

Parsing China's power: Sino-Mongolian and Sino-DPRK relations in comparative perspective

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Abstract

This article draws on Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall's power typology to examine Chinese power in Sino-Mongolia and Sino-North Korean relations. Using compulsory, institutional, productive, and structural power to frame these bilateral relations, this article looks at the means by which China obtains power and how it utilizes power in relation to Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This article also examines Mongolian and North Korean perceptions and responses to Chinese power. Concurrently, the article considers the Barnett/Duvall model's applicability to China's relations with other periphery developing states.

Introduction

One of the pre-eminent questions around China's contemporary foreign policy is how the state develops and uses power. As power is a central component in key Chinese studies' debates around the nature of China's rise, the logic driving its military modernization, and its future role in the international system and international society, understanding how China develops and uses power is an increasing priority. While a number of important works have addressed China's power, no single theoretical account of Chinese power has emerged. Neither has the concept developed beyond China's relations with great and medium-sized powers. In many ways, the study of modern Chinese power remains largely underdeveloped.

This article contributes to the literature around China's power in two important ways. First, it employs Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall's four-part typology to China's power. This theoretical framework allows for considerable consolidation of existing paradigms of Chinese power, many of which focus on one single aspect of China's power at the expense of a larger, comprehensive account. In measuring Chinese power in terms of compulsory, institutional, productive, and structural power, the Barnett/Duvall model is able to incorporate the various aspects of Chinese power – economic, political, cultural, and military – into a single model with powerful explanatory potential. Application of the Barnett/Duvall model also brings discussion of Chinese power into greater international relations theory.

Second, this article examines China's relations with developing states in Asia rather than focusing on China's relations with great or medium-sized powers. The logic behind this approach is to provide a more comprehensive account of China's power than currently exists. With the majority of the work on China's power focusing on the state's more visible relations such as those with the United States, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and India, there is a dearth of work on China's relations with smaller states. As it is with smaller states that China's power is most pronounced, such an omission leads to a lopsided understanding of China's power.

Specifically, this article examines China's relations with two key periphery states, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The focus on Sino-Mongolian and Sino-North Korean relations allows for a comparative account of the presence of, and China's

use of, power in that the two states have almost diametrically opposed political, economic, and military systems. Where Mongolia is a parliamentary democracy, North Korea is a totalitarian autocracy. While Mongolia has a liberal economic system, the DPRK employs economic nationalism. Mongolia focuses on peace keeping; North Korea maintains one of the world's largest standing militaries and pursues security through nuclear deterrence. Examination of the manifestation of Chinese power and China's use of power toward Mongolia and the DPRK, therefore, provides insights into how China uses power in highly diverse states.

Understanding Chinese power

While a great deal of disagreement exists between those who look at China's foreign policy over the nature of Chinese power, few deny the importance of trying to discern its application. The difficulty in reaching accord between analysts, rather, stems from the divergent perceptions about what constitutes power.

David Lampton (2008, p. 10) notes that Chinese power is best understood through the means it employs, whether physical, material, or symbolic. For Lampton, Chinese power results from might, money, and minds, which together constitute comprehensive national power. According to this presentation of power, China's power grows in tandem with its economy, military, and cultural influence.

Robert Sutter (2010, p. 35) takes a similar, if less defined view of China's power. Sutter notes that China's ability to project power through a developed military and the ability to influence other states through both positive and negative incentives (carrots and sticks) are central strategic concerns.

David Kang (2007, pp. 198–200) emphasizes the regional and historical understanding of China's central role in Asia as the source of its power. Kang claims that Asian states not only accept but encourage China's rise, seeing a strong China as more conducive to regional stability than a weak China. For Kang, China's power is largely 'soft' power.

Yan Xuetong argues that China's power comes from what he calls 'humane authority' or 'superior moral power' reinforced by hard or military power (Yan, 2011, pp. 77–79). Breaking with other analysts, Yan downplays the importance of material strength such as economics and military might, arguing that China will only become truly powerful by

convincing other states that its internal political system is a model for regional and international order. In this sense, Yan's concept of power is closely related to what Yang Jiang has labeled China's 'grand power style' or the idea of a benign hegemon (Yang, 2011, p. 64). In both conceptualizations, China's power comes from its normative attractiveness supported by its material strength.

Brantly Womack (2006, pp. 2–3) identifies China's asymmetric relations with smaller states as a source of power, arguing that China's relative size to its neighboring states provides it with tools it could potentially use for economic and political coercion. Edward Luttwak (2012, p. 8) points to China's rising economic power and subsequent military capabilities as the source of its power, although he suggests that China's 'premature assertiveness' contains the seeds that will ultimately undermine its ability to exercise its power and diminish its overall security.

This article employs the Barnett/Duvall power typology as a means of bringing these important but disparate accounts of power together. This application of international relations theory to work on Chinese power helps organize differing accounts of power under a single, powerful explanatory rubric. The use of the Barnett/Duvall model to look at Chinese power not only provides the theory with an empirical test, thereby testing its utility in parsing state-to-state power relations, but also provides a valuable addition to scholarship on China's use of power, China's foreign policy, and China's relations with developing states.

Power in Sino-Mongolian and Sino-North Korean relations

Parsing power into a four-part typology, as Barnett and Duvall do in their work *Power in International Politics*, allows for a nuanced understanding of the form power takes in the states' respective bilateral relations. The first component of Barnett and Duvall's power taxonomy is compulsory power, which is the most traditional conceptualization of power as it is directly concerned with one state's ability to control another state's actions. A state can bring material and normative resources to bear to exert compulsory power over another state. A dominant state purposefully seeks compulsory power with an aim to advance its strategic goals vis-à-vis the smaller state.

The second component of the taxonomy is institutional power, which focuses on the formal and informal institutions that bind two states together and includes the rules and procedures that define these institutions (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p. 51). Institutional power is about the 'socialization' of one power by another through the use of institutional arrangements. This type of power is indirect in that once established, the power attempting to influence the other power's behavior no longer has control over the process but must rely on 'socially extended, institutionally diffuse relations' (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p. 51).

Productive power is the third part of the taxonomy and relies on systems of knowledge and discursive practices to constitute social subjects. Through discourse, a powerful state can affect a less powerful state's social identity, norms, and customs. Productive power spreads through a 'generalized and diffuse process' and focuses on changing the weaker state's society's 'self understanding and perceived interests' (2005, p. 55).

Structural power, which Barnett and Duvall (2005, p. 53) define as 'power concerning the structures – or more precisely, the co-constitutive, internal relations of structural positions – that define what kinds of social beings actors are' makes up the fourth part of the power taxonomy. Structural power implies linkages between state structures that are asymmetric in nature, providing the dominant state with both indirect and direct control over the dependent state's capacities and subjective interests.

Compulsory power

Mongolia

The most cited example of Chinese compulsory power over Mongolia is Beijing's use of economic coercion to shape the behavior of Mongolian politicians toward Dalai Lama. By closing rail transit between the two countries in 2002 and suspending China Air flights in 2006 in response to the Dalai Lama's visits to Mongolia, China coerced Mongolian politicians into refusing to meet the Dalai Lama in an official manner and into cancelling public events at which the Dalai Lama was scheduled to speak (Campi, 2012). The Mongolian public largely derided the Mongolian government for its perceived capitulation, suggesting Chinese compulsory power forced the Mongolian government to be against both public opinion and political expediency.

These oft-cited instances, however, are not the only examples of Chinese compulsory power over Mongolia. Nor are they the most substantive examples of China's compulsory power. Far more consequential for Mongolia is the compulsory power that stems from China's control over the Port of Tianjin, on which Mongolia is dependent for its external trade. While China allows Mongolia use of the port, it applies heavy tariffs to Mongolia's goods, thereby undermining export profitability for Mongolia beyond China. Through this method, China is able to monopolize purchase of Mongolian goods, such as coal, while keeping them exceedingly inexpensive by global standards in China. Rather than export its goods to other countries in the region where profitability would be negligible, Mongolian businesses must accept a lower price (sometimes less than half the international price) and sell 'delivered at frontier' to China (Hamilton, 2012, p. 41). This use of compulsory force directly influences Mongolia's foreign and economic policies.

China has also established compulsory power through its investment in infrastructure development in China around Mongolia's periphery. While few would argue that China intends to use military force against Mongolia, its expansion of transportation linkages between the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR), the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and Gansu, Heilongjiang, and Jilin Provinces to Mongolia has the dual use capability of facilitating both trade and allowing for rapid military mobilization. In the last 10 years, China has constructed 3,000 km of rail in the provinces around Mongolia, with plans to run three lines directly into Mongolia's western, southern, and eastern flanks. More relevant even than this massive railway expansion, China has been engaged in road building in and around Mongolia that will link both countries together in China's national system of expressways (Rayson and Baatar, 2009, p. 48). This geographic vulnerability is thrown into greater relief when one considers that China maintains an estimated 520,000 troops in the Beijing and Lanzhou military regions along Mongolia's southern border and that more than 72 million Chinese live in the three provinces that directly border Mongolia (Xinjiang, Gansu, and the IMAR).

The Mongolian government realizes its vulnerability to Chinese compulsory power and has taken several steps aimed at mitigating its dependency. In 2011, Ulaanbaatar announced plans to develop a rail line from Mongolia to the Russian port of Vostochny. Theoretically, the rail

line would allow Mongolia to diversify its trade portfolio. In practice, the rail development plan is marred in uncertainty surrounding financing, cost effectiveness, logistics, and domestic politics.

The Mongolian government is also seeking to increase the capacity of its border security through training and consolidation. Ulaanbaatar, for example, is debating whether or not to consolidate the country's General Authority for Border Protection and the Border Protection Service of Mongolia into a single body so as to increase professionalism and coordination between what are now two disparate, often competing security organizations.

Mongolian strategic analysts and policy-makers clearly understand the implications of infrastructure development in China's surrounding provinces. According to a lead researcher with the Mongolian National Security Council, the Mongolian military is so concerned about China's ability to interfere in Mongolia through the IMAR, XUAR, and Gansu province that it has a contingency plan in place to deal with the potentiality.¹ The contingency plan assumes Mongolia's inability to defend itself and is dependent on rapid international military intervention.

While these developments show that Ulaanbaatar is clearly concerned over China's compulsory power, they also demonstrate the country's limited ability to mitigate its vulnerability.

DPRK

Similar to the case of Mongolia, economic coercion is the clearest example of Chinese exercise of compulsory power toward the DPRK. Owing to the complexities of Sino-DPRK relations, Beijing has been unwilling to make use of political or military pressure on the DPRK. In particular, the threat of instability, were these types of pressure to be applied, has led the Chinese government to make use of economic relations to exercise its compulsory power.

China has been gradually more willing to flex its economic muscle against the DPRK. In 2002, Chinese police forces arrested Yang Bin, a Dutch-Chinese businessman who had been appointed by the Kim Jong Il government to run the Sinuiju Special Administrative Region ([Chung, 2004](#), p. 300). This region was due to be opened to attract investment

1 Personal Interview, Ulaanbaatar, 2010.

from China. However, the DPRK did not consult with the Chinese government before launching this project, which is yet to enter into operation. In contrast, China has been closely involved in the most recent move of the DPRK toward creating special economic zones (Abrahamian, 2012). It seems that any significant opening up of the economy of the DPRK will need China's prior approval.

In addition, China's compulsory economic power has been applied through infrastructure development. Beijing is the dominant player in this area. China has committed up to US\$10 billion to build ports, road, railways, and tourist infrastructure. This amounts to almost 70% of the DPRK's GDP (Zimmerman, 2010). Most notably, China has been the main driver behind recent developments in Rason, home to a special economic zone that includes the DPRK's major ice-free port. Beijing launched the Changjitu Development Plan in 2009. This plan aims at developing Jilin Province, which borders North Korea. A high-speed train now connects the two major cities in Jilin Province, motorways have been expanded and upgraded, and the regional financial infrastructure is being developed (Abrahamian, 2012). The Rason port is central to the economic development of Jilin Province. Even if located in the DPRK, Chinese companies have been working in upgrading Rason's infrastructure and transport links from the port to the border with China (Abrahamian, 2012). Essentially, Rason is being integrated into the economy of China's northeastern provinces.

Beijing has also used economic coercion to try to influence Pyongyang's negotiation behavior, in particular negotiations to end the Second North Korean Nuclear Crisis. After members to the 6PT signed a joint statement in September 2005 and the DPRK refrained from implementing it, China allowed US sanctions on Banco Delta Asia to be applied (Moore, 2008, p. 9). The bank held several DPRK accounts, and the sanctions, which froze the accounts, had a negative impact on DPRK finances (Lague and Greenlees, 2007). Based in Macau, Banco Delta Asia fell under Chinese jurisdiction. Thus, Beijing applied its compulsory power to try to force the DPRK back into the negotiation table. And the effects of the sanctions on the DPRK were part of the reason why Pyongyang went back to the negotiation table.²

2 Personal interview, Washington, DC, 2008.

Furthermore, reports suggest that China has closed pipelines transporting oil to the DPRK on several occasions over the years (Moore, 2008, pp. 8, 11). Given the reliance of the DPRK economy on oil imports from China, Pyongyang has been negatively affected by these closures. Even though it is difficult to prove direct correlation, it seems clear that pipeline closures have been used by the Chinese government to try to force Pyongyang to engage in negotiations about its nuclear program.

The leadership of the DPRK has sought to balance Chinese compulsory power in two ways. To begin with, Pyongyang has sought to diversify its economic links. Despite political problems during the Lee Myung Bak presidency, economic activity in the Kaesong Industrial Complex never ceased. It remains a major source of hard currency for Pyongyang. Meanwhile, Russian companies have been invited to invest in the DPRK. Russia leases one of the piers at the Rason port, and the Khasan-Rajin Project has already resulted in the reconstruction of the rail line between Khasan in Russia and the Rason port.

Better known has been the DPRK's development of its nuclear program to, among other things, provide for the regime's own security. The program weakens China's compulsory power by limiting Beijing's ability to press for political change and Chinese-style economic reform. Since alignment with China is not the main source of DPRK regime security anymore, Beijing is limited to harnessing economic coercion if it wants to avoid instability on its borders.

Institutional power

Mongolia

China's institutional power over Mongolia exists through political, economic, and military structures. While the degree to which China can exert institutional power varies across these different institutions, it is nevertheless an important component of China's use of power toward the country.

Politically, China's institutional power toward Mongolia is based on the two countries' 1994 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The treaty outlined a code of conduct based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, including a commitment to nonaggression,

non-interference, and peaceful coexistence. Within the treaty framework, both China and Mongolia agreed to refrain from entering into an alliance against the other, agreed not to allow foreign troops to use their respective territories for activity aimed against the other, and agreed that Mongolia would remain a nuclear free country (Rossabi, 2005, p. 232).

While the treaty ostensibly commits both states to cooperation based on egalitarianism and non-interference in one another's affairs, the asymmetric nature of Sino-Mongolian relations makes the treaty inherently unequal. Mongolia's room for maneuver vis-à-vis China is limited in that it cannot engage in balancing behavior without violating the treaty. While China is similarly restricted under the treaty's provisions, this limitation means little considering the preponderance of Chinese material capabilities in relation to Mongolia. Similarly, under the treaty, Mongolia cannot allow troops to billet within its territory, a limitation that serves China's strategic interests well. While China is similarly confined, the practical implications are very different. What was conceptualized as a bilateral agreement based on equality has developed into an institution of unequal exchange.

China is also pre-eminent over Mongolia's economy across a range of indicators. Chinese originating FDI accounted for 51% of all FDI into Mongolia in 2010 (US\$596.7 million of 1.76 billion), up from just 24% in 1994 (FIFTA, 2012). Chinese companies make up the majority of all foreign-owned and operated companies in Mongolia at 50% of total foreign firms (FIFTA, 2012). Chinese workers are the majority of foreign workers in Mongolia (National Statistical Office, 2012). China is Mongolia's largest trading partner both in regard to imports and exports. In 2011, China received 91% of Mongolia's exports and provided 32% of its imports (National Statistical Office of Mongolia, 2011). The year 2011 was the first in which China surpassed Russia as Mongolia's largest source of imports, a trend that indicates that China's dominance over Mongolian trade is growing. Chinese overseas development aid to Mongolia is also increasing both in amount and importance (B. Gaadulam, 2008, Interview, Department of Policy and Coordination for Loans and Aid, Mongolian Ministry of Finance, Ulaanbaatar).

These economic ties have resulted in institutional power for China it has used to shape economic policy in Mongolia related to investment and trade, to secure contracts in Mongolia's key mineral deposits for

Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and to influence Mongolia's domestic development priorities and strategy (Campi, 2013).

Militarily, China has established extensive ties with Mongolia through defense security consultations (six in total), joint military exercises such as the 2009 Peace Keeping Mission, and high-level military-to-military exchanges. China has aggressively sought to expand military relations with Mongolia by dispatching military officers such as Xu Caihou, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, to Mongolia to press for greater collaboration. While the two states' military relations are not as developed as their political and economic ties, they have established China as one of Mongolia's most important military partners.

Mongolia has long sought to lessen China's institutional power through its Third Neighbor foreign policy. This policy, first expounded in the country's 1994 National Security and Foreign Policy Concepts, highlights the importance of diversity in foreign partnership for Mongolia, particularly in relation to dependency avoidance. As the policy has not lessened China's institutional power, which has expanded exponentially since 1994, it is largely a failure. Mongolia's foreign relations, while multifaceted, do not allow for a diffusion of influence in the country that offsets China's institutional power.

DPRK

The DPRK is notoriously reluctant to be part of international institutions. Nevertheless, China certainly tries to exercise institutional power through political, military, and economic structures. The degree to which institutional power is effective varies across these structures.

The longest lasting institution binding both countries is the China–DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, originally signed in 1961. Article II of the treaty establishes a mutual defense principle whereby the two countries state that they will defend the other in case of attack. Beijing's willingness to abide by this article has been called into question (Glaser and Liang, 2008, p. 169). However, there has been no serious attempt from the Chinese government to discontinue the treaty. Thus, the security of the DPRK is still partly predicated on China's willingness to defend it from third-party aggression, at least in theory.

Chinese institutional power is clearer when examining economic relations with the DPRK. The exact state of DPRK's economic interactions with other countries is complicated to ascertain, giving Pyongyang's reluctance to publish data. Nonetheless, it is estimated that, as of 2010, China received 46.5% of DPRK exports, with the ROK being the destination of 40.5% (CIA, 2012a). Meanwhile, as of 2010, 64.5% of DPRK imports came from China, with 24.6% arriving from the ROK (CIA, 2012b). This shows the DPRK's trade dependence on China, which has actually been growing since Lee Myung Bak became ROK president and inter-Korean relations soured (Song, 2012).

China's economic dominance over the DPRK is equally pronounced when examining FDI flows into the latter. These are notoriously volatile, with a peak of a net inflow of US\$629 million in 1989 and a low of a net outflow of US\$105 million in 2005 (UNCTAD, 2012). But in any case, the DPRK's FDI stock has been steadily increasing since 1989, reaching US\$1,530 million in 2011 (UNCTAD, 2012). Triangulating UNCTAD's figures with those of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (2010, p. 82), it is possible to infer the DPRK's dependence on investment coming from China. Most notably, Chinese FDI accounted for as much as 94% of the total received by the DPRK in 2008. These figures exclude ROK investment in the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

Data on aid flows to the DPRK are even more difficult to collate, since China does not disclose the information. Nonetheless, Beijing is considered to be the largest provider of aid and energy assistance to the DPRK (Manyin and Nikitin, 2009, p. 17). As a proxy for DPRK dependency on food aid from Beijing, cereal imports from China, usually transferred for free or sold at below-market rates, have accounted for over 50% of total imports since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, as can be seen by triangulating data from the FAO and China's General Administration of Customs. As for energy dependency, Lee (2009, p. 48) shows that oil shortages have heightened Pyongyang's reliance on China, with, for example, nearly all supply coming from China in 2003.

Pyongyang's response to Beijing's politico-military institutional power is well-known – development of a nuclear program to deter third-party aggression. Its 'Juche' or self-reliance ideology has underpinned development of a nuclear deterrence, with the goal of ensuring regime survival without having to resort to external help. That is, without the need to receive military support from China. Meanwhile, Pyongyang has sought

to minimize Beijing's economic institutional power through economic diversification. DPRK authorities have sought to increase trade and attract investment from other states. Nevertheless, development of a nuclear program had hindered economic diversification and increased reliance on economic links with China. Thus, it seems that development of a nuclear deterrence has weakened Beijing's politico-military institutional power, on the one hand, but strengthened economic institutional power, on the other.

Productive power

Mongolia

While certainly controversial, it is possible to view China's discourse with Mongolia as driven by its desire to develop productive power, particularly when considering Beijing's approach to ethnic propaganda. One need only point to China's long-standing drive to assimilate the ethnic Mongolians in the IMAR and to the perception in China that ethnic Mongolians are part of contemporary Chinese identity to support the claim (Bulag, 2010, p. 3). Moreover, there are parallels between China's policies in the IMAR and those it pushes for normative interaction with Mongolia. China, for example, has systematically used education, cultural interaction, and migration to assimilate the IMAR's ethnic Mongols into China (Harrell, 1995, pp. 22–27). Since 1994, China has engaged in an effort to expand education and cultural exchange with Mongolian society, particularly through the IMAR. Concurrently, Chinese economic migration to Mongolia has increased exponentially year-on-year.

In 2005, the IMAR provincial government signed an education exchange agreement with the Mongolian Ministry of Education, called the '2005 Mongolian Students to Study Chinese in China and Chinese Teachers to Go to Mongolian to Teach Agreement' (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of Inner Mongolia, 2008). In 2006, the IMAR government also agreed to provide tuition and living expenses for 100 Mongolian students to study in the IMAR each year. In support of the agreement, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China agreed to provide funding for 15 IMAR teachers to go to Mongolia and teach Chinese in 2008. (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2008).

Since the 1990s, Beijing has also actively engaged in expanding educational opportunities in Mongolia related to Chinese language learning. In 2008, the Chinese government and Shandong University established a Confucius Centre at Mongolia's National University and pledged to provide funding for Chinese language teachers ([Mongolia-Web, 2008](#)). In addition to the high-profile Confucius Centre, there are more than 60 Chinese language schools in Ulaanbaatar alone, and dozens of Chinese-funded Chinese language teachers in both the capital and Mongolian countryside.

The Chinese and Mongolian governments have also signed a series of agreements aimed at fostering cooperation of the two countries' closely connected histories and customs ([Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Mongolia, 2004](#)). These include the 1994 'Cultural Cooperation Agreement', the 1998–2000 'Executive Plan for Sino-Mongolian Cultural Exchanges', the 2001–03 'Executive Plan for Cultural Exchanges and Cooperation' and, most recently, the 2008–10 'Executive Plan for Cultural Exchange' ([Xinhua News Agency, 2005](#)).

While the nature of productive power, which relies on diffuse social interaction for development and leverage, makes it difficult to assess whether these bilateral educational and cultural exchanges have resulted in Chinese productive power, they unquestionably provide normative ties that influence intangibles such as identity and norms. That China relies on these tools for its 'civilizing projects' in the IMAR, XUAR, and the Tibet Autonomous Region is unquestionable ([Harrell, 1995](#), pp. 4–7).

Chinese economic immigration to Mongolia is also a potential source of productive power, much as it has been for China in the IMAR. Since 2000, the number of inbound Chinese passengers to Mongolia has jumped from 5,000 to 25,000 annually and is now more than one and a half times larger than that of Russian inbound passengers – the second largest group – despite having started at an equal point in 2000 ([National Statistical Office, 2012](#)). In 2010, Mongolian customs put the number of legally registered Chinese workers in Mongolia at 16,675. Estimates by custom officials as to illegal Chinese workers in Mongolia suggest twice or three times the official amount.³

Concern over China's productive power in Mongolia is growing. Nationalist groups in Mongolia such as Xox Mongol and Dayar

3 Personal Interview, Ulaanbaatar, 2012.

Mongol have formed in response to the perceived affront of Chinese influence on Mongolian culture. These groups' central message is that China is involved in purposeful, covert action to dilute Mongolian culture through penetration into Mongolian society much as it did in the IMAR. While once marginal, nationalist groups in Mongolia have gained a degree of legitimacy across Mongolian society, with major Mongolian newspapers now employing language central to the group's messaging when talking about social interaction with China (Press Institute, 2012, p. 19). Even the Mongolia government is not immune to this nationalist backlash against China's productive power. In 2010, for example, the government released a revised National Security Concept in which it equated protection of Mongolian culture, the Mongolian way of life, and Mongolian ethnic purity with national survival. Analysts believe this re-conceptualization was in response to China's growing influence (Reeves, 2012, p. 600).

DPRK

Sino-Korean relations have traditionally been perceived as Sino-centric, with Chinese episteme influencing Korea's in a father-to-sibling-like relationship. Chinese systems of knowledge were assumed to directly affect Korea's identity, with Confucianism being the prime example of the influence of Chinese ideas. Epistemic consonance between China and Korea was ensured via the education of Korean elites in China. The tributary system, with China at the center and Korea as one of several tributary Asian neighbors, gave form to this relationship (Fairbank and Têng, 1941).

Throughout the Cold War, however, Chinese discourse and identity only minimally influenced the DPRK's. Both countries had fought together during the Korean War. They were then part of the Socialist camp as well as the Non-Aligned Movement. Chinese and DPRK leaders therefore had a shared history binding them together. But ideological differences between China and the DPRK started as early as the 1950s, with the DPRK playing China against the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War (You, 2001, p. 390). There was little productive power of Beijing over Pyongyang throughout this period.

Following the end of the Cold War, Chinese influence over DPRK identity was further weakened. Indeed, Pyongyang felt betrayed by

Beijing's decision to normalize relations with Seoul in 1992 (You, 2001, p. 397). Nonetheless, Beijing has sought to maintain a degree of influence over Pyongyang's public discourse. Constant political, social, and cultural exchanges between both countries are an excellent tool for China to try to influence the DPRK. The latter's official newspaper, *Rodong Sinmun*, chronicles these exchanges.⁴ They were even relatively unaffected by the nuclear tests Pyongyang conducted in 2006 and 2009, when Sino-DPRK relations supposedly were at their lowest point.

Indeed, China has sought to generate productive power through educational and cultural exchanges. In November 2002, the ministries of Education of China and the DPRK signed an agreement on educational exchanges and cooperation. This agreement has served as a framework for higher education institutions to establish intercollegiate exchanges. As a result, hundreds of students from both countries have received scholarships to study in the other. Furthermore, Chinese-language teachers have been sent to universities and foreign language schools in the DPRK (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2007a).

In addition to educational exchanges, cultural exchanges between China and the DPRK abound. Dating back to 1959, both countries have maintained an agreement to implement cultural exchanges. Officials and arts and sports groups visit from one country to the other frequently. Furthermore, art exhibitions showing Chinese art in the DPRK and vice versa take place very often (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2007b).

In any case, China's productive power over the DPRK has not been as influential as it might be expected. As Zhang (2009) shows, Korea was unwilling to be fully Sinicized even during the centuries-long tributary-system period. The DPRK, which for decades has had 'Juche' or self-reliance as a central aspect of its ideology, has followed on this tradition.

There is no evidence that educational and cultural exchanges are significantly increasing Chinese productive power over the DPRK, with no perceived danger of ethnic nationalism in the Sino-DPRK border. Indeed, evidence from refugees from the DPRK suggests that, given the choice, North Koreans prefer to consume South Korean cultural

4 An online database with past copies of the newspaper is available at <http://www.kcna.co.jp/today-rodong/rodong.htm>.

products over any other (Kretchun and Kim, 2012). Even though it is difficult to know the degree to which China's productive power affects the DPRK, given the closed nature of the latter, there is no indication that there is much influence. Anecdotal evidence and Pyongyang's official pronouncements suggest that the population and leadership of the DPRK see themselves as Korean.

Structural power

Mongolia

China enjoys extensive structural power over Mongolia through its economic, political, cultural, demographic, and military ties. China's involvement in Mongolia's domestic economy has led to an asymmetric economic exchange through which China has developed a disproportionate influence over Mongolia's economic and political spheres. In 2009, for example, a sharp drop in Chinese demand for commodities led to a 1.9% contraction in Mongolia's overall economy, the collapse of Mongolia's largest bank, a rise in Mongolian unemployment from 10.5 to 12.8%, a surge in non-performing loans in the agriculture, construction, and manufacturing sectors, and a widening of debt in the country's fiscal and current account (World Bank, 2010, p. 1). A similar slowdown occurred in Mongolia's exports in 2012 as Chinese demand decreased (Campi, 2013).

This structural power extends to Mongolia's political process. Conflicts of interest among Mongolian politicians with business ties to China have allowed Chinese SOEs such as Shenhua Group, PetroChina, and Sinopec to gain access to strategic deposits in Mongolia despite legislation designed to limit foreign ownership in such deposits. A good example of this type of structural power is Chinalco's successful acquisition of 45 million tons of coal from the Mongolian government-owned east section of Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi despite public and political opposition. According to one Mongolian mining official, the Mongolian government awarded Chinalco the contract in repayment for a US\$3 billion loan it received from China in 2009 (Hamilton, 2012, p. 63).

The asymmetric nature of Sino-Mongolian cultural relations has also resulted in structural power. This structural power is the result of what Steven Harrell (1995, p. 7) refers to as an 'asymmetric dialogue'.

Sino-Mongolian exchanges are inherently unequal in that China has the capacity and resources to inundate Mongolia with Chinese culture but very little interest in receiving culture from Mongolia. This asymmetry is exacerbated by China's inclusion of Mongolian culture as part of Chinese identity. A good example of this behavior is China's grandstanding of Mongolian culture as part of China at the 2008 opening ceremony of the Olympic Games without reference to an independent Mongolia.

The massive build-up of infrastructure connecting China and Mongolia, unilaterally initiated by the Chinese side, has 'stripped Mongolia of all its nature barriers to China' (Rayson and Baatar, 2009, p. 48). Grayson and Baatar call Chinese infrastructure development in and around the country Mongolia's 'greatest challenge', as Chinese can now move freely into the most remote areas of Mongolia. This structural power enables China to move rapidly into Mongolia's territory without obstacle.

Both Mongolia's revised 2010 National Security Concept and its 2011 Foreign Policy Concept attempt to deal with China's structural power through legislation aimed at decreasing its dependency on the PRC (Reeves, 2012, pp. 590–591). To mitigate China's economically derived structural power, for example, Ulaanbaatar announced that it would limit the amount of FDI a single country could provide for Mongolia to one-third (China now accounts for more than 50%). The Mongolian government also reiterated its commitment to the Third Neighbor policy in both concepts, despite its inherent failings.

In 2012, Ulaanbaatar has also instituted conflict of interest legislation aimed at severing the ties between political office and business interests. While the legislation is just as much about domestic corruption, it also aims to dilute China's influence over the country's political and economic development. So, too, is the 2013 Strategic Entities Foreign Investment Law, which imposes tight regulations on foreign investments from SOEs – largely viewed as Mongolia's attempt to lessen China's structural power (Campi, 2013).

To date, however, the Mongolian government has not been able to mitigate the spate of Chinese structural power over their country. Despite well-intentioned legislation, Mongolia remains extremely economically dependent on China, a position that undergirds the rest of Sino-Mongolian

asymmetric relations. As Mongolia's economic health is reliant on China's demand for resources, there is little room for maneuver on Mongolia's side.

DPRK

With regard to the DPRK, the hermetic nature of its economic and socio-political structures paradoxically makes Chinese influence central to their functioning. As Victor Cha (2012, p. 425) notes, 'North Korea is *the* [sic] most isolated country on earth, and has been for most of the past six decades.' China is the only country that can be said to have a certain degree of influence over a hermetic DPRK.

Economic relations between China and the DPRK show the extent of Chinese structural power. As already stated above, the economy of the DPRK is highly dependent on trade, FDI, and, to an extent, aid from China. The DPRK's trade deficit and percentage of total trade with China have been steadily increasing, China is the largest foreign investor in the DPRK, and Beijing is the only reliable source of foreign aid. At the same time, the Chinese government has been willing to use its asymmetric economic relations with the DPRK to try to influence its behavior. Beijing has cut off oil exports to the DPRK on at least three occasions between 2003 and 2010 (Nanto, 2011, p. 78). The economy of the DPRK is dependent on Chinese oil exports to function, so the cutoffs probably reduced activity.

Business ties further compound Chinese structural power over the DPRK. On the Chinese side, business is either conducted by large SOEs willing to invest in the DPRK or small private companies that restrict themselves to trade activities (Haggard *et al.*, 2012, p. 132). Furthermore, 41% of Chinese companies invest in extractive industries and 38% in light industries, such as garment production (Thompson, 2011, p. 53). These two sectors are central to the economy of the DPRK. Without Chinese investment, they would be significantly smaller. Thus, the Chinese government could potentially decide to curtail investment by SOEs in the DPRK or put barriers to small private companies and hit the economy of the DPRK.

China applies political structural power over the DPRK as well. The extent to which China influences politics in the DPRK is the object of debate. Indeed, some analysts argue that the Chinese government has little leverage over the DPRK. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that

China has a level of influence over DPRK politics, unmatched by any other country. During his time in power, Kim Jong Il visited China seven times. In contrast, he visited other countries only three times.⁵ More poignantly, Kim Jong Il went to China to ensure a smooth transition of power to Kim Jong Un (Wong, 2011). Thus, the most important political process in the DPRK since Kim Jong Il assumed power following the death of his father in 1994 was conducted only after the blessing of the Chinese government.

Furthermore, visits from government officials, military personnel, and Communist Party members from one country to the other are constant, as can be gathered through the official media of both countries. Far from being courtesy visits, many meetings between Chinese and DPRK officials have a political component. As a notable example, following the DPRK's first-ever nuclear test in October 2006, a high-level delegation from China went to Pyongyang (Rodong Sinmun, 2006). This visit made the Kim Jong Il government resume negotiations on its nuclear program. Differently, following the DPRK's second test in May 2009, China refused to send any high-ranked official until October 2009. When it did, the DPRK announced its willingness to resume negotiations on its nuclear program (Xinhua, 2009).

The government of the DPRK has tried to mitigate China's structural power. To reduce trade dependency on China, the DPRK has continued operating the Kaesong Industrial Complex in spite of political problems with the ROK and has marketed the Rason Special Economic Zone to Russian companies. In addition, the DPRK amended its foreign investment laws for its special economic zones in March 2012. These are now open to all countries (Babson, 2012). Pyongyang is seeking to extricate itself from Chinese economic structural power, even though it has been thus far unsuccessful.

Understanding China's power

As Barnett and Duvall (2005, p. 68) point out, their power taxonomy was designed with the aim of encouraging scholars to analyze how different forms of power interact. Their assumption is that the four forms of power they describe reinforce each other and are applied under different

5 Information obtained from *Rodong Sinmun* and Korean Central News Agency.

circumstances. The previous section demonstrated that this is true in the case of China's relations with its two neighbors, Mongolia and the DPRK. All forms of power are present in these relationships, working together to reinforce Chinese influence.

Compulsory power

China's compulsory power over both Mongolia and the DPRK is based on its ability to use economic coercion to affect domestic economic and political behavior, particularly through denial of trade and investment and its increased investment in infrastructure on the two countries' peripheries that has the dual use purpose of facilitating trade and mobilizing military resources. While China's compulsory power tactics in both states are similar, its ability to use compulsory power differs greatly at both instances.

While Mongolia is extremely vulnerable to China's compulsory power, particularly China's ability to choke its access to both the Chinese and world markets, China has been less willing (or able) to use compulsory power against the DPRK. This suggests that Chinese compulsory power is limited, at least to a degree, by its larger foreign policy considerations. While China does not stand to lose much in putting pressure on Ulaanbaatar, similar pressure of Pyongyang could result in instability on China's borders that are not in its best security interests. China's compulsory power in this regard is not without limitations, although it has used it successfully in a number of demonstrated instances.

Institutional power

China has developed institutional power over both Mongolia and the DPRK through their domestic political, economic, and military institutions. Bilaterally, Beijing has signed friendship and cooperation treaties with both Ulaanbaatar and Pyongyang. These treaties expand China's institutional power by providing a commitment to mutual defense and non-interference, while promoting economic and political cooperation between China and Mongolia and the DPRK. Equally, the treaties help China develop an institutional power that limits the two states in terms of their foreign policy relations and their ability to engage in activity aimed at balancing China's influence. While the treaties provide both Ulaanbaatar and Pyongyang with a curtain of security, they equally

commit the two states to act within China's best interests even when such interests may run counter to their own.

Economically, both states are extremely dependent on China, which translates into institutional power for Beijing. The Chinese government has used this institutional power to influence the two states' respective economic development in ways that benefit China. Militarily, China has worked to establish cooperation (in the case of Mongolia) that it can use to expand its institutional power. In the case of the DPRK, Beijing has not been able to establish institutional military power due to Pyongyang's nuclear program. In any case, China's institutional power stemming from its dominant position over the two states' political, economic, and, in the case of Mongolia, military institutions provides it the ability to affect change in both states.

Productive power

Overall, China's productive power in both countries is limited. This limitation persists despite Beijing's concerted efforts to push forward greater cultural and educational cooperation with both states and the presence of Chinese laborers in both Mongolia and the DPRK. Moreover, China's treatment of its ethnic Mongols, particularly its focus on assimilation through cultural education, has led to a situation in Mongolia where its society views all Chinese productive power as a corrosive force. In Mongolia's case, China's ability to develop and use productive power is somewhat self-defeating.

For the DPRK, Korea's long history of resisting cultural assimilation by China underpins its resistance to Beijing's exercise of productive power. Despite seemingly political, culture and historical affinities, China's productive power over the DPRK is weak. Even educational and cultural exchanges have had a limited effect in terms of the assimilation of Chinese culture by the North Korean population. A preference for ROK cultural products exemplifies the limits of China's productive power over the DPRK.

Structural power

China's structural power with Mongolia and the DPRK results from the overall asymmetry inherent in their relations. China's dominant position in trade, FDI, and aid flows to the two countries has created a structural

dependency on the Chinese economy that neither Mongolia nor the DPRK can effectively mitigate. This dependency is more pronounced in the case of the DPRK, given the closed nature of its economic system, but also conspicuously present in Sino-Mongolian economic relations.

So, too, does China enjoy structural power over both states as it is able to leverage its unequal economic relations to ensure favorable political environments. In Mongolia, conflicts of interests between the country's polity and business community mean that China is able to effectively manipulate the state to serve its economic and strategic goals. In the DPRK, Kim Jong Il felt compelled to obtain Chinese support for his son Kim Jong Un to eventually take power. Without China's blessing, the political transition in the DPRK could have been very different. Moreover, links between Chinese and DPRK officials are essential to the latter, given Pyongyang's political isolation.

Structural power also extends to culture and military ties in the case of Mongolia and to demographics in both cases. In all three instances, China enjoys a tremendous advantage that translates into power. In the case of the DPRK, structural power is mostly economic. But the economic isolation of the country makes other types of structural power less necessary for Beijing. This inherent asymmetrical advantage means China enjoys structural power simply through its interaction with both states (Table 1).

Structural power and institutional power are the most important forms of power China uses in its interactions with Mongolia and the DPRK. Concurrently, compulsory power is becoming increasingly relevant to Chinese interactions with the two states, especially Mongolia. In contrast, China's projection of productive power toward both states is weak and unlikely to increase in the near future.

Table 1 Parsing China's power over Mongolia and the DPRK

| Country | Type of power | | | |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | Compulsory | Institutional | Productive | Structural |
| Mongolia | Medium and growing | Strong and growing | Weak and not growing | Strong and growing |
| DPRK | Medium and stable | Strong and stable | Weak and not growing | Strong and stable |

Following Barnett and Duvall's power taxonomy (2005, p. 48, Fig. 1), this indicates that Chinese power works well directly and through social relations of constitution (structural power) as well as diffusely and through interactions (institutional power); is working progressively better directly and through interactions (compulsory power); and is not working well diffusely and through social relations of constitution (productive power).

In other words, China is best at establishing direct influence based on co-constituted relations (structural power) and indirect influence resultant from the creation of institutions (institutional power). Meanwhile, it is increasingly better at creating traditional influence based on superior material capabilities (compulsory power), while not being as good in influencing through projection of its ideas (productive power).

Conclusion

Understanding the nature of Chinese power toward Mongolia and the DPRK sheds light on how China uses power within its foreign relations with developing states on its periphery. This is particularly the case as Chinese power manifests in similar ways within both states despite the disparity in their domestic institutions and foreign policy. While it is premature to suggest the Barnett/Duvall model of power is applicable to all China's periphery relations with developing states, its applicability in parsing China's power relations with Mongolia and the DPRK suggests its further utility in understanding China's wider bilateral relations.

The Barnett/Duvall taxonomy provides four important insights into Sino-Mongolia and Sino-DPRK relations that also suggest its relevancy to further study of China's relations with developing periphery states. First, asymmetry is a key driving force behind China's power. Whether in economic and political relations, social and cultural interaction, or military affairs and capabilities, China enjoys the natural advantage of not only being a more developed economy but a state with far greater human and material resources. The advantages of unequal exchange are applicable across the range of China's foreign relations with developing states, suggesting the further applicability of the Barnett/Duvall taxonomy to understanding China's foreign relations.

Second, the four types of power are present in China's relations with Mongolia and the DPRK despite their extremely different economic and

political systems, foreign relations, and social conditions. This reinforces Shen Dingli's assertion that China's contemporary foreign policy is more focused on return of investment than ideology. Rather than serve a normative end, China develops and uses power to achieve its larger instrumental strategic goals. The relative unimportance of the developing state's domestic institutions suggests that a state's economic, political, and social 'type' is a relatively minor variable in determining the manifestation and use of Chinese power. This outcome further suggests the approach's overall utility in examining China's power relations with developing periphery states.

Third, China develops power over the two states both through conscious and unconscious means. Consciously, China engages both states through treaties, formal agreements, and exchanges in order to increase its power, particularly in terms of compulsory, institutional, and productive power. Unconsciously, China develops its power simply through the process of interaction, all of which is asymmetrical in nature. China's structural power, for instance, is less directly sought than indirectly gained. This expansive development of power is also applicable across a range of China's developing state relations.

Fourth, both Mongolia and the DPRK have difficulty in mitigating China's compulsory, institutional, and structural power, all of which are either stable or growing. It is in neither state's interest (nor is it entirely possible) to decouple economically and/or politically from China. Neither is it strategically sensible to enact aggressive policies against China that could elicit aggressive responses. Both Mongolia and the DPRK are in a situation, therefore, where Chinese power is likely to expand with China's continued rise, as both states find their economic and political dependency on China growing. Almost all developing states on China's periphery are in a similar, if not identical, situation vis-à-vis China.

The Barnett/Duvall model clearly provides an important tool for understanding China's development, conceptualization, and use of power in its foreign relations with developing states on its periphery. Its added value comes in parsing Chinese power into different types that provide a more comprehensive understanding of its foreign relations. It is essential to have such a model in place to understand better China's power as it continues to grow in the coming years.

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