.* The warm water made her feel rejuvenated. To drown out the silence she started humming a song she did not remember the lyrics to. Carefully untangling her hair, she twisted it into a big wet knot at the top of her head. Emerging from the bathroom, hair wet and in big flannel pyjamas, she made her way to the kitchen.

As she passed the bay window in the living room, she stopped. Thick green curtains were drawn, a bay seat tucked away behind them. When Niamh first moved in, she loved reading in the bay window, snuggling up with a good book watching the trees at the edge of the forest. Now she usually kept the curtains drawn. A small shiver crawled down her spine. Setting her jaw, she turned to the kitchen. Kettle on, the feeling of unease did not fade. Her fists were clenched, knuckles white.

Knock. Knock.

She froze. The shiver was back, sending electric shocks up and down her body. Her eyes watered, breath quickening. The loud whistle of the kettle made her jump, letting out an owl screech. Niamh scrambled to turn off the stove and silence settled once more.

Knock. Knock.

Niamh turned around, hands shaking. The living room was empty, still lit only by the dim ceiling light. Her eyes scanned the room, finally resting on the obscured bay window. Her pale hand immediately went to the pendant around her neck. Mumbling to herself, she went over to the curtains. They were cold to her touch, yet she retracted her hand as if she had been burned. She shut her eyes tightly. Reaching for the curtain again, she tore it aside. Expecting it empty, she opened her eyes. Shock possessed her, pushing her backwards. She fell to the floor. “YOU CAN’T DO THAT!” Her scream bounced off the walls in the small room. In the bay seat sat a black cat. Salem swatted at his own reflection in the window, an innocent act for an ominous sound. Exasperated, Niamh picked him up and hugged him tight to her chest.

“You stupid little cat. You almost gave me a heart attack.” The small creature struggled against her grip, but settled as she kissed his nose. Slowing her breath, she glanced from the window to a small table beside it. Scattered with candles, sage and small stones - rose quartz, selenite and black tourmaline - it was a small altar; a protection altar.

Knock. Knock.

Snapping her head back to the window, she stared in horror. A loud hiss came from Salem, alert in her arms. Holding her breath, her petrified reflection stared back at her. Outside there was no one. Nothing. Only moonlit silhouettes of trees waving in the dark. Niamh let Salem out of her embrace, his back arched to the ceiling with spikes of raven fur. With her gaze fixed on the window, she quickly stood up, redrawing the thick curtains in the process. Tearing her eyes away from the bay window, she glanced at the altar, letting out a panicked breath she reached over for an incense stick. Carefully, she lit the incense; smoke rising in a thin stream.

Knock. Knock.

The sound was louder now. Hollow. As the incense rose, the knocking intensified. Niamh moved away from the window. Salem stood beside her, ready to pounce if he had to. “Shhhh, it’s alright. We’re alright.” Her voice came out with a tremble, as if she could not quite convince herself it was true. The knocking continued as the incense snaked upwards. Her breath hitched in her throat. Touching her pendant, she began to mumble again, trying hard to steady her breathing. With her eyes glued on the altar, she chanted through the knocking. Slowly the smoke began to disperse, becoming wide and free.

The knocking slowed.

Knock.

Her hair had come undone, dropping quietly toward the wooden floor. Pushing her hair back, she whispered – “It’s alright. We’re alright.” Fumbling with her pendant, she made her way back to the kitchen. *We’re alright*. She picked up her headphones from the small kitchen table, turned on the noise cancellation and poured her tea. *I’m alright*. In the living room Salem settled in the armchair - laying on top of Niamh’s uniform - still cautiously watching the green curtains. She sat down on the couch, opened her laptop, and turned on a movie. Her hand trembled slightly as she brought the warm cup to her lips; she was not going to get much sleep tonight.

Knock. Knock.

She let out a shaky sigh.

I wish the knocking would stop.

Kazuki Fujii

Kitchen

The god is greedy
ready for tonight

Sentence of death
coerced with fear.

Pasta, boiled —
Boosh!
in an iron pot,
You writhe in blaze.

Garlic, smashed —
A bat
Bang!
Bam!
Your minced belly reeks.

Tomato, butchered —
Bloody
Gloppy
Your organs splattered.

Carrot, flayed —
Skin skinned. Head be
headed
Your limbs dismembered.

All finished? - not yet.
Mix the corpses
salt on wounds
Insult to injury

Heaps of corpses
float in a bubbled red ocean

With devil’s fork
bung
in the darkness of mouth
munched.

“Delicious”
says the voracious deity.

*Ayuna Yukihiro***Blood**

Traces of red in devouring white
 Take two pills only to distract
 I hear stage whispers
 of what she said and what he said
 of what you did and what I did
 It's a recurring cycle
 I've seen this scene before

Your graceful treachery leaves a stabbing pain
 A quick rush of anger, waves of distress
 Your words are sharp-edged stones
 Aimed to scar, never to kill

Now you say I've gone insane
 Paint me in blame just to save your face
 My head is pounding
 Side effects of your lies
 So watch me as I pull
 the knives from my back
 And I'll carve a perfect jack-o'-lantern smile

Give it some time
 Watch it all fade away
 When the blood no longer
 trickles down my skin
 I'll wait
 for you to come around again

*Kazuki Fujii***Shade in Peace**

Chilly wind in the early morning of November hit the branches of a maple tree; autumn leaves came loose and danced in the foggy sky. Together with the leaves, a pigeon appeared -- five others followed. They flew from the east and stopped on electrical wires of telegraph poles high above the ground. Then another twelve. The flock came from the south, and landed next to the first group. Again thirty. A much bigger group arrived from the west. When the number got over a hundred, murmured voices grew larger and larger. Finally — one pigeon, whose wrinkles on his face and wings were as many as the hundreds of the gathering pigeons, flapped from the north and touched on the tip of the highest telegraph poll. The mass of birds looked up at the old pigeon. The whispers gradually diminished — hundreds to half, to dozens, to several, to three, and to none. Silence occupied the pigeons' public meeting 15 meters higher than the ground of the human world. Looking over his beloved fellows, the old pigeon held his breath and puffed his chest --- then opened his dried beak:

“Hello. My fellow birdkind. I appreciate every single one of you who brought me to this position. Without your support, I shall not be present. For a long time, we suffered a lot. A lot — from the crisis encroaching on our birds' society. Our favorable relationship with human beings worsened rapidly due to the number of policies in the former regime. Deregulation on scavenging their garbage. Derogation from obeying our dropping spots. Dereliction of duty to follow guidelines of nesting locations. The chaos stimulated humans' anxiety and brought tension to our relationship with the living on the ground. This is not good. Birds and humans are mutually dependent. From now on, we will regain our hopeful future — we will rebuild society.”

When the 'Liberty' -- the leader of 'Democratic Peace Pigeons (DPPs)' (which recently won the election and also rose to the ruling party) -- concluded his passionate inauguration message, storms of excitement and applause by the pigeons pervaded through the gray sky of suburban London.

Watching from a distance on the opposite side of the telegraph polls, a young-journalist pigeon, Peter, also could not resist expressing pleasure. Although he was not such an enthusiastic supporter for the party, the list of unfavorable policies of the former regime led by the 'Boss' had made him gloomy for years. He had studied human relations (HR) at Lancaster National Park College and obtained the master degree there. Then he became a reporter at 'Feather Times' — the most renowned media institution among birds — and belonged to the 'Human Affairs Department' there. His main job was to observe and research about

the forefront of humans' impressions towards birds. He was happy with the assignment because Peter's dream was to better birds' relationship with human beings. When he was a child, he was unable to fly well. Normally other pigeons could fly independently about a month after birth. Yet he could not. Seeing other pigeons in the sky that flapped their wings well, he felt disappointed with himself and suffered from inferiority on the ground. Then an old man appeared in a park where Peter's nest was. He sat on a bench, saw the bird. Perhaps feeling sympathy, he took out a French bread from his cowhide bag, made it into pieces and gave the crackers to the pigeon. While Peter pecked them around, the old man loosened his wrinkled face and showed a smile softly. For most of Peter's life, that memory continued to occupy his mind.

Now he was a journalist. While he kept researching, he noticed that growing cases of scavenging garbage by crows affected negatively on human beings' sentiment against the birds. He wrote an article about it. Yet its publication was heavily criticized and condemned as 'biased' — by the supporters of the now-opposition party.

Looking around, Peter found them. Black — about thirteen. The pigeon gazed at the birds. Their sleek and dark wings were like dreadful nights. Their sharp beaks looked easily able to pierce through newspapers he wrote. They stood on the electrical wires far from the 'Liberty' and his fellow pigeons. Compared with the energetic meeting by the hundreds of pigeons, their atmosphere was filled with grumpiness. No wonder — considering 'Crows Defense for Independence (CDfI)' lost seats and the election of choosing the leader of birds. Most, or probably all, gave a hostile gaze to the speech. Among them, one crow's eyes met with Peter; one was grimacing and the other grinned. The crow then flew toward the pigeon. Peter's grin turned into a grimace. In human worlds, the science of psychology proved that negative feelings were more easily transmitted than positive. The same goes for birds.

"You must be happy, hah?"

The crow violently landed next to the pigeon on the electric wire, which swayed heavily. Shook up and down, Peter began to fear while clenching his toes firmly. The crow's widely-opened black eyes were stern like a spear — piercing through Peter's round 'ping-pongs' of sight. Other pigeons were on the opposite sides. He was alone in the distance. Yet — the same was for the crow. The black bird came alone. If Peter would try with full his strength to fly to the pigeons, there would be no harm. Thinking in that way, Peter decided to reply back to the crow.

"What's the matter with you?"

"*Ping-pongs** are now happy with the election. The old coot of DPPs will lead us to the 'better' world."

With a gaze far from the inauguration speech on the opposite side of telegraph polls, the crow said this in a deep voice with an emphasis on the word 'better.' Watching his glossy black face from the side, Peter felt that the crow looked around the same age as him.

"And you seemed not satisfied."

"How could I? Our 'Boss' had protected us from human beings for the past years. They are not our friends. They are enemies. And now the old coot is saying we have to become closer to them. What a beggar! *Ping-pongs* were all spoiled while they kept begging bread crackers at the park from humans for so long. So long... that lost sense of wildness since our old ancestors. We lived purely in bird society in the ancient times — without any harmful humans then. Yeah, you are happy since you ping-pongs are flattered now and brought up in a campaign of anti-war movements by them. Some people like you. We crows are black and disdained as unfortunate, on the contrary ... But you know they also call you dirty, unsanitary, garbage dumper? ... For us too. That's very insane to become 'friends' with them."

When he mentioned 'Boss,' his black eyes widely opened. It must have been unexpected — that the 'Boss' of CDfI lost against the 'Liberty' in the election. He was a very charismatic figure for the crows. His hostile elocution and firm attitude against human beings. Sometimes his tone went quite radical, without hesitation to call the humans 'destroyers of birds' society.' No leaders in the bird society ever stepped over the taboo. Because of such excessiveness, even some pigeons followed the 'Boss' — who felt unpleasant towards human beings.

"I know some human beings don't have favorable impressions of us. Yet it is also true that they are the ones who provide us with food. Even crows — you guys can't survive without scavenging their dumps. One research institution, called 'Coo Research Centre'— showed that if we become excessively aggressive against them, as the 'Boss' did in the previous period, they would get further cautious against us. Higher security. Then it would be more difficult for us to gain food from them."

**Ping Pong*: Derogatory term used by other birds for pigeons since their eyes and body looked as tiny and rounded as a ping-pong ball.

“NO! Absolutely NOT! That research centre is always biased and we cannot trust in it. First of all, why do we need to co-live together with the ‘invaders’? Their land was originally ours. But the humans came and transformed our forests into messy and miserable urban areas. They crashed our ancestors’ habitat. And then they denigrate us. How could such inequality exist? Answer me pigeon, Answer me!”

When Peter opened his beak to rebut the crow, he noticed one thing — the crow’s left foot was missing. It was sometimes seen that birds lost their limbs in the urban areas. That is because of human’s vehicles — trains and cars. Peter remembered one friend. He was a journalist colleague who had lost his life on the railway. The friend was just flying around his nest near telegraph poles. Yet he did not notice that a train came closer — hit by the giant metal that ran at 90km/h. When Peter arrived at the site, the friend’s corpse did not form the shape of the bird. Organs and blood were splattered around the stones of the railway.

Peter thought that traffic accidents were unfortunate but inevitable. Even some human beings experience that and lose their lives. But watching the crow’s missing limb made Peter recall the memory of the lost friend — a feeling of sorrow. When the crow landed onto the electrical wire, it swayed heavily. Peter felt that it was because of the crow’s violence — but probably not. It must be quite hard for the crow to support his entire body with only one foot. He could not keep his balance well, and that is why the wire shook severely.

As Peter’s excitement suddenly toned down into calm, his opened beak could not produce any sounds because of his shock. A state of static. While the silence occupied the two birds for a while, a flapping sound gradually came from the opposite side of the electrical wires. Other pigeons. Five.

“Hey, why is a crow standing here? Did you come here to see the new leader of our birds?”

“But crows were always supporting the ‘Boss’! No way he came here to congratulate the ‘Liberty’ --- our DPPs leader.”

The pigeons kept talking with each other, five-meters away from the black bird. The crow seemed slightly puzzled; he was alone now among the six pigeons. Then he turned his face towards the group of his black fellows far in the distance. Taking a pause, he looked back and gave a gaze at each pigeon and lastly at Peter. The crow shouted.

“You think now our bird society would be better, with the old coot of DPPs as leader.

But he just won because he was not the ‘Boss.’ the ‘Liberty?’ Hah, what did he ‘liberate’ from humans! Compared with our ‘Boss’, that coot is just a shade — no one really expects him to be the leader of the bird’s society. Moreover, none could stop human beings’ aggression against birds anymore. Like our ancestors lost their habitat of forests as driven away by humans, we would be eventually tossed away by them like flies. Hah — I really feel poignant!”

As soon as he left the words, he stood up with his right leg and began flying. Further and further. The black body gradually turned into a dot in the sky.

“He was such a right-wing guy. I really cannot understand why he could be so pessimistic with humans.”

“It was good for us that the ‘Boss’ of CDFI lost in the election — he was too bad with human beings. He stirred up our fears a lot, and had negative influences on birds’ perception of them.”

The group of five pigeons now started discussing the matter of human-bird relationships. *We are protected by the Wildlife Protection and Hunting Law under the British government. There shall not be any harm then. Yes, people in Britain are especially warmer than those of the continent. A country called ‘France’ across a strait has an old culture of eating pigeons’ meat. Here we are safe.*

Hearing the conversation, Peter’s attention was completely away — what kept occupying his mind was the crow’s lost-left foot. Although Peter did not agree with him, the crow’s last words shook the pigeon’s mind. *Division. He thought. I was happy with the victory of DPPs. But to whom does justice belong? Is it to us, to them, or to both, or neither?*

Peter turned his face away from the group of pigeons. A television. From the window of a three-story house of human residents. He was able to see the screen from a distance. There, a young male news reporter was reporting feces damage by birds against historical Victorian buildings in London.

Kei Torio

Alone Together

Curtain Call

After they made their last love, Ann was scared of losing him, but had no choice. "It's all over." She mumbled and gently kissed her sleeping boyfriend.

Early in the morning, the sunlight entered between the curtains into her eyes. She looked for the clock that was usually annoying in the mornings. Six O'clock. There, she noticed she was in the king-sized bed, alone. *Where is he?* It was a bright morning. The breeze filled the room, while the birds sang with joy. *Wait. I closed that window last night.* She walked to the opened window.

The veranda smelled of tobacco. Drew stood there looking far away. Maybe he looked over the whole town counting the stars on the ground. For a 24th floor resident, looking below sparkled more than the stars above.

His back looked smaller than usual.

She wished to have the courage to go closer to him. She went back into the room, closed the curtains without leaving even a little space. She sneaked back into the cozy bed.

Marking

Seven O'clock. Work time.... Never in her life had she thrown away her work. Her arm went to the sleeve of her white blouse. The silk touch gently stroked her pearl skin. Her back shivered when the blouse hugged her. But no. It's all over.

Her pencil skirt squeezed her thighs up to her waist. A beige stocking lay on the floor with its legs crossed. She smelled it to test if it will go for another day or not.

"Bet it!"

She crouched on the messy bed. She caressed the right-leg stocking. Smooth, it camouflaged her leg. She reached her arm to the left one. A little scar was on the stocking's skin. *Yep, That was Drew.*

She glanced at Drew and planned to complain. But he was not there.

A large sigh came out.

She headed off to the entrance grabbing her bag. *I'll go straight to the pharmacy to get some stockings, then buy a cup of Starbucks, and....*

"You're going?" He popped out from the kitchen.

"..." She struggled wearing her high heels without the stockings.

"Well, I was making coffee but okay. You go, I stay." He looked sad as a lonely puppy.

"Sorry, but thank you." She left the apartment with a smile.

That was the last time he saw her.

"Good bye..." He said it to the door as Ann went out.

Girl's Side

A few months later, Ann was at an office. She worked from 9 to 5, staring at the computer. She desired to stay with Drew, but she had to take her life seriously. Jobs, bills, and reality overwhelmed her. She was satisfied with her decision, but she also regretted it.

*Do you know that night I almost said, "I love you?"
But I had to go... From today...By myself...*

*Lots of love,
Ann*

Boy's Side

Drew lay down on the bed like a living-dead creature for days. He didn't want to wake up in the real world, but wanted to stay in his world with Ann. Suddenly she woke up looking at the future. He looked at the past. At the time when they spent their last morning. While smoking, he had realized their journey would soon end, soon and Ann did not like it, but she had to go on.

I knew our story was about to end.

*I had to part from her
Even though I don't want to.
But we could be alone together.*

All the luck to you, Ann,

Drew

Anh Nguyen

My Milk Mug

Hot to the tip of my hand
 I want to hold you so bad
 The warm, nurturing milk in you
 The liquid I need to sustain
 To clear up the fog in my brain
 To warm me down to my core
 The buttery creamy smell within you
 Entice my lips to your rim
 Yet the fuming smoke
 Coming from you
 Warns me not to do so
 As I waited, patiently
 Eventually
 You offer me your handle to hold
 Gently you thaw my touch
 And we kiss
 One sip, just one at a time
 So this moment lasts forever
 The morning plagued with the mist
 We traded, I'm filled, you're empty
 While you're still warm
 I want to hold you more
 Thank you for the meal
 My good one

Anh Nguyen

It's a Monochrome World

4 a.m. The alarm clock let out one single beep before I turned it off. November's early morning was a bit chilly, and I struggled to get out of my cozy heavy blanket, but I managed. While everyone in the apartment was still fast asleep, I went to the bathroom and began brushing my teeth and washing my face. Then, I continued separating my white hairs from the black ones and applied black hair dye. I had spent the past weekend in the apartment with Mummy, so I did not dye my hair for two days, and the white part had grown so much. I used instant hair dye, so it would take about 30 minutes to set in.

As I was about to enter the shower room, I heard the sound of Mummy going into the kitchen. "Oh no, it's 5 a.m already," I thought, and turned on the water. Quickly washed and then quickly dried my hair. I got dressed, put on my contact lenses and headed to the dining room. Mummy was setting up the table while mother was reading the newspaper. "Here's your soy sauce, Kimiko," Mummy placed the bottle of soy sauce next to mother. Mother put down her newspaper and poured soy sauce on her rolled omelette. Mother Kimiko was already dressed in her dark blue suit and ready for work. Mummy Ria, on the other hand, wore her apron over her pink pajamas, her platinum hair was messy and all over the place. Mummy sat down on the opposite of the mother's seat and poured Worcester sauce on her sunny-side up egg.

"Good morning mum, good morning mother."

I sat down and poured both soy sauce and Worcester sauce on my sunny-side up.

Mother snarled at me, "I wish you would stop eating like that, these two sauces do not go well together."

"Kimiko, come on. Let Hana enjoy what she likes." Mummy smiled gently at me. Mother scowled at Mummy, then quietly finished her breakfast. I also quickly finished my breakfast so that I could leave at the same time with Mother.

"Bye Kimiko, bye Hana. Don't forget your lunch!" Mummy fixed Mother's tie while checking if I had taken my lunch with me. Her crystal blue eyes looked back and forth to check on me and Mother. Then Mummy took a silver white lily hair pin and attached it on mother's hair bun. The silver lily added a nice detail on mother's dark luscious hair.

"Bye Mummy."

"Have a good day Ria."

As we were heading to the elevator, I heard a friendly voice greeting. "Hana, how's ya weekend? Good morning Mrs. Kimiko." Ritsuko hugged me tightly from the back and smiled widely at my mother. Mother nodded at Ritsuko. We went on the elevator.

"Pretty normal, I spent the weekend doing a black and white movie marathon with mummy."

"Ehhh, why didn't you invite me too? We could have watched something more exciting, like those new horrors that just came out."

"You know I don't do well with horror," I pouted.

"C'mon watch for my sake, okay? You know, I have two tickets to the new slasher movie, come with me please?" Ritsuko pouted. My pouty face could never win against Ritsuko's. With her short black hair hugging her blushing face, her pouty peachy lips and big round eyes, Ritsuko is probably the cutest Japanese high school girl ever. I looked over to Mother. Mother glared at me, urging me not to let this adorable girl wait. Much as I didn't want to watch something bloody, I involuntarily agreed with Ritsuko. Ritsuko smiled brightly, with her dark hazelnut eyes glistening softly. We got down to the apartment's parking lot and mom drove the two of us to school.

After homeroom, the first class period was Biology. My mind drifted away as the teacher went on about chromosomes and whatever about DNA. "Chromosomes carry hereditary information... they determine how tall you are and what your eye's color is... humans have 22 chromosome pairs and one pair of XX chromosomes..." I yawned, accidentally too loud. The teacher snarled at me, while everyone in the classroom giggled. "Let's continue. The fundamental laws of inheritance. Your genes come in pairs. For example, if your mother is tall and has black hair..." I glanced over to Ritsuko, then the whole class. Everyone's heights differ, but they all have the same dark, black luscious hair like Mother. Another difference between them was their hair texture. I started writing a list of my observations of my classmates: tall-curly, tall-straight, short-straight,... Oh, this girl, she straightened her hair. It was all curly and puffy last week. I wrote down: short-curly. Her straight hair would return to curly anyway. Straight hair does look good on her, but she looks so bubbly adorable with her small body and large wavy hair.

Finally, lunch time!

"Hey, if we have children, maybe our kids will inherit your gene of being bad at cooking, Hana." Ritsuko took a bite from her melon bread.

"I hope our kids won't be short like you," I teased Ritsuko, and she pouted as she yanked my lunch from me.

"What wicked creation you got this time?" Ritsuko curiously looked inside. "Ew, it smells awful!"

My face flushed bloodshot red. "Yes! I like it that way, okay, leave me be." I grabbed my lunch, the Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwich, angrily taking a bite of it.

"Why would you go and mix these things up like that huh?"

"Peanut Butter is tasty, Jelly is tasty too! Why is it bad to mix them up?" I grunted.

Ritsuko noticed how uneasy I was with her attitude. She hugged me tenderly, "It's okay. You're weird, and I like that about you." She looked at me with her puppy dog eyes. "Don't be mad at me please?" Ritsuko was being too adorable for me to stay mad at her. "Fine," I sighed.

"Hey you lovers, get a room!" One of our classmates noticed us. "It's always so chummy with you guys huh."

"There are single people here, you know? Stop flaunting your love!" said another classmate, jokingly.

Ritsuko and I both looked at each other, then we looked at our classmates., and I kissed Ritsuko on her cheek. Ritsuko embraced me seductively while looking at our classmates' reaction, and then we broke into laughter as our classmates yelled and recoiled.

I felt nauseous after watching the horror movie with Ritsuko. Ritsuko joyfully reviewed the details of the movie. I ignored her, squeezing my eyes and looking up in the sky, taking a deep breath in. We headed to the convenience store near our apartment building. We went in, Ritsuko headed for the ice cream aisle. Mummy Ria was working at the register.

"Hi Mum!" Mummy looked exhausted. Her platinum blonde hair was so messy and thinned out, it looked more white than blonde.

"Hi Hana. Hi Ritsuko." Mummy looked over to Ritsuko. Ritsuko completely did not hear Mummy and kept looking at the ice creams. "You look pale," Mummy worriedly looked at me.

"We just saw that new slasher movie. I felt a little dizzy, that's all."

“Then just get the usual and I’ll pay for you then.” Mummy told me. I grabbed a small milk carton and a can of coffee. Mummy checked a can of coffee and the milk carton. Then she took out some coins from her pocket and placed them in the cashier machine.

“This is your daughter? She looks nothing like you,” said a noisy middle-aged customer. Mummy smiled, she did not know what to say. I went over to Ritsuko. “Well, good for her,” said that customer as she left the store.

We sat at the seating corner of the convenience store. I opened the milk carton and poured coffee into it.

“Stop it Hana, this is absurd. You’re committing food crime.”

“Just let me be, will ya?” I grunted. My head had been hurting while watching that bloody movie.

“Awe, don’t be mad,” Ritsuko playfully stroked my hair. I took a sip of my drink. The taste calmed me down. Just as my headache started to subside, Ritsuko came back with another comment: “I cannot understand how you can drink that thing.”

I stayed quiet. I stirred my milk-coffee concoction.

As Ritsuko looked like she was about to continue, I cut her off: “Look, I watched a horror movie with you, even though I don’t like to. Why can’t you respect my hobby too?”

Ritsuko still played around with my hair. She was braiding it behind me. “I’m just saying. Why would you go and mix two things together when they are perfectly fine the way they are?”

“I’m mixed too you know,” I said under my breath. I took another sip of the concoction, my eyes were burning with rage. Suddenly, Ritsuko yanked out one of my hair strands.

“Ouch, whatcha do that for?”

“Hold on. Done.” Ritsuko finished braiding my long hair, and she told me to turn around. I held in my anger, turned back at her.

“Okay, I’m sorry, okay? But it’s okay, I promise I’m not like the others. I love you, just the way you are, just as beautiful as you are now.” Ritsuko sincerely looked at me. On her hand, she was holding a strand of glistening silver white hair. She gently dropped it on the floor.

“Wanna head home yet?” said Ritsuko.

“No, I’m gonna wait for Mummy to finish her shift.”

Ritsuko looked over to Mummy. “Fine then.”

She left the convenience store.

A while later, Mummy finished with her shift, and we walked home. Mummy wore a large unfashionable grey hoodie. “Should we go shopping for clothes this weekend?” I suggested.

Mummy smiled kindly, “Sure, what do you want to buy? I think a long black lace dress would look good on you.”

“No, I’m saying we should buy something for you.”

“Aww, my daughter is too sweet.” She laughed it off. “There’s no color that would suit me anyway.”

“If it suits me then it should suit you. I am your daughter, you know.”

“No, no. None of the colors go well with me. Both black and white made me stand out-” she stopped.

“If you stand out then I will stand out too.”

“No, no. You’re beautiful my daughter. That is because you’re Kimiko’s daughter too.” She opened the door to our apartment. Mother was already home, reading the news on her smartphone. She didn’t even bother to look up, and asked: “Ria, when will the dinner be ready?” Mummy hurriedly went inside. I closed the door behind us. Finally, the horridly long first day of the week was over.

Ayuna Yukihiro

Unspoken Tale

“Setareh”

We lay on concrete ground
Saw the sky without the stars
Just you and me,
embraced in silence.

Gave me your scarf
It wrapped around my neck.
Roasted pistachios
lingered in memory

Rustling leaves
outside the window
that November night,
do you still remember?

Our shadows aligned
my head on your shoulder as I
took a sip from your cup
bitter sweet plum

Your hands were cold
Just like mine.

Devouring White

Spilled ink on
empty canvas.
You called them stains
so now everything's grey
I wish it were black.

My truth was your lie
molded over months.
Sculptures can't paint
and I ruin
beautiful things.

Without the Stars

Trapped in a cornfield maze.
Every path taken
leads to dead ends.
I lay on my back
and saw the sky
without you there.

It started with goodbyes.
A friendly stranger,
you've become.

Your voice in my head
but my heart sings of freedom
I'll follow
the winds instead
to a place, I'll call home.

Maybe one day...no
I shouldn't say.
It's time that I leave.

Sip of Mistake

Cracked shells on the floor
held her hand in the dark
like my secrets,
wrapped my scarf
around her neck.

She took a sip from my cup
that night,
her head on my shoulder
I thought she was mine.
Yet words were
unspoken
and she left
in the morning with
“Everything's grey”
her indecisive tides
are to blame.

Surrender

My windows
boarded up
for the storm to come.

Don't knock on my door
with questions
for answers
you wish not
to know.

They pull you in
like ocean tides and
in the end
you'll swallow sand.

Renée

Shivering trees and
sworn secrecy.
There he stands
a reckless sculptor.

“Estelle”

he whispers
as if bitter plum
linger on his tongue.

There's piling snow
outside these walls.
His wandering eyes and
my wondering nights
end, in crushed
pistachio shells.

Who is to blame for this
splattered ink.
How stories change in
convenient ways.

“Estelle”

they would whisper,
rumors in static hiss.
But they dare not ask
footnotes to my
unspoken tale.

*Keita Kohno***Winter Tree**

Dearth
Leaves go
Swallowed up high
To where, ganders cry

Shredded,
Mourning in ache
Too much to take
In the broad daylight rape

The final feather
Taken away, with that
Single gale

Nonetheless,
Alas, perfection

Seeing her perfumed nudity
May I eulogize the enchantress?
Or be triggered with her seductiveness?

Dear me, how! Year-end widow,
With your last boy seized
By that cruel winter general
Could you stand in the blizzard
Alone to just freeze?

Yet, I've seen it all!
As if the only hair
Was plucked out
From a bald man's head.
With pity, my mouth is filled with
Rich bitter, and too much savory

I've seen it all!
How your little man has flown.
Blown away fluttering, oh fluttering
Like a freed dove from a cage
Charmingly so it did, soared above
The red toasting chimney

And gently
Like a snowflake on the moon
Found its place
Where it had a lawn
And a fallen plume

Lying there
Waiting for the next
Gush of wind

Ellie Olstad

Dear Friend

Dear Friend,

I miss you.
Immensely.
I hope you are well.
I look forward to the day
we meet again
A cup of hot tea
eager conversation
drowning out the silence
that is ever present
when I am not with
You.
Whom I miss.
Immensely.

Do You Remember?

The warm spring wind, softly sweeping the last pink petals away. In a glass bubble with excited voices, we were in our own. Just you and me. When my feelings bubbled over. A tube of toothpaste being stepped on. It was not your mess, nor yours to clean. Yet you sat there. Holding my hand. It was never a question, "Do I stay? Do I leave?" Though the bubble was cracking, and the splinters were piercing; you sat there and held my hand. While I sobbed.

Absence of Sheep

Spools of yarn.
A kitten's heaven.
Pull one string and watch it unwind
Magical thread
Memories entwined
During good or bad weather
Laughter bounces off the walls
Deep secrets knitted away
Always with
a common thread.

Daybreak

I still find it funny,
how I never knew orange and blue
were complementary,
until I met you.

Please Press Play.

“You should probably not do that,” he looked up at her, head slightly askew; clearly judging. “I really want to, but maybe it is too much? To hell with anyone who thinks it is too much. It is my game, I decide.” *Well, that means to hell with me doesn't it?* He shook his head disapprovingly. “Do as you like, it's not my place,” he stood up, stretching his long body. “I'll just leave you to it then, but don't say I didn't warn you.” Slinking away through the doorway, he glanced back at her. She was still hunched over her screen, mouth slightly agape with square eyes. She looked over at him, “Oh you're leaving?” He nodded. Rushing over, she crouched down as she rubbed his soft raven fur. Reluctant purrs reverberated through her palm. “I'll see you later then,” leaning down to kiss his pink nose she almost toppled over and let out a breathy laugh. *She might be silly sometimes, but at least she feeds me.*

A New Chapter

You stood there,
meek and unsure.
You said hello
A shy smile
An awkward handshake
But so warm, and open.

Dear Friend,

When we met
In spring,
The trickling sound of snowmelt.
In summer,
The cool taste of watermelon.
In autumn,
The crisp touch of fresh books.
In winter,
The gentle smell of bergamot.

I knew then
As I know now
I won't ever let you go.

About the Authors

Kazuki Fujii (Shade in Peace / Kitchen) is a Japanese student at AIU who took Professor Joel Friederich's Creative Writing in the Fall of 2020. Although Kazuki has always been passionate about reading and writing, this was his first attempt at making a poem and a story. He graduated from AIU in March 2021 and will enter graduate school in Italy (University of Padova) to specialize in media and communication.

K. Kohno (Rock Throne and Snowdust / Winter Tree) is a junior at Akita International University. His field of expertise in writing is pseudohistory, incorporating various historical events into a fictional concept. Here he takes on a challenge of illustrating the mental dynamics under a static environment. Moreover, he has put efforts on adopting poetic techniques within his creative writing to deliver sensual information to the readers. His story “Rock Throne and Snowdust” was selected as runner up for the Editor's Choice Award for Creative Writing for this edition of AIU's student journal.

Anh Nguyen (It's a Monochrome World / My Milk Mug) is a recent graduate of Akita International University. She took Professor Joel Friederich's Creative Writing in Fall Semester 2020. Before taking the class, Anh used to write in journals as a hobby, however she had stopped since she went to university. Creative Writing class allowed her to reignite her love with writing.

Ellie Olstad (Anemoui / Knock Knock / Dear Friend) is a senior student at AIU majoring in Global Business. Originally from Norway, she grew up listening to Norwegian folktales, which sparked her interest in telling stories. She took Creative Writing in autumn of 2020 to explore and reignite her interest in writing creatively. The majority of her writing takes place in mysterious, eerie and dark settings exploring several themes such as the supernatural, fear and death. Her poem “Anemoui” was selected as winner of the Editor's Choice Award for Creative Writing for this edition of AIU's student journal.

Kei Torio (Alone Together) is a junior at Akita International University. She used to write and tell short stories when she was a child. She loved happy-ending stories, but stopped for years. Her story “Alone Together,” shows the end of a romance in a collage of two perspectives.

Ayuna Yukihiro (Unspoken Tale / Blood) is a junior student at AIU. Her inspiration for creative writing comes from the nostalgic natural sceneries she remembers in Akita. “Unspoken Tale” is a narrative/collage poem with 6 sections. In this piece, she explores the depths and complexity of daunting emotions from betrayal, hurt, loss, and the process of finding "closure."



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