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Editorial Remarks

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Editorial Remarks (Vol. 4, No. 2)

The current issue (Vol. 4, No. 2) features five research articles and three book reviews. Amid the global welter caused by the pandemic, this is a great achievement. Editors wish to express gratefulness to all the article and book review contributors to this issue.

Chris Rowley, who is an East Asian specialist in organizational culture and human resources, contributed an article, titled “Culture and Uncertainty: Meanings, Reasons, and Results,” reflecting how the current Covid-19 pandemic is creating a new global contingency of uncertainty for many societies and organizations in the world. His insight lies in the question of how lucid the meaning of “uncertainty” is, when a leader of each nation is trying cope with the current level of uncertainty and provide comfort to her people. Culture determines its meaning, even as leaders would also have to persuade her people to accept the histrocity of its changing meanings.

Anthony B. L. Cheung’s contribution, entitled “Hong Kong in an Existential Crisis: Is ‘One Country, Two System’ into a retreat?” deals with the thorny issue of Hong Kong’s politicization from 2019 by the youths who refuse to lose its One-Country-Two-Systems framework. The value of his contribution is that the clash of cultures and identities between the Hong Kong youths and the People’s Republic of China does not necessarily originate from the dearth of jobs and opportunities for them in Hong Kong.

Kaori Yamamoto’s article, “What is Our ‘Homeland?’: Zainichi Korean High School Students on ‘Homeland Visit’ Tours to the DPRK,” presents her personal tour with the zainichi Korean high school students to North Korea to participate in and observe their activities that would reinforce or discourage the perception of their homeland. She finds that the homeland for these high school students does not physically exist, even as its abstract persistence can be traceable to their imaginary conceptualization of their motherland.

Sumin Lee and Wonho Jang contributed an empirically analyzed conceptual paper of “How Much Does Empathy Resemble Trust? Trust Radius and Interpersonal Empathy in South Korea.” The analysis of the Korean data reveals that trust radius (i.e., the scope of trust that transcends in-group or out-group boundaries) is highly correlated with social empathy (i.e., one’s emotional capacity to understand strangers’ social needs and act to help them out). The trust radius and social empathy would naturally be affected by various socioeconomic variables, including culture.

Finally, Björn Boman’s study of K-pop idols, entitled “Money or Melancholia? Dropout and Retention Rates in the K-pop Industry,” is another empirical analysis of why so many K-pop idols decide to drop out of their K-pop career or commit suicide amid their career success and stardom. One hypothesis, which was popularized by journalists was the “slave contract” argument.

The other competing thesis is the melancholia argument that these artists drop out because they cannot cope with the manic depression that is reinforcing rather than diminishing during the height of their career. Using C&E editor, Ingyu Oh's melancholia thesis, Boman finds that melancholia is a possible cause of the dropout and suicides by the K-pop idols, as other socioeconomic variables failed to explain the dependent variable.

Three book reviews presented in this volume are contributions from Ingyu Oh and Mark Lovas, who reviewed a book on the comfort women, on emotions, and on Japan's new fad with obesity pills. We hope Vol. 4, No. 2 will help scholars and students of East Asian international relations and racial/ethnic politics gain new insights from the articles freshly written by some of the most advanced experts in the field. *C & E* will continue to strive to provide ambitious and meaningful contributions for each fresh issue amid the pandemic.

John Lie, Ingyu Oh, and Wonho Jang