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Balance And Imbalance Of International Flow Of Information
In Non-Western Countries:
A Case In Japan

By
Youichi Ito
BALANCE AND IMBALANCE OF INTERNATIONAL FLOW OF INFORMATION IN NON-WESTERN COUNTRIES; A CASE IN JAPAN

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1. Introduction

Japan in the 19th century or soon after World War II was a tiny underdeveloped country. However, Japan has created many "exceptions" in modern world history. Japan was the first non-Western country that defeated or seriously threatened modern Western powers militarily, economically and technologically. By so doing, Japan has destroyed many "myths" and social theories regarding the natures of the Western and non-Western societies. In many cases, what had been achieved by Japan first was similarly achieved or is likely to be achieved by some other non-Western countries. Therefore, studying the Japanese case is important in predicting the future state of other non-Western countries.

In the area of international information flow, Japan has created again an "exception" in the non-Western world. For example, the trade of TV programs between Japan and the United States is almost balanced. Japan exports TV programs to Europe three times more than its import from Europe. Altogether, Japan's export of TV programs is twice as many as its import. As for international news flow, there are only three countries in the world where media coverage of Japan is less than the Japanese media coverage of them. They are the United States, the Soviet Union and China. The coverage of Japan in the rest of the world is either about the same as or more than the Japanese media coverage of them. The percentage of foreign TV programs on Japanese network television is the second lowest in the world after the United States. The ratings of foreign TV programs are generally so low that
they are televised only late at night or during the daytime. "Dallas" was cancelled due to low ratings, and Readers' Digest Japan went bankrupt after many years of deficit operation.

In the past theories and discussions regarding international flow of culture and information, there was an implication that culture and information flow from higher places to lower places just like water. In these arguments there was an implication that culture and information flow from the West to the non-West because the modern Western culture is superior to the modern non-Western culture. This view is not necessarily wrong if "culture" in this context refers to what the writer calls the "universal culture" such as economy, military, science, technology and internationally enjoyed sports. However, this view is wrong if it refers to "ethnic culture" such as language, religion, value systems, way of living, way of thinking, or way of doing things. This distinction is important to understand modern Japan.

The "universal culture" i.e., economy, military, science, and technology has to be universal by nature because, in these areas, it is easy to determine which is superior or inferior and make rank orders. Furthermore, most nations in the world cannot help participating in the competition to climb up the ladder of rank order. If they do not, they will be left behind, their standard of living will drop, and in the worst case, national independence may be lost. Most, particularly large, countries in the world, therefore, severely compete with each other to reach a higher rank in these "universal culture" items. Japan superficially looks similar to advanced Western countries because Japan's positions in these ladders are close to their positions.

On the other hand, "ethnic culture," i.e., language, religion, value systems, way of life, way of thinking, way of doing things, tends to remain as it was because there is no rank orders, competition, or threat in these items. Many people particularly in the West thought that these two kinds of cultures were inseparable or closely related. In other words, they thought that only countries with the Western type of ethnic culture could reach high ranks in the ladder of "universal culture." Modern Japan, however, has proven that it is not true.

As symbolized in the lowest Christian population in the world (less than one percent) and low appreciation of individualism and "Western rationalism" (as understood by the Japanese), the "Japanese ethnic culture has not been
changed so much as expected by Western social theorists. On the contrary, Japan's success in the "universal culture" is nowadays explained by some elements in the Japanese ethnic culture (e.g. work ethics, group-mindedness, collectivism, peculiar management system, labor union system, etc.).

Several new industrialized countries and regions such as South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia seem to be going through the kind of change that Japan has experienced, i.e., climbing up the ladder of "universal culture" without changing too much their ethnic cultural patterns. If so, what happened in Japan in the area of international information flow is likely to happen in these countries as well challenging many "myths" and social theories in this area such as the "cultural imperialism" hypotheses.

This paper will draw on the experience of Japan to predict such "challenges" in the near future by other newly industrialized Asian countries, and to suggest modifications of existing theories.

2. Directions and Volume of International Information Flows

(a) News Reporting

The Institute for Communication Research of Stanford University and the Institut Francais de Presse of the University of Paris jointly conducted an extensive study in 1961 on the flow of news among thirteen countries in five continents. Their conclusion was briefly as follows:

"The world flow of foreign news deals chiefly with a group of highly developed countries which are also dominant in world politics... News flows from the highly developed to the less developed countries. It flows from Europe and North America to the other continents. It flows from the United States and the Soviet Union to all other countries." (Schramm 1964, p. 61)

Japan was one of the thirteen countries investigated in this study and it was found that while Japanese newspapers heavily covered the United States, the
Figure 1. Proportion of foreign news in representative newspapers of 13 countries devoted to the other 12 countries during one month in 1961. A blank indicates less than 1.5 percent.

(Schramm 1964, p. 60.)
Soviet Union, France and England, Japan was not covered in any foreign countries to the extent France and England were covered (not to speak of the United States and the Soviet Union). In other words, the pattern of news flow to and from Japan in the early 1960s followed the typical pattern seen in most developing countries at present (Figure J).

For many years after the second world war, the United States occupied an overwhelmingly large portion of Japanese foreign relations. To the United States, however, Japan before the 1970s was one of many small countries in the world. This "perception gap" was naturally reflected in the quantity of news reporting in the mass media of both countries. According to the Stanford/University of Paris survey mentioned before, the ratio between the coverage of the U.S. by Japanese newspapers and the coverage of Japan by American newspapers was 49 versus 3 in 1961 (Schramm 1964, p. 60). As for television news, it was reported at the 7th CULCON (U.S.-Japan Cultural and Educational Conference established in 1961) that the ratio of the number of programs NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai or Japan Broadcasting Corporation—Japan's largest national network) received from the U.S. and that which NHK sent to the U.S. was about 10 versus 1 (CULCON 1974, p. 6). The relationship between Japan and the United States at that time was often compared to two people looking at each other through a telescope. In order to remedy such an imbalance, various efforts were made through bi-lateral projects such as the previously mentioned CULCON and the Japan-United States Editors' Conference established in 1972.

After the 1970s, however, Japan began to receive complaints from other Asian countries that the Japanese mass media do not cover them as much they cover Japan. By the end of the 1970s, many observers pointed out that American and European mass media coverage of Japan remarkably improved chiefly due to the increase of Japanese influence on the world economy. Armstrong (1982) calculated the number of New York Times articles on Japan from 1966 through 1975 and showed the increase of the coverage of Japan over time. According to this study, not only economic news but also news about Japanese politics and international relations drastically increased during this period.

Armstrong (1982) also compared the coverages of Japan and Germany in Newsweek and Time magazines from 1966 to 1976. As a result, it was found that, usually before 1971, the coverage of Germany had been heavier than that of Japan. However, this trend reversed itself in 1971 and, since then, the
coverage of Japan usually exceeded that of Germany. Also, Armstrong (1982) compared the American television coverage of the resignation of then Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka and that of German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1976. The result was that during the two month period investigated, Tanaka's resignation produced 18 stories whereas Brandt's resignation only 11 on American television news programs. Furthermore, this survey revealed that, partly due to the Lockheed Scandal, in 1976 "Japan stories ran to over ten percent of total international news" (Armstrong 1982, p. 77).

Although the coverage of Japan by the American mass media has never been and will never be equal to the coverage of the United States by the Japanese media, by the end of the 1970s, the Japanese people began to feel that the American media coverage of Japan had reached a satisfactory level. Some people attributed this improvement to bi-lateral efforts such as the CULCÓN and the Japan-U.S. Editors' Conference. However, this probably merely reflected the increase of Japan's influence in the world economy and politics.

The Research Institute of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (1979, 1981) investigated the representative newspapers of ten countries and compared their coverage of Japan with the Asahi Shimbun's coverage of these countries. The ratios between the coverage of those ten countries by the Asahi and their own media's coverage of Japan were: the Soviet Union (46 vs. 8), the United States (112 vs. 23), China (100 vs. 37), France (12 vs. 9), England (24 vs. 24), West Germany (8 vs. 11), Thai (7 vs. 32), the Philippines (2 vs. 26), Hong Kong (2 vs. 45), Singapore (0 vs. 30) (Research Institute of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 1981: p. 173). From these findings we can conclude roughly that coverage of Japan in the Soviet Union, the United States, and China is less than Japan's coverage of the three, but in the rest of the world coverage of Japan is either about the same as, or greater than, Japan's coverage of the respective other countries. The Japanese feel this situation quite natural considering that these three giant countries are extremely important for Japan's political and economic security. Therefore, the Japanese at present do not necessarily feel that news coming into and going out of Japan is unreasonably unbalanced.

b. Television Programs
The share of imported TV programs in Japan used to be quite large in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The peak was the early 1960s. At that time, most popular American programs were imported and televised in Japan. However, imported programs gradually lost popularity and were replaced by Japanese programs. When Varis (1973) investigated the percentages of foreign programs in major television stations in 53 countries in 1971, the percentage of foreign programs was one percent on NHK Educational, four percent on NHK General, and ten percent on the average of commercial networks. The percentage of imported TV programs in Japan was the second lowest in the world after the United States. Sugiyama (1982a, 1982b) investigated the number of foreign television programs on seven Japanese television stations. Foreign programs accounted for 2.3 percent of the titles and 4.9 percent of the actual time on these seven stations. The reason for this difference is that most foreign programs are movies which last an hour and a half or two hours. Among all the imported programs, 78.1% came from North America, 19.3% from Western Europe, 1.3% from Eastern Europe, 1.0% from Asia, and 0.3% from Oceania (Oct. 1980-Sept. 1981) (Sugiyama 1982b, p. 11).

According to Sugiyama (1982a, 1982b), Japan exported 4,585 hours of television programs to 58 countries in 1980. At the time of Varis' investigation in 1971, Japan's export of television programs was approximately 2,200 hours and this was about the same as her import (Varis, 1973). Therefore, Japan's export of television programs doubled between 1971 and 1980 while her import remained almost the same. The largest buyers were the United States (1,357 hours) followed by Italy (767 hours), Hong Kong (391 hours), South Korea (284 hours) and Taiwan (185 hours).

In the total amount of hours of the trade of TV programs in 1981, import occupied 33.7% and export 66.3%. In other words, Japan exported twice as many TV programs as it imported. Table 1 shows the Japanese export/import balance of television programs by region.

Table 1: Export/Import Balance of TV Programs by Region

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Imports (hours)</th>
<th>Exports (hours)</th>
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- 6 -
This table shows that the trade of TV programs between the United States and Japan is almost balanced and Japan exports to Western Europe three times more than it imports from Western Europe. This fact is often ignored or underestimated in the discussions regarding international flow of information between Western and non-Western countries. The Japanese experience suggests that it is possible for non-Western countries to improve their balance of international information flow.

(Sugiyama 1982b, p. 34)

c. Other Media

In the total amount of international trade of long films, import occupied 53.7 percent and export 46.3 percent in Japan in 1977 (Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications 1978, p. 70). This means that the trade of long films is almost balanced. One of the characteristics in Japan's film trade is that 93.3 percent of long films Japan imported came from North America and Europe and only 5.6 percent came from Asia. On the other hand, 52.9 percent of Japanese films were exported to Asia and only 23.9 percent went to North America and Europe. These figures indicate that Japanese long films are less competitive than its TV programs in the international market. A major reason seems to be that in the world's TV program market, the United States and Japan are far stronger than other countries, but when it comes to long films, there are several other countries in Europe as well as in Asia which produce internationally competitive products.

UNESCO collects data on the import and export of long films from more than 100 countries in the world and publishes the results in its *Statistical"
Table 2: The Market Share of Imported Films in the World
(Source: UNESCO, 1972)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>19,230</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6,645</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2,691</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the UK</td>
<td>1,713</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>FRG (West Germany)</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>GDR (East Germany)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Korea (North)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Yearbook every year. Table 2 shows the market shares of major film exporting countries. As seen in this table, some developing countries which are relatively developed in the region they belong to and have rich cultural heritages such as India, Egypt, Turkey and Hong Kong, occupy considerably large shares in the world's film export market. Nowadays, these countries produce more films than most advanced industrialized countries, and the shares of these countries in the film export market are steadily increasing. A major reason for it is that, in advanced industrialized countries, the film industry is declining due to competition with television, but in some large developing countries, the diffusion rate of television is still so low that movies play an important role as a mass entertainment medium. Domination of the world's film market by North American and Western Europe is apparently ending.

Japan exports more books and magazines than it imports. The export-import ratio of books and magazines in Japan in 1977 was 61.5 versus 38.5. Thirty-two percent of Japanese books and magazines were exported to Oceania, 25.5% to Asia, 23.5% to North America, 12.0% to Europe, and 6.6% to other regions. On the other hand, of all imported books and magazines, 44.4% came from North America, 35.2% from Europe, 19.7% from Asia and 0.7% from the rest of the world including Oceania (Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications 1978, pp. 70-71).

One of the exceptional areas where Japan's import overwhelmingly exceeds export is translations. In 1979, 2,156 titles of 14 major foreign language books were translated into Japanese whereas only 164 titles of Japanese books were translated into those languages. Out of 2,156 titles, 1,487 were from English. If we add French (240) and German (230), 91% of translations were from these three languages (UNESCO 1984, PP. 904-909).

Table 3: Ratios of Translations with 14 Major Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translations</th>
<th>from</th>
<th>to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1,487</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
German 230 21
Russian 107 12
Italian 29 5
Spanish 23 11
Swedish 20 3
Arabic 3 0
Dutch 1 3
Danish 4 2
Norwegian 3 2
Hungarian 5 3
Polish .3 2
Turkish 1 2

Total 2,156 164

Considering the Japanese strength in the world's mass media market, this weakness in translations is interesting and need some analysis. Generally speaking, most books translated from one language to another belong to high quality culture rather than mass culture and science and technology. If we can accept this assumption, three explanations are conceivable for Japan's weakness in translations. First is that although Japan has succeeded in internationalizing its popular culture, it has not yet succeeded in internationalizing its traditional high quality culture. Second is that Japan is still underdeveloped in basic sciences, particularly social sciences. Therefore many books on social sciences have to be translated from Western languages. The third explanation is that the largest target for Japanese cultural products, the Asian masses, have not yet reached the stage of enjoying translated foreign high quality culture. Although the first two reasons cannot be ignored, the third reason seems to be most important considering the fact that the Asian market is the largest market for Japanese cultural products. For example, in the UNESCO data, data on the translation into Chinese which is spoken by more than one billion people is not available. When people in neighboring Asian countries reach the stage where they can enjoy translated foreign books, translation of Japanese books into foreign languages will become far more common than at present.
3. Factors Determining the Directions and Volume of Flows

a. News Reporting

What determines the directions and volume of international news flows? Regarding the findings of the survey on international news flows by the American and French team mentioned above, Schramm wrote as follows:

"To point out merely that the countries that get the most news coverage... are also the ones that own the world news services is far too simple an explanation. The potency of these countries in world affairs; their possession of the nuclear weapon; the strength of their economics, and the relation of these through trade and finance to the economies of all other countries; their eminence in science and industry — all these things ensure that almost anything of serious significance that happens in one of these countries is likely to be of interest or concern to smaller countries throughout the world. In a very real sense, many of the dangers and opportunities which a tribal watchman used to look for from his vantage point on the nearest hill are today to be found in the highly developed countries, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the newspapers of less developed countries should provide a great deal of news from these countries" (Schramm 1964, pp. 62-63).

Sommerlad (1977) gave similar reasons for the imbalance of international news flows:

"Many third world countries are disappointed that more of their news does not get into the international news circuits and is not published by media throughout the world. This is only in part the result of the telecommu-
communications and world news agency structures. It is in part because of inadequate news coverage and lack of economic resources, but there are also other complicating factors.

The imbalance in international news flows, of which so many countries complain is, in the first place, a reflection of world political power. In a world context, more things happen of international importance in centers of power such as Washington, New York, Moscow, London, and Paris, than in smaller countries in Asia, Oceania, or Africa, or for that matter, in any part of the world. As power blocs change so will news flows. That is in the nature of news" (Sommerlad 1977, p. 28)

These arguments can be well taken if we consider the flow of news in the domestic market. In Japan, an extremely large portion of the news flows from Tokyo to other parts of Japan. The most important reason for it is that "news," as understood by journalists, occurs in Tokyo far more frequently than in any other part of Japan. Compared with this reason, other reasons such as the headquarters of major newspaper companies and news agencies being located in Tokyo take on secondary importance.

Another factor which has often been ignored or underestimated in the discussions of international news flow is the importance of distance. Even in the classical study by Stanford and the University of Paris in conducted in 1961, the data obviously showed that each country was most heavily covered by neighboring countries. For example, Brazil was most heavily covered by Argentine newspapers and Argentina by Brazilian newspapers. India was most heavily covered by Pakistani newspapers and Pakistan by Indian newspapers (Figure 1)

Many experts, particularly ex-practitioners, have emphasized geographical and psychological proximity as an important factor to determine the degree of news value. For example, an airplane accident which occurred in Korea or Taiwan will be more heavily covered by the Japanese mass media than a similar accident in Europe, Africa, or South America. This is because of geographical proximity. Even an airplane accident in Africa will be heavily covered if a Japanese tourist group is involved. This is because of psychological proximity.

The importance of geographical proximity in news reporting was empirically supported by Sparkes (1978) in his analysis of news flow from
Canada. Liu and Gunaratne (1972) found that neighboring countries accounted for most of the international news coverage. Lee and Kang (1982) hypothesized that Japanese newspapers would cover Korea more heavily than American newspapers and American newspapers would cover Korea more heavily than British newspapers. This hypothesis was tested by a content analysis in the three aspects: (a) number of items, (b) amount of space, and (c) intensity of attention. The hypothesis was supported in all these three areas. The authors conclude that this is due to geographical proximity.

Zipf (1946) expressed the importance of geographical proximity in information flow in the form of a formula. According to Zipf (1946), the volume of information flow (V) between two communities (the populations of which are P1 and P2 respectively) can be expressed roughly as follows:

\[ V = \frac{P1 \times P2}{D} \]

\( P1 = \) Population of community 1

\( P2 = \) Population of community 2

\( D = \) Distance between the communities 1 and 2

Although this formula looks better applicable to point-to-point communication such as telephone, telex and mail, this formula might explain, at least in part, the flow of news.

It seems obvious that geographical propinquity is an important factor which gives direction to international news flow. If we synthesize politico-economic importance and geographical propinquity, we are led to some "assumptions" proposed by Hester (1973) concerning international information flow. According to Hester's "assumptions":

"The need for surveillance of environment surrounding a national system is a triggering mechanism for the gathering of information to be used in national systems.

Leaders of nations—especially seek information about other national systems which they perceive as threats."
or potential threats to their own nation. Professional
journalists, in reporting and transmitting news, often
unconsciously fulfill the same goal as above" (Hester,
1973: pp. 244-245)

Based on such assumptions, Hester proposes the following hypotheses:

"The flow of information from Nation A, considered as
a threat or potential threat by another nation, Nation B,
will be greater than the flow from a nation, Nation C,
not considered threatening to Nation B." (Hester, 1973:
p. 245).

Hester further proposes several other hypotheses concerning international
information flows. Among them the ones which seem to be relevant to the flow
of news are:

"Information flows between nations having active
economic relationships will be greater than the flows
between nations not having such economic ties.

Information flows between nations having cultural and
historical affinities will be greater than flows of
information between nations not having such affinities.

The inflow of information from a mother country to a
colony or former colony will be greater than the outflow
of information from the colony or former colony to the
mother country, unless the colony or former colony is
perceived as being higher ranking in the hierarchy of
nations" (Hester, 1973: pp. 245-246).

Although Hester's hypotheses are yet rather crude, looking at Figure 1,
a result of the joint research by Stanford University and the University of
Paris conducted in 1961, we have an impression that some of those hypotheses
are supported. However, such an impression has never been scientifically
tested and proved. In order to scientifically prove these hypotheses, more
research is necessary.

Mulugetta and Miller (1985) introduced the degree of government control as another variable to explain the direction and volume of international news flows. This study indicated that geographical and cultural proximities were stronger predictors of news flow in countries under weak government control than in those under strong government control.

As more empirical surveys are conducted, and the volume and directions of news flow are examined more strictly and in more detail, it may reveal that the real state or the real mechanism of international news flow is not as simple as often claimed. There will certainly be some "regularity" in the international flow of news. However, it will not be as simple as to be explained only in terms of advanced industrialized nations versus developing nations or north versus south. We do not know yet exactly, in a systematic way, the patterns of international news flow, mechanism behind the complicated flows, or the reasons for the regularity of the flows.

b. Television Programs

As for the determinant factors of international flow of television programs, Ito and Kochevar (1984) seem to be the only systematic research conducted so far. The authors coded the data on international flow of television programs for 51 countries prepared by Varis (1973). The percentage of imported TV programs from each country was cross-tabulated with economic, political, cultural, historical, demographic, and geographical factors. The result was that each country has a tendency to import television programs from countries with which it has close economic and political relations. Cultural similarities, geographical proximity (except in the case of neighboring countries), or differences in population or personal income were found to be not so important as determinant factors.

This finding may merely reflect the fact that the world's television market is dominated by major industrial powers which also dominate international trade and political relations. At the same time, however, it indicates that television programs are sold and bought just like any other industrial goods. It coincides with actual observations. For example, Lyle, Ogawa, and Thomas (1986) discuss the recent strategies by some major Japanese networks to export their programs to American stations.

According to this study, the systematic efforts started with the
purchase of small cable stations in Honolulu, Los Angeles and New York and they are now marketing their programs to educational stations, the public network (PBS) and even to major commercial networks. The areas of marketing are expanding from the above three cities to Washington and Chicago.

"Perhaps even more important," according to Lyle, Ogawa and Thomas (1986, pp. 15-16), "the Japanese firms are making serious study of the American market, its practices and its audiences. The trade publications of the American television industry are carrying an increased number of reports about the efforts of Japanese program salesmen. For example, in its edition of April 23, 1986, Variety reported the three month tour of American television stations by the assistant head of Nippon Television Network's International Operation." These observations indicate that improvement of the imbalance in the trade of television programs has much to do with serious marketing efforts by program sales companies. Therefore, it is understandable that economic and political relations could be more important than cultural factors for the export of TV programs.

On the other hand, however, it is reported that Japanese salesmen find it much more difficult to sell Japanese TV programs and movies in North America and Europe than in Asia. As mentioned before, the experiences of Japanese and other relatively developed Asian countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia indicate that cultural differences function as barriers against excessive import of foreign television programs. This fact may seem contradictory to the finding discussed above that cultural proximity is not as important as economic and political relationship.

Three reasons can be given to explain why cultural differences were not considered so important in Ito and Kochevar (1984): (1) Longitudinal trend is not incorporated; (2) no comparison is made between imported programs and domestic programs; and (3) the world's TV program export market is overwhelmingly dominated by a few economic and political powers such as the United States, Japan, and England. Therefore, the flow pattern is rather simple, and there is no room for cultural factors to function in most other countries. As we see later, this is not true any more with movies. Therefore, it seems that although economic and political factors appear to be the best predictors at present, it is very likely that cultural factors increase in importance as program production abilities of Third World countries improve.
c. Other Media

Using the worldwide data collected annually by UNESCO, Ito and Kochevar (1983) studied the determinant factors of international flow of long films. Independent variables consisted of 19 economic, political, cultural, historical, demographic, and geographical factors and the dependent variable was the percentage of import from each country. The importance of independent variables was compared by a regression analysis. As in the case of television programs, economic and political factors were found to be most important factors. It should be noted, however, in the case of long films, cultural affinity was found to be the third most important factor.

The reason may be that film industries in Third World countries are more developed and internationally more competitive than their television industries. Thus, large developing countries, functioning as regional film exporting centers such as India, Egypt, Turkey, Mexico, and Brazil export their films to neighboring countries. This is why the influence of cultural factors was found to be stronger in the case of films than in the case of TV programs.

There are several studies on the determinant factors of international traffic of mails, telephone calls, telex, and satellite communication. In an early study of mail flow, Deutsch (1979) found that the "propensity to international communication" was a function of the geographical area of a country, its population size and total volume of mail. Similar findings were reported by the Keizai Kikaku Kyokai (Association for Economic Planning) (1970). They studied the relationship between an "international information exchange index" (composed of per capita international traffic of telephone calls, telx, telegrams, mail, and international travel expenses divided by gross national product—GNP) and a "social development index" (composed of per capita GNP, percentage of urban population, percentage of university students, and sales of manufacturing industries divided by gross domestic product—GDP). They concluded that although the degree of international information exchange by a country was highly correlated with the degree of "social development," it was also a function of various other factors such as geographical area, population size, degree of isolation and self-sufficiency and the degree of reliance upon foreign trade.

Hur (1979) used a variety of predictors in his attempt to explain the international mail and telephone volume and satellite interconnections of 45
countries. Mail and telephone volume were correlated with one another, but not with satellite interconnections. They were also highly associated with trade. For satellite interconnections, socioeconomic factors such as economy, technology, urbanization and education along with domestic communication were positive predictors. Surprisingly, international trade was negatively correlated with the number of satellite interconnections.

Timmerman, Davidzink and Hvidsten (1966) found that Great Britain's gross revenues from communication transactions with six European nations and the U.S. were closely related to trade with each country. Cherry (1978) hypothesized on the basis of this and other research that international communication follows the patterns of international trade and political relations.

Saito, Inose and Kageyama (1980) studied international information flow through several major point-to-point media within Japan, within the United States and between Japan and the United States over time. They found that domestic information flow through these media (mail, telegram, telex, facsimile, telephone, and data communications) were closely related to GDP, and international information flow to gross international trade between the two countries. They also found that technological innovation and the opening of new services such as transpacific cable services and communication satellite services had positive effects on international information flow.

4. Content and Influence

a. News Reporting

There have been many claims that news about Third World countries carried by major international news agencies and American and European mass media are biased to Western countries' favor (Schiller 1974, 1976; Somavia 1976; Matta 1976). Although several good empirical studies which disprove these claims (Schramm and Atwood, 1981; Pinch 1978; McCombs 1977) have been published, these claims apparently have some validity in many cases of international news reporting. For example, the Japanese have always felt that foreign mass media reports news which meet foreign masses' stereo-typed
images of Japan. Bizarre events such as famous novelist Mishima's harakiri in 1970, Red Army's suicide attack at the Tel Aviv Airport in 1972, Red Army's hijacking of a passenger aircraft using a traditional Japanese sword in 1970, a nationalist fanatic's "kamikaze dive" by a small aircraft to the residence of Mr. Kodama who was one of the key actors in the Lockheed Scandal in 1976 were favorite subjects for foreign mass media. The Japanese were afraid that this type of news produces and reinforces the image of Japan as a country with modern technology and medieval spirit. Therefore, in a sense, Japan has also been a victim of the American and Western European domination of international news agencies.

Japan, however, is different from many Third World countries in the sense that Japan was not only a victim but also criticized for being an assailant in international news reporting. South Koreans have long claimed that Japanese news reporting was biased and unfriendly to South Korea (Lee, 1981, 1982; Song, 1982). The Russian Embassy in Tokyo has complained many times that the Japanese mass media are hostile to the Soviet Union. During the war in Vietnam, many news, commentaries, and pictures disadvantageous to the U.S. government flew from Tokyo to other parts of the world. The American Embassy in Tokyo was very much irritated and protested many times against the unfriendly attitudes of the Japanese mass media. The British Ambassador to Japan has complained that Japanese mass media write too much about the "British disease." From these experiences, the Japanese feel that although we may be victimized sometimes by foreign mass media, the Japanese mass media are also doing the same thing to other nations. There is a good empirical study on this subject conducted by the International Press Institute. The researchers asked a distinguished Indian correspondent and a distinguished American correspondent to examine and report the treatment of their own countries for one month in the newspapers of the other country. The result was that neither correspondent was very happy with what he found. First, the Indian correspondent's reaction:

"Coverage perfunctory and haphazard... Editors interested evidently in only four broad classifications of news from India --- bizarre or outlandish news, news having some bearing on the East-West struggle and communism, disasters... Too often editors publish only the first few lines and jettison the rest... The domestic
political scene in India is practically a closed book...
But for the inevitable pieces about untouchability or
the caste system or child marriages, nothing much is
published in the daily press about Indian social
affairs" (Schramm 1964, p. 64).

This comment is quite typical as a reaction from third world countries. Even
now, twenty years later, similar reaction could be heard from any developing
country. In fact, the strong complaints expressed by Third World countries
at a series of international conferences during the past ten years were based
on such impressions and beliefs.

However, the American correspondent was also as unhappy as his Indian
counterpart.

"As bizarre as the average American's impression of
India... The news is given, but not the story behind the
news... The picture of the United States is both
inadequate and unbalanced... It suffers from narrow
channeling and a dearth of Indian correspondents in
America... Aspects of life in the United States which are
most objectionable to Indian feelings are played up in
the Indian press out of all proportion to their importance
in the American scene" (Schramm 1964, p. 65).

Every nation may have a tendency to be pleased by the blunders and stumbles
rather than by the successes of other nations. If so, it explains the
ubiquity of "bias" in international news reporting.

Now let us assume that all the news agencies and mass media in the world
equally have their own biases and prejudices. The problem, however, is that
American and European biases and prejudices are more widely and deeply
disseminated than those of other parts of the world. Japan cannot do much to
change this situation because the biggest reason for this inequality is in
language. For example, Japan's Kyodo News Agency is almost as large as AFP
(Agence France-Press) in terms of the scale of budget and the number of
personnel. Kyodo's facilities and technologies are not inferior to those of
Reuters, AP, or AFP. Despite that, Kyodo can never become a real
international news agency and its influence can never be comparable to those
of Reuters, AP, or AFP. The reason is language more than anything else. The same can be said about Russian TASS, Chinese Xinhua, and German DPA. As long as English and French remain international languages, the domination of international news flow by news agencies based in English and French speaking countries will continue. As a result, biases and prejudices reflecting cultures of English and French speaking countries will have stronger influence in the world community than the Russian, German, Chinese, Japanese, or Arab biases and prejudices.

Thus, as mentioned before, quantity-wise, the Japanese feel that the flows of news reporting coming into and going out of Japan are reasonably balanced. When it comes to content and influence, however, the Japanese feel that their opinions and claims (for example, regarding trade issues) are not adequately represented in foreign mass media whereas American and European claims are widely and deeply disseminated all over the world.

b. Television Programs

Television programs intrude into homes very easily and dominate ordinary citizens' "information environment." Therefore, many people have feared that imported television programs will drastically change the traditional way of life and endanger the cultural identity of the nation. If dominance of foreign programs continues more than one hundred years, there may be such a danger. The Japanese experience indicates, however, that such a drastic change does not occur within ten or twenty years even if television networks carry many foreign programs. What actually happened in Japan is that as television production ability developed, domestic programs beat foreign programs in terms of ratings and foreign programs gradually disappeared from Japanese networks without any government regulations.

Table 4 compares average ratings of imported and domestic programs. As shown in this table, the ratings of imported programs, particularly those of entertainment programs are much lower than those of Japanese programs. The rating of imported programs exceeded Japanese programs only in information and cultural programs. Therefore, imported programs seldom appear during prime time in Japan. For example, a researcher checked the program of seven TV channels available in Tokyo from the 1st to the 30th of April, 1975 and counted how many times imported programs appeared during prime time (7-10 p.m.). They appeared only six times (Sugiyama 1982b, p. 9). In other words,
imported programs are televised in Japan late at night or during the daytime for special interest groups rather than for the general public.

Table 4: Comparison of Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imported programs</th>
<th>Japanese programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light entertainment</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious performance</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information elaboration</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic education</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education time slot</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value projection</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic not known</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sugiyama 1982b, p. 24)

As mentioned before, however, the share of imported TV programs used to be quite large in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but those foreign programs gradually lost popularity and were replaced by Japanese programs. The order of disappearance of foreign programs is interesting. The more culturally bound, the earlier they disappeared. For example, home comedies, variety shows, and drama series made in foreign countries disappeared from Japanese television by 1970. The foreign TV programs that have survived after 1970 are detective stories, movies featuring war, horror, gangsters (such as "God Father"), love, and sex. In other words, violence, horror, and sex are truly international and cross-cultural entertainment.
In 1981, a Japanese major commercial network decided to start an American drama series, "Dallas," on prime time because its ratings were extremely high not only in the United States but also in Europe and Australia. Also, the company invested much money for promotion campaign. The program was televised once every week from 9 to 10 p.m. which is exceptionally favorable time band for a foreign program. However, the ratings were so low that the series was cancelled in six months. Average ratings of 24 episodes televised during the six months was only 4.8 percent. As this event symbolizes, it is very risky for Japanese networks to place foreign programs on prime time. Asked why they don't like foreign programs, some people, particularly those in rural areas, replied that they could not remember European names in dramas. Others claimed that they could not differentiate the faces of characters in dramas, saying, "Faces of Westerners all look alike."

What happened in Japanese television is now happening in some newly industrialized countries in Asia. In Singapore and Malaysia, for example, it was reported that the most popular program category in terms of ratings are domestic programs, the second are Chinese (Hong Kong and Taiwan) and Japanese programs, and American and European programs are least popular on average.

c. Other Media

What was said about television programs can be also said about long films. In the 1950s and 60s when the Japanese film industry was still feeble, many foreign films were imported. As the Japanese film industry became more competitive, the number of imported films decreased. Most of the foreign films that attracted a large audience were those featuring violence, horror, and sex rather than artistic films which require some background knowledge about the cultures and histories of foreign countries.

As for print media, Japanese editions of Playboy and Penthouse are successful whereas Readers' Digest Japan went bankrupt in 1985 after many years of deficit operation. The reason seems obvious. You need some background knowledge about American society, economy, and culture to enjoy Readers' Digest, but you don't need anything like that to enjoy Playboy or Penthouse. It is very likely that what happened in the Japanese magazine market will also happen in other non-Western countries.
5. Conclusions

Through the discussions on the information flows going out or and coming into Japan, it became apparent that international information flow has to do with many different factors. Furthermore, importance of each factor differs from one kind of information to another. In the case of news reporting, for example, military and political strength is a very important factor. The fact that only the United States, the Soviet Union and China are covered by Japanese news media more heavily than their media coverage of Japan may have to do with the fact that only these three countries in the world have potential powers strong enough to occupy Japan militarily. News media in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian countries cover Japan far more heavily than the Japanese media cover them. A reason may be that Japan is a potential threat to them, but they are not threats to Japan. For whatever cause, in the case of international news flow, it is unrealistic to pursue "absolute balance" between all the countries in the world. Each country should determine an adequate level or pattern of balance based on its military and political potentialities and national policy and be satisfied with it. Although American, Russian and Chinese media do not cover as much as our media cover them, we think it reasonable.

The dominance of four major international news agencies in English and French speaking countries will continue as long as English and French remain international languages. The Japanese, as well as other nations whose mother tongues are not English nor French, are often victimized by these news agencies but cannot do anything effective to change the situation.

TV programs, long films, music tapes, records and other mass culture products are produced and sold in the international market just like any other industrial goods. First of all, in order to produce internationally competitive mass culture products, the domestic market has to be considerably large. Secondly, in order to export these products, the country has to have international sales networks, various know-how regarding trade, advertising and marketing. For these reasons, Japan is quite strong in this area particularly in the Asian market.
In the countries where domestic products are available, cultural difference usually works as an effective barrier against imported products. The more culturally bound the content is, the stronger this mechanism works. Therefore, between culturally different countries, excessive influence of the foreign culture will not be a serious problem. However, between culturally similar countries such as between the U.S. and Canada, the U.S. and Europe, Japan and Korea, and Japan and Taiwan, this may continue to be a serious problem. After all, in the area of mass culture products, industrial strength is a spear and cultural identity is a shield.

A large portion of high quality culture is exported in the form of books and translations. Here also, cultural difference works as a barrier against import, and it is very difficult for any country to export its traditional or modern high quality culture to other countries. Fortunately, however, an interest in Japanese traditional and modern high quality culture is becoming stronger all over the world in recent years. This phenomenon also seems to have to do with the increase of Japan's economic and political influence. It also explains why Western countries made a remarkable success during the past two centuries in making their high quality culture universal.

Science and technology are universal in nature. Cultural difference in them are almost negligible. Therefore, cultural difference does not function as a barrier against inflow of science and technology. Information regarding science and technology simply flows from upper places to lower places.

The information and discussions provided in this paper may be used for policies to increase export and decrease import of information and cultural products. Since excessive import of foreign culture is a serious problem for most countries in the world, such motivation is understandable. However, the educational values that the import of information and cultural products has should not be underestimated. Generally speaking, import of information and cultural products from foreign countries is desirable unless cultural identity is endangered by excessive import. It adds something new to the national culture and enriches it. There is no culture in the world which has never learned and borrowed from other cultures. All the great cultures and civilizations in the past were created borrowing and blending various foreign cultural products.

Another point to be emphasized is the importance of maintaining geographical balance. Excessive import of information and cultural products
would not be a serious problem if they were imported from geographically and culturally diverse areas. The problem has become serious because most countries in the world import only from a handful of advanced industrialized countries which have strong marketing capabilities. If information and cultural products exchange systems are developed and each country exchanges its products with a variety of countries, import of information and cultural products will benefit every country in the world.
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