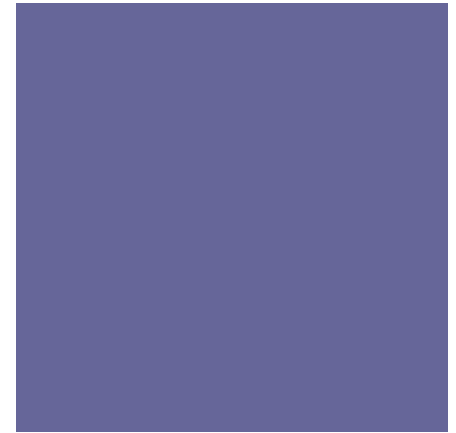




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The Documented Community of the Nation?

Bureaucratic Practices and Transborder Membership Politics in Korea and Beyond

+ Transborder Membership Politics (TMP)



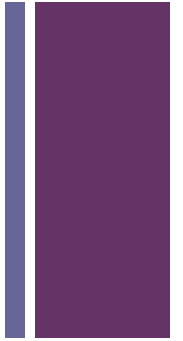
- TMP: the membership politics concerning the relationship between the state and “its” *external members*, such as emigrants, diasporas, and ethnonational “kin” populations

How do the historically evolving, and mutually interlinked, **bureaucratic practices** shape the contours of TMP over time?

- Case: South Korea’s contested relationship with ethnic Koreans in Japan and northeast China



Politics of Identity: Two-Pronged Approach



- Not ethnodemographic fact, but political achievement
- Classification, identification, boundary-crossing
- Two components

Macropolitical level	Group definition	Legal, political, public spheres
Micropolitical level	Individual identification	Bureaucratic settings



Individual Identification



Micropolitical level	Individual identification	Bureaucratic settings
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■ Why important?

- 1) Question of state's infrastructural capacity
- 2) Question of agency of those subject to state's classification and identification



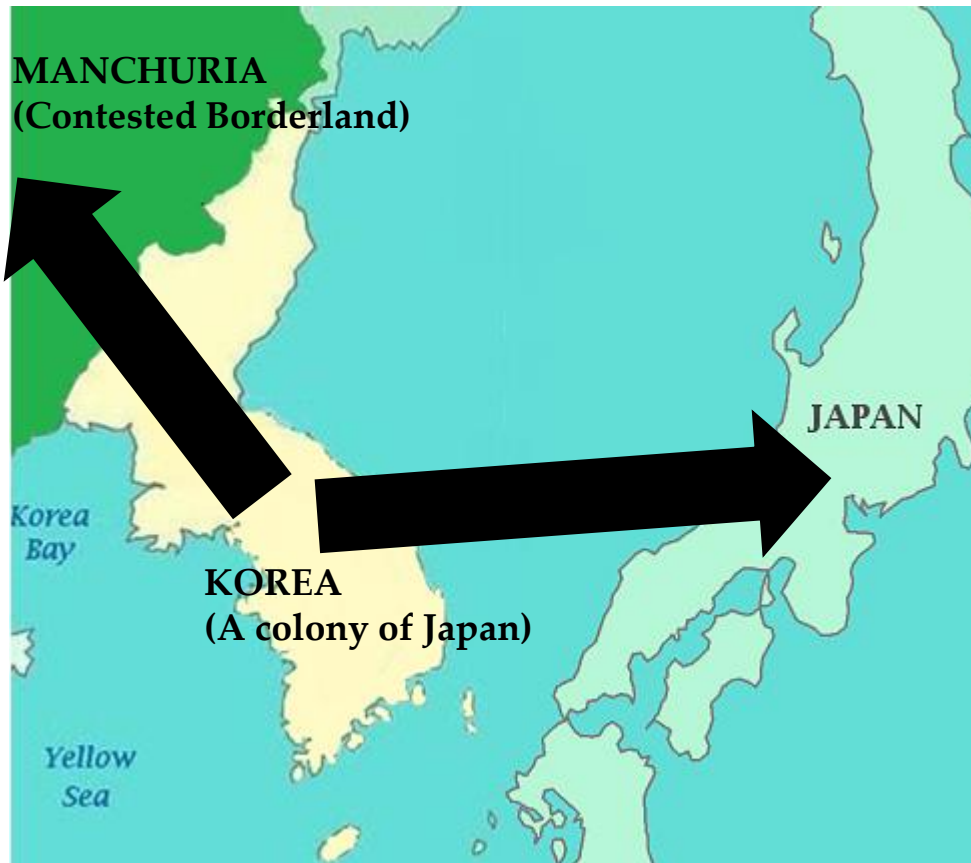
Bureaucratic Practices



- ... constitute **the conceptual grid** through which a state identifies and enumerates “its” transborder population and mobilize them for its own agendas
- ... mediate the reiterative encounters between a state and “its” transborder population, and in so doing, shape **the vernacular idioms of self-identification** of the latter.
- ... leave **durable documentary traces** to which a state turns to validate the belated claims to national belonging by those whose long defunct ties to their “homeland” seem ambiguous or suspicious



Colonial-era Migration



- A large-scale outward migration of ethnic Koreans
- Incomplete postwar repatriation
 - 600,000 remained in Japan
 - 1.2 million remained in Manchuria



Empirical Cases and Data



1. South Korea's effort to create its own docile citizens out of ethnic Koreans in Japan in a fierce competition with North Korea

2. South Korea's effort to control its territorial and membership boundary from ethnic Korean "return" migrants from China

■ Data: 18 months of multisited field research in South Korea, Japan, and northeast China (2005-2009)





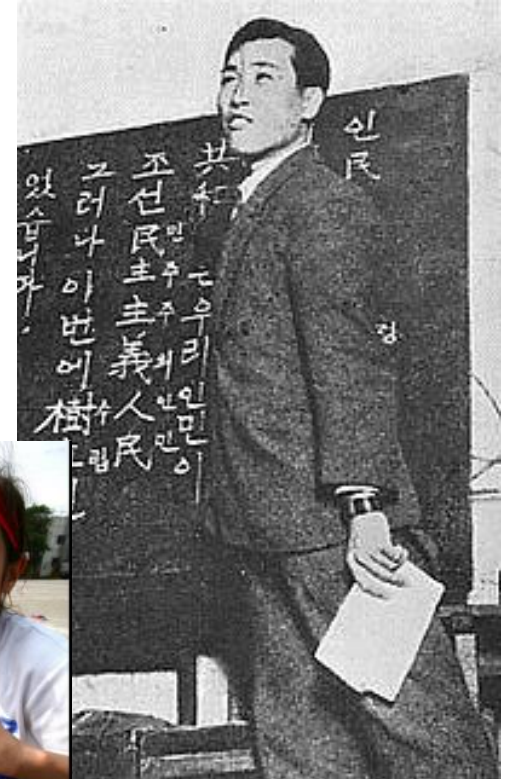
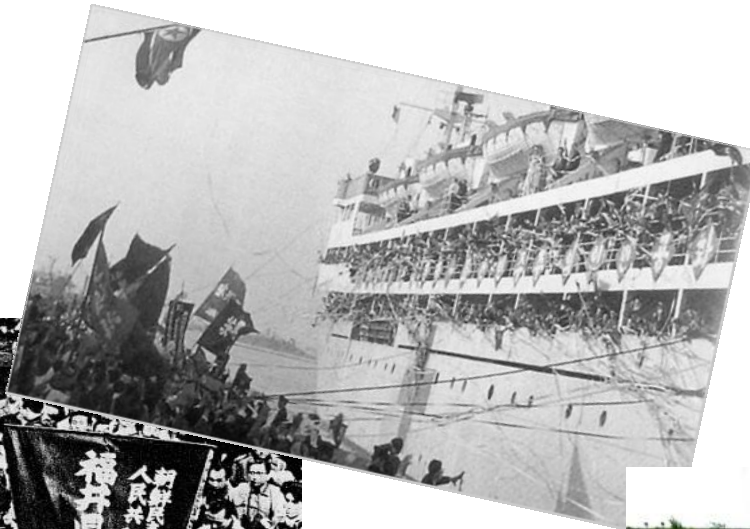
Cold-War Competition over Koreans in Japan

- Radical exclusion of Koreans from postwar Japan: repatriation and denationalization policies
- Political vacuum for the vehement competition between NK and SK
- Divergent transborder nation-building strategies to make their own docile citizens out of stateless Koreans, who were deeply ambivalent toward the two putative homeland states



+ NK as Safe Haven

Repatriation
Campaign
(1959-1967)



Investment
In Korean
enclaves and
schools



SK as Broker and Gatekeeper

- 1965 Japan-SK bilateral treaty: grant of permanent resident status to those who officially identified themselves as “South Korean nationals”
- Discrimination against pro-North Koreans
 - (1) Ban on cross-border transactions
 - (2) Persecution of kin members in South Korea
 - (3) Refusal to issue passports and family registration documents





Strength of SK's Strategy



NK	“Safe Haven”	Enclaves and schools	Soul of the people
SK	“Broker” and “Gatekeeper”	Various identification documents	Bureaucratic persona

- Effectively pressed conversion and prevented defection
- Enabled identification, surveillance, and mobilization
- NK: incapable of providing a reliable and desirable bureaucratic persona due to lack of international recognition and its pariah status



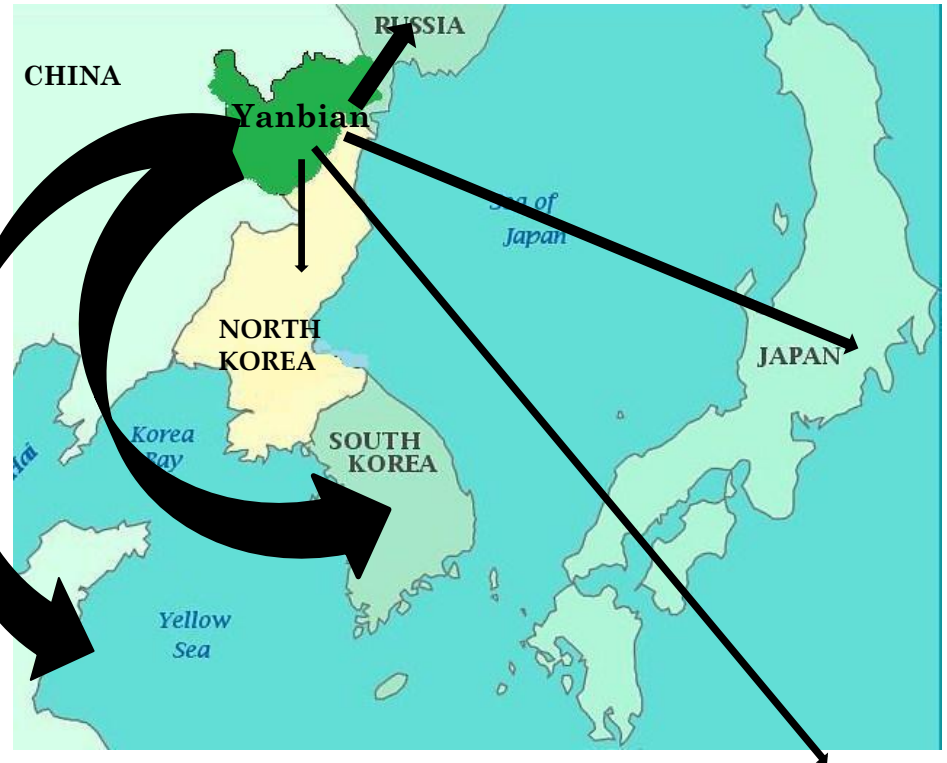
KC: Cold War & Post-Cold War

Cold War



- Incorporation into communist China
- No contact with SK

Post-Cold War



- Intensive migration *within* and *beyond* China
- Most popular destination: South Korea



Reluctant Homeland State and KC's Struggles for Inclusion



Struggles over
group
definition

Legal,
political,
and public
spheres



Struggles over
individual
identification

Bureaucratic
settings



How to establish the
authenticity of
claimed kinship ties
between KC migrants
and SK citizens



Verifying Kinship Ties

- Initial exclusive reliance on **official documentation**

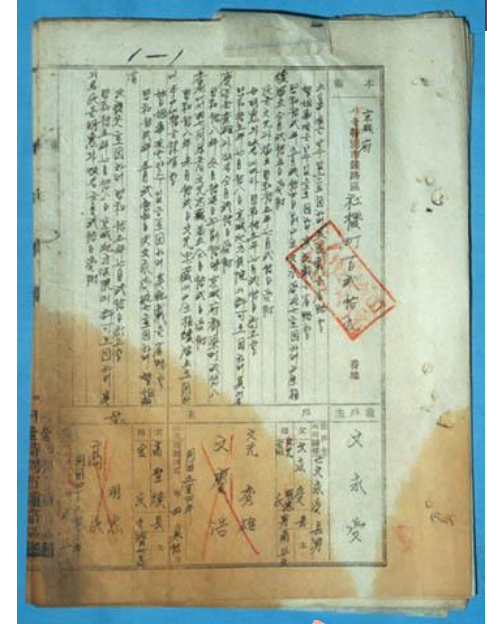
Document required to establishing kinship ties	
... to native South Korean Citizens	... to naturalized South Korean Citizens
Colonial-era family registry	Chinese official documents

- Both documents difficult to obtain, even for legitimate applicants



In Want of Documentation

- Colonial family registry: “the memory of the state”
 - Principle: supposed to document all colonial Koreans
 - Reality: missing or incorrect records
- Fading individual memories
- Chinese official documents
 - Up to the discretion of Chinese local bureaucrats
 - The rule of relationship (guanxi) prevailed





Creating Own “Papereality”



- Black markets for paper identities
- Bribing local bureaucrats
- “Fraud will work! Truth won’t!”
- Reliance on “papereality” turned out to be vulnerable to false reporting, fabrication, and impersonation



In Search of Alternatives



- Detailed narrative statement, supporting documents (family genealogy books, photos, etc.), and interviews



+ Problems with the New Verification Regime



- Overburdened immigration and consular offices
- Room for discretion and corruption
- Frustration with arbitrariness and delays

“If there are those who can perfectly answer such questions without hesitation, the officer should be suspicious of them because they are the ones who memorized all those details to disguise who they truly are!”



DNA Test



- Appeal to immigration bureaucrats
- Appeal to Korean Chinese migrants
 - Convenient tool to speed up the process
 - Effective means of establishing their “trustworthiness”
 - “natural,” “authentic” descent versus “artificial” documentation
- Shaped the discursive field in which the criminality of immigration law violations were discussed



Summary and Theoretical Implications



How do bureaucratic procedures mediate reiterative encounters between the “homeland” state and its transborder populations ?

Bureaucratic practices provide a crucial **institutional scaffolding** for TMP. They transform newly emerged borders and unfamiliar state categories into the experiential reality of ordinary people. They also open a new venue for **micropolitical struggles over individual identification**.



Summary and Theoretical Implications



How do transborder populations mobilize a variety of counter-strategies, shaping the contours of TMP in unexpected ways?

- Transborder populations, on some occasions, effectively resist their forcible incorporation into their state of origin; and on other occasions, they effectively circumvent or challenge the gatekeeping practices of their putative homeland
- Micropolitical struggles over individual identification are central to both cases



Thank you...

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CONTESTED EMBRACE

TRANSBORDER MEMBERSHIP POLITICS
IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY KOREA

JAEUN KIM