Tracking the National Dream of the Sojourners:

Railway Building as an Institution in Modern Japan

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

June 2010

Abstract

Abstract of Thesis entitled:

Tracking the National Dream of the Sojourners: Railway Building as an Institution in Modern Japan

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For the degree Doctor of Philosophy

at Chinese University of Hong Kong in June 2010

The research delineates the process of the building of the railway system in modern Japan (1868-1937). While the railways are commonly considered to be an economic and political infrastructure that is functional to the secular governments to integrate the invented nation-state, however, this does not adequately explain why there are many distinctive cultural imaginaries related to the railway in Japan and why the Japanese seems to be faithful enough to continue to lay tracks for years. I argue that trains are more than mere economic infrastructure through which collective sentiments are expressed. Instead, I argue that the belief that is formed towards the railway had been collectively crafted by different social players for a variety of reasons in the due course of modern Japanese history. Emerging social players, including capitalists, politicians, and commoners, tried to justify their varied practices by making claims to define the great use of railway. Railway building gradually became a shared platform on which different power and interests could be defined and practices legitimized. Those rationales, however, might have nothing to do with the instrumental "use" of railway, but were intimately related to the making of capitalism, democracy and nation-building in modern Japan.

The research appropriates a theoretical-methodological framework of institutionalization analysis, which helps us to delineate how a collective belief, as in the case of railway building in Japan, was formulated. This framework helps us to delineate how a legitimate social order was established through discoursing, ritualizing, and imagining. Myths, rituals and imaginations attached to the notion of railway were indeed ideological concepts and packages to represent the changing society, even though these efforts might not be well recognized by different social players who participated in the making of this railway belief. The research argues that railway building became one of the most powerful manifestations of nation building. It is a part of the long-evolving process of Japan through which the emerging collectivity came to define and redefine itself in the growing world society. Through railway building, different social players tried to articulate myths, form rituals and share imaginations, and at the same time negotiate what rational economic policies, a legitimate democratic polity and an imagined community meant.

論文擇要

制度鐵道：重溯近代日本的火車與國族建設夢

張彧暋

本文旨在追溯近代日本鐵道之文化構作與制度化過程。以往論者普遍將鐵道視爲上世紀政府用以維繫國土發展的政治基建，其經濟作用至今仍然存在。另一方面，鐵道在當代日本卻被賦予大量的文化象徵意義，成爲表達集體情感的意象媒介。

本文質疑論者以「用途」解釋日本政府持續建設鐵道的緣由，進而探討日本的鐵道如何由經濟建設轉化爲表達集體情感的文化意象。論文將闡述歷來寡頭政要、資本家、民選政治家、地方勢力、皇室、宗教組織及火車公司等不同群體如何通過對鐵道的歌頌，因應各別的理由而定義其利益與權力的關係，爲各種相關的社會作爲提供合理解釋，使鐵道建設脫落了原來的交通意義，而與資本主義、民主主義及國族主義的建構密切相關。

本文論述設想言說、儀式及想念爲合法社會秩序三種制度化機制，嘗試梳理制度化及集體信念(譬如對鐵道建設的信念)的形成過程。論述將涉及各種與鐵道相關的神話、儀禮及想像如何影響社會背後存在的各種意識形態與理念，並分析有關信念的參與者如何在不知情的情況下，通過對鐵道建設的種種付出而具體呈現其價值。因是，本文認爲鐵道建設的制度化過程可視爲近代日本國族建構的一種呈現，也就是「日本」這個社群如何在國際社會中定義與再定義自身的制度化過程，通過制度化的鐵道信念，不同的人構作言說神話、儀式典禮、想念想像，並由此定義何謂合理的經濟政策、合法的民主政體與想像的共同體。

（題目中的 "度" 一字，廣東話作 dok6 聲、普通話作 duo2 聲）

Acknowledgements

The will to knowledge ---

Institutions are the *tracks* and ideas are the *switches* that change the direction of the train. Switchmen, then, were the *names* that you are going to read in the following list. If the work itself was an institutional product, the acknowledgements should then be a railway map (in chronological order) that highlighted some junctions of tracks that one may encounter in the railway trip.

My pre-sociological training was heavily influenced by Prof. Ho-Hsiu Hwang and Dr. Lee Tian-Ming, whose teaching, as I later find out, were both heavily influenced by the late Ludwig Wittgenstein. Prof. Ho's "symbolic view towards human nature," as well as his teaching of philosophy of education, emphasizing on the symbolic-cultural constructedness of individuals, and Dr. Lee's view towards the public use of language indirectly influenced my decision to escape from my original discipline to the social science.

Prof. Lynne Nakano (Department of Japanese Studies) introduces me the world of Japanese culture and anthropology. The research topic was first presented in her class (1998). I would like to thank for her guidance for years.

I first met with Prof. Wong Suk-ying, my supervisor and mentor in sociology, in her class of *Japan in a Global Perspective* (1999). I did not remember why I came to her class. Her classes are magical. Her sociological imaginations are full of charming spells. Her advices are heavenly light. Prof. Wong is an ideal supervisor who encourages students to have an independent spirit to explore, while provides warm guidance if my spirit became sojourned and homeless. I tend to agree with Max Weber that it is very hard for one to *learn* and practice his or her mentor's charisma. Yet her introduction of the new institutionalism and also the field of sociology, which is enchanted by her *geist*, to me is really... *sugoi* (great).

I thank Prof. Stephen Chiu Wing-Kai and Prof. Lui Tai Lok. They carry an ideal spirit of the endangered Hong-Kong culture with self-confidence. Prof. Chiu's courses of *The Rise of Modern East Asia* (2000) and *Japanese Manga and Society* (2008), and Prof. Lui's classes (too many to mention here — I attended about 10 or more different courses according to my own record) provide me all kinds of sociological knowledge I need to know.

I thank Prof. Gordon Mathews (Department of Anthropology) who teaches me

Contents

One   The research problem

Two   Literature review

Three   Methodology

Four   Structure of thesis

One   State-building, capitalism and the discourse of railway building

Two   Concealed origin: the emergence of railway building as a national project (1868-1872)

Three   Capital, capitalists, and capitalism: forging state-capitalists relations (1872-1889)

Four   A railroaded nation and the nationalized railway (1890-1906)

Five   Conclusion

One   Ritualizing power structure and the establishment of the
           democratic polity: methodological accounts of the institution of railway

Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

Railway is a mystique. To where the tracks are linked, people feel relieved because they are connected to the cities, including myself... Bus routes run according to the schedules but they do not have "shapes" (*katachi* 形). For roads, I don't feel any linkage between the city and the village. But when I see railways' tracks, I will say the feeling of isolation (*koritsukan* 孤立感) and sense of remoteness (*hekichikan* 僻地感) are lessened. It is also why young people will stay here. Without railway I think our population in the village will decrease further.

> Mr. Sumi (89), interviewed at 12th May, 1995,
> on his reflection on the building history of a local railway.[1]

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[1] Quoted from the History of Yamaguchi Prefecture, edited volumes of historical archives Volume one, Contemporary History, Testimonies and Memorandum. (Yamaguchiken 2000: 852)

Section One   The research problem

1   Prologue: the railway mystique in Japan

Many people consider railway a mere economic infrastructure in the old age. Railway building had once been an important and powerful engine to help unifying the modern nation-state and modernizing the country in economical terms (like transporting freights). It is not uncommon for sociologists and historians to argue that the construction of railway played a critical role in standardizing time zones,[2] organization models,[3] and conceptions of national territory.[4] More importantly, however, many scholars link railway, travel and tourism with that of the birth of modern sense of national consciousness. Li,[5] borrowing his ideas from Schivelbusch,[6] and Traganou[7] argue that railway was an important cultural representation of a newly imagined geographical horizon of the modern nation. Yet the railway age had passed - - at least for many countries. It is perhaps not exaggerated to assert that sociologists today do not find that the railway still holds any relevance for research in contemporary eras.[8]

In Japan, however, one can possibly observe that there are various apparently distinctive cultural phenomena attached to the notion of railways.[9] I have started to formulate my research problem based on my observations of images of trains and tracks in the contemporary Japanese media. One of the most symbolic images to represent Japan is perhaps a photo of the Fuji Mountain with a shinkansen (新幹線) or bullet train. Still more images of trains appear in advertisement, drama, movies, animation and so on with or without any apparent reasons.

To convince his readers that the subject matter of railway in Japan is worthy of investigation, Noguchi highlights its cultural uniqueness by packing numerous weird examples related to trains, in a rather unorganized manner, into fourteen pages.[10] Those examples include, Miyazawa Kenji's (宮沢賢治) *Night of the Milky Way Railroad* (銀河鉄道の夜), Kawabata Yasunari's (川端康成) *Snow Country* (雪国),

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[2] O'Malley 1990
[3] Chandler 1977
[4] Brenner et al. (eds.) 2003
[5] Li 1996
[6] Schivelbusch 1986
[7] Traganou 2004
[8] Exceptions include Chandler (1977), Dobbin (1994), Roy (1997), among others.
[9] Koori (ed.) 2004
[10] Noguchi 1990

station lunch boxes, the importance of railway in child socialization, the train culture in urban life, a scene in Kurosawa Akira's film, a junior high school student who had memorized all the railway timetables for the entire country, a novel called *Tabiji* (The journey) which was a popular historical story in the 1960s about a railway family, and a song called *Kanashiki Tetsudô Kan* (The Sad Railway Man). While the list of these fragmented examples concerning trains and tracks in Japan can go on and on. It would also be worthwhile to inquire into the social meaning of this forest of symbols out of the train phenomenon in modern Japan. More importantly, I argue that the sociological significance of these apparently random facts warrant our attention.

The phenomenon of trains and tracks is also reflected in literary images, such as novel and all kinds of literary work in Japan. Sometimes it seems weird that one of the most popular novels is written by a novelist Nishimura Kyôtarô (西村京太郎), who writes detective stories about murders in different trains for more than twenty five years and is required to pay the largest amount of tax among all novel writers in Japan. With more than one hundred titles in this genre of detective stories called *misutari* (ミスタリー or "mystery"), almost all lines and types of trains have become the crime scenes for behind-locked-door murder-cases in his novels, and the detective in the story have to use the railway timetable to find who the criminal was. There are in fact numerous writers writing the similar kind of stories in novels and in television dramas. Before Nishimura, it is Matsumoto Seichô (松本清張), who has founded the "Social Detective Stories" (社会派推理小説) that has used the railway in this genre of stories. Although the detectives in these stories have solved numerous "social mysteries" for years, the greatest myth about why railway might be involved, if it is not merely a gimmick, as a part of the unquestioned worldview in the stories remains a great interest to me.

Perhaps, railway is not simply a representation and a worldview, but also a manifestation of the modern nation. Japanese sociologist Ôsawa (2008) interestingly refers to a railway hobbyist, nicknamed *kokutetsu-kokumin* (国鉄国民), in the 1960s.[11] Although this man liked railway, he only liked the Sôbû Line in Tokyo. This mania[12] frequently pretended to be different people from other prefectures in order to

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[11] Ôsawa 2008: 90-94

[12] Ôsawa refers to railway hobbyist as "primordial otaku." Otaku, now a commonly used term in contemporary Japan, refers to those crazy hobbyists who have immersed themselves into the virtual world of manga, anime, games. See also my own research on railway hobbyists (Cheung 2003).

raise petition to different authorities for double-tracking and electrifying this line by sending letters with different postmarks from different post offices around the country. What accounts for the behavior of this seemingly crazy hobbyist? Ôsawa commented that,

> What was the attractiveness of railway? In the early times of modernity, railway was perhaps the only media that liberated people's imagination from the native, local collectivity in which they were born and grown. Modernity referred to the time when common people — those outside the centers of political and economic arenas — realized that they were… independent members of the civil society or the nation. Yet to have actual feelings for this social space, a touchable physical media was necessary and railway was such a media. It was possible to imagine that the capital, the territory of nation-state, and the world were opened up beyond where the railway extended; this was why railway could draw a romantic imagination.[13]

The temporal and spatial coordinates of the railway system were imprinted on the mind of national subjects, and individuals could even transcend its everyday life into a national imaginative horizon.[14] In Ôsawa's somewhat abstract words,

> Railway manias captured the railway and its networks as an extended social space and a universal whole of the world. Railway itself was surely a tiny partial element of the world, but by enjoying its partial elements one could enjoy the whole of the universal world.[15]

The individual's mental structure was like a carved seal impressed by the railway system according to its internal temporal and spatial logic. Railway did not "unite the nation" simply by laying tracks. It only helped invent the sovereign nation-state, in a sense that when *some*, if not all, people *did* really travel and experience travelling on the one hand, and if they collectively experienced a common temporal and spatial coordinate which was brought by the new railway system on the other hand.

The railway gave shape to the temporal and spatial dimensions of the modern nation, but it was not necessary for people to develop national consciousness just because they took trains. Nevertheless, trains and tracks indeed have become significant cultural icons in all arenas of life in modern Japan. So why can one imagine the world through this tiny small train?

By reading a timetable, for example, a hobbyist could virtually imagine the whole nation. Detectives in those "railway mystery" novels could even find out "the

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[13] Ôsawa 2008: 92
[14] Ôsawa 2007: 177-188
[15] Ôsawa 2008: 92-93

truth" of the society by decoding the secret of the railway system. Similar to Levi-Strauss, the founder of structuralism, who analyzes the hidden coding sequence of tribal myths and says that the imagination towards human nature is "one myth only" among cultures,[16] perhaps railway is such a "myth" in modern Japanese society.

2   The theoretical framework

Three important terms that require some brief definitions in the first place: railway building, institution building, and nation building. *Railway building* refers not only to the physical efforts to lay tracks but also to those social undertakings which define the use of the railway and to actualize the building plans. *Institution building*, however, refers to the social process that invented and the defined the cultural meanings in articulating and strengthening the claims of the railway building. In other words, this definition focuses on the social processes of the constitution of cultural meanings instead of the railway system itself. To assert that railway building as an institution, the research aims at examining of the social undertakings and processes that defined and crafted those cultural meanings of railway building. Finally, *nation building* refers to the configurations of the cultural meanings, which were crafted in the institutional building process that defined the very meaning of the emerging "imagined communities" (Anderson 2006) of Japan in the world. In the following sections, in order to explain the changes of the configuration of railway — and the meaning of these changes   it is necessary to articulate a theoretical framework in which institution building of railway and nation building could be examined together.

(a)   The triumph of railway building in modern Japan

The research argues that it is necessary to conceptualize railway building as institution building. The research aims to provide a sociological account for the historical making and collective construction of the cultural meanings towards the usefulness of railway — economically, politically and culturally. To start with, it is ideal to conceptualize the potential theoretical puzzle brought by the cultural landscape of railway building in modern Japan reviewed in the first place.

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[16] Levi-Strauss 1963; 1990

Railway seems to be a hidden worldview in contemporary discourses. Symbols of trains and tracks are some sorts of emotional home and cultural imaginaries for many in Japan. It seems that Ôsawa's observation might not be true to all societies with railway but may be a unique phenomenon limited to Japan. In fact, it is perhaps relatively distinctive to modern and contemporary Japan in which railway is somehow culturally charged with collective sentiments. Yet one cannot easily account for why that will be the case.

The critical problem, however, is that railway does not automatically produce such cultural or national imaginations. Aforementioned scholars have asserted that railway was intimately related to the national representations or cultural imaginations. Yet they did not specify the historical contexts and process, as well as the sociological mechanism, of *why* and *how* railway *had been enchanted* with collective effervescence and became a totem-like collective representation.

If one employs a Geertzian view, then one might explain this representation in terms of the cultural distinctiveness of Japanese society.[17] One might argue that the railway system represents a special "railway culture" through which values of the Japanese society and culture are manifested and might further assert that it is the "symbol of modern Japan."[18] Yet this static conceptualization of "culture" faced challenges also from Japanologists and anthropologists as well, who argue that symbols are always open to reinterpretations and historical changes.[19] The claim of "culture" does not guarantee much explanatory power to solve the puzzle of why people hold such cultural values and sentimental attachments to a symbol.

If one takes a Durkheimian view, one could consider the railway system as a totem which symbolizes the success of modernization in Japanese history. The long-term devotion to the symbolic use of the railway in popular discourse as a hidden worldview could then be seen as a ritualistic kind of collective celebration of the railway, which is indeed a totem representing the nation. The problem with this view, however, is that a totem does not create the collectivity in the first place, but it is the collectivity which has tried to establish their identity through the externalization of their social reality into the magical totem.[20] In short, railway, as a technological system itself, could not produce the collective modern national sentiments. What we

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[17] Geertz 1973
[18] For example, Hood's book takes this approach. See Hood 2006
[19] Morris-Suzuki 1998; Ohnuki-Tierney 2006
[20] Durkheim 1965

must consider is instead how shared imaginations were consolidated around this totem.

In what ways, then, can we make a sociological sense of this strange conception towards railway in the case of modern Japan? If only a few railway mania possessed such imagination, and if not all people travelled by railway, "common people" did not necessarily produce and transform national imaginations through railway travel experiences into a cultural artifact manifesting the nation. The theoretical challenge requires our intellectual sensitivity to see through the social constructiveness of railway. This historical process involved persistent social dynamics and collective efforts to infuse the railway system, not as a mere technological infrastructure, with much ideological values and cultural imaginations.

(b)   Why railways are considered to be instrumental at a collective level?

This section examines the concept of *railway building* first. Railway building does not merely refer to the technical, economical and organizational make-up of the railway system. Arising from my intellectual curiosity, this research asks why people would consider railway an infrastructure to be useful before it was actually built, despite the fact that huge amount of capital, advanced technology and immense political effort were required to mobilize the resources and put this project into place. While given the fact that huge amount of capital, advanced technology and immense political effort were required to mobilize the resources and put this project into place, one may alternatively use an instrumental approach which focuses on the aspect of economic interest or organizational efficiency to analyze the railway building process.

Given the economic scale of the railway system, ones might consider many structural elements like economic incentives and political power as important factors to account for the phenomenon. Indeed, commonly found sociological explanations may try to single out social actors (like capitalist class or interest groups) and their internal attributes (economic interest, power or cultural sentiments) to see the causal relationship among them. As will be shown in the following chapters, however, no single group of actors or attributes could account for why different kinds of social players in the modern Japanese history would all accidentally keep making claims of the great use of railway.

These structural forces, actors and attributes were important. Yet far from an economic infrastructure for transporting goods and passengers in modernizing the

nation-state, it was railway, but perhaps not other infrastructures, that became, and still is, one of the omnipotent institutions in Japan, which could serve all kinds of functions. It seems that the building of it fitted all the "needs" of interest, power, and cultural sentiments.

To be unfolded in this research, one can find that many social players, for a variety of reasons, had been making claims to argue for the economic use of railway, to keep petitioning to the state for the building of it because of political purposes, and to make use of it for religious and cultural reasons. In the building process, rationales and views supporting or refusing to build railways were strategically made and utilized by different social players. Many of these ideas, themes, and practices synchronized to the dominant discourses in the political settings at the time. These utilized ideas had been shaping the shared understanding of what it meant to be "national interest" politically, economically, and culturally. On the one hand, the making of the beliefs in the railway was further strengthened and embedded in the political structure, which enacted a particular set of national policies based on the railway. On the other hand, the symbol of railway had also been appropriated by individuals to frame and produce personal worldviews and it was conceived as an important medium to express a sense of transcendence for both the self and the collectivity, as seen in different cultural products like literature and films. Railway was gradually institutionalized as an important medium for an imagined community, in which railway became not merely an economic or political means but an end in itself.

Railway building in Japan was not directly promoted by any single social groups or players alone. Indeed, for a variety of reasons, capitalists, politicians and commoners all strangely tried to frame their own actions by articulating the usefulness of railway building. Railway building then gradually became a platform in which different kinds of social players could all legitimately frame their interests. It increasingly became a source of legitimation for different players to frame their claims and practices. To put it in another way, the theoretical puzzle then becomes why many social players had found their ideas and practices in terms of the use of railway building, even though the railway system itself might have nothing to do with their interests, power or cultural sentiments at all. For sure, the research does not necessarily reject any causal explanatory mechanisms which "reduce social

phenomena to aggregates of behavior"[21] among prescribed "actors,"[22] but it simply emphasizes the high-order cultural mechanisms which legitimize these interests and actors. Accordingly, this research provides a theoretical framework which can account for why this institution could possibly satisfy many across time by arguing that the railway was socially constructed to be "a legitimate source of moral claims and cognitive models,"[23] which constructed the identities of "actors" and defined what count as acceptable claims and acts.

(c)   Railway building as a normative presence

To conceptualize railway building as *institution building*, I refer to the social process of defining and negotiating cultural understandings towards the use of the railway. The making of different cultural claims to make sense of the efforts to build railway was collectively created by continuous but highly unconscious and unintentional efforts. This research inquires why people consider railway as an infrastructure to be useful before it was actually built, that is, how and why the railway came to have collective cultural meanings for people in Japan. It aims to provide a sociological account for the historical making and collective construction of the cultural meanings towards the usefulness of railway — economically, politically and culturally.

Railway building as an institution was collectively created by continuous but highly unconscious and unintentional efforts. It is not saying that people built or claimed to build railways without reasons or wished to lay tracks in a random manner. Yet these rationales and actions were not necessarily intentional or purposive with clear plans. In the research, one alternative perspective is to consider railway building as a prolonged series of projects that emerge as a national undertaking, then become a participatory venture among the mass and finally evolves into a normative presence nationwide.

It is perhaps reasonable for readers to have their first guess that to have a grand project like railway building, there should be some strong social players to make a clear plan to lay tracks and build trains. From the perspective of engineering, it was true; railway building was indeed technically advanced at the time. Perhaps railway

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[21] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 195
[22] Meyer in Krucken and Drori (eds.) 2009: 111-135
[23] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 198

was so powerful such that many people realized its use before its completion; there might be a blueprint in the mind among institutional builders to actualize their visions by carrying out their plans. One might guess that the government should have a grand project of railway building in advance to unify the sovereign territory by tracks. Given its scope in capital raising or advanced technology, either the state or capitalist class might be thought of as a strong agent in initiating this project. The scope of railway building might also make politicians to get actively involved in the political decision making process. In any case, the scale, the scope and technology demanded by railway building were extraordinary — it could not or should not be merely a series of unintended consequences.

The research argues, however, that the construction of this infrastructure was not a totally rational and continuous undertaking, which was conjured from the visionary mind among some defined social actors. No single social agent could account for the making of this grand plan for decades. No single factor, cause and functional attribute could explain why so many social players kept making claims to justify the use of railways and managed to ask for railway building for years up to contemporary eras. Indeed not many tracks were actually laid and railways lines did not enter into every corner of the country. Perhaps, railway building in modern Japan turned out to be some sort of an aggregation of random facts or unintended consequences in a prolonged manner — a series of accidental events — that made this dream continue for years.[24]

It is indeed that the making of this institution could not be accounted for by intentional and purposive plans among single actors with well-defined interests (economic, political or cultural), the making of the belief towards railway building as worthwhile and useful was neither historical contingent nor meaningless aggregates of random facts. Following this line of thinking, the research, therefore, argues that the collective and continuous efforts contributing to the institutional building of railway in Japan could not be assumed to be a single intentional project. The strong belief towards railway was made in a gradual manner and evolved and get organized among various players from time to time.

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[24] One might consider the current approach resembles Braudel's combined approach of history and sociology by considering the "Long Duree" of the underlying layers of social changes. Braudel 1980: 74

(d) Railway as an institutional and ideological framework of modern Japan

The last section suggests theoretical contributions to the current research that might be promised by the two concepts of institution building and nation building. One the one hand, *institution building* considers how and why the railway building came to have collective meaning for people in Japan. On the other hand, nation building deals with the question of how Japan's modernity was constructed conceptually. Combining the two approaches, then, the research argues that one can refine the significant role that an institutional building (here, the railway building) can be conceptualized as the emergence of modern Japanese society and nation.

This research tries to capture these apparently scattered but continual efforts to build the railway and investigate how the belief towards railway defined, organized, reconfigured and eventually become an institution in modern Japan. By institution, it refers to a collective and substantive belief towards its "use." Specifically, it tries to account for the making of an institution, by delineating the emergence, maintenance, and changes of this belief, which was supported by various ideas, meanings and practices. At the beginning of the story, one can find many reasons that initiated the railway building project in modern Japan, which were, to a large extent, irrelevant and external to the railway system itself. As the research proceeds, one can see how different social groups came into the scenarios. Different social players, because of many contextual rationales and idiosyncratic reasons which had nothing to do with the railway system, gradually invented concepts, made up claims, crafted out strategies to justify the need of the building of it. Finally, people utilized and experienced this infrastructure and came to consider it as an indispensible part of social reality, even though they might not realize the original intentions and reasons that made this social reality possible. The current research will employ the theoretical school of contemporary sociological new-institutionalism, which pays attention to the collective sense-making, the cultural-cognitive mechanisms and the legitimacy in institutional building and institutionalization. It will also provide a conceptual framework that yields a methodological approach for institutionalization analysis and proposes discoursing, ritualizing, and imagining as three important mechanisms to help us delineate the making of a legitimate social order within the disciplinary effort of historical-sociological research.

The research argues that when those varied and unintended efforts among major social players continued to contribute to the making of the beliefs towards the "use"

of railway, railway building became not only something useful in reality, but also a manifestation of a powerful nation building project. Values underlying those building efforts revealed a deeper and wider cultural-ideological project for the nation. For example, state-builders and emerging capitalists tried hard to define what a proper state-capitalist relation meant, when they were debating on the problem of the nationalization of railways. Politicians and localities introduced the concept of civil participation as well as universal suffrage and got involved in the emerging democratic polity by trying persistently to introduce local railways to villages in deep mountains. The imperial institution, railway companies and commoners experienced the railway travel and started to make sense of the emerging national imaginary called the *kokutai*, or the "polity." Instead of a purposive plan to induce a sense of nation as a strong ideological program by the state or any single social group, these scattered, unintentional but tremendous, substantive and collective efforts made many of these values and this cultural-ideological project tangible, real, and powerful.

Last but not least, to capture the relation between the meaning construction of the railway building and nation building process as a dynamic force, it is important to evaluate the interplay between the endogenous and exogenous factors which had crafted many of those cultural claims proliferated in the due course of the institutional building of railway. The concept of *nation building* is employed here to examine the production and circulation of many of those underlying ideas and manifesting values, which were borrowed from local, national, and global contexts and used to define the very meaning of railway institutional building. Specifically, cultural imaginations towards the railway were indeed manifestations of many newly evolved and celebrated ideas, like publicity, national interest, democratic participation and universal citizenship. The research thus provides not only a historical trajectory to delineate how the modern institution of railway building in Japan was socially and historically constructed, but it also aims to construct a framework to explain how this institution was being appropriated and upheld as a grand ideological-cultural project of the emerging Japanese nation that finds her significant presence in the modern world order by different social players.

To sum up, arguing from the perspective of institutionalism, the main objective of this research, then, is to provide a theoretical and methodological framework to delineate the institutional making of this cultural artifact amid the process of nation-building in modern Japan, from the Meiji period in the 1860s to the early

Showa period in the 1930s. Here, railway building refers not only literally to the physical setting and organizational make-up of railway construction, but it also refers to those ideas and practices which tried to justify the building of it. To assert that railway building is an institution, it means there is a well established belief that the building of it (or the promise to build it) is worthwhile. The research tries to provide a framework to delineate why and how that will be the case and argues that railway building is a manifestation of the nation and a sense-making process of the nation as a cultural-ideological project which helps people to make sense of the collectivity across a long span of period.

The research aims at making a contribution to the refinement of modern sociological institutionalism in which mechanisms and cultural carriers are regarded as key components in the institutionalization process. Through the examination of the Japanese case within the context of railway building at both the local and national level, this research might also shed light on the internal dynamics that are involved in organized and unorganized interests in many social movements, within which a social reality (and also a social consequence) begins to take shape. I believe such an effort of uncovering the organizational linkage between policy claims and formulation and ideological making is a significant advancement towards the understanding of the transforming order of (nation-)state and society relations in our times.

In the following literature review, I will provide a brief summary and theoretical framework for institutionalism, followed by sections on the methodology and the structure of the thesis.

As discussed in the last section, railway building in Japan involved continuous but unconscious economic, political and cultural efforts. Duara once referred to the lineage in China, which was the most powerful institution that encompassed and consolidated diverse localities into a central state and a unified cultural whole of nation, as "cultural nexus of power," in which economic, political and cultural-religious elements were all involved.[25] People shared a cultural world made up by symbols — through myths and rituals — that were defined by the institution.

Institutional building in modern Japan, I would argue, is also the invention of a similar kind of "cultural nexus of power." For the current case of the institution of railway building, it involved economic, political and religious efforts at the same time. To examine it, then, equals to the delineation of the collective formulation of an institution.

In the following section, I will review major theories on institutionalism in sociology. By drawing from theoretical resources, I will try to construct a methodological framework for analysis of institutional building and institutionalization.

1   Founding theories of institutionalism: Classical and modern

We should first start from some founding theories on institution by Max Weber, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who had focused on defining how social actions were constructed and on analyzing how these social relationships could be maintained in a stable social reality. The purpose is to draw some theoretical resources from these classical and modern texts on the discussion of the making of social relationships, legitimacy, and social order.

(a)   Max Weber: From social relationship to institution

Peter Berger's famed book of *Invitation to Sociology* had once discussed Max

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[25] Faure, for example, considered the building of lineage as the most important institutional invention since only the late Ming dynasty. The case of lineage in modern China was indeed an institution, because from everyday life among commoners to imperialistic affairs in the central government, people conducted their economic and political affairs under the name of ancestors as well as the emperor. See Duara 1998; Faure 2007

Weber's famous definition of social action.[26] The original quote is:

> The term of "social relationship" will be used to designate the situation where two or more persons are engaged in conduct wherein each takes account of the behavior of the other in a meaningful way and is therefore oriented in these terms. The social relationship thus *consists* entirely of the *probability* that individuals will behave in some meaningfully determinable way. It is completely irrelevant why such a probability exists, but where it does there can be found a social relationship.[27]

Weber's definition of "social relationship," however, captured the essence of the discipline of sociology.

(i)   Definitions of institution, institutionalization, and institutional effects

Relationships are social, only when two or more persons are mutually oriented towards one another. Then they can in turn try to react in a meaningful — symbolic — way by taking into account others' actions and responses. We are very confident to live orderly together in everyday life without great worries or concern about how others will respond to our actions. It is because we do expect a very high probability that "individuals will behave in some meaningfully determinable way."

What is an institution? Contemporary new-institutionalism's definitions to institution, indeed, share many common concerns with Weber. According to Jepperson's succinct clarification, it "represents a social order or pattern that has attained a certain state or property," and "[b]y order or pattern" it refers "to standardized interaction sequences." An institution "is then a social pattern that reveals a particular reproduction process" and institutionalization "denotes the process of such attainment" (1991: 145). In his words, "institutions are socially constructed, routine-reproduced... program or rule systems" (1991: 149). I also conceive institutions, as suggested by Friedland and Alford, as "both supraorganizational patterns of activity through which humans conduct their material life in time and space, and symbolic systems through which they categorize that activity and infuse it with meaning." (1991: 232) To assert railway building as an institution, then, I refer to

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[26] Berger 1963

[27] Weber in Secher (ed.) 1962: 63. Original emphasis in Secher's edition. I adopt Secher's version instead of Roth and Wittich (eds.) (1968) here because the former one's English is easier to understand. The major difference is the translation of "situation" and "conduct" in Secher version became "behavior" and "action" in the Roth and Wittch version. I consider the usage of Secher here fits my intention yet, even though the criteria of selection has nothing do to the original intention of Weber, if any, and I do not know German to judge whether translation is more appropriate.

the "self-activating reproduction processes" (Jepperson 1991: 148) that aim to upkeep the belief in trains and tracks, and to infuse railway with meanings.

Also borrowing from the above scholars, I also consider the *situation* where participants in social relationships could probably behave in meaningfully and mutually determinable ways as a sign of an *institution*.[28] In this research, I define *institutionalization* as the process that social interactions can achieve this stable status. While *institutional building* refers to the initiation and establishment of an institution, for the sake of analytical simplicity, I include it also into the process of institutionalization. Institutionalization analysis, thus, refers to those *analytical mechanisms* which help us to delineate the *formulation* of social order. Institutional analysis, on the contrary, is devoted to the efforts to evaluate those *process*, effects and consequences of an established social order. Institutionalism is useful for the current historical-sociological research because it pays special attention to the aspect of social formation. In other words, the current research suggests and spells out some specific mechanisms for one to analyze social formulation.

(ii) Theoretical resources from the Weberian framework to institutionalism

Weber's institutional analysis immediately is linked with the following concern of legitimacy.

> Action, especially social action which involves a social relationship, may be guided by the belief in the existence of a legitimate order. The probability that action will actually be so governed will be called the "validity" of the order in question.[29]

Weber and some sociologists who share an interest in institutional analysis seek to explore those mechanisms that make the above mutually maintained beliefs possible and sustainable. This belief is what he called a "legitimate order." In other words,

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[28] The usage of the concept of institution is perhaps different from the "mainstream" usage. According to Jepperson, "some scholars involve institution simply to refer to particularly large, or important, associations. Others seem to identify institutions with environmental effects. And some simply equate the term with "cultural" effects, or with historical ones." (1991: 143) Yet I agree with Jepperson's assertion that the definition of the term "should not be specifically intended, as they often are, with either cultural elements or a type of environmental effect... [But] it becomes possible to represent institutionalization as a particular set of social reproductive processes, while avoiding the opposition of institutionalization and "change." (1991: 144)

[29] Weber 1968: 31. Careful readers may find my adoptions of two quotes from Weber are from two different versions. I should confess the selection criteria here is somewhat arbitrary, as I do not know German at all. Yet the Roth and Wittich version's translation of "order" here, instead of "authority" in the Secher version (Weber 1962: 71), fits the meaning I wish to express. "Order" is a better translation and concept to describe the situation when a social reality was established.

legitimacy can be said as the situation or the stage when an institution was established.[10] For Weber, sociological understanding is devoted to the discovery of those mechanisms that help us to delineate and understand the social process that makes an institution possible.[31]

It might neither be an ontological-theoretical concern of the historical origin of a society nor an explanatory or scientific methodological quest for universal reasons and models accounting for social order. I argue that, first, based on *historical and social contexts*, institutionalism should aim at seeking out *where* and *when* one could find such institutionalized — legitimatized — social relationships. Second, one may also aim at examining *how* an institution could be created and sustained, i.e. legitimate order or authority. In the current study, I refer to the former task as institutionalization analysis, which aims at delineating the *formulation* of social reality and spelling out the *mechanism* of *institutionalization process*. Moreover, I refer to the latter task as institutional analysis, which aims at explaining the *institutional effect* of the institutionalized formal structure in shaping and channeling structures and ideologies.

As we will see, the above distinction is only an analytical one, because Weber's sociological methods are somehow mixed with both concerns of studies of institutionalization and institutional effect. Weber tried hard to reduce historical phenomena into concise definitions, especially his famous typology of social actions and ideal types.[32] One may also consider Weber's *Economy and Society* as a survey of the institutional effects of a particular institution.[33]

On the contrary, Weber always fully realized at all times that the above analytical and categorical scholarships are merely constructions by researchers and should not be mixed with the true historical process of institutionalization. His ideal types are

[10] Beetham 1991

[31] It implies that the belief towards the "usage" and "custom" (in Weber's terms) of *a* social order as *the* social order (Weber in Roth and Wittich eds. 1968: 29). Weber also proposed that there were four basic types of "legitimate order" (Weber in Roth and Wittich eds. 1968: 24-25), maintained by four types of social actions, including "tradition, affectual faith, value-rational faith, and legal." (Weber in Roth and Wittich eds. 1968: 33-36)

[32] One may consider these definitions not as prescriptive or explicative but instead as axiomatic "general law" for sociology in conceptualization and theorization, and these axiomatic sociological laws require no further justification. Contemporary American scholarship of comparative and historical sociology might adopt this way of theorizing especially for comparative approaches; see Kalberg 1994.

[33] He formulated a variety of characteristics found from historical phenomenon into many definitions, which could be seen as his efforts to theorize a particular institution. His analysis of a particular set of social arrangements, which gave rise to a legitimate order, is aimed to evaluate those institutional consequences, including the potential functions, conflicts and effects. See also Swedberg 1998

- 17 -

only for analytical convenience and these are only theoretical entities for researchers to construct their own comparative methods across contexts.[34] In other words, concepts like "capitalism" or "democracy," for example, may have double analytical meanings — they may be researchers' construction, or the institution "which the people we have interest in identified with."[35]

Sociological theorization and historical-contextual analysis are not mutually exclusive. It might be only a methodological distinction depending on one's research question and design.[36] The crucial point is however Weber's ultimate concern about how social relations — mutually predictable and understandable relationships — are fundamentally constructed in nature. The following, then, depicts the theoretical development of these two approaches in institutionalism afterwards.

(b)   Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann: Social construction of reality

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967) as well as Berger's *The Sacred Canopy* (1969) serve as important works to analyze the institutionalization of social realities. It is perhaps not accidental for Berger to be a sociologist of religion, because the key for understanding how an institution is established and maintained is to see through the fact that it is a problem of *belief* among two persons in a social action.

(i)   Theoretical foundations

Apart from drawing heavily from Weber, Berger and Luckmann have also drawn much from Schultz for phenomenological insights and paid particular attention to the social relationship. The reason for Berger and Luckmann to borrow the concept of inter-subjectivity, emphasized by Schultz's social phenomenology,[37] is because this word rightly captures the essence of Weber's theorizing of social relationships. Social action is only a belief, because one's actions oriented that are towards one another

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[34] See Kaneko 1957; Burger 1987; See also Schluchter 1981
[35] The wordings here are borrowed from David Faure at [http://www.history.cuhk.edu.hk/People_Info/dfaure/Introduction.aspx], last accessed 1st October 2009.
[36] Weber's two approaches might come from his confusions and unclear analytical distinctions between institutional analysis and institutionalization analysis. The former emphasized on the social process of an institution and its legitimate effects, while the latter paid more attention to the delineation of the formulation of social order based on rich contextual analysis. Weber's article "Objectivity of Social Science and Social Policy" is not widely citied in the English academic world compared to the Japanese one. My reading of Weber relies on the Japanese translation of the German text. See Weber 1998.
[37] Schutz 1970

consist of only a chance that what he or she expects others will do or speak may not be fulfilled. Sociology, thus, is concerned about the *belief* and it seeks out those social mechanisms that help sustaining an institution.[38]

Different from Weber, Berger and Luckmann devote their efforts first to the study of institutionalization. For sure, they also pay attention to the legitimacy but they care more on how an institution is formed.

To examine in what ways a specific form of social arrangements is institutionalized to be a *belief*, Berger and Luckmann suggest that the society can be considered as an "objective reality" and a "subjective reality." They propose different mechanisms for the two kinds of realities, namely institutionalization and legitimation for the former and internalization for the latter respectively. In their words, "society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product."[39]

In the chapter of "society as objective reality," Berger and Luckmann have distinguished two aspects of forming a social reality: institutionalization refers to the repeated patterns of social conducts, while legitimation refers to the ideological packages and symbolic universe to justify the established order. Internalization refers to how individuals are socialized and thus identify with those values and norms as defined by the pre-established order, which is conceptualized as "subjective reality."

(ii) <u>The problem of habitualization as founding mechanism of institutionalization</u>

Berger and Luckmann first specify habitualization as the origins of institutionalization.

> Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution.[40]

In other words, habitualization is the core of institutionalization, and the typification of reciprocal habitualized *actions* among social players is an institution. In their famous thought experiment, two persons, A and B, interact.

> A watches B perform. He attributes motives to B's actions and, seeing the actions recur, typifies the motives as recurrent. As B goes on performing, A is soon able to say to himself, "Aha, there he goes again." At the same time, A may assume that B is doing the same thing with regard to him. From the beginning, both A and B assume this reciprocity of typification. In the course of their interaction

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[38] Berger 1969
[39] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 61
[40] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 54

- 19 -

these typifications will be expressed in specific patterns of conduct.[41]

To Berger and Luckmann, institution building is founded on the typification of reciprocal repeated acts, or habits, between social players. Typification of habits is a very clear sign of institution, as social players can now mutually expect those social interactions to be repetitive.

> The "there we go again" now becomes "this is how these things are done." A world so regarded attains a firmness in consciousness; it becomes real in an ever more massive way and it can no longer be changed so readily.[42]

Yet habitualization is the description of the institutional consequence; it is neither a theoretical substitute to explain its "origin" nor a mechanism to help us delineate its formulation.[43] Their concern for patterns or modes of social conducts is granted. Yet apart from the weakness of using thought experiment in hypothesizing habit as the foundation of institutional origin, a theory on institutionalization relying on the concept of "habit" still does not explain why an institution can be formed.[44]

For sure, Berger and Luckmann are right to say that those typified and repeated social conducts are one of our basic units of analysis. To be elaborated in the next section, I will hereafter refer to the typified repeated mode of conducts as ritual, and the mechanism to achieve the status of mutually typified social interactions as ritualization.[45] At the moment, I argue that habits do not account for institutional origin but are a consequence of the institution so established. A theory of institutionalization relies on habitualization is tautological if one does not account for those contextual environments that give rise to habits. To be discussed below, we should then aim at a theory of ritualization that can account for how the habitualization of social mode of conducts is possible.

(iii) <u>Legitimation as a second order of the construction of symbolic universes</u>

Careful readers may realize that Berger and Luckmann refer to institutionalization and legitimation as two different analytical aspects. In the first

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[41] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 56
[42] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 59
[43] Camic is quite right to comment that the concept of habit is under-theorized in sociology. See Camic 1986.
[44] Besides Camic (1986), Robert Bellah's famous book "Habits of the Heart" may also be seen as an important contribution to the study of the curious concept of habit. See Bellah 2007
[45] For relevant theoretical concerns, see also Goffman 1967; Collins 2004

stage, or "institutionalization" of the objective reality of society,

> Institutions further imply historicity and control. Reciprocal typifications of actions are built up in the course of a shared history. They cannot be created instantaneously. Institutions always have a history, of which they are the products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced.[46]

To understand why and how an institution can be seen not as an invention but as a part of nature — "'this is how these things are done" — by others, they suggest that one should also examine how a "shared history" has been *symbolically* created. It is because those mutually expected habits, which are historically granted for two persons of A and B, make no sense for the next generation or new comers.

This comes to the second stage that to make other participants in social relations, who do not invent these modes of conduct by their own, realize the realness of the pre-established order, a legitimation is required for others to make *cognitive* sense of those habitualized "rules" and "natures."

> The institutional world requires legitimation, that is, ways by which it can be "explained" and justified.[47]

In Berger and Luckmann's conceptualization, when habits are typified and routines are thought to be "sedimentated" into tradition, legitimation, "as a process," is required to explain and justify the habitualized order of social mode of conducts. This is achieved through cultural-cognitive efforts and collective sense-making. Legitimation is a "'second-order' objectivation of meaning" because the creation of a symbolic universe can also be considered to be having its own cognitive order.[48] It is why they will analytically separate "institutionalization" and "legitimation," which refer to the first order of habits and the second order of meanings respectively, into two mechanisms.

(iv) From legitimation to "a treatise in the sociology of knowledge"

Until now, Berger and Luckmann still follow the theoretical logic of Weber. What makes their theory of institution relatively new, however, is their attention to the role of the creation of *knowledge* in legitimation. Social relationships, thus, are guaranteed and made possibly only by meanings — symbolic forms of knowledge.

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[46] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 54-55
[47] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 61
[48] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 92

Legitimacy of a social order — an institution — can then be seen as the ideological packages of knowledge.

> Language provides the fundamental superimposition of logic on the objectivated social world. The edifice of legitimations is built upon language and uses of language as its principal instrumentality. The "logic" thus attributed to the institutional order is part of the socially available stock of knowledge and taken for granted as such. Since the well-socialized individual "knows" that his social world is a consistent whole, he will be constrained to explain both its functioning and malfunctioning in terms of this "knowledge." It is very easy, as a result, for the observer of any society to assume that its institutions do indeed function and integrate as they are "supposed to."[49]

Berger and Luckmann are very careful here, because one immediately faces the problem of researchers' assertion of the "logic" of institution.

> ...great care is required in any statements one makes about the "logic" of institutions. The logic does not reside in the institutions and their external functionalities, but in the way these are treated in reflection about them. Put differently, reflective consciousness superimposes the quality of logic on the institutional order.[50]

Confusions may arise here because they do not further distinguish the knowledge possessed by the researchers from the people that we are interested in. Yet they are very clear that any sociological theory that tries to account for the social construction of reality is fundamentally based on the analysis of knowledge among people, as well as the interplay between legitimation and institutionalization. More importantly, this knowledge should neither be considered as speculative thought in philosophical sense nor abstract theories in scientific sense. On the contrary,

> we would contend that the analysis of the role of knowledge in the dialectic of individual and society, or personal identity and social structure, provides a crucial complementary perspective for all areas of sociology... We are suggesting... that the integration of the findings of [purely structural] analyses into the body of sociological theory requires more than the casual obeisance that might be paid to the "human factor" behind the uncovered structural data. Such integration requires a systematic accounting of the dialectical relation between the structural realities and the human enterprise of constructing reality — in history.[51]

As will be argued, their interest in legitimation is shared and further developed by the new institutionalist school of thought, while their formulation of a sociological

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[49] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 64
[50] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 64
[51] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 186

interest in history and knowledge is taken up and expanded by Michele Foucault. Both of them would then be necessary for us to build a good theoretical mechanism for use in the historical and sociological analysis of the institutionalization.

(v) <u>Limitations: who constructs the social construction of reality?</u>

There are, however, several limitations of Berger and Luckmann's approach to institutionalization analysis. First, its theory of habitualization may be considered to be a hypothetical thought experiment only. It may be true that the typifications of reciprocal habits may serve as the cornerstone of institutional building, but there are no reasons to assume it, not to mention the tautological problem of this theory as discussed before. Indeed, we need analytical mechanism which can be postulated not only in hypothetical situation but useful for us to apply in concrete historical contexts and experiences.

This comes to the second point about the theoretical-analytical distinction between institutionalization (habitualization of modes of conduct) and legitimation (the creation of symbolic universes). The mind-body separation or meaning-act distinction is however not necessarily a valid analytical one. People always make symbolic sense of their acts and actions require symbolic interpretations.[52]

Third, Berger and Luckmann do not provide concrete suggestion for research implications. A methodological or operational framework remains to be developed such that one can fully utilize their insights in practical sociological projects, especially for historical sociological research that aims at analyzing the social formation of realities.

Finally, it is also not true to assume that an institution is necessarily created in the order as prescribed by Berger and Luckmann. Historical sequence may be different, in which modes of conduct might not be institutionalized first and then ideological packages be offered later to justify and explain those typified reciprocal social relationships. In histories, one may easily imagine that one can invent languages and myths first and then rituals and actions. This is also the reason why Berger suggests a simpler three-step model (externalization, objectivication, and internalization) in his *The Sacred Canopy* (1969). I argue that institutionalization and legitimation are better seen as the same social formulation and process, and a clearer

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[52] Wuthnow 1989

methodological mechanism should be spelled out.

To conclude, both Weber and Berger and Luckmann have much to say on the importance of social construction. Meanings and modes of conduct, objective and subjective reality, are two ways to capture how a stable social relationship can be achieved. My analysis of institutionalization draws heavily also from their concern of social formulation even though I will try to provide more subtle suggestions for one to analyze and delineate how a legitimate social order is forged, by adding some important theoretical insights from contemporary new institutionalism, which is to be reviewed in the next section.

2 Contemporary new institutionalism in sociology: theories of legitimacy and institutional analysis

The current research employs the theoretical angle of new-institutionalism commonly found in contemporary sociological theories. This section briefly introduces this school of thought which was led by John. W. Meyer and his colleagues. Their theoretical foundation is based on phenomenological institutionalism proposed by Berger and Luckmann but it emphasizes relatively more on the institutional effects than the institutionalization. The distinctive feature of this school of thought is that it has taken up the concern for the *legitimacy* and the *cultural-cognitive sense-making*. Institution should be treated as *socially constructed* and as a *social process*. This section picks up some important concerns and concepts and tries to incorporate them into my formulation of a theoretical-methodological mechanism for institutionalization analysis in the next section.

(a) Sociological new-institutionalism: evaluating the legitimate foundation of sociological knowledge

The major reason to adopt this school of theory is because of its concerns towards legitimacy in institutional building, as well as its reflections towards many common explanations found in Western (if not all American) sociology. The major concern for Meyer's new-intuitionalism is to focus on the *cultural-cognitive* aspect of institutional process as well as the *constructedness* of an institution. Institutionalism, according to Meyer, puts legitimacy in its first place, so that the collective sense-making through either symbolic ideological packages or ritualistic structural

isomorphism comes first in its theoretical understanding of social realities. In other words, institutional theorization never ignores the problem of social formation and its process, especially the constructedness of an institution, and always puts Weber's or Berger's concern towards legitimacy in its first priority of explanation.

(i) Scholarly categorization of institutionalism and institutional arguments

There are in fact many versions of "institutionalism" within or outside sociology. Institutionalism also has a long history within sociology. Scholars tend to categorize different kinds of explanations which are all under the same notion of "institutionalism" according to a variety of standards. Richard Scott, for example, created an analytic framework of institutional analysis into three pillars: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive.[53] According to Scott, different institutional arguments employ different research focuses, explanatory mechanisms and kinds of logic.[54] These varied analytical approaches among scholars reflect that an institution also has three pillars of operations:

(1) Regulative pillar: Institution coercively regulates and legally sanctions through rules and laws;[55]

(2) Normative pillar: Institution normatively binds people to norms through certification and accreditation;[56]

(3) Cognitive pillar: Institution cognitively provided people with shared cultural understandings through constitutive schema.[57]

To Scott, the three pillars of institution do not refer to the explanatory logic among theorists and arguments alone but also refers to three common ways to use the word "institution." When he tries to incorporate and categorize different institutional arguments in organizational analysis into a coherent framework, he argues and defines that institution has three different aspects in supporting its status-quo and legitimacy. To Scott, the legitimacy for an institution could be supported by three different sets of criteria or mechanisms, or a combination of them.[58]

But what is it that makes new institutionalism new according to Scott's categorization? It is the focus towards cultural-cognitive dimension in collective

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[53] Scott 2008
[54] Scott 2008: 47-48
[55] Scott 2008: 52-54
[56] Scott 2008: 54-56
[57] Scott 2008: 56-59
[58] Scott 2008: 59-71

sense-making from a social phenomenological approach that makes the contemporary new institutionalism distinctive. The above effort to clarify scholarly discussion is indeed indispensible, but it may not be clear if three pillars of institutional arguments can become three pillars of institution or not (in the case of Scott, he clearly thinks so). Also, we cannot distinguish clearly for what reasons one should adopt a specific pillar of institutional explanation. It arguably becomes a matter of selection of an explanatory logic according to one's research design, depending on which aspect of an institution that the researcher wants to illustrate and explain.

I do not intend to review and compare all the advantages or limitations among the different types of explanations available in the wide spectrum of contemporary institutionalism, but I want to simply lay out why the cultural-cognitive kind of new institutionalism can be useful and theoretically justifiable for the current project.

(ii) Institutionalism: theoretical and methodological assumptions in socially constructedness and levels of analysis

At this point, Ronald Jepperson's effort to clarify and categorize sociological theory according to the "degrees to which units socially constructed" and the "featured level of analysis" is much appreciated (see figure 1.1). In his terms,

> The "levels" dimension distinguishes roughly between methodologically structuralist and individualist imaginers; the "constructedness" dimension distinguishes between phenomenological and realist concepts of causal units and processes. Institutionalism invokes institutions as causes, so it necessarily emphasizes both high social construction and higher-order effects.[59]

Degrees to Which Units Socially Constructed	Featured Levels of Analysis	
	Low Order (Individualist) ·	High Order (Structuralist)
High Construction (Phenomenological)	1 "Organizational culture"; Symbolic Interaction	2 Institutionalism
Low Construction (Realist)	3. Actor and/or functional reduction attempts: neoclassical economics, behavioral psychology; most neoinstitutional economics; some network theory	4. Social ecology, resource dependence, some network theory

Figure 1.1   Lines of theory in organization analysis[60]

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[59] Jepperson 1991: 153
[60] The table was adopted from Jepperson 1991: 154.

Based on a macro-historical analysis, the current project aims to delineate the social construction process of an institution. Following Jepperson's categorization, my research fits into the box 2 "institutionalism" in Fig 1.1., in terms of both the theoretical assumptions as well as the scopes and level of analysis.[61] In terms of theoretical assumption,

> Highly socially constructed units are opposed to putatively natural or non-contextual ones. That is, high constructedness denotes that the social objects under investigation are thought to be complex social products, reflecting context-specific rules and interactions... In high (here, "phenomenological") imagery, the units' existence is itself a framework-specific social creation — in phenomenological parlance, units are "constituted"... In high-construction imagery, one cannot isolate subunit "foundations" of social organization; one rather seeks deep or core rules. The causal imageries are quite distinct: a natural base, a social superstructure, in realist lines; a nested system of social programs, in phenomenological ones...[62]

The concern here is that the research wishes to show how an institution has been constructed, so that institutionalism, according to Jepperson's categorization, fits in my theoretical concern. The second criterion is about the level of analysis:

> Methodologically individualist lines try to invoke only low orders of social organization in their explanations and thus seek single-level explanations; they give relatively micro-orders causal primacy over more macro-orders or organization in this fashion. Structuralist lines allow for independent and unmediated effects of multiple orders of organization, and often, though not necessarily, see higher orders as having greater causal potency than lower orders.[63]

Again, as my research aims at macro-historical analysis, a "structuralist" line of level of analysis enables me to examine how different "actors" — individuals, capitalist classes, politicians, localities, organizations, the state or the imperial institution — have indeed constructed in the larger social-historical contexts. In an institutional imagery, these "actors" with their "fixed attributes" are theoretically postulated concepts that require explanation. They indeed embody the cultural theories of organizing which are defined in the larger institutional and contextual environment.

In sum, one reason to employ institutionalism as indicated in box 2 in Fig 1.1 is

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[61] Box 1 refers to lower order analysis which aims to highlight the social construction process, like Goffman (1959); Box 3 refers to lower order analysis which assumes many internal attributes of pre-given actors, common in the American sociological tradition; Box 4 might also refer to many comparative-historical research like Skocpol (1979).

[62] Jepperson 1991: 153-154

[63] Jepperson 1991: 154

that its concerns towards "constructedness" of actors and social realities fit both my theoretical question to unravel the formulation of an institution as well as my methodological analysis to macro, historical-cultural scenarios. Also, I do not intend to explain the emergence of social order based on an individualist level of analysis. On the contrary, I pay attention to the interplay between these social players, which are constructed in various multi-level, contextual scenarios. I argue that the social imaginaries, which theorize and account for a particular social actor, are indeed defined by the institution emerging from a changing historical matrix of social forces.

(b) Phenomenological institutionalism: theoretical problematiques

"Phenomenological institutionalism," as characterized by Meyer himself, focuses on the cultural-cognitive side as well as the constructedness of social actors. It pays special attention to the legitimacy which is based on a cultural sense-making as a collective social process.[64]

John Meyer's new institutionalism challenges on many realist assumptions in modern social science. In his interesting work of "Society without culture: A Nineteenth Century Legacy," Meyer challenges many realist kind of sociological explanations, which assume individuals or organizations as autonomous "actor" carrying many unchanging substantive attributes like "interest" or "power" for theorizing.[65] Realist institutionalism carries "very strong conceptions of the priority, boundedness, autonomy, and rationality of actors."[66] These realist theories in social science have invented concepts but ironically also helped constituting and legitimating the social reality. Meyer has called these social scientific theories as "cultural accounts" which in turn legitimize the rationalizing world society. In "Ontology and Rationalization in the Western cultural Account" Meyer has referred to this process of postulating many social-scientific entities that help legitimizing of the emerging world society as "rationalization."[67]

Meyer points out that those realist theories may treat these actors and social structures as given, natural, theoretical entities which are in fact constructed by the researchers.[68] These theoretical entities and attributes are axiomatic in the

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[64] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 40-43
[65] Meyer 1988
[66] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 40
[67] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 67-88
[68] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 68-73

explanatory mechanism but remain unexplained. These realist theories do not take into account the wider contextual backgrounds that culturally constructed these "actors."[69] On the contrary, phenomenological institutionalism has conceived these actors as constructed "by institutional models and meanings rather than as prior and fixed entities."[70] In his words,

> As illustrative imagery, here, if realist looks at the silver screen of social life and perceives a John Wayne, he imagines that this reflects a real true John Wayne. The sociological institutionalist supposes that what he sees is a very ordinary actor playing the part of John Wayne — a part written by a screenwriter who isn't an actor at all... Of course, in the wider world society to which we attend, the "scriptwriter" is a historical-cultural drama.[71]

Commonly found (American) sociological theories often postulate theoretical entities of "actors" without questioning who writes the "script" and ignore those contextual drama that gives rise to these "scripts" of the model of social reality.[72]

On the contrary, the current research suggests that many of these social scientific concepts and practices are invented and utilized not only by the scholars but also the commoners. I attempt to borrow this theoretical perspective to probe into the "historical-cultural drama." I try to delineate the emergence of an institution, which indeed constructs those "actors" as legitimate, and the "use" of an institution by picking up relevant and illustrative scenarios from the complex historical-cultural drama.

I try to identify those "scriptwriter," i.e. agents who are responsible for making claims and defining rules. State-builders, capitalists, politicians, companies, localities, technicians, bureaucrats, priests and commoners all used these theories to define themselves as a legitimate actor in the society and to assert their role in helping the construction of the useful railway. More importantly, in the current case of railway building, people tried collectively to justify the institution as rational and functional in terms of interest, power, and collective sentiments. In the process, people were indeed like "scriptwriters" who tried to invent and manipulate these emerging cultural categories and accounts from their institutional environment to define themselves and explain the use and function of railway building as an institution.

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[69] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 76-80
[70] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 40-41
[71] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 41-42
[72] Goffman indeed shares similar concerns about micro interaction in everyday life. See Goffman 1959.

(c) Explanatory mechanism of phenomenological institutionalism: legitimacy and collective sense-making

The current research aims at explaining the emergence of an institution, which means the making of a legitimate social order. It tries to delineate the formulation of the belief towards and the practices of railway building as a functional infrastructure for the collectivity. New-institutionalism provides some important explanatory and analytical mechanisms that may serve as useful theoretical tools to help us delineate the process.

(i) "Culture as Institutional Rules": theory and exemplary research of analysis of institutional effect[73]

What makes new institutionalism new is its focus towards the building of legitimacy based on the collective sense-making and cognitive understanding, which inevitably leads to the heightened concern of culture. To Meyer, "culture" is not conceived to be an essentialist kind of substantive values or norms which is distinctive to a collectivity. Meyer objects to those "individualistic social models" which conceptualize "culture as a general value system for society and socialization as a mechanism for instilling culture into individuals, as exemplified in the work of Parsons (1951)… Culture is both a set of values that leads to individual preferences and a system of technical knowledge that informs individuals about which means to choose in order to achieve specified ends."[74] Under this theoretical fabric, the concept of culture was limited "to a cluster of consensual general values… and a body of consensual knowledge or technique… Culture thus enters in only as an influence on the condition of the actors involved."[75] On the contrary, by considering culture as "institutional rules," Meyer asserts that,

> Culture includes the institutional models of society itself. The cultural structure of these models defines and integrates the framework of society, as well as the actors that have legitimate status and the patterns of activity leading to collective goods… the central cultural myths of modern society are those giving meaning and value to society and its components… a proper analysis must focus on institutions — the cultural rules of society itself.[76]

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[73] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 73-76
[74] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 69; Parsons 1951
[75] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 73
[76] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 73-74

To Meyer and the new institutional theorization, "culture" refers to those institutional rules and models of society, which defines the very meaning of legitimate actors and "patterns of activity leading to collective goods."[77] In the modern world society as defined by Meyer,

> Culture… is less a set of values and norms, and more a set of cognitive models defining the nature, purpose, resources, technologies, controls, and sovereignty of the proper nation-state.[78]

One classic example of the sociological research, which employs this institutional line of theorizing, is Frank Dobbin's *Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, Britain, and France in the Railway Age*.[79] As I share a similar research topic and approach with Dobbin, we shall take a brief look at his argument.

By comparative method and historical case study of railway policies and industrial cultures in three counties, Dobbin has challenged the dominant theoretical trends in social science (excluding anthropology which targes on "pre-modern cultures") based on "economic rationality." He finds that out although there were huge differences between railway policies in the three countries, their governments all claimed their policies to be "economically rational" which held universal values. Also, despite the fact that there were rigorous changes of the governmental forms, the political ideologies, and the people in charge of the state, the major orientations of these national industrial policies continued in the respective countries across a long span of time.

To answer the question of "[h]ow do particular, rationalized social institutions develop in particular contexts" and to account for the persistence of these apparently rational policies, Dobbin argues that "differences in rationalized meaning systems explain broad cross-national policy differences, and that rationality is essentially cultural."[80] These "rational" industrial politics were indeed meaningful only in their own national cultures. In other words, an economically rational industrial policy could only be legitimately defined as "rational" in its institutional settings as well as restricted to its historical-social and national contexts. Many seemingly industrial cultures that were based on "universal rational principles" have actually been crafted in their particular institutional settings.

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[77] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 73
[78] Meyer 1999: 123
[79] Dobbin 1994
[80] Dobbin 1994: 12

Dobbin is probably right to illustrate how "culture as institutional rules" defined and legitimized many seemingly universal "rational" railway policies in the three countries. These distinctive conceptions towards rationality further defined a legitimate rational policy across time.

In sum, the core institutional beliefs in western modern society, like "economic rationality," were indeed constructed — a particular aspect was selected, emphasized and highlighted to be the core rules for a collectivity to culturally define the rationality underlying an economic policy. Dobbin's research has highlighted that universal attributes like rationality and economic interest were actually defined as legitimate only in their institutional contexts. In other words, culture, in this sense, refers to those institutional rules which define a "collective model of society," crafting the very meanings of legitimate actors, practices and rational policies.

Although sharing the same new institutional theoretical concern, my research focus, however, differs from Dobbin's. The key difference is that my concern is on how an institution was constructed in one case, while Dobbin's concern is on how institutions differentially shaped rationality in three different countries. Dobbin's research focuses on the institutional effects and social process, while mine is on the institutionalization and social formulation.

For Dobbin, as his research question and hence explanatory mechanism are different, he does not need to explain how distinctive national cultures as institutional rules emerged in a particular country. He can only compare and contrast how institutions as already established cultural understandings shaped and defined rational economic policy in the three different national contexts. In his cases of analyzing institutional effects, "national cultures" is the same as institutional structures and it requires no further justification.

My focus, however, is on institutionalization. It is a task to examine how shared cultural understandings towards railway building could be achieved. The current research thus does not make assumptions of any distinctive "national culture" as institutional structure that defines rationality in a particular way. For sure, railway was physically built for economic and political purposes, despite the fact that the ideas of what it meant to be "economic and political interests" had actually been created and redefined.

(ii) Explanatory mechanism of institutionalization

While most researches in the contemporary new institutionalism in sociology focus on the institutional effect, I will argue that institutionalization analysis can also employ, and indeed share, many common theoretical fabrics in Meyer's approach.

First, institution is constructed. Institutionalism pays attention to the emergence, maintenance and changes of those shared cultural understandings, beliefs, and ideologies that constitute an institution.[81] As we have seen, culture is a key concern for institutionalization analysis, which draws much insight especially from Berger and Luckmann. Yet these "cultures" are not seen as a static, essentialist kind of personal values and social norms. Culture as institutional rules is conceived as the continuously changing definitions and redefinitions towards what a legitimate society should look like. In sum, these institutional beliefs are constructed and one should aim at unpacking how they have emerged and are negotiated in the course of history by using rich details extracted from social-cultural scenarios.

Second, beliefs and conducts are two basic analytical units in institutionalism. An analysis of institutionalization, which is seen as an ongoing process of cultural redefinitions of a legitimate order, should conceive these collective beliefs, rules, and modes of conduct as basically shared cognitive systems. In order to unearth how these cultural rules are formulated amid the contextual environment, institutionalization analysis aims at the identification and delineation of those shared cultural understandings as seen in the generalized belief systems and isomorphic rituals of codes. On the one hand, one finds different myths to justify an institution. These ideas and symbols can be seen as organized ideological packages of well-elaborated rationales that try to explain the "function" of an institution. On the other hand, social structures can also be seen as some constructed and standardized modes of conduct. These isomorphic rituals can be seen as the routinized and expressive forms of collective action. Chwe, for example, argues that ritual provides a common cognitive framework for people to act in the same way and hence a habitual and cognitive base for coordination and common knowledge in a collectivity.[82] In other words, myths or rituals can be seen as two major units of analysis and as collective forms of shared cultural or cognitive understandings. Through adopting these myths and participating

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[81] Some phrases here are borrowed from Wong's title of an unpublished lecture record See Wong 2007.
[82] Chwe 2001

in these rituals one conforms to an institution and gains the legitimacy to justify their roles, actions and claims in the collectivity. Institutionalization analysis thus refers to the examination of the interplay between myths and rituals in the collective process of constituting a legitimate order.

Third, these changing cultural definitions of an institution, as argued by Meyer and Rowen in their organization analysis, are conceptualized not as some internal attributes or embedded values of social actors, but as exogenous symbolic resources available in an institutional environment immersed with organized and institutionalized beliefs, rules and ideologies.[83] Institutional environment is conceived as a broad system of shared cognitive system with resources of symbols and beliefs. In other words, in our institutional social imaginaries, social actors, like an organization, an interest group or even an individual, are situated in an institutional rather than a technical environment.[84] Culture can be seen as "toolkits" in this sense, so that social actors situated within the institutional environment always seek for legitimacy by incorporating or packing many external cultural accounts and elements into their own.[85] To examine the institutionalization process, one should then always consider that social actors (whether an organization, a group of local representatives or a class of capitalists) are always situated in the broader institutional environment. One should also examine the interplay of many cognitive cultural understandings between actors and the environment, in which different social players always try to define and redefine their roles and rules of the games as the legitimate ones.[86]

Combining the above three major concerns, the "new institutionalism" offers renewed conceptualizations of legitimacy and heightened concerns of collective cultural sense-making. The explanatory mechanism for institutionalism can then be summarized in the following ways:

1) Highlight the constructedness of an institution;
2) Delineate the mechanism, formulation and the emergence of those cultural beliefs into collective, shared beliefs;
3) Examine the interplay between ideological packages of cultural myths and isomorphic rituals of structured modes of conduct, which are situated in the wider

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[83] Meyer and Rowen in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 89-110
[84] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 95-101
[85] Swidler 1986
[86] See for example Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, chapter two) for a similar discussion of how social players, with their different forms of capital, could define and redefine the rules of the game in the "field."

institutional and contextual environments;

4) Examine how an institution is redefined, maintained and changed.

The aim for the new institutionalism is to see through the fact that a legitimate social order is constructed and can only be sustained through isomorphic myths and ceremonies as "logic of confidence and good faith."[87] In sum, the new institutional theorizing proposed by John Meyer analyzes the society by emphasizing how the sense-making towards a social reality are collectively crafted to be take-for-granted structure of routines and well established "natural" beliefs. These beliefs are conceptualized as various forms of "institutional accounts" that legitimize the social reality.

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[87] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 105-107

3 Institutionalism as historical-sociological research agenda: non-ontological mechanism of institutionalization analysis

We have reviewed several important theories on institutions. Max Weber has invented important concepts on social relationship, legitimacy, and institutions for sociologists. Peter Berger and Max Luckmann have expanded Weber's argument and provided us with important tools to analyze social formations and institutionalization. Sharing Berger's phenomenological institutionalism, John W. Meyer and his colleagues have elaborated on the important role of legitimacy in analyzing institutional effects. In response to the many unexamined assumptions in contemporary sociological explanations, they emphasize especially the constructedness of social actors, the importance of the cultural-cognitive aspect and the collective sense-making process with respect to institution. Yet Berger's thesis is mainly a theoretical treatment and does not clearly offer an analytical mechanism for historical analysis. Meyer and his colleagues have directed our concern back to the legitimacy, one of the theoretical cornerstones of the academic discipline of sociology, in explaining the institutional effects in contemporary life. Although Meyer always reminds us a phenomenological approach to see through the social reality, the cultural-cognitive process, as well as the historical root of the modern world society, he does not say much with respect to the institutional building and institutionalization. This research attempts to fill this theoretical gap by proposing a theoretical-methodological framework which can serve as a guideline for research on institutional building and institutionalization.

While the current research puts more emphasis on the formulation of social reality, the institutional building process and the institutional effects should be considered as two sides of the same coin. For institutional analysis, one looks at those myths and ceremonies serving as the "source of confidence and good faith" to explain how those mutual beliefs in social interactions can be sustained. For institutionalization analysis, then, one looks at the mechanism of how cultural ideas are formulated into a discourse, and how modes of conduct into rituals. Again, institution is the belief in a legitimate, sustainable social order across time, or a "self-activating reproduction processes characteristics of institutions."[88] Both

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[88] Jepperson 1991: 148

analytical approaches and lines of arguments, regardless of their static or dynamic appearances, aim at the delineation and explanation of how social interactions are crafted, upheld and thereby institutionalized into a social reality.

(a)   "Non-ontological mechanism"

    I suggest three major mechanisms: discoursing, ritualizing, and imagining. For sure, one can consider these three concepts as *theories* of institutionalization and also as three different processes of institutional building. Nevertheless, I recommend that it is better to consider them as analytical-methodological tools for historical-sociological research.[89]

    I would spell out one important theoretical paradox if one considers the mechanisms suggested as some strictly theoretical accounts. If one defines institution by these three accounts, one should face a meta-theoretical challenge: in what ways one's sociological knowledge of an institution developed by the researchers can be exempted? If the readers and the author are indeed involved also in the social interactions, so one can judge the current piece of work from the standard of a modern university, which is also a well institutionalized organization with its own social logic and epistemological standards according to the institution. If so, like the words of Geertz,

> An Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which rested in turn on the back of a turtle, asked… what did the turtle rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? "Ah, Sahbi, after that it is turtles all the way down."[90]

"The social construction of knowledge," as we are reminded by Peter Berger, is indeed a problem of social ontology. On what basis our knowledge about an institution can we rely on? This is indeed a theoretical problem for institution analysis — what kind of meta-theories of institution can account for a theory of institution that explains the social order?[91]

    This is also a postmodern challenge famously proposed by Michele Foucault, whose historical research employing his distinctive method of the "archeology of

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[89] The order of the three concepts of "discoursing, ritualizing and imagining" suggested here is purely a function of the historical circumstances. In this stage one may simply consider that the current order was derived from the current research case.
[90] Geertz 1973: 28-29
[91] Hama 2006

knowledge" suggests that the social construction of knowledge could not be explained by the standards set by the knowledge system itself. The social validity of a particular knowledge could only be explained and accounted for by their historical and social contexts. In short, to account for how an institution or a social order came into existence, one can only at best arrive at a narrative or an account, simply because one cannot use standards within a knowledge system, or "episteme" as conceptualized by Foucault, to judge the knowledge itself. Indeed, Foucault's concern is exactly an institutional one: institution is a legitimate cultural account, or a system of knowledge, which has been made up by discourses, rituals, and beliefs accounting for its existence. The knowledge — the institutional account — tries hard to convince people in its universality without realizing the historical-contextual origins of the knowledge. People wish to believe in the social reality that they have collectively constructed by *selectively* forgetting and memorizing those facts that they expect others to believe in.[92]

The above concern is important because readers may legitimately ask: to what extent the current piece of work is another institutional myth? Why picking up railway as the research topic? If one seriously tackles with this question, then it becomes another research to examine the institutional building of the self of the author — "what did the turtle rest on?" I simply leave this question, albeit irresponsibly, unanswered, because it turns out to be a research problem regarding the theory of social formation or social ontology. I suggest that at best, for institutionalization analysis, one can aim at deriving a *non-ontological mechanism*. The analytical framework is non-ontological, because the current approach does not further question the social foundation of knowledge. I simply suggest this framework as a mechanism, in both theoretical and methodological sense, which can provide us some help for historical-sociological research to delineate the process of institutional building.

(b) Discoursing: how we talk?

The importance of language in institution building is indispensible, as language is perhaps one of the most defining features of human culture. Language is an

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[92] Here I borrow heavily from Hervieu-Léger (2000)'s book *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, although in the current research I have no intention to give a full account of the possibility that this book may contribute to theorizing on institutional analysis.

indispensible object of analysis to any institutional theories we have reviewed. For example, "meanings" (as emphasized by Weber), "subjective reality" (as emphasized by Berger and Luckmann) and "institutional myth" (as emphasized by Meyer) are all made up primarily by languages. In the current research of railway building, for example, readers will be reminded by the historical fact that the institution was made up by claims, discussions or ideas but not necessarily steel tracks and steam locomotives in the first place. Discoursing has made a shared topic for discussion available — why railway building is important for the country? — although the discourse on the great use of railway was initiated because of many concerns irrelevant to the use of railway. Discoursing then refers to the identification of both the historical and social contexts for the emergence of a discourse and examining the contents of discourses.

Discourse is made up by languages, which is public in nature. By public, it means that language is only possible if we share some basic social rules. Language is symbolic, implying that it is a social and cultural invention and is subjected to interpretation. It implies that it is possible for us to interpret the meanings of others, if we wish to establish some forms of social relations. Shared meanings, as emphasized by Weber, are the qualifying features of social relationships in his definition. One important remark is that one should consider language as "a form of life," as famously proposed by Wittgenstein, implying that it is more important to situate the language in its cultural context and to examine the actual use of language in social life.[93] It is not the internal logic of the language system but the publicity underlying the collective use of language that can give us some hints on how a social reality is crafted and legitimized. Institutionalization analysis should then pay attention not only to the language itself but to those contexts in which language is embedded in the social life.

Language plays a crucial role in making an institutional account. The title of Ernst Cassirer's book, *Language and Myth*, rightly captures the role of symbol in establishing social relation and social reality and spells out why the concept of *myth* in institutional building is also essential.[94] He rightly argues that "word magic" is the cornerstone of any religions, which are indeed one of the first social reality constructed in all cultures. In other words, in analyzing the language or how we talk one should aim at uncovering the unspoken institutional accounts and rules

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[93] Wittgenstein 1953; Grayling 2001
[94] Cassirer 1953

underlying those visible archival texts and speeches. It is not enough to examine the ideas itself as represented in texts and those social rules of language uses, but the hidden changing social structure — what we called institutional account or myth here — that makes a certain speeches, texts, and forms of languages possible.

The problem is what kind of strategy should be employed to help us analyzing and reading those underlying institutional accounts that make a particular form of texts and speeches possible. Since Michel Foucault, *discursive formation* becomes one of the important qualitative methods in analyzing social construction.[95] It is also not uncommon for scholars to suggest some kinds of discursive institutionalism or constructivist institutionalism to highlight the explanatory power of ideas and discourse in institutional change.[96] Yet the Foucauldian concept of discourse is still the most convenient analytical tool to unravel the historical construction of social reality.

Foucault, in his consecutive works, critically delineates the invention and uses of many words and concepts in forming a social reality.[97] By analyzing *how we talk* about *the things* through inventing words and concepts, he tries to unravel those underlying social forces that shape the ways in which people try to make a social reality tangible through discourses. Institutional formation, thus, refers to these underlying rules and social forces that make it possible for people to talk about things collectively. In his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, he terms this process "discursive formation."

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functioning, transformations), we will say... that we are dealing with a *discursive formation* — thus avoiding words that are already overladen with conditions and consequences, and in any case inadequate to the task of designating such a dispersion... The conditions to which the elements of this division (objects, mode of statement, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected we shall call the *rules of formation*. The rules of formation are conditions of existence... in a given discursive division.[98]

Though written in an abstract way, Foucault tries to summarize his methods in his

[95] Phillips and Hardy 2002; See also Akagawa 1999
[96] See for example Schmidt 2008; Hay 2006
[97] See for example Dean 1994; Gutting 1989; Kendall and Wickham 1999; Fairclough 1992
[98] Foucault 1972: 38

previous works of *Madness of Civilization* and *The Order of Things*.[99] What he wants to say is that an institution (in our usage) is composed of a system of dispersion of languages, in which one can find an order — similar to what Berger and Luckmann have called "the second-order of symbolic universe." Yet Foucault suggests that one should not look at the internal logic of the language system itself but should look at those social "conditions" in which the languages are invented and used. "Rules of formation" thus refer to the social "conditions" that structure the way of language formulation. Foucault then suggests some ways to delineate how discourses could be analyzed.[100]

(1) Delineating how people invent linguistic "concepts" to talk about "objects," a process that makes "something" to be tangible by language;

(2) Examining "modes of enunciation" in which how these "objects" are spoken;

(3) Unraveling those "strategies" by which these intellectual constructs are mixed, formulated, and combined into a well-formed structure of narrative and an account of the established social reality.

Discursive formation, thus, refers to the *social forming* of languages and Foucault suggests some practical and methodological ways to enable us to see through those contextual backgrounds behind a seemingly systematic discourse in archival texts.

The point is how one can guess what happened in the changing social relations (in history) through the observation of the changes in the uses of languages behind archival texts. Specifically,

> It is this group of [social] relations that constitutes a system of conceptual formation... The description of such a system could not be valid for a direct, immediate description of the concepts themselves... I do not wish to take as an object of analysis the conceptual architecture of an isolated text... One stands back in relation to this manifest set of concepts; and one tries to determine according to what schemata (of series, simultaneous groupings, linear or reciprocal modification) the statements may be linked to one another in a type of discourse; one tries in this way to discover how the recurrent elements of statements can reappear, dissociate, recompose, gain in extension or determination, be taken up into new logical structure... These schemata make it possible to describe — not the laws of the internal construction of concepts, not their progressive and individual genesis in the mind of man — but their anonymous dispersion through texts, books...[101]

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[99] Foucault 1967; 1974
[100] Woodiwiss 2003. Lectures notes from the course contemporary theory, department of Sociology, CUHK, materials could be obtained from
[http://www.soc.cuhk.edu.hk/admissions/chi/webclass/v-con05.htm] and
[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/webcast/theory/contemporary9.pdf] accessed 24th September 2009.
[101] Foucault 1972 :60

These painfully abstract texts reveal Foucault's warning to us. Unlike Peter Berger who suggests that languages and symbols have their own structure and can thus be analyzed, Foucault keeps reminding us that the most important task for us is to see through those changing social relationships — contexts — behind words and things to get at those cognitive and collective "schemata." Our task in tracing the forming of any social realities, thus, is equivalent to uncovering what social forces make "how we talk" possible through the common invention and usage of languages.

> If there is a unity, if the modalities of enunciation that it uses, or to which it gives place, are not simply juxtaposed by a series of historical contingencies, it is because it makes constant use of this group of relations.[102]

The archaeological digging of textual monuments is for unraveling its institutional environments — or "groups of (social) relations" between words, people and things in Foucault's usage — as well as the making of an institution.

> Thus conceived, discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, is a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself by determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed.[103]

To sum up, my conception towards institutional analysis here is thus equal to Foucault's "totality" in the above usage. Discoursing thus refers not only to the delineation of words, concepts and things, but to the analysis of discursive formation — those changing social relations underlying archival texts.

In fact, institutionalization analysis, in my usage, is thus equal to Foucault's "archaeology of knowledge." To re-conceptualize Foucault's theories in our words, discoursing, thus, is the making of *knowledge* — myth — which is actually a systematic cultural account of an institution. As proposed by Foucault, *the will to knowledge* is indeed the will to institutional formation, which can then be, and can only be, examined first through many archival texts.

Discourse is indeed one of the most important manifestations of an institution, as these "rules" of language use reveal the changes of "groups of social relations." Emphasizing on *discoursing*, or discursive formation, thus allows us to see how a language, and hence a knowledge system, is possibly formed amid the

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[102] Foucault 1972: 54
[103] Foucault 1972: 54-55

historical-social conditions. For example, *we* invent concepts and names. *We* define, classify and categorize according to our changing social relationships. Naming, defining, classifying, for example, are thus important steps in discoursing. We always couple an action or a social relationship with a name. Yet the aim to investigate the forming of languages and concepts is how these words are used. Institutional analysis is not interested in the knowledge itself but *the will* to knowledge. What are those changing social relationships that gave birth to this will?[104]

The last but the most important point is that, Foucault is extremely sensitive to historical changes. Discourse analysis points to the *changing* social relationships manifested in changing words and things. It points to the evolution of the construction of words and the make-up of discourse over-time, unraveling the underlying, changing social relationships in historical contexts. Discoursing could thus be seen as one of the analytical mechanisms in institutionalization that tries to examine how words and things are defined and redefined changing texts and contexts, with an aim to unravel the restructuring of the collective, cognitive and sense-making process as well as those changing social relations beneath the words in the historical trajectory of social formulation. In chapter two in the current piece of this research, it will apply the methodological tool of "discoursing" to unpack the historical formulation of many concepts related to the great use of railway which were in fact constructed and invented because of many hidden rationales irrelevant to the railway.

(c)   Ritualizing: how we do?

Ritualizing concerns about the sharing of common modes of conduct. "Routinization of charisma" as suggested by Weber[105] and "externalization and objectification of actions" in Berger and Luckmann's institutional theory that we have reviewed are different ways to capture the occurrence of externalized form of social practices and modes of conduct during institutionalization, which are conceptualized here as rituals. Wuthnow has defined ritual as "a symbolic-expressive aspect of behavior that communicates something about social relations."

> It emphasizes the communicative properties of behavior and the fact that ritual often communicates more effectively because it conforms to certain stylized or embellished patterns of behavior... although it may express emotions or intentions, it clearly assists in articulating and regulating the nature of social

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[104]   Foucault 1978a; see also Gorski 2003
[105]   Weber in Roth and Wittich 1968: 246-254

relations.[106]

I approach the concept of rituals, in its broadest sense, to be those recurring, standardized, and programmed social practices that actualize, consolidate, and routinize our beliefs which help confirm our beliefs through doing the same thing together across time and give us a sense of realness.[107]

When people do things in similar fashion, they draw legitimacy by sticking strictly to the ritualistic requirements defined by the collectivity. Ceremonies and structural isomorphism coined by John Meyer can then be seen as another form of institutional account. In short, in examining the *ritualizing* in institutionalization we try to analyze *how we do* things together and how we come to share the same mode of conduct that makes the social reality more tangible by shared actions.

Comparatively speaking, anthropologists and historians pay more attention to rituals than sociologists, even though the theoretical roots of ritual can be traced back mainly to Emile Durkheim in his *The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life*.[108] To Durkheim, the key to understand religion — or any social realities — is to see through the fact that the sharing of the same modes of conduct corresponds to the sharing of the cultural-cognitive categories in a collectivity. Cognitive categories ("elementary forms" as described by Durkheim) are crucial to our theories of ritualizing, and they are fundamentally collective and social.

> Undoubtedly the relations which they [categories] express exist in an implicit way in individual consciousnesses. The individual lives in time, and, as we have said, he has a certain sense of temporal orientation. He is situated at a determined point in space, and it has even been held, and sustained with good reasons, that all sensations have something special about them. He has a feeling of resemblances; similar representations are brought together and the new representation formed by their union has a sort of generic character. We also have the sensation of a certain regularity in the order of the succession of phenomena... [But] there is no individual experience... which could give a suspicion of the existence of a whole class which would embrace every single being, and to which other classes are only co-coordinated or subordinated species. The idea of *all*, which is at the basis of the classifications... could not have come from the individual himself, who is only a part in relation to the whole and who never attains more than an infinitesimal fraction of reality.[109]

Categories are not psychological or personal but social products of routinized

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[106] Wuthnow 1989: 109
[107] See for example Wuthnow 1987, especially chapter 4
[108] Durkheim 1965
[109] Durkheim 1965: 488

collective life, which give people a sense of collectiveness and realness as manifested in rituals.

This line of theorizing can also be found in the work of contemporary scholars. Chwe, for example, interestingly argues from rational-choice and game-theory perspectives that ritual is rational because it provides a basic cognitive platform for coordination and common knowledge for participants in a ritual.[110] Chwe's theory of ritual, however, has shared the same concern for collective sense-making as the new institutionalism has.

Asserting ritualizing as one of the three mechanisms of institutionalization, thus, refers not only to ascertaining how people share the same mode of conducts, but also to unraveling how cognitive categories are shared and actualized in actions or modes of conduct. It is these cognitive categories underlying those ceremonies and modes of social conduct that make ritualizing a powerful mechanism in establishing a legitimate social order.

> They [categories] not only come from society, but the things which they express are of a social nature. Not only is it society which has founded them, but their contents are the different aspects of the social being; the category of class was at first indistinct from the concept of the human group; it is the rhythm of social life which is at the basis of the category of time; the territory occupied by the society furnished the material for the category of space; it is the collective force which was the prototype of the concept of efficient force, an essential element in the category of causality. However, the categories are not made to be applied only to the social realm; they reach out to all reality.[111]

If one follows the new institutional line of theorizing, it is the sharing of cognitive categories in rituals that gives people a *sense of realness* and *collectiveness*. Thus, the power of ritualizing in forming an institution comes from a sense of "mysterious" experiences brought by the ceremony, the moment when no one feels alone. Society is no longer an abstract idea but a tangible reality. When one participates in a collective ritual, there is a sense of "realness" and "collectiveness" given by an institution, which is conceptualized as "collective effervescence" by Durkheim.

Many later theories towards ritual focus, however, on its function in controlling or maintaining social solidarity. In *How Institutions Think*, Mary Douglas is perhaps right to assert that institutions make classifications and shape how we think and she

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[110] Chew 2001
[111] Durkheim 1965: 488

- 45 -

tries hard to develop valid theories to explain how rituals help integrate society.[112] This line of theorizing considers the functionality of rituals in maintaining order, but it has also encountered as often found in explanatory difficulties as found in many circular, teleological, and functionalistic arguments.

Catherine Bell, in her *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, borrows extensively from Foucault's insight in deriving a theory of ritualizing. She rightly comments that the theoretical problem comes from "the very [theoretical] category of ritual itself."[113] Bell points out that it is *ritualizing* which deserves our attention. Also drawing from Geertz's *Negara* and Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*,[114] Bell argues that "political rituals do not refer to politics, as Geertz has strained to express, they are politics. Ritual is the thing itself. It is power; it acts and it actuates."[115] Careful readers may find that I do not intend to emphasize power to be the final theoretical solution in my interpretation of Foucault. Indeed, Bell also does not say ritual can be accounted for by power; on the contrary, *ritualizing* makes power relationships possible.

> Foucault's discussion helps clarify the purposes of ritualization as an effective way of acting, namely, how the production of ritualized agents is a strategy for the construction of particular relationships of power effective in particular social situations.[116]

Michele Foucault, again, has many contributions for us, but Bell argues that one should not be confined by the concept of power as the single source of theorization.

> Under what general conditions is ritualization an effective social strategy? It is in ritual — as practices that act upon the actions of others, as the mute interplay of complex strategies within a field structured by engagements of power, as the arena for prescribed sequences of repetitive movements of the body that simultaneously constitute the body, the person, and the macro and micro networks of power... In ritualization, power is not external to its workings; it exists only insofar as it is constituted with and through the lived body, which is both the body of society and the social body. Ritualization is a strategic play of power, of domination and resistance, within the arena of the social body...[117]

Recalling our discussions in the previous sections, ritualizing can be seen as efforts to unify modes of conduct into unified practices. Ritualization can be viewed "as a more

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[112] Douglas 1986; Fardon 1987
[113] Bell 1992; Smith 1992; See also Vallas (2006) and Hacking (2004) for a comparison between Foucault and Goffman;
[114] Geertz 1980; Foucault 1977; 1978b;
[115] Bell 1992: 195
[116] Bell 1992: 202
[117] Bell 1992: 204

or less institutionalized medium of objectification, one that constitutes traditional forms of authority through techniques of formalization."[118] If one applies this conception of "ritualizing" in analyzing power and authority — in establishing one of the many possible forms of social relationships — then "the ritual construction of authority is a stabilization of power and therein a specific augmentation of power;" ritualization thus "depersonalizes authority, lodging power of the specialist in a office or formal status, not in the person."[119]

Similar to discourse, ritual has much to do with power, but one should note that Bell's emphasis is on how ritual*izing* can help settle down power *relationships*. Again, power made rituals possible, but ritualizing made social relationships — power as only one possible kind of relationship — possible. Bell proposes that instead of a static theory of ritual, ritualizing should be best seen as an effective mechanism for us to see how social reality is constructed.

> At best, ritualization can be defined only as "a way of acting" that makes distinctions like the foregoing ones by means of culturally and situationally relevant categories and nuances… An essential strategy of ritualization is how it clarifies or blurs the boundaries that identity it as a specific way of acting.[120]

The last point is that ritualizing makes social reality real to participants and hence also makes institutional effects possible. For examples, rituals like dividing students into several grades, defining the role of teachers and students, or signing a certificate of graduation make the concept of "credential society" and the modern institution of education tangible and real.[121]

To sum up, I propose ritualizing as the second analytical mechanism for institutionalization analysis. Ritualizing, thus, refers to how modes of conduct are objectified, how the sharing of cognitive categories among individuals in a collectivity is possible, and how ritualization charged individuals with a sense of realness. For an established institution, ritualization leads to ceremonies, which then become important cultural accounts of an institution. In chapter three, I employ this theoretical-methodological tool of "ritualizing" in analyzing a variety of emerging practices which helped redefine a new political relation between the central state and localities and made the institution of railway building become very real when the

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[118] Bell 1992: 211
[119] Bell 1992: 211
[120] Bell 1992: 205
[121] Collins 1979; Meyer 1977

localities and politicians actively participated in promoting and spreading the idea of local railway building. As we will see, a sense of realness was derived from participating in many of these ceremonial practices, like writing railway proposals and having petitions. Ritualizing helped redefining a proper power relationship besides giving tangible shape to the belief towards the great use of railway building.

(d) Imagining: how we feel?

Imagining is perhaps a poorly theorized concept in sociology, although the term "sociological imagination" coined by Mills and the famous concept "imagined communities" coined by Benedict Anderson are highly popular among scholars. Indeed, all social relationships are based on imaginations and all social realities are imagined communities.

The concept of "imagined communities" points out two important characteristics of an institution: it is collective (i.e. a community) and at the same time imagined. It is imagined because no one actually knows what others are feeling and knowing. Although there might not be any real social interactions at all, they consider themselves to be members of the same community and they believe in the same institution. People think that they *can*, as a possibility, participate in a social interaction, but they may never have any interactions at all with other members in the same community.

In the research, imagining is an indispensible theoretical-methodological tool because not all people could take a ride of train for travel (or even they had seen railways in their villages) but they still shared some sorts of imaginations. How, without the help of myths and rituals, was the sharing of belief still possible?

If a social interaction is fundamentally an imagination, this is indeed the most curious aspect of institutional building: without interactions, how social belief is possible? Without the glue of discourse and ritual and without any supernatural empathetic ability but only sympathetic sharing of feelings, this kind of social relationship is not "real" but imagined. To put it in other words, this form of institutionalization is thus the most abstract, mysterious, yet perhaps the strongest mechanism that makes the belief towards the collectivity that holds this social reality together.

Imagining does not mean false consciousness. It is better to think of this concept as a mechanism to establish *a good will* or *good faith* in the possibility of establishing

a social relationship in the long run, without necessarily relying on tangible means like discourses or rituals. While discoursing and ritualizing are essential in the earlier stage of institutional building, imagining becomes dominant when a social reality starts to establish itself: *I* just *feel* that *we are* together. Our past experiences give us confidence in the future social relationships, even when we are not necessarily involved in real social contacts at all.

The Chicago school of symbolic interactionism and pragmatism may have many potential theoretical contributions for the current research.[122] Indeed, Abbott suggests that new institutionali m may share many theoretical assumptions with this school of thoughts.[123] Cooley, for example, has maintained that imaginations are the foundation of any social relationships.

> The immediate social reality is the personal idea... Society, then... is a relation among personal ideas... In order to have society it is evidently necessary that persons should get together... only as personal ideas in the mind... Society exists in my mind as the contact and reciprocal influence of certain ideas named "I"... Each person is immediately aware of a particular aspect of society... It exists in your mind as a similar group, and so in every mind... I do not see how any one can hold that we know persons directly except as imaginative ideas in the mind... Persons and society must, then, be studied primarily in the imagination. It is surely true that the best way of observing things is that which is most direct... I by no means aim to discredit the study of man or of society with the aid of physical measurements... but I think that these methods are indirect and ancillary in their nature and are most useful when employed in connection with a trained imagination... I conclude, therefore, that the imaginations which people have of one another are the *solid facts* of society, and that to observe and interpret these must be a chief aim of sociology. I do not mean merely that society must be studied *by* imagination... but that the object of study is primarily an imaginative idea or group of ideas in mind, that we have to imagine imaginations.[124]

Indeed there is nothing mysterious here. Imagination is indeed about the *experience* and about *how we feel*. Instead of philosophical concerns, the above scholars give us important hints on how imagining is crucial to the sociological investigation of institutionalization, which is fundamentally based on the imaginative ideas about a generalized other.[125] Institutionalization thus refers to how this good will or belief towards others becomes possible.

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[122] Mead and Morris 1934
[123] Abbott 1992a
[124] Cooley 1964: 119-122
[125] See also discussion by Joas and Beckert (2006) who argue that the "presentistic" conception of pragmatism, like Dewey, conceives "goals are not externally set but emerge in action process itself in a reciprocal interaction between means and goals."

It is quite impossible to delineate the process of institutional building without considering the imaginative components of a collective belief. Cornelius Castoriadis simply conceptualized this belief as *The Imaginary Institution of Society*.[126] To define *imagining*, if one wishes, one can first follow Charles Taylor's definition of "social imaginary."

> By social imaginary, I... am thinking... of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations... I adopt the term imaginary... because my focus is on the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends... The social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and widely shared sense of legitimacy.[127]

Taylor indeed shares many of our concerns towards legitimacy and expectations in how social relationships are possible, though his concern is towards the social imaginary, which is "not a set of ideas, as against 'institutions'" but "what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society."[128] Imagining, thus, refers to those social mechanisms that help achieve this social imaginary, and can be analyzed through different representations.

Yet the above scholars do not provide concrete empirical suggestions for how one can trace the making of a social imaginary. Also, they do not realize that one can posses the idea or social imaginary that we are the same member of community *without* real interactions at all. How does this become possible? How are collective experiences organized?

Since Benedict Anderson's famous thesis scholars make use extensively of the concept of imagined community to show that a nation is socially constructed. Yet a nation was not constructed easily by either physical infrastructures or imaginations alone in a simple manner. As suggested by Anderson, the well-coined term of "imagined communities" can indeed highlight the concern about the social construction of the modern entity of nation, which was once considered a given

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[126] Castoriadis 1997. I do not wish to discuss Castoriadis' difficult theoretical treatment here, but he rightly points out that Marxist, functional, or structural kinds of sociological explanations could not capture the social reality without considering how imaginations, supported by symbols, are crafted amid the historical contexts. One cannot simply assume the unchanging nature of society and institution.
[127] Taylor 2004: 23; See also review by Abbey 2006
[128] Taylor 2004: 2

"essence" of an ethnic group with distinctive culture; national culture was invented. As Anderson argues, people with the same nationality do not know each others under the same collectivity; this is why he characterized nation as "imagined communities." By definition, social reality is constructed and thus imagined. The railway cannot physically unite the place into the same nation until an imaginative component is introduced.

Yet for Benedict Anderson, "an imagined community" does not imply that it is constituted merely by imaginations. By simply calling a community imagined cannot, however, be a substitute for explanation; a constructed social reality cannot rely on imagination alone but also non-imaginative components. To him, if all social reality is imagined, the critical problem is what *mechanism* is involved in varied historical trajectories in constructing this institution.

One should then specify different mechanisms that lead to and support the collective imagining of a social reality external to their immediate social life. To Anderson, apart from the invention of the national language and the printing capitalism, pre-modern travel like secular job postings among colonial administrative bureaucrats (Creole)[129] and the sacred pilgrimage among religious believers are alternative mechanisms to produce a transcendental sense of totality and collectivity. Other important concerns like the birth of modern novel and the official nationalism (which combined all of the above mechanisms among late developing countries like Japan) are also critical in understanding the forming of imagined communities. Indeed, Anderson does not suggest that any single cause or mechanism can fully account for the birth of the modern nation.

The classic question on nation-formation raised by Anderson is that in what sense people can be *dis-embedded*, physically or mentally, from pre-modern local communities and re-embedded into an imagined collectivity called the nation. One important aspect of *imagining* in institutionalization is that the legitimacy of a constructed social reality is often drawn *beyond* and *outside* their real social group lives.

An additional remark on how one could observe imaginations is required. As argued, representations could be seen as traces of imaginations, which provide also a stylistic account of the institution. For example, travel logs and manuals, guide books

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[129] Creole are "persons of (at least theoretically) pure European descent but born in the Americas (and, by later extension, anywhere outside Europe)." Anderson 2006: 47

of tourist spots prepared by railway companies are all representational accounts of how one should imagine the nation. Even though passengers will definitely have different travelling experiences and not all people will have a chance to get a ride on the train, these stylistic accounts of representation however can make people believe that they share the same imaginations. I will elaborate more in chapter four to illustrate the mechanisms, especially on the organization of journey and travel, in creating collective experiences that constitute an imagined community. Although we can observe how people imagine through different cultural representations and sometimes imaginations can also been created through discourses and rituals, it is important to point out that this mechanism is highly context dependent.

(e)   Some useful conceptual tools: institutional accounts — myth, ceremony, representation

The following section will extract and briefly define some important concepts frequently used by Meyer and the new institutional school that may be incorporated in my analytical framework for delineating institutionalization.

"Institutional accounts" include three concepts: myth, ceremony, and representation. In my usage, the concept of "institutional (or cultural) accounts" refers to how an institution, or a collective belief, can be conceptualized, perceived, and analyzed by both the participants and researchers. Institutional account, then, can be considered as "units of analysis" which allows us — both researchers and commoners — to methodologically analyze an institution, or "the property of an order."[130]   In the words of Meyer,

> Institutions can be described as cultural accounts under whose authority action occurs and social units claim their standing. The account here takes on a double meaning. Institutions are descriptions of reality, explanations of what is and what is not, what can be and what cannot. They are accounts of how the social world works, and they make it possible to find order in a world that is disorderly.[131]

Why is the concept of "institutional/cultural account" necessary? First, if one considers "actors as deeply embedded in, and constructed and controlled by, wider forces — institutions," then perhaps the term "institution" indeed "has little meaning: anything exogenous to a putative actor can be seen as an institution."[132]   By definition,

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[130] Jepperson 1991: 147
[131] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 80
[132] Meyer 1999: 124

if those phenomena existing in the society which could also been seen as a proof of institution and if institution is everywhere, how can we effectively approach or get to know an institution beyond these beliefs? Jepperson is right to point out that institutional account is opposed to analysis based on "action," because "if one participates conventionally in a highly institutionalized social pattern, one does not take action, that is, intervene in a sequence, make a statement."[133] When people believe in an institution, they may not perform any action so that we need to seek out ways to let these beliefs become visible or tangible to us.

Institutional analysis, thus, focuses not on dynamic "action" but on seemingly static "cultural account." To unravel those beliefs towards a legitimate social order, which make participants in a collectivity believe in the institutionalized order as real, true and tangible, three pairs of concepts can be employed for analysis and as indicators. They can also represent how people get to know and express those underlying rationales and ideas.

First, *myth* refers to those ideas and ideologies, languages and discourses with which people used when they try to justify and explain the use of an institution.[134] In earlier stages of institutional building, languages including speeches, texts, explanations, rationales and ideas are employed to build and maintain a good collective faith. Meyer also uses this term to describe the elaboration of rationalized beliefs for an organization to conform to those institutional myths in the environment.[135] Also, myths can be an important manifestation of *cultural accounts* which are "descriptions of reality."[136] In my framework of institutionalization analysis, *discoursing* creates *myths*. By sharing similar *cultural accounts* people gain shared understandings of what they are talking and discussing about.

Second, *ceremony* refers to those ritualized, structured and shared modes of conduct. Meyer argues that rituals and ceremonies are for maintaining "confidence and good faith."[137] For example, *structural isomorphism* refers to those ceremonies which make an organization resemble each others, share similar structure and modes of conduct.[138] In my framework, *ritualizing* creates many ceremonial activities which

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[133] Jepperson 1991: 148
[134] But see Von Hendy (2002) for a general survey of the historical makings of this concept.
[135] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 95-96, 101
[136] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 80-82
[137] But see Jones (2005) for a general survey of the historical makings of the concept of totem, and see Bell (1992) on the concept of ritual; see also sections below.
[138] Meyer in Krucken and Droi (eds) 2009: 106-107

are claimed to be useful and functional. Meyer considers that ceremonies are necessary because they are important sources of confidence, which give the social reality a sense of realness when everyone performs in similar ways.

Lastly, *representation* refers to the many expressive and symbolic texts and performances. Unlike ceremony, representations always highlight their cultural distinctiveness. They are varied symbolic forms, like songs or drawings or writings, and may not be expressed through uniformed discourses. Imagining creates representations. People *feel* that they are sharing the same symbolic world even though representation allows for differences in distinctiveness in forms and styles.

The above concepts, however, refer to the cultural account of a well established institution. They are indeed three theoretical descriptions of the types of legitimacy defining a social order. Myth, ceremony, and representation are thus sources of confidence and belief, when people somehow employ the same discourse, perform the same ritual, and express what they feel by sharing the same imagination and by representing their imaginary.

While these three concepts are very useful in the analytical scheme, one should be reminded that they describe cultural accounts and forms of legitimacy, instead of the process of social formulation. Combing both sections on theories of institutionalization and new institutionalism, my purpose is not to highlight a single theorist (for example, Berger or Foucault) or factor (for example, power) to account for the institutionalization process. I have tried to borrow many of the theoretical resources from these theories to suggest a non-ontological mechanism to analyze institutionalization. If my task is successful, then this framework could be used to help the analysis of the emergence, development and changes of an institution, i.e. an emerging legitimate social order.

Section Three   Methodology

The research employs the theoretical school of sociological institutionalism and relies mainly on qualitative methods, especially archival research.[139] To investigate the institutionalization of any social realities, we are inevitably facing historical archives of dated pieces of printed materials. Issues of measurement criteria, validity, and reliability of data could be problematic in designing and undertaking a historical research. We are also facing some theoretical underpinnings of the methodology. Researchers are not necessarily sensitive to examine how data are created and collected with social purposes and passed on, i.e. most, if not all, data are politically and culturally created to manipulate or even distort social realities. Archival materials, qualitative or quantitative ones, are created to re-present social realities according to the needs of their authors. Sociologists may be objective enough to control and design their own research, and to collect and create data to fit high level of methodological standard. Yet when dealing with historical data, researchers can hardly control the research design when these materials were prepared beyond the control of the same researches; one can even hardly detect and predict any errors and can only evaluate the research methodologies in a post-hoc manner. The methodological challenges for any researchers having an interest in institutionalization analysis will then be their ability to see through the social process of the creation of data in the relevant contexts. This section then reflexively evaluates some methodological measures employed in the current research project which was mainly designed for the analysis of the institutionalization process and the historical formulation of a social reality.[140]

1   Institutionalization analysis through examining the historical making of historical facts

Institutionalization analysis tackles mainly with the dimensions of time and

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[139] Needless to say, this statement requires much elaborations but I do not wish to compare a great variety of institutionalism or cases of institutional analysis due to limited space. For references, see Pierson (2000; 2004) for a review on institutional analysis in political science and historical institutionalism; Ingram and Clay (2000) on institutionalism from rational-choice perspective. On the contrary, see Ma's wonderful discussion on how the Newtonian scientific worldview which dominated the social science is indeed incompatible with historical institutionalism, especially the ideas of path-dependence and the economics of increasing returns (2007). I should also thank Prof. Tony Tam and Prof Lui Tai Lok for their advices on the methodologies of new institutionalism.

[140] Hill (1993) provides a very practical guide for historical-sociological research.

changes.[141] As the current project focuses on the institutionalization, i.e. the process of the formulation of social reality, one should pay attention to how ideas and concepts are formed and how social structures and practices ritualized. To build a legitimate social order, ones collectively invent theories (myths) and methods (rituals) — into an institutional account — to make others believe in the order. While most introductory textbooks emphasizes the importance of the invention of theoretical concepts, the current research argues that institutionalization analysis might not necessarily invent theoretical entities, extract and measure variables, and test their theory on hand.[142] It is because to examine the social reality one deals with those concepts and rituals which were invented by people but not the researchers themselves.[143]

To reiterate, institutionalization is to make ones believe in what others had said or did. To do so, authors of texts invented concepts, made speeches, collected statistics, drew tables and charts, calculated numbers, interviewed persons and edited histories. Concepts, methods, as well as commentaries, tables and charts, were all created for many purposes. Yet basically the authors wanted to convince his or her readers that the author's portrayal of social realities was *the* social reality. Their accounts might or might not reflect the social reality, and we have no alternative way to know except relying on these inevitably biased data. Researchers should remind themselves of the skepticism towards the purpose of recording history and creating documents, that is to a larger extent, it is to convince and manipulate the reader to think in a way that the authors expected.

Michel Foucault surely gives us some important insights into this aspect. What was left in history is the history which was written and recorded by the institutional builders.[144] On the one hand, in a very strict sense, objective data never exists and we

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[141] It is not saying, however, quantitative means could not tackle with the time and changes, but researchers should identify their goals — to aim at either a theory, i.e. universal knowledge which is true for all time, or an account, i.e. a contextual narrative which is subject to change. See for example the concise discussion by Abbott (1990) and Sewell (2005).

[142] See Nisbet (2001) for a classic analysis of how classical sociologists were indeed inventing concepts to describe and portray the society, but these concepts were not "theoretical entities."

[143] For readers who disagree with my assertion here might find Chakrabarty (2000)'s argument, from the perspective of Subaltern Studies, useful. He warns us that the uncritical use of theoretical concepts in area studies, which were invented in its Western contexts of social science, indeed "demystify the ideology" behind these translation of "analytical categories," causing serious distortion of historical intepretations. For sure, I am not completely exempted from the same attack, but readers might find relevant works in footnotes for those historical origins of many theoretical concepts I attempted to use in the research.

[144] Dean 1994

cannot capture historical and social realities in a strictly objective way. On the other hand, even so, what were left in history were those institutional accounts — at least we can examine these accounts. To Foucault, one can then interpret the "structure of ideas" behind those discourses (like how people talked about madness) and rituals (like how people designed a prison) through critically investigating the underlying reasons that made a specific type of archives available to us.[145] If one aims at an institutionalization analysis, then one read these texts not to find the truth as its goals but for how people fabricated lies into a shared belief. History is a badland, but not necessarily a wasteland.

The problem is how to do so. In the badlands of historical horizons, collection and verification of absolutely "objective" facts are difficult.[146] For the current project with mainly a sociological interest, methodologically speaking, I have paid less attention to the discovery of new facts and the verification of them by myself but rely on research by professional historians wherever possible. Instead, I take a rather meta-theoretical step and treat the empirical data and researches also as cultural accounts (or "forms of knowledge" in Foucauldian sense).

Triangulation is now a popular methodological concept in social sciences, but sociologists may find their times easier to rely on historians' works in the first place (both approaches would be mentioned in the following sections). Dobbin (1994), for example, "approaches the task of documenting models, scripts, and templates with the tools of a historian open to the diverse riches of archival sources."[147] I suggest that making wise use of and relying on historical scholarships may be more efficient and reliable.

Having said that we have little control of the designing of archival research for answering many sociological questions, this is not to say that we are condemned to be postmodernists that any sociological knowledge of the past is impossible. Schneiberg and Clemens (2006), in their important article discussing research strategies in institutional analysis, point out that "a common measurement strategy has been to use… discursive output as *topics* for analysis, that is, as documentation of cognitive frames, principles, or institutional logics."[148] Concretely, "these may involve extracting the most 'typical' model from a body of discourse searching for events or

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[145] Foucault 1967; 1977; 1978a
[146] Bryant 2000
[147] Dobbin 1994; Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 210
[148] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 211

arenas in which models or settlements are explicitly theorized and codified; reconstructing the repertoire of alternative models invoked in a particular setting over time; documenting how policy debates get framed in terms of irreconcilable positions..."[149] They suggest that "institutionalists can... approach and gauge legitimacy by tracing the emergence and resolution of debates... in the popular press, legislative records, trade journals, or case law... [They can use] shifts in law and changes in the level and terms of public criticism and debate to track the eruption and solution of legitimacy crises."[150]

Also, they adopt a "Scott by Scott model" by crossing Richard Scott's three pillars of institutional analysis (1995: 34-52) and James Scott's distinction between public and hidden transcripts (1990: 4).[151] "Public transcript" refers to the data in the forms of public discourse, law, regulations, rules and formal practices; "hidden transcript" refers to the less formal archives documenting the private arguments and disputes in the forms of commentaries, personal diaries or letters. The basic idea is that "different institutional processes will leave distinctive traces in public and backstage discourse."[152] On the one hand, we can at least examine how an institution was formed, especially the making of institutional accounts — not *the* reality but the representation of social realities — by tracing how "public transcripts" were created. On the other hand, as Schneiberg and Clemens suggest, "researchers must consider to what extent actors 'mean what they say' in the sense that discursive output does not flow directly from cognition."[153] They suggest that one should then interpret "public discourse and documents — 'the public transcript' — under conditions of domination where members of a subordinate group will typically disguise or dissimulate in public, leaving traces of their own beliefs or goals only in less accessible 'hidden transcripts' produced by the discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by powerholders."[154] In the following sections I would then introduce some basic types of archival materials and to discuss those limitations of the use of them.

Lastly, it is necessary to remark that the gathering of facts does not generate research question. It depends also on the interpretive-cognitive framework among researchers, who are embedded in their academic networks, which in turn

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[149] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 211
[150] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 212-213
[151] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 212-213; Scott 1995; Scott 1990
[152] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 212
[153] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 211
[154] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 212

institutionally shape and channel their narrations of facts. Karl Popper claims that,

> To sum up, there can be no history of "the past as it actually did happen"; there can only be historical interpretations, and none of them final; and every generation has a right to frame its own. We want to know how our troubles are related to the past, and we want to see the line along which we may progress towards the solution of what we feel, and what we choose, to be our main tasks. It is this need which, if not answered by rational and fair means, produces historicist interpretations.[155]

Consequently, this reflexive approach, which pays attention to the social production of knowledge, helps us to clarify that under what circumstances what kinds of facts would be discovered, how these facts were organized and interpreted, and why a particular knowledge was produced and considered to be important. To examine institutional building, then, refers to the delineation of the social construction of these "facts" and "knowledge," i.e. the "discursive formation of knowledge" as claimed by Foucault, as reviewed in previous sections.

2   **Research process**

The processes of data collection and archival search were held from April 2005 to March 2007 in Tokyo, when I was hosted at the University of Tokyo and financially supported by two research scholarships.[156] Yet my reading of railway histories and background studies could be traced back to 1998, when I first had a presentation on the topic in the introductory class of Japanese culture.

There was no shortcut for one to read history. Before formal research in Tokyo, I read official historical accounts and researches on the subject matter, and collected materials related to the railway history. The criteria of selection of data will be specified in a moment, while at the earlier stage I found myself lost in the jungle of meaningless data, such as endless charts and numbers, official records of prices of shares of railway companies, or commentaries on the economic use of railway. The original intention for the current project was the investigation of railway culture in contemporary Japan, so that in the earlier stages, cultural products and texts were collected. But the final product you are now reading was mostly based on historical accounts and archives, which were collected during my research period in Tokyo.

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[155] Popper 1966: 268; see also Becker 2003; Popper 2003; White 1973; 1987

[156] The research was supported by the Monbukagakushô Scholarship (provided by the Japanese Government, 2005-2007) and the Matsushita Research Funding (set up by the Panasonic Research Foundation, 2006).

The first task was to locate major libraries and bookstores where materials on railway history could be found and to identify major secondary history books and edited collections of archival materials. Then, I gained a rough picture on the fruitful field of railway history studies.[157] Relying on many of these scholarly researches, I became familiar about the primary resources in the field and the academic history of railway studies research, after compiling bibliographic references in a chronological order.[158] This task has proved to be an important one, because the research interests among scholars as well as those people who were interested to collect related materials varied and shifted greatly with their changing needs.

In the next stage after I became familiar with the field of railway history, I employed similar approaches to locate primary resources and reflected on the scholarly use of them. First, I relied on the library system in University of Tokyo,[159] as well as its interlibrary loan services,[160] to obtain many secondary and primary data, as well as major scholarly works. I relied also on the library in the former Transport Museum in Akihabara (now its collection is moved to the Railway Museum in Saitama)[161] and the Military Archives in the National Institute of Defense Studies in Tokyo, for their collection of local histories and pamphlets.[162] National Archives of Japan for parliamentary records and official documents and the Library of Travel Japan of the Travel Bureau Foundation for many documents on the cultural history of railway and tourism were also useful. Two book stores specialized in railway history in Jimbôchô, internet resources[163] and online secondhand bookstores were frequently visited.

Through going back and forth of primary data and secondary researches, I realized the fact that scholarly interest in a particular aspect of the institution consequentially produced materials in that specific aspect. For example, when investors in the late Meiji period considered railway to be a means of investment,

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[157] See the introductory book edited by Noda, Harata, Aoki and Oikawa 1986
[158] Aoki 1983; 2004
[159] I obtained materials especially from the central library, the library of economic department and media studies. I also obtained many materials through the bookstore in the Hongo Campus.
[160] I should thank the staffs in the library of department of education.
[161] While many scholars tried to find official documents and archives of railway history, I paid more attention to its well preserved collection of local documents and pamphlets, which were properly sent by different local authorities and representatives from all over Japan.
[162] I learnt this from Matsushita, a historian of political history of railway, who introduced the locations of many related archives in his book. See Matsushita 2005: 72-73; 50-51.
[163] I made a very good use of the Online Digital Collection of the National Diet Library when I was back from Japan. See [http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/] last accessed 1st September 2009.

relevant materials on talking about the economic use of it became dominant. The availability of a specific type of data on an aspect of an institution, in turn, shaped the discussion among scholars' research interest in a specific discipline.[164] These are important reflexive measures for institutional analysis, because through analyzing the availability of a certain type of materials and research, one can have a preliminary estimation of what really happened at a particular historical moment and in a specific social context, and to have a guess on why a particular institutional account would dominate the later discussions and scholar researches.

3   Collection and selection of data

Readers may realize that there was no strict sense of sampling employed in the earlier stage of the research. I simply collected archival materials without much selection criteria. Later, however, I started to develop a set of selection criteria to narrow down the scope of research and sort out necessary data which could answer my research question.

In principle, I am not very interested in data concerning the internal operation of the railway system, for example, serial numbers of locomotives, statistics of passengers and freights, or business revenues of railway companies. For a very large portion of historical archives concerning railway, one can find details in the operation and management of the railway system, which was produced out of practical concerns for people to run the system. Also, it is difficult to distinguish hobbyist kind of collection from that of historicist kind of data gathering. For example, scholar's statistical analysis of the economic behavior of buying railway shares among villagers may be produced out of the interest in business history or history of technology. These researches have the same research value as a geographical survey done by a hobbyist about stone statues memorizing ancestors who helped to build railway.

The forms and production of these data do tell us something about how an institution was built, for example, the recognition of statistical and objective data as politically acceptable forms of knowledge did not become possible in the very beginning. Yet one important bottleneck for historical researches on railway history in postwar Japan is that the scholars uncritically assumed the "use" of railway in modernizing the economy of the country. Thus one may find out many researches and

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[164] For relevant discussion on the subject matter of disciplinary problem, see also Abbott 2001a; 2004.

data focusing on its economic effect. For example, researches on the history of railway infrastructures, management, and economic performances are quite dominant in the field. If one suspects why railways were considered to be important from the first place, then these texts could be seen as institutional accounts (or "public transcript") which were traces of the institutional building.

I am more interested in data and materials which contain richer contextual information. For example, pamphlets and commentaries that tried to convince their readers to construct a local railway by discussing the importance of railway. I am also interested in archives that recorded how railway building was actually implemented or failed to be so. Finally, I am interested in records and researches showing how railway was actually used by people. For example, in what ways railway company promoted travel? How the emperor made use of railway? The key is to consider that the "function" of the railway system is not necessarily given by the technology itself but the claims on the great use of railway were constructed in the wider institutional environment. It is all these social meanings that get created, interpreted and formalized command much of my scholarship interest.

4   Types of data

I find the distinction between primary and secondary data is not necessarily very useful, as seen from the debate between historians and sociologists on the subject matter.[165] The problem of whether to distinguish history and sociology as two disciplines can be put aside for the moment as it made little help to provide concrete guidance.[166]

One crucial methodological measure for institutionalization analysis is to examine what makes facts count; facts and data are considered as objective only when

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[165] But see also the discussion by Wieviorka 1992; Calhoun 1998; Abbott 1990; 1992b; 2001. At this point, I do not wish to enter into the debate between Goldthorpe and Mann, but see Goldthorpe 1991; 1994; Hart 1994; Mouzelis 1994; Mann 1994; Bryant 1994.

[166] Indeed, I find Oguma's simple but succinct distinction between sociology and history may be more helpful. In his view (Oguma 1995: 9-15), the two disciplines differ from each other simply by the scope of research design. Historical (or anthropological) scholarship always restricted their research question by specifying a particular place and time, i.e. a small geographical area within a very short period. Sociological research normally is led by their broad theoretical question leading to its research design with less restriction of time-span and geographical focus. Historians pay attention to the discovery of first-hand resources and the verification of the data, while sociologists simply utilize both first-hand data and second-hand researches. Comparatively speaking, one can say historical studies are indeed more methodological-led while sociological studies of history should be guided by its theoretical concern. American comparative and historical sociology, however, in my view, pays much of its attention to methodological issues which could not be perfectly solved. My approach to historical sociology resembles classical ones and Japanese ones. See Abrams 1982; Smith 1991; Oguma 1995.

people collectively recognize them.[167] On the contrary, the methodological problem of the distinction between primary data and secondary researches in the following is mainly for the sake of clarity in presentation. One should be reminded that primary resources are not necessarily more reliable than secondary ones. It is more important to ask how the data would be considered by the authors, readers and researchers to be true and important.

(a)   Secondary resources

It is impossible for historical sociologists to ignore scholarly historical works, even though the purpose of collecting data among the historians is different from that of the sociologists.[168] To us, most secondary resources could be considered as "public transcript." The purpose to use them is to familiarize myself about how official documents or scholarly research provide us some mainstream account of the institution.

Japanese railway history was a fruitful field of study to the extent that research handbooks teaching basic methodologies and historiographies especially designed for researchers in this field as well as an academic journal published by the Railway History Society are available.[169] Official histories, especially *Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō Hyakunenshi* (日本国有鉄道百年史), published in 1969 to 1972 with more then ten volumes, covered major facts about the history of railway since the Meiji period.[170] In the 1980s, scholars, especially Japanese historians of technology, economy and business, started to organize an academic association, undertake research and publish on those areas which were not covered by "official" government history, like those on private railways or the cultural history of railway.[171]

While I learned a great deal on many basic "facts" of the railway history and many of these findings, one important drawback of these secondary researches is that these interpretations inevitably focused on the "well-being" of the railway system, i.e. how and why the railway functioned to help modernizing the country. My concern, however, is not only those functional attributes of this infrastructure but also those

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[167] Poovey 1998

[168] For a general survey of Japanese railway history written in English, see Aoki et al. 2000.

[169] For information, see the website [http://www.nikkeihyo.co.jp/tetudousigaku/], last accessed 1ᵃ August 2009.

[170] Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō 1969

[171] Noda et al. (eds.) 1986. For the bibliographic references, Aoki's list is perhaps the most comprehensive one; see Aoki 1983.

contextual factors that gave rise to the belief towards the use of it. Accordingly, I made use of these secondary resources in order to refer to more first hand sources. More importantly, I paid special attention to those unrecognized assumptions underlying these relatively empiricist researches. Without this important theoretical reflection to ask why railway building is useful, these secondary researches became part of the institution to justify its use and to make more elaborated myths in constructing cultural accounts.

(b) Primary resources

For primary resources, it is difficult to list them all out and it is impossible to list out all selection criteria. These included both public and hidden transcripts, depending on the nature of a specific type of data and the distinction is relatively contextual. In general terms, as suggested by Schneiberg and Clemens, I selected data which could illustrate how people "think, meet, argue, make claims, define options, conduct studies, tell stories, and generate discursive output, including reports, interviews, minutes, and newspaper commentaries."[172] I have, wherever possible, tried to explain the origins of particular resources in footnotes. Generally speaking, many "primary resources" used in the research were collected or edited in certain ways. It is important to have triangulation between different resources or between different accounts, while the key is to uncover for what purposes these "facts" were produced. Primary resources may include newspapers and commentaries, which always had a clear purpose to convince readers of certain points or to present a political position. Petition letters and pamphlets prepared by localities were also imbued with a clear purpose and a targeted audience. Other possible resources include parliamentary records, biographies, personal dairies and interview records. While sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between primary and secondary resources, the key is to find ways to guess or identify the purpose of the making of that archive. At this point, it is thus necessary to go back to some secondary data, by reading and examining how editors of data and historians said about how they have collected a set of primary data, and to go back and forth between different resources and researches to cross-check the validity of these claims.[173]

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[172] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 209
[173] Most sources employed in the current research are second-hand sources. One major reason is that Japanese scholarly research contains very fruitful references and their works are usually directly quoted

5   Analysis of data

The research does not consider the factual value of data for objective, neutral and reliable truth, i.e. one cannot believe in what the piece of data tells us is what the reality is; instead, "the fact" we are referring to here is the *social process* of the making of the data, including, thus, the text itself, its authors and readers, as well as its context. Analysis of data, thus, refers to those "methods" which help us to effectively read and predict those social rules behind the text.

Generally speaking, interpretive approach was employed to tease out the cultural meanings from discourses and practices.[174] Remember that a critical problem for a sociological research which utilizes historical data is that it has no control of how data and facts are generated. Simply consider that one's reading of the text is a kind of social interaction. Before the establishment of a sustainable "social" relationship, one cannot assume any prior *knowledge* and *standards* towards the relationship. The text tries hard to convince its reader what it tells is true in order to establish some forms of social reality, i.e. a legitimate social order.

Schneiberg and Clemens rightly comments that "culture and cognition figure prominently in institutional theory, but empirical studies have only begun to make use of powerful techniques developed in discourse analysis and the sociology of culture."[175] Concretely, I paid attention to how social players "perceive problems and make (or fail to make) connections among concepts, objects, and practices... articulate models, fairness principles, and criteria for reasonableness and efficiency... [which] indicates about institutional processes."[176] To recall Schneiberg and Clemens' metaphors and distinction of public and hidden transcripts, I paid attention to the documentation of "the core tendency of a body of discourse" and "variation, conflict, deviance, and debate."[177] Schneiberg and Clemens' evidentiary strategies for institutional analysis thus suggest that "different mechanisms may also be revealed by tracing discourse over time and by making of 'breaches,' deviant events, or conflicts

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from first-hand sources. In addition, Japanese scholarship provides very comprehensive bibliographies for my further reference. In many cases, I will directly refer to both these scholars' work and to cite those resources which were already quoted in their books. As a result, one will find that I rely on some prominent scholars' researches in a specialized field but in most cases this serves only as a quick reference to first-hand sources.

[174] See also Ikegami 2005b
[175] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 210
[176] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 211
[177] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 212

that reveal the usually undiscussed boundaries of taken-for-granted understandings."[178] In other words, besides official documents and historical accounts as relatively public transcripts, I paid attention to those hidden transcripts which could be found in less official documents like petition letters, news commentaries, pamphlets, locally edited historical accounts or interviews.

Specifically, there are three major ways to analyze the data. First, I had tried to ask when and where a piece or groups of data began to emerge. For example, I had identified a tremendous number of commentaries arguing for or against the nationalization of railway, or many proposals and letters from all over the country to make claims in arguing about the importance of local railway building, I had tried to identify the timing and geographical locations to make sense of the emergence of them. Then I had juxtaposed the data with alternative sources or made reference to secondary research, situating the archival materials in the contexts in order to make sense of it beyond its textual meanings on the paper.[179]

Second, after getting a rough image of the historical context of the materials, I had tried textual analysis to identify what kinds of claims the authors wished to propose. Sometimes identifying the actual names of the author was helpful and important, but the point was to locate any relationships among the author, potential readers and audiences of the text. These claims, especially the words and concepts, were well recorded and analyzed. This analysis could be referred to as the discourse analysis, which pays attention to how concepts were utilized. Besides the discourse analysis, it was also important to note what kinds of practice, or ritual as defined here, were invented and shared as well. Though one can hardly verify many of these claimed practices (like petitioning), one important definition of practice here was the very process of the production of these documents. One might find that the emergence of these documents like opinion letters and proposals was indeed a crucial part of institutional building. The analysis then focused on what kinds of accounts were made through the collective production of these documents.

Finally, I paid special attention to identify responsible social agents, who actively made claims about railway building or participated in related activities, as well as those agenda and problems they wished to establish and articulate. I had tried to delineate why railway building became an agenda and why this issue became a

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[178] Schneiberg and Clemens 2006: 214
[179] Lustick 1996

- 66 -

common platform in which different social parties could frame their interest and identities. Consequentially, I had tried to analyze the process that led to the building of the belief towards the use of railway building, in which the authors and readers interacted with each others through the text in order to mutually reconfirm their identities. In other words, I had tried to delineate the process of how the people under investigations wished and tried to invent concepts to confer their emerging identities.

6   Concluding remarks: methodology for historical-sociological analysis — mission impossible?

Many comparative-historical studies in the American tradition are based on measuring and extracting variables.[180] While the current research does not employ variables-based methodological strategies, it pays attention to meet the important requirement of data relevance to the research questions raised. Hence, the effort is purely one that based on methodological considerations.

The small-N problem, famously stated by Lieberson, undoubtly concerns any comparative-historical case studies projects. We cannot effectively predict error and deduce any descriptions on the whole population based on a few small cases.[181] The methodological concerns and challenges for sociologists to deal with an incomplete set of archival data might induce a postmodernist kind of epistemological nihilism because one may never be able to control the error in the normatively prescribed manner of sampling techniques and procedures as described in methodology textbooks for sociology students, which suggest ways for effective control and error prediction in sampling.

The reason is perhaps simple. Historical sociologists may never gain full control of the research design and could only passively rely on the incomplete traces of accounts if they ever decide to rely on historical archives for research. Archival materials are created in a relatively unreliable manner and they are passed down in history in an incomplete — if not totally unknown — way. Hence, we are facing a kind of "partial truth."[182]

The reliability of "evidences" available to historical research is suspicious.[183] Words and concepts might have different meanings from time to time. Data may be

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[180] Skocpol 1979; 1984; Tilly 1984
[181] Lieberson 1991
[182] The term was adopted from Clifford and Marcus (1986).
[183] Lieberson 1992

unreliable because the writers recorded data and wrote for a variety of purposes, distorting social facts in order to manipulate or convince readers in a manner the authors wanted. Authors wanted their readers, not necessarily scholars but their targeted audiences, to believe in a way they expected. It is not necessarily a deception but some sorts of selection of data to represent the social reality. Also, archives were mostly gathered by researchers for a variety of purposes. Even if they were well-recorded in reprinted collection, we still do not know how they were edited — again, they wished to conceal or to select the social realities they wanted to hide or emphasize. From the start we could only see the social realities through these archives which were mostly written to impress us in a way the authors expected their readers to believe in.

History is not necessarily memorized and passed to us in forms of archives. Archives were already the end product of the institutionalization of a social reality. The most important methodological question to ask ourselves is how a piece of archival text could reach into researchers' hands; what is the social process involved in making and transmitting a text — a form of knowledge indeed — in history? One should consider archival materials as a form of knowledge and cultural accounts. Their making and transmission were already parts of institutionalizations. In short, we should be careful to examine how data were prepared in their own historical and social contexts, how texts were passed into our hands.

If the research methodologies for the institutional analysis ignore the fact that from the very beginning the data were historically created and institutionally channeled, one was condemned to be manipulated in a way as what those authors wanted you to believe in. The point is that it is quite the same for one to read archives or to interact with a stranger. Reading a text and greeting a stranger are the same interaction rituals. The only difference is that researcher could only be informed by the product of the author, i.e. the text, but the authors were mostly not available again for our interviews to reconfirm the truth of their accounts.

Although this methodology section has outlined some major considerations, precautions and reflections, they are far from strict methodological procedures and measures of the research process. It aims to give readers a rough guide and spell out any limitations of the research I can think of. Thus instead of procedures, it is better to treat them as hints and precautions at most.

Section Four Structure of thesis

The research delineates the historical process of the institutionalization of the railway building as a cultural entity in modern Japan. It employs three theoretical tools: discoursing, ritualizing and imagining. The discussion will also be analytically organized into three important themes: capitalism, democracy and nationalism.

To note that the presentation of research was roughly narrated along the time line and organized according to three social arenas is simply for the sake of analytical clarity. In the current case, it is more convenient to present the process according to the suggested sequence without distorting real historical developments.[184]

Another analytical distinction will be the rough division of three different social arenas: (1) economy and interest; (2) politics and power and; (3) religion/ culture and collective sentiments. The division here has both theoretical and historical rationales. Historically speaking, railway building, in the case of Japan, was indeed related to the making of three major modern institutions (capitalism, democracy and nationalism). Theoretically speaking, economy, politics and religion/ culture have always been considered to be three important dimensions of the society in sociology or social science. Yet the theoretical distinction here does not suggest that one can separate the three aspects into independent theoretical presuppositions and models and hence reduce complex social phenomena to any single type of factors, actors or internal attributes for explanation. As the research suggests that theoretical concerns of interest, power and moral sentiment could and should be accounted for by an institutional framework, a successful institutional analysis should take all these social arenas into its explanatory accounts.

This research has three substantive chapters. Chapter 2 will examine the making of the discourse on the use of railway in the Meiji period (1868-1911). It examines those historically contingent conditions that gave rise to the building of railway. The "origin" as well as the creation of those myths which justified railway building were created in a post-hoc manner, which had little to do with the railway itself but were closely related to the modern state-building, the forging of state-capitalist class relation and the crafting of modern capitalist arrangements. Second, it identifies various social actors concerned, who were responsible to make claims and ideas

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[184] Theoretically speaking, however, I do not assume that the institutional building processes will follow the sequence as specified for different research cases.

around a common issue of railway building, even though their actions and practices had nothing to do with the use of railway. Finally, through discourse analysis, this chapter illustrated the discursive formation of cultural accounts during the problem of nationalization of railways at the end of the Meiji era. This chapter argues that long before tracks were actually laid, the railway myth, or "theories" on the use of it, was supported by claims which were accidentally created by some social élites.

Chapter 3 delineates the transition from discoursing to ritualizing in actualizing the railway belief in the Taisho period (1912-1926). Ritualizing refers to the making of various common practices that were invented and employed by localities and politicians to facilitate the building of local railways. This chapter provides an account on how they collectively invented and shared practices to ask for the local railways. This chapter examines these "methodologies" aimed at local railway building and explains that theses isomorphic practices further strengthened and expanded the scope of this railway belief throughout the country. This chapter also argues that these practices were methodological accounts of an institution which stylized what democracy meant. They were indeed manifestation of the newly redefined nation-state based on political representation and participations. Ritualizing some shared modes of conduct became another kind of collective sense-making process that made the institutional belief towards railway tangible and real.

Chapter 4, with the use of the concept of imagining, traces and illustrates how the institutional belief of railway was popularized among commoners, after some railways were built and some people travelled from the 1900s to the 1930s. This chapter first focuses on those who really used the railway — when, why and how the emperor and some commoners did have chances to have pilgrimage to go around the country by railway because of many curious political concerns or religious rationales, like using railway for political domination and touristic attractions. Then it examines how these political or religious travelling experiences might even influence the imaginations towards railway among those who did not use the railway in different ways. It concludes that the railway belief was now fixated by the sharing of the same national imaginative horizon among those commoners.

The concluding chapter provides a summary of the argument, theoretical implications of the research findings, limitations, and a prospective research agenda is further advanced.

Chapter 2

Discoursing the nation:
Building the modern state, capitalism, and railway (1868-1906)

William James, in order to show that thought is possible without speech, quotes the recollection of a deaf-mute, Mr. Ballard, who wrote that in his early youth, even before he could speak, he had had thoughts about God and the world.- What can he have meant?" – Ballard writes: "It was during those delightful rides, some two or three years before my initiation into the rudiments of written language, that I began to ask myself the question: how came the world into being?"

Philosophical Investigations
§342, Ludwig Wittgenstein

"Is it not indeed to Hegel, and especially his philosophy of ethics and politics, that Prussia owes that mighty life and organization she is now rapidly developing?... It will be more palpable to many, should I say, that, while in constitutional England, Preference-holders and Debenture-holders are ruined by the prevailing commercial immorality, the ordinary owners of Stock in Prussian Railways can depend on a safe average of 8.33 percent. This, surely, is saying something for Hegel at last!"

The Open Society and Its Enemies
Karl Popper quoted a follower of Hegel who tried to explain why Hegel is great.

Section One   State-building, capitalism and the discourse of railway building

This chapter delineates how the collective belief towards the use of railway was made possible in the historical process of the building of the modern state and capitalism in the Meiji Japan. In the previous chapter, we have seen how railway was treated as an unquestioned worldview through which people's collective sentiments were expressed. The belief towards the usefulness of railway building was persistent throughout the history of modern Japan. This chapter traces the origin of this collective belief and suggests that it was perhaps merely an unintended consequence in the process of modern state-making.

Social reality becomes something comprehensible only when there is something we can discuss about. Discoursing refers to the invention of common ways of talking about something, especially the collective making of ideas, claims and languages. Employing the concept of discoursing, this chapter first delineates what historical conditions and contexts made the *discursive formation* of the institutional belief railway is useful – possible.

Taking an institutional perspective, railway building should be treated not only as an infrastructural building. This research argues that long before the tracks were actually laid, the institutional belief had already been articulated. In the nineteenth century, railway was certainly charismatic and spectacular, and it brought the world together. This assertion, however, presumes that people had already realized its transformative power and acquired the knowledge that the railway was useful and functional for them to modernize their society even before it was constructed. This conclusion always appeared especially in historical narratives of non-western societies, as in the case of Japan.[1] But people might not have well recognized the power of railway, and the societies might not have been necessarily transformed by it.[2] Even if they did know about its great use, given the fact that railway building involved huge amount of capital and advanced technology, it was very unlikely for a government, especially for a late-comer like Japan, to invest money into an unfamiliar, grand project when they did not even have the modern state-apparatus and means of raising

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[1] Harada 1991; Harada and Aoki 1973

[2] In the case of China, see Duara (1988) in which he rightly says that railway fundamentally altered the human geography of China, while most of the lands were unconnected by railways and remained unchanged. See also Wigen (1995) for another view in the case of Japan of how railway even changed those lands unconnected by railways.

capital. It is thus a sociological question to ascertain and examine how people made up the claims of the great use of railway in "modernizing" or "civilizing" the country. I argue that these claims, however, were created because of many reasons unrelated to the railway itself but to the state building and the making of capitalism in modern Japan.

Different groups of people, for a variety of reasons in different contexts, collectively made up claims to justify the use and the necessity of the building of it for the sake of the "nation." We will look at how state oligarchs and capitalists were manipulating the issue of railway building to justify their actions for other purposes, notably financing a government, stabilizing governance, making profits in stock market, or controlling the means of high finance. Investors did not support the construction of railway; the great advantage brought by the railway was perhaps an unintended consequence. In fact, this chapter delineates how people made up in an ad hoc manner the claims and myths, which included mostly abstract ideas, informal talks and unsupported commentaries made by capitalists, in explaining the use of the railway.

Railway building was intimately related to the making of modern state and capitalism. The huge capital required for railway building challenged the capacity of existing financial market, and in order to construct railway, it meant the introduction of modern capitalist institutions like banking establishment and stock company to raise, uphold and circulate the capital required.[3] This almost inevitably involved the help of modern state which was perhaps the sole agent having the political power and financial capability to start a railway project. In other words, investigating railway building in the context of Meiji Japan requires an understanding of the historical process of modern state-building as well as the dynamics of capitalism.

By state-making and capitalism, however, I do not merely refer to the structural make-up of them, a topic approached by many comparative and historical sociological researchers in the past, like Moore, Anderson, Tilly, and Skcopol, who took a realist approach to explain the evolution of modern state and capitalism.[4] These researchers tend to focus on the autonomous role of the different social groups or classes in explaining the evolution of the modern forms of nation-state and capitalism. These autonomous actors, like state-makers, capitalists, bureaucracy, organizations, or

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[3] Roy 1997
[4] Moore 1966, Anderson 1974, Tilly 1975, and Skcopol 1979

73

individuals, have different concerns of interest and power, or internal attributes, which are all building blocks of their theoretical models.

There were mainly two major theoretical perspectives on the studies of railway history in the Meiji period among the scholars. Firstly, historians working on political history tended to look at the different roles of social groups in forging a railway policy in the political process. Railway building was treated as an arena of policy-making in which the various autonomous social groups with conflicting interests engaged in negotiation.[5] Secondly, postwar Marxist Japanese historians treated the nationalization of railway in the late Meiji period as a case study of the historical process towards a state monopoly of the means of capital.[6] They studied railway history in order to understand how the oligarchs, bureaucrats, capitalists, military officials, and politicians with different class interests struggled with each other to gain control of the railway, which was a strategic arena of high finance.[7]

We will consider some of their insights in the due course, but the above perspectives were mostly, borrowing the words of John Meyer, "reductionists" which presupposed that "the power and interests of groups exist first, and the state is a superstructural product of these prior interests"; he has rightly criticized that the above "explanations of collective life and action... start with the narrow interests of one or another group."[8] Railway policy was considered by scholars as an arena in which different social agents with pre-given interests and power negotiated or conflicted with each other. Studying railway history thus became merely a case study of political or economic history, and railway was only an unquestioned useful infrastructure that helped the success of Japan.

Yet they begged the question of why railway would be treated by the different social agents as a key issue in political decisions and economic affairs. A more important question is how they came to realize, or to make-up claims of, the great use of railway. If we treat railway in Japan as a persistent belief system, we should try "to understand why so many social actors devote so much effort to building up a given authority." This research thus traces the "historical evolution of the realm of this constructed collectivity," i.e. the belief towards railway building.[9]

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[5] Matsushita 2004
[6] Ōshima 1949
[7] For example, Shima 1950; Tominaga 1953; Sugiyama 1975
[8] Meyer 1981: 895
[9] Meyer 1988: 898; see also Jepperson and Meyer 2007a; 2007b

In sum, this chapter analyzes why railway building was made to be an important concern for the early Meiji state-builders and the emerging groups of capitalists, in which railway building meant very different things for them. It seeks out the reasons why they tried to articulate their very different concerns into a common problem of railway building. Then, I will explain why railway building became a national concern for many induced by a financial crisis of modern capitalism. Finally, I will highlight the sociological significance of investigating the railway history in the Meiji Japan to better understand the dynamics between the building of modern state and capitalism. This chapter argues that railway building was highlighted into a national agenda among élites because of the crisis of modern state and capitalism. Claims were formed into a discourse to highlight its great use. As a consequence, the discourse of railway building legitimized the actions and the railway building was made to be the "guardian" of capitalism in this period.

Section Two   Concealed origin: the emergence of railway building as a national project (1868-1872)

This section identifies the historical conditions of the "origin" of railway building and it depicts how Meiji oligarchs, having just seized the power from the old regime, borrowed money from the foreigners by making up the myth of the necessity of railway building. It reveals that the claim about the usefulness of railway building was a myth created in a post-hoc manner by these oligarchs.[10] The paradox is that they made claims about the urgent priority of the construction of this fairly unknown western technology by investing a large amount of capital, even though the new Meiji regime had no monetary resources. Also, this section further uncovers that railway building in Japan was initiated by some state oligarchs who had the purpose of borrowing foreign loan in mind. Some of them tried to justify the decision to borrow foreign loan by making claims about the urgent priority of the railway construction.

Railway building was, however, important. It transported goods and persons, it brought together people who did not know each other before, and the huge capital involved in the construction of it made it important for the origins of the modern institutions of capitalism.[11] Meiji oligarchs enjoyed their luck in terms of the timing when they decided to build the railway. Timing was on their side when we compare how the Chinese Qing Empire hesitated to introduce this western technology at the same time of the 1870s simply because of political considerations.[12] By accepting a western technology it would become a gesture of change for the ancient regime, which was a best chance for the Meiji government whose legitimacy was based on change but not stability.[13]

To explain the success of the modernization of Japan, the problem seems to be, at least for later historians, in what ways was the railway first perceived as a charismatic technology by the political leaders? How and why were some of the Meiji government

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[10] Berger and Luckmann 1967: 53-72, 82-104

[11] For related discussion, see section three.

[12] Faure 2006: 30. While I borrowed heavily from Faure's theoretical insights, I differ from him on one point about the use of the word "institution" in his book. Faure emphasizes more on those "mechanisms for capitalism" to be "the evolution of capitalist instruments" for the "holding and circulation of capital, that is to say, money, and frequently, paper instruments including land deeds, account books, contracts, shares, bonds and any certificate of savings or loans of any sort, and the institutions that serviced them, be they family firms, chartered companies, temples or lineages." (2006: 13-14) The research shares his point to a larger extent, while I pay more attention to the discoursing process which makes railway to be the "guardian" of capitalism during the period.

[13] Gluck 1985: 162-163

officials visionary enough to claim that the building of railway was an important means to achieve national integrity in a hostile international world?

The knowledge about railway was already available in the late Tokugawa regime through the Dutch merchants in Nagasaki. Many travelers already mentioned and reported on their railway travel experiences. Some craftsmen even tried to build train models.[14] When Perry gave a train model to *Bakufu* officials as a gift in 1854, he noted that these gentlemen had already known about this technology quite well and had great curiosity to have a ride on it. The British and American people had already advised the late Tokugawa regime to build railway. The *Bakufu* even signed an agreement with the American diplomat A.L.C. Portman, who first wrote a proposal to the Japanese to explain the use of railway and to request permission for Americans to lay tracks between Edo and Yokohama, although this agreement was not accepted by the Meiji state.[15]

The major question, however, is not how some Meiji elites, like Ôkubo Toshimichi, Ôkuma Shigenobu, Itô Hirobumi came to realize the power and function of the railway. It is not worthwhile to discuss how boldly these persons were to persuade other "conservative" officials about the importance of railway, a story that many Japanese railway history books will definitely talk about.[16] Instead, it is a question of how a small elite group within the early Meiji government successfully intermingled with the issue of government fund raising by foreign loan, by making railway building an issue and defining the "great use" of this technology.

I   The mystery of the origin of the first railway: what gets emphasized?

One may consider a paradox when discussing why and how some Meiji leaders tried hard to argue for the necessity of building expensive railway, given the fact that the early government had no money, credibility and soldiers. Curiously, those leaders, all big names in the glorious history of Meiji, wisely bet their political future on something that they had not known about and was astronomically expensive. In fact, the objections to railway building outnumbered those that agreed to it at the time right after the Meiji restoration.

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[14] Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969 (vol 1): 18-22

[15] It is worthwhile to note that, unlike the common view which see late Tokugawa as an inefficient regime, the Tokugawa did signed a contract with American to allow them to lay tracks. Yet exactly because of this, it became a perfect excuse for anti-Tokugawa to blame Tokugawa as betrayer of the nation who sold land to foreigners. See Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969 (vol 1): 47-64

[16] Misaki 1993: 23-70

At this moment when civilians were poor and those barbarians were pressing against us, it was highly unreasonable to build railway. Perhaps the people who suggested the railway building wanted to cheat both the civilians and the government. I wished the government could instead put the same money first into building battleship, making our nation stronger and become united under the heaven. (Opinions from Ministry of Judiciary to the government, 1869)[17]

Ôkuma remembered in later years that how hard he tried to lecture those "conservative forces" on the great use of railway. When he suggested the government to borrow money from foreigners to construct the railway,

I was in the whirlpool of complaints and rejections of railway building. I realized that those warnings made by the conservative forces were the majority in the government, but I felt the necessity to repel their opinions to actualize this grand project and to make the eyes and ears of everyone opened. It was also necessary to have better transportation... Even though everyone rejected the project, I still believed that this project was worthwhile...[18]

So why Ôkuma bothered to risk his political life   or even risk his real life, as he said that many conservatives had claimed to slash those betrayers of the nation who wanted to borrow money from the barbarians — to suggest spending huge amount of money to build this western thing? In his memoirs, he provided the reason that "If we improve the bad transportation conditions, we can awaken the old feudalistic dream of repelling the barbarians."[19] Ôkuma said in later years that,

At that time, Itô Hirobumi and myself did not have much political power, we convinced our senior officials that, in order to abolish the feudalistic powers and consolidate everyone in the nation, one should break through the inconvenient transport system. Also, to destroy feudalistic thoughts, a project which could awaken people was necessary. It was at this time we heard of the discussion of the railway building. These considerations became our motivations to think of the railway as the best method to achieve the above aim. (Speeches given by Ôkuma and recorded in the reports of Imperial Railway Council, 1902)[20]

Besides the reason of "breaking old feudalistic thoughts," Ôkuma remembered that it was Iwakura Tomomi who provided the following reason to justify the first decision of the railway construction.

We moved our capital from Kyoto to Tokyo, and his majesty [The Meiji Emperor] should have his ritual of ancestor worship in Kyoto. If his majesty often moved along the roads, it clearly disturbed the civilians and it was troublesome. The

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[17] Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969 (vol 1): 71
[18] Ishii 1952: 146
[19] Ishii 1952: 145
[20] Re-quoted from Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969: 61

origin of morality was filial piety, and filial piety was fundamental to all actions. Build railway would solve all problems, and it saved much time and efforts. To help his majesty to fulfill his filial piety, railway was really important.[21]

Indeed, this was a very wonderful idea. It was told that those conservatives finally closed their mouths and agreed to the construction of railway when Iwakura gave out the above reason.

We can contrast the above two reasons told by Ôkuma. Was it because railway could help the Meiji emperor to worship ancestors which was important for building up the nation's morality? Or, could railway combat feudalism that made its construction as the ultimate priority of the poor Meiji government in their first few years of governance?

If one finds the argument of either combating feudalism or strengthening filial piety too crazy to legitimize the plan, the initiating officials like Ôkuma and Itô also faced the same problem. These claims were contradictory. Perhaps those claims were created in a post hoc sense to legitimize the original plan. Why were Ôkuma and Itô "visionary" enough to risk their political life and to suggest the spending of money — a huge sum of capital that the Meiji government did not possess - in a project that was, as those "conservative forces" claimed, "unnecessary or not urgent"?

2   The making of the cultural imaginations of railway

Ishii, a postwar Japanese historian who wanted to solve the puzzle, compassionately identified historical sources related to the origin of railway in Japan.[22] He wanted to know how the Meiji leaders convinced those "conservative" forces and constructed the railway in modernizing Japan. He gave us the details we just went through above, yet he found a curious issue that none had bothered to explain before. Until his time, railway history books stated that the money borrowed from Oriental Bank in England, about 1,000,000 pounds, which was also Meiji government's first foreign loan, were used to construct the railway. However, he realized that it was not.[23]

Later historians found out that only one-forth to one-third of the foreign loan was

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[21] Ishii 1952: 147; Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969: 61; Original source from Ôkuma and Sôma 1922: 147
[22] Ishii 1952: 172-177
[23] Ishii 1952: 178-181

actually used in building the railway, more specifically, a section of the railway between Shimbashi and Yokohama.[24] Indeed, the so-called "Loan of Lay," the foreign loan borrowed from the British person H. N. Lay, was an important case of studying diplomatic relations of the early Meiji government.[25] The most important point is, however, why was the money claimed to be used in railway building only partially used in laying tracks and buying locomotives? 300,000 pounds were used to buy equipments in the UK for railway construction, but 500,000 pounds were used to print notes and make coins.[26] Indeed, the agreement of the loan did not specify and limit the use of the money, even though Mr. Lay, and the later Oriental Bank which became the official authority to help the Japanese government to issue bonds in London, advertised the bonds exclusively for Japan's railway building. Ôkuma and Itô obviously convinced their "conservative" fellows to borrow this foreign money also for the same reason.

Curiously, the Meiji government came to an agreement in which one term of reference specified that three sections of railway lines should be completed within five years.[27] The Shimbashi-Yokohama line was quickly finished, but instead of using the money borrowed directly, the Meiji government asked the Osaka and Kyoto merchants to contribute money for the construction of the Kyoto-Tsugaru section. One may anticipate that, in the first place, Ôkuma and Itô did not plan to use all of the money borrowed from the foreigners to build railway and to build all sections specified in the loan agreement.

It will be exaggerated to say that Ôkuma and Itô wanted "to cheat both the civilians and the government" that they actually wanted to borrow money from foreigners to print notes more than building railways. But given the fact that the Meiji government did not have much financial power at the time and many chartered merchants were already asked to contribute money for many of the Meiji

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[24] Hoshino 1979: 130-139

[25] To simplify, Meiji leaders found that this English gentleman called Lay, originally the former Inspector General in China and also the one tried but failed to convince the Qing Imperial Government to build railway, came in front of these Japanese leaders, claiming that he can borrow them money, at an interest rate of 12% with mortgage on the custom tax and the railway revenue in the future. Yet the Meiji leaders found out this gentleman went back to England and claimed him the representative of Japanese government to raise national bonds through Oriental Bank at an interest rate of 9%. The reason was that the Japanese elites did not know what meant by the terms of "loan" or "bonds". They quickly abandoned the transaction with this guy and asked the Oriental Bank to do for them directly. See Hayashida 2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2007

[26] In Ishii's calculation, the loan had about 4,800,000 yen, but only 1,460,400 yen were used for laying tracks. Ishii 1952: 177

[27] Hoshino 1979: 136-137

government's projects, to the extent that further enforced loans would damage the government's credibility, foreign loan was perhaps the best method in their mind. It was quite surprising that more than two-third of the borrowed money was used to print high-quality notes in Frankfurt, to buy silver reserve and to make coins. Ishii, our historian, told his seniors on his findings and they were surprised because it was their first time to hear about the use of this loan, which was for printing notes rather than building railway.[28]

In other words, the foreign loan was borrowed for paying bills instead of railway construction. Although from archival materials one may not find reliable resources indicating these early Meiji officials' motives, it is more important to note that, from the beginning, the loan was used not as fund for the railway construction as what Ôkuma had claimed. It was perhaps not because they needed the money to build railway, but perhaps they needed the plan of building expensive railway as an excuse to borrow money from the foreigners.

It is more important to point out that they created a discourse on the use of railway within the early Meiji government. Opinions were framed around not on the question of the legitimacy of borrowing foreign loans, which was indeed a debatable issue concerning national integrity in the Meiji era. The discussion turned to the validity of the use of money on the railway building. Ôkuma and his fellows were wise, in the sense that they anticipated the huge money involved in railway building and it turned out to be a good chance to raise this urgently needed capital for the government, as railway was a welcomed project for investors in the London market. Because of that, the loan agreement clearly stated that the Meiji government should complete certain specified lines within a designated period in order to use the railway revenue for mortgage, as a precaution to prevent the Meiji state using all of the money for other purposes.

After the decision to raise fund from the London market was made, Ôkuma and his fellows faced a hard time to figure out the rationales for railway building. They even did not have any budget plan for the railway building. Maejima Hisoka, an assistant chief of the Bureau of Finance and Civil Affairs, produced an memorandum in 1870 called Tetsudô Okusoku, "Railway Estimates," or rightly put by the historian

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[28] Ishii 1952:177

Ericson, "Railway Surmises."[29] This budget was indeed literally a kind of speculation in which he "calculated" the estimated gain and loss of the railway between Tokyo and Kyoto. In order to "dispel the worries of the patriots," he concluded that the usefulness of railway to the nation in terms of "economic interest," or in his wordings, "the gain in revenues," was huge which provided the justification for the railway construction.[30] In addition, according to Ôkuma and Ito's memorials, they found a few pieces of supporting opinion "out of several hundred memos of objections" that made them "really impressed." They should surely be impressed, as these pieces of opinions adopted and summarized major points from some early reports written by the foreigners.[31]

We can tell that Ôkuma's plans of building railway and borrowing foreign capital were intermingled, but we could no longer explain which consideration went first. The origin of this institution of railway building might be a historical contingency in the state-making process, instead of an intended consequence of the state-builders. Notwithstanding the real intentions behind, historical records on the ideas justifying the need of railway were supplemented in a post-hoc sense, and the narration was part of the institutional building to conceal its origin.

Another important thing to point out is that once the first line of railway was built, the belief towards railway was quickly strengthened, not by claims first, but by the real experiences of the railway travel by these government officials. These experiences, nearly religious ones, were immediately co-opted into the building projects that literally opened government officials' eyes. As what Ôkubo Toshimichi said right after his first train ride, "a look is more than a thousand of words."[32]

3   **Experiencing a new reality: consolidating the belief among state-builders**

Changes of the subjective experiences were integral to see how an institution was established in the early stage. To describe institutional origin of social change, Weber used the word "charisma," a mystic origin of social change, something magical and religious to the extent that we should not bother to explain further beyond but simply

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[29] Ericson 1996: 99-100

[30] Also, he wrote that by the nature of the huge capital required for railway construction the government should encourage the civilian to construct railway under government's supervision, as well as various methods of forming modern stock company. Ericson 1986: 100-101

[31] Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969 (vol 1): 84-87

[32] Ishii 1952: 316

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admit and describe a stage of transcendence among people.[33] Indeed, we should pay attention to how these altered experiences gave people a sense of change and how these alteration of experiences were co-opted into people's imagination of a new social reality. In the context of this research, one should then pay attention to the reports which described some officials' feeling of "ecstasy" when they had a ride on train.

Changes of the experience were fundamental to understand why a railway was considered to be charismatic by Meiji people. It is perhaps not new to say people gained a new sense of time and space on their first railway trip. Schivelbusch in his important book *The Railway Journey: the Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (1986) gives us important accounts on how railway technology fundamentally altered European people's sense of time and space which was composed of the integral feelings of the changing modernity.

We can take an example. A *Bakufu* official called Kawata, for example, was said to be trying hard to maintain his posture on the model train given by Perry. It was recorded that his body was shivering and he showed a kind of spasm which was similar to somebody who "laughed cowardly" (臆病笑い), so that it seemed his movement made the train moved.[34] This account illustrates how this new technology altered human beings' sensations and feelings and gave them a sense of change.

In the early Meiji context, a sociologist, Takeda, describes the train experiences of those officials who joined the "eye-opening" Iwakura Mission, perhaps the most important study tour of the Meiji government.[35] Indeed, some Meiji officials literally could not see anything outside the train windows.

> The steam train finally started to move, and my eyes failed to see and it's dizzying...when the car moved it created great sounds. When it left the place where people lived, it speeded up and produced sounds like thunders, while I looked left and right, the trees and glasses appeared to be stripes.[36]

Takeda rightly comments that different attendants in the mission had the same descriptions of their sensations like "seeing pattern of stripes" and "unable to talk because of the noise," which is fundamental to understand how this technology altered their experiences. The railway trip constituted a kind of quasi-religious experience.

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[33] Weber in Roth and Wittich eds. 1968: 1111-1147
[34] Takeda 1999; Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969 (vol 1): 17
[35] Takeda 1999: 103-121
[36] Takeda 1989: 106-107

This magical western technology was "proven" to be an ideal model for the new country, because these stunning or even religious experiences did alter their sense of reality. The feeling of the powerfulness and a sense of inferiority before the "western" were indeed fundamental to understand how these state-builders looked at railway, which was a source of change fundamental for the legitimacy of the Meiji polity.

The Iwakura Mission was held between 1871 to 1873, roughly the time when the first rail line in Japan was opened. Without saying, participants reported quickly on their magical experience, which consolidated the new belief towards the western technology. One can also observe similar kinds of feelings by analyzing how an intellectual called Eki Yuki described his first railway trip between Shimbashi and Yokohama at 1873.

> The train departed, [it seemed that] the mountains and trees located either distantly or nearby were moving, but the train did not move. Those objects nearby passed by instantly, while the distant ones passed slowly. Things outside the window were moving chaotically, rivers and hills were all flying by. It seemed like the train did not move, but actually everything outside the train were not moving. Mountains were already there for ten thousand years, so did the trees on the land. It was then the seemingly immovable train actually moved. It was why I finally believed that heliocentrism was right.[37]

It is not that important whether the railway experience could really make one to believe in heliocentrism scientifically or not, but the alteration in sensation was intimately linked to the reconfiguration of worldview of an intellectual during an era of rigorous political change.[38]

People who attended the Iwakura Mission were not the first group of people who experienced the railway. Indeed, the first railway was already opened in Japan approximately at the same period when almost half of the Meiji leaders were on trip. But this mission was a kind of pilgrimage for the new officials who wished to develop their political legitimacy based on western civilizations. Uda (2007: 86) rightly points out that different from the late *Bakufu* exchange students' and visitors' experiences, this official mission provided "those participants a shared experience in the railway trip in the US and Europe who belonged to the same governing class, and transformed these experiences (like knowing that railway could run even in winter) into their vocation towards modernization." In other words, the use and effect of railway came

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[37] Re-quoted from Uda 2007: 38-39
[38] Uda 2007: 49-52

to be realized only after this small class of Meiji future leaders and bureaucrats had a chance to have their experience turned up-side-down. Their shared experiences helped to enforce and solidify the belief towards this western magical tool. Consequentially, after their feelings were electrified by an alteration of sensations, they promoted this technology in a hurry after the trip, because all of them believed that this technology could help them to shape a new national society, which was also a shared mission for this new class of political elites.

One of the "conservative" forces at the time, Kurota Kiyotaka, the late Prime Minster, was said to be strongly opposing to the railway construction at the time of 1869. He thought Ôkuma and those people who suggested borrowing foreign money to build the railway instead of the military force were evil betrayers of the nation. He was then asked by Ôkubo to have a trip to America and Europe at 1871 to open his eyes, and when he came back, he said,

> I should apologize that I called some of you betrayers and thefts of the nation and asked seniors to fire those who suggested building railway. After my trip to Europe and America I found my fault and I had no face to stand before some of you. I hoped some of you could forgive me. From now on, I would help all of you and I hoped we could keep the friendship onwards.[39]

It was said that Kurota cried after saying this. Ôkuma in his memoir talked about this event that "a year ago he called me an evil betrayer of the nation and asked the seniors to fire me, after [his trip] he acknowledged his faults in public. What a loyal and patriotic guy who could do something that normal people could not do! ... Old Saint said that an ideal person should not be afraid to identify his fault and to change himself." It is perhaps not a person who changed himself, but a polity and its criteria of legitimacy that were changed. All of these sentiments and alteration of feelings created, presented and consolidated through this symbol of train, and these experiences were shared by a new class of political elites who forged their new modern and national mission of railway building.

4   Concluding remarks

This section suggests that the decision to implement the construction of railway was perhaps an accidental outcome when a few early Meiji oligarchs wished to use

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[39] Ishii 1952: 140

railway building as an excuse to borrow foreign loan. Provided that borrowing money from foreigners was unthinkable for the government at the time, and that the poor new government did not have other effective means to raise the capital urgently needed, railway building, which involved huge capital, became a very good excuse for them to have Japan's first foreign loan. The money borrowed was mainly used for printing good quality notes to pay bills for the new government, while arguments and objections within the government were indeed framed and directed to the discussion of what railway was, instead of the validity of the foreign loan itself.

Railway was powerful indeed, but at the same time one should be skeptical of those claims justifying railway's use, which were historically made in a post hoc manner. This section illustrated why it will be difficult to explain the origin of the railway building from the ground that a few Meiji leaders were visionary enough in knowing the use of railway in modernizing the country.

At the time of 1872 when the first rail line was opened[40] and when many of the future Meiji leaders and bureaucrats had a try on it in the foreign world, the transformative power of railway became a taken-for-granted truth for them. How these officials' subjective feelings were shaped by their first railway trips is then crucial for us to understand how these loosely organized oligarchs became a united class of modern state-builders and shared a common mission. Indeed, railway did not only compress time and space but also altered these state-builders' sense of time and space which constituted their visions of building a new state. Their political vision manifested itself in their belief towards railway building which could be used to transform the nation gradually.

Railway was then crafted to be an icon of civilization. The magic of railway was then used in representing a new political era, or vice versa. As what a Chinese style poet "Steam Locomotives" at the time put,

> Was steam locomotive's convenience ghost-and-god like? / It was the first time I believed the far point under the heaven could be my neighborhood. / Today's prosperity surpassed yesterday. / The season of spring in this year was better than the last year.[41]

The charisma of the railway was experienced by at least these Meiji state-builders and a tiny number of the passengers in the early 1870s. This "magical tool" was, however,

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[40] The ceremony of the opening of railway was surely -extremely important. The dissertation will analyze the role of ritual in institutionalizing the railway belief in chapter 3.
[41] Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1969 (vol 1): 103

expensive and the government did not want to pay for it. The state should then cooperate with the people who had the money and provide new means to raise and hold capital for organizing railway firms. It was then another story about how the state worked with the emerging class of capitalists to further substantiate the gravity of this national project which eventually holds the devotion of citizens from all walks of life. Stepping into the 1870s and 1880s, the spread of the railway belief, as well as its charismatic power to legitimize the state, would be perceived not really in its use, but through the magic of, to put it in a Marxian way, capital.

Section Three   Capital, capitalists, and capitalism: forging state-capitalists relations (1872-1889)

Railway building in the 1870s and 1880s Japan was intimately related to how the Meiji state cooperated with the emerging capitalists in order to channel their capital into railway construction.[42] In this section, I examine how the Meiji state organized and encouraged the merchants as well as the *kazoku* (華族) and *shizoku* (士族), or the former daimyo and warrior class, to raise capital for building the railway. As a consequence, partially unintended, it gave birth to those capitalist institutions, and the belief towards the railway that could be transformed into capital returns through railway stock investment. The spread of the railway belief in the 1880s, or "the fever of railway" as called by Inoue Masaru, the Railway Bureau Chief at the time, was thus expressed in terms of the railway stock bubble in the newly established security market. This section provides the background of how the Meiji state could possibly create an institutional environment in the late 1890s in which the railway belief could be defined in terms of measurable capital.

There were several major concerns of railway construction in the Meiji Japan. Firstly, most of the intercity railways were built by "private" capital.[41] The government did build major routes by itself, especially the strategic Tôkaidô Line (東海道線) between Tokyo-Kyoto in the 1870s and 1880s. For most of the Meiji time, however, the government encouraged private sectors to build railway.

Secondly, understanding railway building is a key for us to know how the Meiji state made modern capitalism work. Sociological understanding of capitalism, to put it in the simplest way, concerns about the evolution of the social arrangements that made the accumulation and circulation of capital possible.[44] This is critical to the understanding of railway building, as one can first simply consider how expensive this technology was.[45] Historian Noda gives us some estimation of how huge the capital necessary for building railway was at the time.[46] For example, the initial capital of

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[42] It is necessary to point out that the railway was not the only state-building discourse of the time. Ramseyer and Rosenbluth (1995) provide an account of other institutional choices (for example, financial and cotton politics) in the Meiji politics of oligarchy.

[43] The term "private capital" here refers to the money that is not coming from governmental budget, but it does not necessarily mean the money from the market. See below section for further elaboration.

[44] Faure 2006: 12-14; Lestition 2000; Collins 1997

[45] Roy 1997

[46] Noda 1980: 48-49

Nippon Railway was 5.96 million yen and Kansai Railway was 3 million yen. Comparing the capital for establishing a stock company which required around 100 thousand yen at the 1880s, the capital for establishing railway companies were astronomical. Noda rightly quotes Marx in saying that railway was the foundation of stock company, and at the same time, the starting point of other stock companies.[47] When rails were built, one already had banks and stock exchanges for other purposes. Consequently, the significance of the railway building did not rely mostly on its real effects when locomotives finally entered into every corner of the land to transport goods and persons. It did transform the economy, but mainly by providing the social arrangements for raising capital. In the U.K., the establishment of modern bank provided important ways of raising capital for the development of railway. On the contrary, in Japan, as a late developer, it was the construction of railway that facilitated the birth of banks, stock markets, and modern company, which were all the basic components of capitalism.

Thirdly, railway building in the 1870s deserves our attention because it was not only about the capitalist institutions but also about the making of the capitalist class. It was intimately related to how trust relation could be forged between the state and the other social groups. When the state tried to consolidate different potential groups to invest into the railway project, like merchants, former warrior class, or anyone who held capital, they were gradually consolidated into a class of capitalist.

In this section, we will see how the state worked with different influential social groups, or an evolving capitalist class, by encouraging them to build railways. This indirectly helped the establishments of different modern capitalist institutions like banks and stock exchanges. To discuss the sociological significance of railway building in the 1870s and the early 1880s, then, is equal to a delineation of the process of implementing capitalism by a modern state, resulting in a new class of capitalists who were co-opted into the state on the one hand, and the redefinition and the strengthening of the belief towards the usefulness of railway building on the other hand.[48] The following section will delineate how a state forged a new and stable relation with the merchants and former ruling class, stabilized its governance through railway construction, which was not going to be a smooth process.

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[47] Noda 1980: 48-49
[48] I should remind readers that it was also a problem of the institutionalization of the "public debt" in the Japanese case, although I did not emphasize the theoretical underpinnings of this problem. But for the history of public debt in the western context, see Stasavage 2003.

1 How to start a railway project?

Although the Meiji oligarchs had already realized — or more exactly, predicted — the potential transformative power of the railway that might help with the national integration as well as the establishment of its legitimate role as a modernizer, the problem was by what means they could actualize it. In fact, the Meiji government did have a variety of options to have their railway built. The state could ask the foreigners to build the railway for them. The state might build the railway by itself, if the state wished and had the necessary financial capacity, either by using its national budget or by borrowing foreign loans. The state might ask the well-organized merchant groups from the major cities to build it, if these merchants wished to cooperate and if they could. The state might search for other new partners in the society, like former daimyo, samurai and local merchants, to cooperate with, if the state could find a way to solicit and secure capitals from them by organizing new models of stock companies. Each option had its consequences and the following section evaluates each of these options that the Meiji state had tried, showing how the early Meiji state came up with a mixture of these policies.

Not until the unequal treaties between Japan and foreign powers were amended, using foreign capital or asking the foreigners to build the railway for them was not an easy option for the Meiji government. State oligarchs were extremely sensitive to any proposals made by the foreigners to buy their lands and properties, which were considered a potential threat to the nation. Opposition from within the government might easily turn to a discourse of patriotism searching for legitimate reasons to oppose the Meiji state.[49] It was not until the debate of the nationalization of railways in the 1890s that using foreign capital became a legitimate option.

The second option was the construction of a state-owned railway by the government itself, but the national budget devoted to infrastructural building was also quite restricted. It is not necessary to list all those important modern projects the government intended to put in place in the 1870s. School, army, factory, and all kinds of modern projects needed to be paid for by the Meiji state.[50] Meanwhile, the state did not yet have its currency system and banks amid the background of inflation in the

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[49] Indeed, there were several cases the Meiji state borrowed money from the foreigners; all of them were important events related to railway building, including the one we have seen in the last section. In any case, the option of asking foreigners to build and operate the railway directly was excluded.

[50] Indeed, the financial burdens of many of these projects were put upon localities, which caused nation-wide social instability. See Oguma 2000.

1860s and 1870s; fighting with inflation was the only mission for the Meiji state in its first two decades of governance.[51]

It is important to mention that the old *bakufu* regime collapsed mainly because of the inflation, an economic problem that any modern government would have to face.[52] In an era of economic retrenchment and also in the absence of a modern currency system, the best strategy for the state was to convince other sectors in the society to join together in such an expensive and risky project. The government only completed the major routes of Tôkaidô Line linking between Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe as late as 1889, as well as some short routes linking major trading ports and navy ports. The so-called state-centered railway policies did not really exist. In fact, the government did not want to, or simply could not, build all railway routes except the major route between the new and old capital.

It was definitely the ideal situation if the state could promote the great use of railway, but the society at large, however, did not really know what this western technology was. As rightly argued by the historian Hoshino, "at the time of 1870, merchants from Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto did not respond to the government's proposal of railway building, because they did not know what railway was, and even new merchants from Yokohama did know what it was, they did not have any methods to raise the capital."[53] The state wanted to present the railway as a profitable modern business attractive enough for potential investors. The problem was how. Historian Ericson nicely summed up the options the Meiji government had.

> In seeking for the participation of private interests in capital-intensive railroad development, the early Meiji regime could basically turn to just two sources of private funding. One of these was merchant capital, of which the first efforts to mobilize were seen in the Kansai Railway Company. The other concentration of private wealth consisted of the annual stipends paid by the government to the former daimyo and samurai.[54]

If the Meiji state wanted to encourage the construction of private railway, it needed to convince the highly skeptical merchants and the former warrior class who had no initial reasons to support the new regime. It was difficult to ask the merchants to invest their money into a grand project based on a foreign technology that people rarely knew about, especially if this huge construction was initiated by a new

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[51] Zhan 2005
[52] Tilly 1990
[53] Hoshino 1982a: 173
[54] Ericson 1996: 104

government without much legitimate grounds. Without a mutual trust or well established conduct of business between the state and the merchants, especially in an era of instability, any claims to national interest or the great use of this magical technology were still totally non-sense to investors.

The following section will outline two important cases to delineate how the Meiji state tried hard to convince, first, the merchants in cities and, second, the *kazoku* and *shizoku* (former daimyo and warrior class) to join this project.

2   The failure case: the Kansai Railway

As the Meiji government did not wish to use its entire foreign loan in laying tracks as specified and required by the loan agreement, it sought out other ways to secure money from the private sectors. The problem was how. Before the Meiji period, large scale business practice relied on political patronage.[55] For a well-organized merchant group to engage in large-scale business prospect which required high finance, one should seek for the political protection from the ruling warrior class. Polanyi is right to say that modern capitalism and free market were institutions that required building, while in pre-modern societies political patronage was predominant in economic behavior.[56] Under patronage, the monopoly encouraged by the state, instead of free market which allowed free flow of capital, was dominant, implying that the political will as well as the closed social networks between chartered merchants were the key to uphold or restrict the flow of capital.[57]

Did political patronage work for the state to encourage the private sectors to build the expensive railway? Hoshino analyzed the first but failed private railway company Kansai Railway with planned route linking between Biwako and Tsugaru near Kyoto.[58] This company was initiated by the Meiji state and the Kyoto Prefectual government in 1869 but it finally failed and was dissolved by the state in 1874.[59] This case shows that the patronage was still a major method in early Meiji business practice in which the political authority played a crucial role, and it illustrated why

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[55] Masaki 1976
[56] Polanyi 1985
[57] Some important institutional forms of capitalism, like double accountancy and some forms of stock holding companies (*kabunakama* 株仲間), however, did emerged in the Tokugawa period. See also Ochiai 2008; Hisano 1973; 1975
[58] Hoshino 1981; 1982a; 1982b
[59] Ericson 1996: 102-103

and how this method should have worked but did not. In other words, given the unknown nature of the business, the suspicious authority of a newly formed state, and the huge amount of capital involved in railway construction, which was beyond the ability of traditional business practices relying on cooperation between chartered merchants, the Meiji state failed to force the merchants to build railways.

From the early stage, the Meiji state government paid great attention to guarantee the success of the first private railway building. It was greatly concerned about its own credibility on business policy, as seen in the early draft of the official company regulations (*kanban tachiai ryakusoku*) at 1871.[60]

> On the issue of commerce, the government should neither use its authority to force merchants nor constraint them by law… The company was a company because it was none of the government's business. It was why they received licenses from the state and should communicate with the state based on mutually agreed regulations, instead of the political authority of the government.[61]

Yet in the areas of high finance and new technology, like steam ships, locomotives, and industrial complex, "government should protect or even help them with money, and serve as a guarantor if the company failed… Government should give another kind of license to them and they should raise capital through public bonds. The investment should be returned based on their future income. For example, a railway company should raise capital from those who wished to buy its shares."[62] This early version of the company law indicated that the early Meiji state considered governmental supervision a key method to encourage construction of private railway.[63]

One may think of the project of Kansai Railway as a politically coerced public project that the merchants from Kyoto and Osaka were asked by the authorities to contribute money in return for a pre-assigned interest.[64] It was not a private stock company in the modern sense. The original company ordinance aimed at serving its sole function of raising construction capital through the coercion by the authority, and the government took up all construction and management responsibility.[65] With the

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[60] For a general background of Shibuawa Eiichi, see Morikawa 1976.

[61] Hoshino 1982a: 170

[62] Hoshino 1982a: 171. One should not, however, be confused the above terms with modern business practices, like "shares" refer to the mutual investment and the holding of stocks between different groups of chartered merchants familiar to each other, which were not "public" in modern sense.

[63] Takata 1994; See also Westney 1987

[64] Hoshino 1982a: 187

[65] Even though the company can resume operation of the railroad after twenty years; see Ericson 1996:

help of officials sent from the central state, the Kyoto city government quickly urged those chartered businessmen in Kyoto and Osaka, as what the feudal states did in the old days, to contribute money to establish a railway firm, in return of the interest paid by the government. It asked money from those wealthy persons registered in district records. The company raised about 700,000 yen in 1871.

In 1872, "because of the difficulties of this business everyone was skeptical,"[66] this so-called "company" became a fund raising method without any connection with the railway operation in the future.[67] The Kyoto city government reported to the central government that even though the initial capital was collected, people were gossiping that the railway might not be finished and, actually, "it showed no sign of construction."[68] The railway project was perceived pessimistically.[69] The Kyoto city government printed notices to "civilize" the merchants about the meanings and economic significance of the railway. After the land survey, the Bureau of Public Works reported that the estimated initial capital required was approximately a double more than expected. This news definitely stunned both the Kyoto government and the investors.

It is perhaps not necessary to give all the details involved afterwards.[70] For example, the Kyoto government even tried to sell the shares to monks.[71] It is important to point out, however, that the company regulations under the old practices did not have any provisions on limited liabilities,[72] and thus the credibility of the company relied solely on the credibility of the major shareholders and the government. In other words, merchants did not believe in a brand new and astronomically expensive technology called railway introduced by a new regime they did not believe

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102-103.

[66] Hoshino 1982a: 181

[67] Specifically, company regulations specified the restricted transfer of shares between stockholders, and it indicated how much money investors should pay within a limited period. It was not any kinds of stock company in modern sense, as shares could not be sold after the completion of railway, and transactions of shares should be reported to the government. Ericson 1996: 103

[68] Hoshino 1982a: 188-189. One should also be skeptical to what extent this initial capital was really "collected" or not.

[69] It was said that if the line between Kyoto and Osaka could be built quickly, the capital required for extending lines to Tsugaru could be easily collected. Yet, the report warned that if the construction is delayed, people will be more skeptical towards railway, and it will truly erode the creditability of similar projects initiated by the new government in the future.

[70] The company had a hard time in soliciting capital because of the uncertain nature of the business, in addition to the difficulties of economic environment. Ericson 1996: 103

[71] Hoshino 1982a: 196. Indeed, temple was one of the key pre-modern corporations which controlled capital, but the policy suppressing Buddhism by the Meiji government in the early 1870s clearly made this option unavailable.

[72] Hoshino 1982a: 203

in, unless relevant institutions of capitalism were installed and had its power of profit-making proven.

The government was really concerned for its credibility in future railway construction projects that were highly dependent on the success of the first private railway company. To make the situation worse, the government itself was divided into different sectors and was yet to act as one concerning the railway policies during the 1870s. Thus, the shifting of policies as well as the financial status made the outcome unpredictable for both the investors and the government itself.[73] The government also knew that if the first private railway project failed, the tenuous legitimacy of itself would be eroded and any further construction project would be more difficult. Finally, the government decided to dissolve this company in 1874.

The huge capital and the new technology involved, as well as the scale of the construction and management of railway, were all beyond the ability of old institutions of business practices that relied on political patronage. It is not saying that political patronage became unimportant later, but this case shows why the old business practices based on political patronage alone could neither glue the newly established state authority and merchants together nor provide methods to raise capital for the construction of railway during the first decade of the Meiji governance.

However, after the Shimbashi-Yokohama line had been opened for some years the power of railway was supported.[74] But more importantly, only when the capitalist institutions for modern high finance were created, capital could be pumped into railway projects. The key was under what political considerations and economic circumstances that the Meiji state could extend its political influences to supervise and cooperate with those new social players and had its railway constructed by providing new methods for them to solicit the capital.

3   The successful case: the Nippon Railway Company

Nippon Railway Company was an important case for us to see how the Meiji government successfully created a capitalist class by means of the building of the modern capitalist institutions. It was a private company but it was under government supervision, whose planned routes linked between Tokyo and Aomori in Northeast

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[73] Hoshino 1982a: 224-225; Ericson 1996: 102
[74] Hoshino 1982a: 225

Japan.[75] This private railway company was still protected and chartered by the state, but the railway project was organized by a new modern form of stock company.[76]

In order to have its railway built, the state found new partners and new methods to organize the project. Instead of the merchants from major cities as in the last case, the state, this time in the early 1880s, cooperated with the "capitalists" who were now composed of *kazoku* (or former daimyo and upper warriors class) and *shizoku* (or former warrior class). This company was a successful one, resulting in a new collective belief towards the use of railway, which was first supported by the government subsidized return and, more importantly, the new means of stock exchange. The belief towards the railway was ironically not necessarily defined by the entrepreneurship of a sound railway business but the speculative investment in railway securities, supported by the modern capitalist institutions of modern company law and stock exchange.

The following section will give a brief analysis of how the new class relations between the state and the capitalists were strangely brought by railway building through the reformulation of institutional arrangement of capitalism, resulting in a new belief towards the railway and a strengthened legitimacy of the Meiji state.

(a) Political and economic backgrounds

Railway building in this period involved a reforming of the capitalist class, and its relation with the state. The early Meiji state had many setbacks originated from both inside and outside the ruling class. Residual conservative forces of the former local daimyo were still strong even though those feudal domains were now replaced by the prefectures directly controlled by the central state. The warrior class was also abolished and many of them were removed from their localities, but the Satsuma Rebellion led by Saigô Takamori heavily damaged the Meiji state. In other words, the Meiji state in the 1870s was still far from legitimate because it did not have good relations with those social players who were former local political leaders.

In particular, *shizoku* was a major source of instability. It was not only because the status of these local samurai was abolished, but it was mainly related to the financial crisis of the nation. The inflation in 1860s destroyed not only the economy of the Tokugawa polity in Edo, but it was induced by many of these domains' badly

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[75] See also Nakamura 2004
[76] See also Hoshino 1982b; Morita 2004

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administrated finance. Although the new state centralized the administration in a relatively peaceful way because many of these domains were already bankrupted,[77] the state continued to face the economic crisis of inflation in the 1870s.[78] The old class of samurai was unwillingly supporting the central government.

In order to comfort these unemployed former political elites, the Meiji state borrowed another foreign loan to pay for the salary of these unemployed samurai. Yet most of them received stipends in the form of government bonds, or *chitsuroku kôsai*, in 1873. There were two consequences. Once the *shizoku* received these bond tickets they relied on the survival of this new regime to pay for their living. If the government was over-thrown they simply got nothing. Even though government bonds for *shizoku* were stopped in 1876, which was one of the major reasons for the immediate uprising in the Satsuma and nation-wide democratization movement in localities,[79] the rapid selling and trading of these governmental bonds led to the establishment of the chartered trading market of these bonds in 1877. Indeed, most of the poorer *shizoku* quickly sold their tickets because the inflation at the time quickly devalued their received stipend. Also, the chartered stock markets were established in Tokyo and Osaka in 1878, when most of these low-priced bond tickets were bought up by the merchants in the evolving securities market.

To sum up, though not completely successful, the Meiji government wisely used its creditability as a modern state to introduce foreign capital to feed these unstable *shizoku*,[80] resulting in the growth of relevant institutions for the trading of these bond tickets.[81] Noda rightly concludes that "before the establishment of the national bond market, the class of *shizoku* was quickly degenerated, while it facilitated the transformation of the capital; after the establishment of chartered stock exchange as well as the bond market it created an active market for the accumulation and circulation of capital, and the class relations were shuffled."[82] It created a new class of capitalists, who included not only the merchants from the old era but also the

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[77] For example, the *hanseki hôkan* (版籍奉還), or "the return of the registers" in 1869, and the later *haihan chiken* (廃藩置県), or "the abolition of feudal domains and the establishment" in 1871.

[78] It was also why the foreign loan was immediately used to print high quality notes in order to stabilize the collapsing nation-wide currency system, as discussed in the last section.

[79] The nation-wide democratization movement in the 1870s and 1880s, or the so-called *chihô minken undo* (地方民権運動), was composed of many of these former lower class of samurai.

[80] Not surprisingly, when the foreign loan was used for paying these unemployed *shizoku*, not many of them objected to this policy by using any patriotic claims.

[81] Noda 1980, chapter 1 and 2.

[82] Noda 1980: 44

kazoku and *shizoku* who received stipends from and relied on the government, who were indirectly supporting the status quo of the Meiji regime.

(b) Forging a new class of capitalist through railway building

After going through the above background, one can now appreciate the important role of railway building in the 1880s. The state targeted on the major *kazoku* and *shizoku* as sources of funding, in addition to inviting the "public," which meant small local merchants along the projected route, in helping the government to construct the railway. In the 1870s, the government had already centralized the capital (i.e. the stipend in the forms of government bonds) held by them in different modernization projects in the 1870s.[83] In 1877 Iwakura suggested centralizing the *kazoku* stipends to set up the Fifteen National Bank with an initial capital of about 18 millions yen.[84] The bank issued 15 millions yen of notes for the government expenses and the building of the state-owned Tôkaidô railway line.[85] Yet suppressing the Satsuma Rebellion as well as the inflation had left insufficient funding for constructing the Tôkaidô line and financing a new private railway company.

At the beginning of the 1880s, Iwakura reinitiated the plan of organizing private railway company. Starting from 1881, Matsukata in the Meiji state started controlling the inflation. The depreciation of the paper currency and the financial retrenchment of the government were the major factors making the state receptive to plans for private instead of state-owned railway.[86] However, the rationales were mainly about political stability. It was also made explicitly clear enough in Iwakura's statement (1881) on establishing the Nippon Railway Company.

> The stipends for *kazoku* and *shizoku* were abolished and they were given
> government bonds. The total amount was about 180 millions, and it was hoped

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[83] To give readers some ideas, however, one can refer to the railway construction plan initiated by Iwakura at 1873, the steam ship company at 1872, and the railway plan between Tokyo and Aomori at 1875 initiated by the merchant Takashima, who suggested organizing capital hold by *kazoku* to raise capital for this company. Shibusawa Eiichi and Maejima Hisoka drafted a new plan to introduce the idea of stock company, accountancy, and company law, but most of these projects failed. For similar reasons we have discussed in the last section, given the economic situation, pessimistic view among these investors and unreliable relations between these former daimyo and the new government, investors were soon regret the promise to contribute money. The discussion of railway building was once turned to ask for the government to sell off the profitable Shimbashi and Yokohama line to these *kazoku* instead of building a new one. At the time of 1877 the government revised the new regulations of *chitsuroku kôsai* making the stipends received by *kazoku* reduced by almost 40% which made the plan cancelled. Hoshino 1982b: 37-38
[84] Tohara 1963
[85] Hoshino 1970; 1971; 1972
[86] Ericson 1996: 108

that they could use this capital wisely and to be good and independent civilians. But four years had passed and only a national bank was established. They wasted the imperial gift [the bonds] and simply used this money for playing. Some of them even claimed themselves as patriots and agitated the ruthless civilians with some irrelevant political thoughts. This was definitely a bad phenomenon that they did not know the ways to make a living...

The second point was that for those rather wealthy *kazoku* and *shizoku* who had no knowledge on agriculture and commerce but only bonds at hand would easily become conservative in investing their capital in business. The worst situation was if they used up all the money they would cooperate with bad guys doing wrong things. If we could start business at this time we could let them participate in the real estate business and stabilize their living. (Iwakura Tomomi. 1881. *Proposal of Railway Company Regulation and Suggestions on Methods of Profit Guarantee*)[87]

Iwakura was wise enough to suggest that the state should not only pacify and console these *kazoku* and *shizoku* with stipends and bonds, but it was more important to mobilize their capital to extend railway networks on the one hand, and to provide them with important revenue and means of reliable means of investment. Even though the expanding bureaucracy wished to have the public projects like railway exclusively controlled by the state, the state should help them to invest wisely and glue them into a reliable capitalist class. They could then be a reliable political partner to the state and their trust could be maintained by the reliable means of investment.

4   The birth of the Nippon Railway Company

The problem was then how Iwakura organized this stock company under governmental supervision. In the case of Nippon Railway, around 20 million yen of initial capital was involved, compared to the 3 million yen of that of the Yokohama Bank and 1.5 million yen of that of the First National Bank.[88] Ericson summarized three ways of how the Nippon Railway solicited capital.

First, the company relied on the direct mediation of Iwakura and other top government officials in enlisting funds from the nobility. Secondly, Iwakura had the promoters obtain the cooperation of prefectural authorities in raising capital from local elites along the projected route of the Tokyo-Aomori Line. And finally, Iwakura appealed to the general public by persuading journalists to publicize the company's plans.[89]

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[87] Quoted from Nakamura et al. (eds.) 1988: 198-208
[88] Hoshino 1971: 8
[89] Ericson 1996: 110

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Yet, the first method was the most efficient way of soliciting capital. Political patronage failed in the former case of the Kansai Railway precisely because the merchants did not believe in the new government's credibility. At this time, however, governmental supervision worked because the state picked up former power elites, who willingly or unwillingly relied on the state for their survival, to form a political alliance.

In forging the credibility of this company, as well as providing attractive economic incentives to force *kazoku* and *shizoku* to cooperate, the state provided extensive governmental protections of this enterprise, including a guaranteed 8% of yearly interest for 15 years, and a provision of lands, survey services, and construction materials for free.[90] The state provided almost all the technological knowledge and help to the extent that, from the steam engines to engineers, all materials and personnel were provided and trained by the government. Indeed, Oikawa cited that it was "a company only in name and was really a government office."[91] In short, the only thing for these suspicious investors, or a class of potential source of instability, to do was: simply contribute their bond tickets to the bank in exchange of railway shares.

This was not a bad idea. If one did not hold much confidence towards the government, one might think of this as exchanging a piece of bond paper into another kind of it called "railway shares." Yet it was by all means a political project with real social and economic consequences. Although Inoue Masaru strongly opposed the development of private railways, oligarchs like Matsukata suggested that the state could help *kazoku* to become entrepreneurs and could efficiently utilize the capital held by them, which was in a sense the money originally given by the state.[92] Various foreign cases were strategically used to justify their opinions,[93] but finally the state

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[90] The central theoretical question, however, does not lie on to what extent this enterprise was "public" or "private" in nature, as what Hoshino and Ericson claimed. To have this business successful, the boundary between public and private was necessarily blurred, and one may feel free to call it a Japanese version of "Official supervision and merchant management (官督商辦 *guandu shangpan*)." See Feuerwerker 1958

[91] Oikawa 1996: 27-29. Translation was from Ericson 1996: 112. It is necessary to remind that this phrase was taken from the 1928 but not at the time of the 1880s.

[92] See also Oikawa 1996: 38-41, 54-57

[93] As echoed by Inoue Masaru, who insisted the government should have a coherent policy of state-ownership of railway, he referred to the case of Great Britain in where unregulated private railways made no good to the centralized state of Japan. Interestingly enough, though, one must also be curious also about the claim made by Matsukata that he had heard a French advisor saying government subsidies and interest guarantees to private railway enterprise were ideal. Both reasons were selectively "borrowed" from foreign countries and used to legitimize the political claims at the time. Ericson 1996:

hoped that through this important national project these "potential source of instability" could become reliable partners of the government.

In reality, indeed, investors with *kazoku* backgrounds constituted 45% of the initial capital, and *shizoku* constituted about 20%.[94] Another characteristic is that the merchants from major cities were relatively insignificant, except for the Mitsubishi group in Kyoto.[95] This point is important if we compare this with the former case of Kansai Railway in which it were the merchants from major cities that the state failed to cooperate with. This interpretation could also be supported from Oikawa's estimation that for the initial capital of about 6 million yen, the Fifteenth National Bank, which was established from *kazoku*'s stipends mainly, held 22% of the stock, individual *kazoku* held 20%, Mitsubishi held 8%, and the remaining shares were held by local merchants along the railway line.[96]

The last but the most important question, however, was how the government secured enough capital from people other than the *kazoku* and *shizoku*. What Ericson referred to "public investors" was a vague concept. It might actually refer to those wealthy people who might have some influence in local affairs, or it might refer to those local merchants. It was indeed the most intriguing part of the story, as we are told that half of the total shares were "sold" to the "public" along the projected railway route, quite expectedly, almost by coercive means.

The initial offering of stocks of this railway company started in 1882. Even with an attractive government-guaranteed interest, the help of advertisement in newspapers and the installment-payment system which allowed people not to necessarily pay up all the amount of the stocks they bought immediately,[97] it was still extremely difficult to attract investors from the public. The only way for the government to do was to mobilize the staff from its local offices. The state divided the quota among each prefecture, and the local bureau offices divided the quota of shares among each village and asked the wealthy persons, who were less organized than merchants in the

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109, 118; Hoshino 1986:43

[94] Hoshino 1971: 11-12; see also Ishikawa 1976: 137-141. This percentage is a rough number, as the amount included some *kazoku* stockholders represented the Fiftheen National Bank capital, and some *shizoku* solicited capital from Mitsubishi.

[95] Hoshino 1971: 11

[96] Oikawa 1996: 28-29

[97] The term was translated from *bunkatsu harai-komi* (分割払い込み) by Ericson (1996: 124). It was indeed a financial arrangement which was intended to attract more investors to buy stock. Yet it was also an important reason which brought about the unintended consequence of the economic crisis of the burst of bubbles in the emerging stock market. See the next section for discussion.

cities, to buy these shares.[98] One example was that in Fukushima prefecture, an officer threatened one of the wealthy persons that "if you did not have any shares at hand you would be removed to Hokkaido by the government." In the case of Ibaraki, "the whole prefecture abandoned the buying of these stocks," while in other prefectures in Northeast Japan "there were so many people who left their deposit money and escaped."[99] Finally, the government lent money to the company to hasten the completion of the first section of the railway line between Ueno and Maebashi in 1883, and Yokohama and Akabane in 1885, a line linking the place of the production of raw silk and the sea port. The government's plan was successful.

When the Nippon Railway Company issued its first dividends in 1884 at a rate of 10%, everything was changed. When a small merchant at Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture, who was probably forced to be a stockholder of this company, received the first dividend, he was extremely conspicuous and asked "is it really true that after the Meiji Restoration the money given to the government now had interest return?"[100] This dividend was not only a small but also a very real amount of money to this local merchant. It was a sign to all investors indicating a tremendous change of business environment, as well as the relationship between the state and *kazoku*, *shizoku* and merchants. It indicated that the credibility of the business of railway and the authority of the state were established. In other words, everyone knew the government really wished to have the railway built and those railway projects were guaranteed to be profitable by the state.

The railway fever started from the mid 1880s which was based on the speculation of these proliferating railway stocks, which dominated the emerging stock exchange market. Before this fever, between 1881 and 1883, many of the local small merchants sold their stocks of this company at hand. A share with a price of five yen could not keep the price at two yen, and at Iwate or Yamagata prefecture, they were given for free — people simply had zero confidence in the railway project.[101] However, after the first dividend distribution, a share, which was paid up for two installments of 10 yen, had a market price of 17 yen now, which made the office

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[98] Noda 1980: 54

[99] Hoshino provides us some figures. The number of stockholders was 134 in Tokyo, 49 in Saitama, 57 in Gunma, 88 in Ibaraki, 92 in Fukushima, 38 in Miyagi, 8 in Iwate and 14 in Aomori. For most of these investors, they bought only one or two shares. Hoshino 1971: 11-12

[100] Noda 1980: 63. Re-quoted from the words of the president of Nippon Railway at the time of 1888, and the words were appeared in this president's memorial, published at 1930.

[101] Noda 1980: 55-56

jammed with those people who only paid 1 yen of deposit money and escaped before; they now came back to ask for the shares. To most investors, the use of railway was proved not only in terms of the railway's profitability, but soon also in the potential of its speculative value in stock market.

Last but not least, after the success of the Nippon Railway, more stable relationships between the state, entrepreneurs and investors were forged. Trust was built between these emerging actors and was based upon more formalized rules in regulating the make-up of modern organizations, which gave them confidence in investing and speculating in the emerging stock market. After the Nippon Railway, the ways of organizing railway business based on private capital, the stock company model, the extensive governmental supervision and the new codes of business practice, were used in other major private railway company in the 1880s. In other words, different modern social actors like the state, enterprise, investors became more well-defined and the interest they were "representing" was more specified.

5   Fetishism of railway stocks in the late 1880s

"If you want money, buy railway stocks!" As suggested by a popular slogan *Tetsudo Narikin* (鐵道成金) in the late 1880s, railway stocks became a fashionable means of investment that made many investors wealthy.[102] The term "fetish" was originally used by Marx as a metaphor to describe the misplaced belief in exchangeable commodities representing social relationship and exchange.[103] The term "fetishism of railway stocks" used here refers to the constitution of the collective belief towards railway, in terms of stock investment and returns, among those newly evolved capitalists who actively invested money into the emerging stock markets hoping for short-term return. The new railway belief was actually constituted and guaranteed by the "possibility of free circulation of railway stocks."[104] Instead of the "use" of railway in transporting persons and goods or as a useful economic infrastructure in strengthening the nation, the belief towards railway was first constituted in terms of the stock exchange. To start with, then, one should first grasp the nature of the belief towards railway which was constituted and popularized among

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[102] Shimizu 1993: 51-52
[103] Balibar 2006; Osbirne 2006
[104] Noda 1980: 219

investors in the late 1880s.

Compared to the difficulties of the government to promote the railway in the 1870s and the early 1880s, the following frequently quoted words by Inoue Masaru well reflected the entirely new belief towards the railway in the late 1880s.

> In general, applicants [for private railroad construction] have contracted the railway disease, which has been epidemic of late, and are behaving as though they were afflicted by an outbreak of fever and were speaking deliriously.[105]

The so-called "railway disease," or a dramatic increase of the applications of railway construction licenses, was stimulated by the success of the Nippon Railway Company. The railway business was protected by the state with guaranteed dividends and both the railway and the state were now considered to be reliable in the mid-1880s. Moreover, inflation was under control and Matsukata's economic reform since 1881 brought deflation to the country. The drop in interest rate, the lack of means of investment, and the availability of hot money provided important backgrounds for the railway fever.[106] It was told that "from this time on railroad projects sprang up like mushrooms."[107] The flow of the capital into railway stock market via the new stock exchange certainly contributed to the constitution of this "railway fever."

The fetishism of railway stocks was not popping out from a vacuum. This belief was made possible only when reliable methods of capital raising, circulation and exchange were available. In the early ninetieth century of U.K, Karl Marx witnessed the birth of different social arrangements of capitalism, especially the stock market, in facilitating the railway construction.[108] With similar social settings, in the case of the late 1880s Japan, an emerging market of active railway stock exchange, or a social mechanism of the raising, holding and circulation of capital by means of this financial instrument, constituted the belief towards railway building.[109]

Different from the first booming of stock exchange from the late 1870s, in which transactions were dominated by shares of the stock exchange company itself, the so-called "era of railway stock" started from around 1884 onwards the early 1900s. With the success of Nippon Railway, railway stocks became the most important

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[105] Memorial from Railway Bureau Chief Inoue Masaru to Prime Minister Itô Hirobumi, March 15, 1887; Quoted from and translated by Ericson 1996: 97
[106] Ericson 1996: 115; Noda 1980: 97-108
[107] Ericson 1996: 115
[108] Quoted in Noda 1980: 48-49; see also the discussion by Swedberg (2000: 184) on Weber's views on stock exchange.
[109] Noda 1980: 79

means of investment and "those wealthy persons who only had an eye for profit relied on the speculations of stocks in the market instead of the yearly dividends [of the private railway companies]."[110]

All over the country, irrespective of the feasibility of the project and the financial background of the companies and organizers, people submitted applications for railway building and most of them were speculative in character. Within these newly established firms there were many major private railway companies in Western Honshû and Kyushû, yet many of these applications were a kind of shell corporation, targeting at soliciting capital in a short time but without any proper knowledge of railway construction and management. Inoue Masaru reported to the Prime Minister Itô Hirobumi that,

> Many of these applications... were merely fantasies which lacked any planning of construction at all. If any, the planned routes ignored geographical obstacles like mountains and rivers, and their financial budget, if any, did not consider these difficulties in construction work... Many of them wrongly thought that any railway construction could make a great profit... I wondered if these applicants were making profit for their own, or simply asking for the government to pay for guaranteed dividends...[111]

It is important to note that by calling all of these speculators "patients who did not think carefully" and saying that "their projects, without planning of construction and transportation or even survey would definitely fail," Inoue Masaru could assert its role in leading the expanding bureaucracy to forge a state-led railway policy. Inoue's observation was true, even though his analysis was part of the justification to propose to the central government that, instead of private companies, the state, which meant the Railway Bureau that he represented, should take charge of the railway construction and management.

Nevertheless, the railway fever based on the belief towards the profitability of stock exchange was true. Between 1886 and 1889, it was told that people "used the name of constructing railway to start stock company but many of them simply wanted to gain huge profit by speculative measures."[112] Although all railway construction required permission from the state and Inoue complained that many of the applications of railway firms were merely shell companies, the name of railway business became literally a fever for capitalists who were finding ways to invest

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[110] Noda 1980: 66
[111] Harada 1965: 35-41; Ericson 1996: 120-121
[112] Noda 1980: 74

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money and to find fortunes in the stock exchange.

For example, the famous case of Ryômô Railway, a small stock company in Tochigi Prefecture, attracted active trade of its premium stocks (*kenrikabu*):

> The prospering economic condition attracted many non-local investors... to the extent that many local merchants could not buy... Many of these investors made every effort to buy up most of the shares from the local merchants before the company was given its licenses, and these stocks were now appreciated... We heard that Kyushu Railway was in the same situation, it sounded like this was now a world of railway. (Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun 23rd December 1886)[113]

The trading of these shares, which was highly speculative in nature, made the highest price reaching 50 or even 60 yens, which were originally worth 50 cents.

One major characteristic was that most investors held railway shares often for short-term gain. Stock exchange at the time was even called "official casino," in which most of the transactions were speculative.[114] Noda gave us a ratio of the numbers of traded railway shares over actual number of railway shares in the market, showing that the transaction of shares were about five and nine times more than the total number of shares available in the market in 1888 and 1889 respectively.[115] Shares of big private railway firms like Nippon Railway in Northeast Honshû and Sanyô Railway in West Honshû were notably not major targets of capital investment, but those medium and small firms' shares dominated most of the transactions.

Speculative transactions were encouraged by institutional measures. Railway companies tried hard in soliciting capital for laying tracks — even if they really aimed at constructing and operating a railway business — by providing installment-payment system, supported by stock-collateral lending of commercial banks for investors.[116] In Ericson's succinct descriptions,

> Prior to the implementation of the Commercial Code in 1893, there were no legal regulations concerning the proportion of the par value of corporate shares that subscribers had to pay up at the time of a company's establishment, and fairly lenient requirements thereafter. As a result, until the practice was legally abolished in 1948, almost all joint-stock enterprises, including railroad concerns, used an installment system for the payment of subscribed stock whereby shareholders would initially pay up only a portion of the par value of their shares, gradually paying up the rest as the business developed.[117]

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[113] Re-quoted from Noda 1980: 68
[114] Noda 1980: 249
[115] Noda 1980: 238-239
[116] Translation was Ericson's, quoted from 1996: 123-124.
[117] Ericson 1996: 123

These practices were quite similar to the trading of margins or even warrants in today's world. Stock prices were fluctuating which made the chances for gain — and loss as well — greater, especially at the time of the late 1890s when legal and institutional restrictions on financial market were yet to be developed and enforced. Indeed, the good days for making fortunes in the newly established institution of stock exchange were short.

The description here may convey a sense that railway became a fantasy through speculative bubbles instead of the real business of laying tracks and managing rolling stocks. Yet in assessing the nature and the evolution of the belief towards railway, we can see that before it was considered widely by the public to be economically worthwhile for the nation, it was first the constitution of this good faith towards the profitability of railway building among investors that made it important. It was the first time that the social relation of trust towards a business could be actively transformed into shares in an emerging modern institution of stock exchange; railway building made these new practices possible. If there was anything that enchanted the belief of the railway, it was the power of capital, or simply, capitalism. Railway building was an engine of capitalism, indeed, in a sense that it made high finance feasible. It is of utmost importance to point out that the belief towards the railway was first manifested in the vision and prospect it brought about under the *name* of railway building. Yet if it was merely a promise supported by a fetish of the railway stock, it risked also the disenchantment of the belief towards railway made up by good faith only. When the confidence towards railway building fluctuated like its stock prices, there were real consequences that halted the construction plan and policies of the state. The forthcoming financial crisis in the 1890s could then be seen as an active dialogue between the state and the capitalists to re-install the challenged faith towards capitalism under the name of railway building.

Section Four A railroaded nation and the nationalized railway (1890-1906)

The decade-long public discussion on the nature of railway building in the 1890s was induced by the first crisis of capitalism. The sudden drop of the values of railway stocks between 1889 and 1891 created a widespread panic in the financial market. Railway stock prices continued to fluctuate from 1891 to 1905, and the problem of railway nationalization was intimately related to this financial crisis.[118]

To say that the problem was economically induced does not mean that the approach employed here is necessarily a Marxist one, although for postwar Japanese Marxist scholars, railway history in this period once served as the most important case to explain the rise of militarism and fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. As suggested by the title of Ôshima's book "Historical Development of the National Railways as a Form of State Monopoly of Capital (國家独占資本としての國有鉄道の史的發展),"[119] postwar Japanese Marxist historians argued that the nationalization of railway in 1906 was an important event that the state concentrated and monopolized the important means of circulation of capital. As will be shown in this section, the problematization of railway from the 1890s to the early 1900s was actually a historical process of how the state, investors, and other emerging social groups tackled with the crisis of capitalism, specifically, the institutionalization of different measures in controlling the arenas of high finance.[120]

This Marxist approach is valid to some extent, indeed, as it points out that the key is about the high finance behind the decade long debate of the nationalization of railway.[121] Yet it ignores the most important aspect of how different claims and views were made in order to justify different parties' agenda. It also fails to locate the reasons why people would heavily emphasize the use of railway in articulating their

[118] The heroic work by the historian Ericson (1996), nearly four hundreds pages of detailed account of the process of nationalization of railway, is of ultimate importance to the current research. For the general discussions on the problem of the nationalization of railway, see also Uda (1976) and Sakurai (1978).

[119] Ôshima 1949; translation of the book title was Ericson's (1996: 479).

[120] This approach was somewhat abandoned when Marxist theories lost its legitimacy from the 1980s, to be replaced by an empiricist approach to local railway history which emphasized the role of railway in helping the success of modernization of Japan. See also Oikawa's review article (2005).

[121] See Oikawa (2005) for a very good theoretical review and genealogy of Marxist scholars' interpretations on the problem of nationalization of railway, including discussions on important works by Shima (1950), Tominaga (1953), Nakanishi (1963), Harada (1965), Hoshino (1979; 1981; 1982). Notwithstanding the theoretical fallacy of historicism common to Marxist theory, many of these works were still valid to the current discussion on how the problem of nationalization of railways was fundamentally about the issues on how financial capital could be effectively controlled.

arguments on matters which were quite irrelevant to the railway. Different claims concerning the "national and public interest" of railway were constructed, defined and formulated into a discourse of the nature and use of the railway to the country, resulting in the institutionalization of the belief towards railway building which in itself evolved into a manifestation of the nation.

This section attempts to analyze why and how a problem of high finance and capitalism would be articulated and changed into a discussion on the purpose of the railway building. It explains why arguments found in the debate were extensively and strategically referring to various foreign experiences to support or refute the nationalization of railway. The research locates different emerging groups of people — in this section, capitalists in particular — who tried to make claims about the nature of railway building in order to justify why the state should or should not buy up the private railway companies.

1   The burst of railway stock bubbles and its consequences

The whole issue of the nationalization of railway was triggered by the collapse of the stock market in 1890. When the prices of most railway stocks dropped dramatically, a nation-wide panic spread among investors, and soon merchants, bankers and entrepreneurs. It was then followed by different groups of people including different sections within the government, diet members, journalists, and localities who actively participated in the discussion, for various objectives, of whether the state should buy up private railway firms.

One may first simply consider the figures of the compositions of types of industries in stocks transactions and quotations for some railway shares in the early 1890s. Noda (1980: 234) identifies that railway stocks were the major components in the stock exchange between 1884 (84.3% of total stock transactions) and 1890 (61.7%), and continued to be so until 1906 (43%), when the government bought out most of the railway shares available in the stock market.

From Table 2.1, one can get a sense of the impact brought by the sudden drop of stock prices. Indeed, prices of major railway companies dropped below their paid-up values for nearly 20 percent.[122] It is not difficult to imagine that it struck hard to the

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[122] Ericson 1996: 129

core of the financial market, when most of the early capitalists had held some railway shares.

	Tokyo Stock Exchange				
Year	Nippon 1st Issue	Chikuhō Industrial	Ryômô	Kôbu	Sanuki
1888	90.0 (50)	---	80.9 (100)	87.6 (75)	78.0 (65)
1889	---	25.9 (10)	47.8 (50)	107.5 (85)	69.9 (65)
1890	88.3 (50)	21.0 (25)	45.5 (50)	54.5 (45)	28.0 (50)
1891	---	---	42.5 (50)	---	30.2 (50)
1892	---	---	52.6 (50)	71.4 (45)	37.8 (50)
1893	102.5 (50)	55.7 (50)	81.2 (50)	108.1 (45)	47.9 (50)
1894	94.8 (50)	74.8 (50)	70.6 (50)	106.0 (45)	52.6 (50)

Figure 2.1   Average Annual Quotations for selected railway shares in Tokyo Stock Exchange, 1888-1894 (unit: yen)

Note: Figures in parentheses represent paid-up values.[123]

Ericson nicely summarized some of the reasons to explain the origin of the first economic crisis in the modern sense in Japan. In order to solicit capital in a more effective way, private railway companies provided installment-payment system to allow subscribers of shares to pay up a portion of the par value of price. Another measure of stock-collateral lending allowed commercial banks to lend money to stockholders on the security of the paid-up portion of their shares.[124] The fundamental problem, however, was "a proliferation of joint-stock ventures, many of them unstable or purely speculative."

> In the absence of legal provisions governing the ratio of subscribed capital that a newly established firm had to raise forthwith, the installment method of stock payment allowed companies to be set up with only a fraction of their stock actually paid up... Furthermore, payment by installment and borrowing on shares made it possible for investors to oversubscribe to newly issued stock in terms of

[123] The table was quoted from Ericson 1996: 133
[124] Ericson 1996: 123

their personal resources. Such overextended holding was masked so long as the boom continued, but any significant decline in stock prices had the potential for disrupting the supply of share capital to corporations by causing banks to balk at making further loans on shares and stockholders to default on their payments.[125]

Indeed, according to Tominaga's estimation, about 57 million yen were invested into the railway business from 1889 to 1890, in which 54 million were un-paid but subscribed stocks.[126] These stocks were collateralized to the banks for further loans and it made the speculative bubbles expanded.

One point that should be emphasized to explain the burst of the bubble is the concern of inflation. At 1889, poor harvest caused an increase in the rice price, which was also a sign of inflation. What made the Meiji state a modern government was its ability to control inflation. The Matsukata Deflation since 1881 could be seen as the first sign of the Meiji government being capable of controlling inflation. When the sign of inflation reappeared and continued to be so since the 1889, both the state and capitalists were very nervous to seek ways to tackle with it.

Followed by the rise of prices, there were heightening demand for share capital and the tightening of money supply in 1889. Banks in Japan decided to increase interest rate, which was a fatal decision that caused a dramatic decline in stock prices and hence the first experience of economic crisis in Japan.[127]

> That, in turn, prompted banks to stop lending on the security of shares or to insist on more collateral... As early as July 4, 1889... newspaper reported a sudden increase in stock payments and a suspension of stock-collateral lending by banks "fearful lest a panic should break out among the public." These trends intensified at the very close of the year, setting off the dreaded crisis with a panic on the Tokyo stock exchange in early January 1890. Stock prices plummeted. By increasingly refusing to make loans on shares, banks simply added to the financial stringency and the rise in interest rates further depressed stock prices.[128]

Our concern, however, was who suffered the most, and what the political and social consequences were brought by this financial crisis. Although major railway firms did suffer from the shortage of capital which halted the expansion and construction of railway lines, most of them did survive because of the full support from government subsidies. However, as the railway shares were integral to the arenas of high finance, the ones who suffered the most were bankers, entrepreneurs, investors and

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[125] Ericson 1996: 124.
[126] Tominaga 1953: 167-168
[127] Hoshino 1980: 122-128
[128] Ericson 1996: 126

shareholders of the railway companies, who held rapidly devalued railway shares and bad debts. They were the first group of claims-makers to ask for relief from the government and to initiate the discussion on the nationalization of railway.

The problem was fundamentally a financial one, but the discussion became a seemingly unrelated issue about the use of the railway. On the one hand, investors asked for the government relief to private railway companies. In order to save the market and their interests, they made claims on the "publicity" of railway in serving the "national interest" in order to request the state to respond to the financial crisis. On the other hand, the suspension of construction works caused by the economic crisis undoubtedly attracted the government's concern, because as far as the state was concerned, the most important or the only concern was the completion of the railway networks. The situation provided good excuses for the expanding bureaucracy to make claims to justify the need for the nationalization of railway, as exemplified in the Chief of Railway Bureau Inoue Masaru's *Railway Policy Proposal*. Furthermore, the military bureaucrats, the politicians in the newly established diet and the localities were also important emerging interest parties who actively articulated claims to participate in the discussion and to define their role as to "represent interest" of a particular local group in the nation-state. In short, it was originally a financial crisis which made investors urging for the governmental relief, yet this economic problem was soon transformed into an issue questioning the national agenda of railway policy, giving shape to a discourse on the "publicity" of railway and the "national interest manifested" in this institution.

2   Articulating claims on the usefulness of railway

Railway is perhaps really useful, but in what ways people came to realize, experience and start talking about its usefulness is an entirely different issue of interest. The powerfulness of railway was not conceptualized by any concrete languages before. The state simply believed in railway because most of the civilized country did. For merchants, the belief of railway building was constituted in terms of its profitability, and this dream was busted with the speculative bubbles. In the following, I will critically analyze the most important aspect in the institutional process, the problematization of an issue — a common topic for many to collectively discuss about the existence of an institution — and the forming of discourse —

concepts, languages and theories that described the function and the purpose for an institution.

From the very beginning, some investors organized themselves to urge the chambers of commerce in Osaka and Tokyo to petition to the government.[129] Petitioners were mainly shareholders, including, broadly speaking, bankers and brokers in Tokyo and Osaka, members in local chambers of commerce, cities assemblies, merchant groups, and even the Tokyo City Firefighters' Union.[130] The concern here is how a problem of financial crisis, mainly affecting a small group of capitalists, was articulated to be a national problem on what railway should serve.[131] One can identify the making of similar claims on the "publicity" of railway building that had already existed in the 1880s before the crisis.

> Railway business… became a fashion…but people did not talk about it in terms of profit, instead they said a place without railway business was a shame… It was blatant for them to say that railway business was not about profit but for civilization and development.[132]

The investors were obviously wise enough to frame their business practices in ideological languages which sounded politically correct and commonly acceptable. A civilian who was a railway engineer in 1892 opposing the nationalization claimed that,

> [People were] afraid of the unfortunate situation of contemporary economy and society. Yet instead of examining closely on the development of private railway, they transformed the debate into [the discussion on the] expansion of the state railway, resulting in an embarrassed situation … in which [arguments] were turned upside down.[133]

The author in the above quotation said that the "arguments were turned upside down" and pointed out that how clever, or unfortunate, for these investors who articulated the problems of their own as a public issue. A liberal economist Taguchi, the founder of the Ryômô Railway, called the debate "a nationalization thesis made by stock speculators." Objections appeared in the newspaper charging that those "rationales like railway serving for military purpose were deliberately made by these cunning and

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[129] Historical details of the organizing process of these investors could be found in Ericson 1996: 153-160.
[130] Harada 1965: 25-26; Ericson 1996: 154
[131] This was an important aspect and linkage that past scholars tend to overlook.
[132] Noda 1980: 65-66; Tominaga 1953: 168
[133] Quoted from Tominaga 1953: 171; also in Noda et al. 1988b

113

deceitful men."[134] These investors definitely did not ask for the government relief in terms of "investors' profit," but they articulated their claims in terms of the "public and national nature" of railway in favor of their arguments. In other words, motives of their actions, like the interest and power involved, if any, were carefully sealed and camouflaged underneath their claims in the discussion.

As far as we are concerned, it is intriguing to see how a financial crisis was possibly appropriated and framed to be a political discussion, in which different concepts as well as rationales concerning the nature and importance of railway building could be defined, contested and appropriated by various groups of people. The discussions and debates on what the railway should serve mystified the original economic problem while at the same time gave birth to those claims that constituted the existence and usefulness of the railway building.

3 The making and elaboration of institutional myths on railway building

The following section outlines some major characteristics of the discourse constituted in 1890 and 1891. It will be too long to discuss in detail a 15-year long debate here and I try to simplify the discussion by highlighting three aspects of the institutionalization process.[135] It depicts (1) how the people argued about the use of railway building (like serving for the military purpose), (2) how the claim-makers tried to prove the existence of railway building as an "institution" (*seido* 制度) by referring to various foreign experiences, and (3) how they claimed that there was a universal law common to all countries governing the nature of railway building for the "publicity" and "national interest." The following section thus delineates how the use of railway was extensively formulated in terms of the "public interest," when different people could talk about an issue, refer to the foreign cases, define the concepts, and frame their actions in conceptual languages.[136]

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[134] Quoted in Noda et al. (eds.) [1893] 1988: 304.

[135] To take another example of Ericson's work, he analyzes the political process and the dynamism between the public and private groups. He pays attention to the roles of different social groups, including the railway bureau, investors, the cabinet, the diet, and the army in forging a consensus which led to the making of the Railway Construction Law in 1892. See also Matsushita (2004), Nakamura (1998), Oikawa (2008) for a similar approach. While recognizing and employing many of these historical findings, the current sociological research avoids detailed description of the political process and, to some extent, economic situations, which were considerably investigated by scholars.

[136] Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a: 1988b; 1988c; 1988d; 1988e

(a) Arguing the military purpose of railway building

Should the state buy up the private railways? Many of the opinions, no matter supporting the nationalization of railway or not, referred first to the military purposes of railway. In other words, "military purpose" might be the first function of the railway defined in the debate. For example, the opinion letter by the Osaka Chamber of Commerce referred to the military purpose of railway as "a viewpoint that everyone in the nation should consider."[137] The investors or their sympathizers tended to highlight the disadvantages of the private railway companies in military transport. It was told that when there was an urgent situation for the country, railways could be critical that "within a moment soldiers and supplies could be transported" and "it was a common sense among military specialists in Europe that all railways should be bought up by the state and be state-owned."[138] Curiously enough, those who opposed the thesis referred to "Japan's own situation that those reasons referring to the military purposes were not attractive."[139] A commentary said that "unlike the European Continental countries Japan was an island country, so that transportation for military purposes should resemble the UK where private companies were enough."[140]

To know why these claims on the military purpose of railway were widely employed as legitimate claims in the discourse, one should first consider why the army wished to assert its role in the government to have a say in the decision making process of the railway construction. Besides the investors of railway stocks, depending on one's point of reference, one could arguably identify that the army was also another agent who made the debate on nationalization hot.[141] The military officials published a memo called "On Railway" in 1889 and it was considered to be a work produced by the army in response to the Bureau of Railway's demand of enforcing a state-led railway policy.[142]

The memo could be treated as a product of compromise between the Railway

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[137] Original documents were appeared in 1891 and edited by Kotani (ed.) 1892: 58, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a: 58.

[138] Kotani (ed.) 1892: 121, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

[139] Kotani (ed.) 1892: 309, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

[140] Kotani (ed.) 1892: 294, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

[141] Indeed, the collected work of "Opinions on railway" started with the army's position paper of "On Railway." See Harada 1965.

[142] In general, this work was considered to be a turning point of the military's position, shifting from supporting private companies to favoring the state to construct railway. The military was convinced by the Bureau of Railway that even though the state could save money for military expenses by allowing private investors to construct railway, they found difficulties to have a national standard among different companies, which might be an obstacles for the army to transport troops if necessary. See discussion by Harada 1965; Ericson 1996: 197-206.

Bureau and the army to have a unified policy standing of the government, but it was somewhat like a technical manual of the railway construction in order to meet the army's requirements. It stated clearly at the very beginning the use of railway for transporting troops and supplies by referring to some cases of European countries. Views and claims in this work supported for a stronger role of the state in enforcing a standard code of rules and restrictions of management among diverse private railway firms. But very soon the people who were engaged in the debate found it highly convenient to employ this military argument irrespective of their diverse claims and positions. In reality, however, the army was primarily concerned about some technical measures to ensure that their priority needs of railway transportation could be satisfied in case of military emergency.

The claim of the military use of railway was possibly the first and the most important one, and this claim remained legitimate for a long time until Japan lost its war in1945; after that, as we will see in the next chapter, the railway became something serving the "world humanity." This is not surprising if we consider the fact that the Meiji government extensively made claims on the possibility of foreign intrusion, and that war was still a very realistic concern for many, especially during the 1880s and 1890s. When the investors asked for government relief, almost all of the arguments referred to the ultimate importance of the railway in transporting troops and supplies — even though, from the viewpoint of military officers, these claims were merely excuses lacking any realistic measures. The point, however, was that it became necessary for one to agree with and object to any policies about the railway by referring to its military use. In other words, railway became useful, literally, when the capitalists framed their actions by making claims on the "military purposes" which constituted the essence of "national interest."

(b) Proving the existence of railway institution by referring to foreign experiences

The second characteristic of the making of the myths of railway building in the 1891 was the extensive yet selective references to the foreign experiences in order to argue that railway was an institution common to all civilized country. Almost without exception, one can find arguments that were strategically formulated by stating those cases of railway building in the foreign countries.

Instead of direct borrowing, however, the foreign cases were referred to carefully by those claims-makers according to their hidden agenda. For example, there were

two important booklets called "On Railway" and "On Railway Policies", written by Shimomura Fusajirô, who was a bureaucrat and a teacher in a college of transportation and communication, arguing for the nationalization of the railway.[143] His works were virtually an introduction to the different policies and theories of railway appeared in the western world. It included discussions on different scholars and theories from different countries in origin. The author argued at the start that,

> Mail service and telegraph were the medium of spiritual transportation between people, while railway was the physical one... They improved the economic life for each person, and eliminated the obstacle of time... These were the fundamental benefits underlying the transportation infrastructure. Because of that, all civilized countries should have these structures... Now the countries and their people were united by means of the transportation in the world, which would develop further. The order (秩序) concerning the infrastructure [of transportation] resembled the nature (性質) of international law. Because of that, these infrastructures should be exclusively owned by the state.[144]

This quotation sounds somewhat difficult for contemporary readers to comprehend and one may find these mythical interpretations unimportant. Yet it clearly indicated the logic and ways of how one could make some legitimate arguments. To rephrase the quotation, the authors meant that, as the transportation linked people and it became common in many countries, so railway policies, like international law, should also be governed by a "universal law."

> According to a Belgium scholar, the theory governing the transportation... was universal; in many countries in the world (萬国) railway became a common institution (制度), constituting the society as an organic whole.[145]

To prove why railway was an institution governed by a "common law," the author then referred to a treaty signed by France, Germany, Italy and others countries, except the America, with a conclusion that railway should be owned by the state.[146]

In order to support his argument, he asserted that "the institution" (制度) of railway had a "essential nature" (固有性質). He was playing a trick that it was his assertion of saying railway was a common institution for many and it *should* have a

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[143] Reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988c
[144] Shimomura 1891: 9, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988c
[145] Shimomura 1891: 10, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988c
[146] One may find the author's ways of describing different countries' transportation like that in the work by a contemporary sociologist Frank Dobbin, who concluded that there are distinct political cultures as an institutional construct in three countries that shape these countries' railway building policies; See chapter One.

universal principle which could be gained by comparison. It is why he introduced different international experiences to his readers — he tried to convince his readers that railway should be an institution, as seen from the cases in different countries, and there should be one underlying rule governing the operation of the railway.

So what was the "rule" of this "institution"? The author accounted for the difference of the railway policies among western countries, especially the disadvantages of applying market principle in the case of America, in arguing that "even though there would be resistance and variations, like different situations in America and the U.K.",[147] "concerning the nature of the institution of transportation, they should be monopolized by the state as the first principle of the country."[148]

It is important to note how the author could convince his readers about the existence of an institution by the selective use and comparison of foreign experiences in articulating an argument to support his conclusion. Given the origin of this technology, it was indeed quite natural for the people to look at some facts at the outside world. The intriguing point is, however, the diverse cases and argumentative implications derived by different commentators.

The above piece of work is only a single case among hundreds of commentaries, but it is important if we consider the fact that the way of arguments as put forward by this scholar became exemplary for his contemporaries to write commentaries. Indeed, by reading these documents in 1891, one could possibly know the railway policies over the world, including an interesting account of Thailand that an author said "Thailand people have wide-gauzed tracks and Japan is bad on this."[149] For those who opposed the nationalization thesis would also argue on the same ground that "the issue on the pros and cons of buying up private railways... was also a big problem in the world, but it did not yet have a proper academic theory widely accepted."[150] Commentators would say that by assessing the validity of these cases they "found" that it was better for the state not to buy up railways. Most of the commentaries in the 1891 debating on nationalization were written in similar fashion, and this was one major characteristic of the nationalization debate that scholars tended to ignore.

Given the diverse cases, however, all commentators tried to argue from the ground that there was some sort of "nature" of the railway that one should follow.

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[147] Shimomura 1891: 12-13, 29, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988c
[148] Shimomura 1891: 27, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988c
[149] Kotani ed. 1892: 136, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a
[150] Kotani ed. 1892: 274, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

Only by comparing between cases, one could derive some "universal rules." One major feature of making institutional myths is the extensive discussion and selective appropriation of foreign experiences, and to argue that there would be some sort of nature and rules governing the institution — a point that those commentators never explained about why this would be the case. In other words, referring to outside authoritative cases is a part of the process to assert the railway building as an institution that was worthwhile to discuss about.

Contrary to the common conceptions of Meiji Japanese who were "copycats" of foreign institutions, commentators at the time were not "copying". If one tried to argue for nationalization, he referred to France and Prussia; if one tried to oppose, he referred to the America and the U.K. Notwithstanding the totally different conclusions they had come up with, they all argued in a same fashion by referring to these foreign experiences. Then, they would say that according to the nature of railway — a case he selectively referred to — one should or should not nationalize the railways.

An "institution" was then definitely an intellectual construct; the term itself was also a translated concept from the outside world. But this was curiously an interesting meta-theoretical concept. People came to realize the railway as something discussable, when they tried to argue something that ones should also discuss about. When these commentators once asserted its existence by referring to something as an "institution" through comparison, it did become an institution.

(c)   Asserting the nature of railway building for public and national interest

So what is the nature of the institution of railway building? After asserting the military purposes of railway and referring to the foreign experiences, commentators, who were mostly investors, ironically tried to make their claims based on the ground of the "public interest" (公衆利益) and "national interest"(國家利益) of the railway. This is the most important aspect of the making of institutional myth on the use of railway.

To take an example of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce who urged the state to buy up railways in 1891, it was possibly the first commentary made by an official body, and we can see how a crisis among investors was framed to be a "public" problem.

> Many of the comments in the debate on the issue were made by scholars and their discussions were abstract; we were entrepreneurs and should also discuss

the issue from an economic perspective... Railway should be state-owned because of its nature... Transportation was the nature of people, who lived together and did not separate from others, and this was the origin of human society... It was why transportation was fundamental for people to communicate... According to an Austrian scholar called "zakkusu," transportation should serve the community (共同体) and it should not be run for private profits... Some had referred to the case of England where the railway firms were run by private firms... but they ignored the fact that it was because they had no experience from the start and they followed an old habit until then. It was an exception...

Railway building involved huge capital, and it tended to be monopolized by individuals if competition is eliminated. For the needs of public civilians (公衆人民), if the railway could be monopolized by the public then it would serve the welfare of the general. According to Mill, who hated private monopoly very much, in general principle business should be done by companies, but it did not mean that the government should not supervise... If the nature of a particular business belonged to some sort of monopoly, like water and gas supply... these companies were responsible to civilians (人民); the public (公衆) could complain if companies have faults... and the government should interfere... In the case of railway companies, if they increased fares and monopolized the business, the people's freedom (自由) was constricted... Then, to let the railways run by private companies was a violation of the nature of railway, and it sacrificed the public's interest for the benefits of a small numbers of individuals. If we could observe the original nature of railway carefully then we can understand the reasons of nationalization.[151]

One should bear in mind that the ones who drafted and used these similar arguments were those who suffered the most from the economic crisis. It was clear that many of these claim-makers who were investors of railway stocks borrowed from the argument made by the state earlier. Some of their phrases and arguments were borrowed from the Bureau Chief Inoue's proposal written earlier. For example, Inoue wrote that, "by nature, like the postal service and the telegraphy, providing service above all to the general public represented, so to speak, the pulse of nation."[152]

They definitely did not directly state their aim, but instead they argued in terms of the public and national interests, or for the sake of people, by explaining about the "nature of railway." Indeed, these concepts were intellectual constructs appropriated from the state, and those investors who wished that the state could purchase their devalued shares used the languages and concepts made by the state and turned it to

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[151] Kotani ed. 1892: 55-57, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a
[152] Translation was from Ericson 1996: 198-199

120

their favors.[153]

Later, a newspaper commentary, after discussing the military use of railway and comparing some foreign cases, argued that,

> Railway was a business of the people and it needed the government's help to protect... We should clarify the essence of the publicity and the national properties of railway, so that we could prevent the monopolies of railway operation by those private companies and we should be clear about the cause of the speculative measures... The management of railway was a long-term planning of the country as well as for the prosperity of the people, but... the country let the private firms to construct railway. It was the government, for the sake of our nation, that allowed the firms to construct railway, and then railway became the tools of the national and the public, not the vice versa.[154]

We had seen that when the government tried to ask the merchants to invest into the unknown business in the last section, the argument was indeed exactly put in "vice versa." A commentary who opposed the nationalization made this clear:

> Because of the economic situations some years ago, the Meiji government favored private railways... [Yet] today people asked for nationalization of the railway (國有主義) and it violated everything in the past. Perhaps it would then change again... We should avoid this bad habit that we always changed our attitudes.[155]

When the state wanted to construct railways in order to glue the *kazoku* and *shizoku* into a new capitalist class as a political alliance, it claimed that the government favored private railways. For those who had gained some fortunes in stock investments, they claimed it was also for the sake of the people's welfare. When the stock went down, it became the responsibility of the state again; when the stock market recovered again, the same groups of people would again turn the argument upside-down by redefining what "public" or "national interest" were, changing the meanings of "the nature of railway" and referring to new sets of "foreign cases" if deemed appropriate.[156] These concepts were clearly intellectual constructs that were appropriated and redefined in the process.

People were not stupid and they knew that these speeches were mostly a gesture to make sure that the government would continue to support the market if necessary.

Many comments referred to those popular theories in the European continent

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[153] As Habermas illustrated in his work (1989), "society" or "public" may also be similar kinds of concepts invented by bourgeoisie.

[154] Kotani ed. 1892: 144-145, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

[155] Kotani ed. 1892: 233, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

[156] Morgan 1988

which might not be applicable to our country... [Railway policy in] our country however resembled the U.K. simply because it fitted our special situation... Railway policy should not be planned to serve those speculative gamblers who merely made fortunes in the stock market... The fluctuation in stock prices suddenly made them painful and the current discussion on the matter of nationalizations was simply their groaning... Shareholders of the railway companies were only a small proportion of the population, why should the civilians in the whole nation sacrifice for them? ... Whatever the reasons or excuses they used we should not put more burdens to our people... The atmosphere brought by their discussion was made in the hope that the rumor could bring positive news to the stock market.[157]

If the people who supported the nationalization defined that the nature of railway possessed "qualities of public and national interest," people who objected to this could also argue in the same way by defining the public interest as "the principle of the market."

> I should argue that according to the nature of railway it should not be owned by the state. Prussia government bought up the railways in 1876 and many people referred to this case... However, railway was a kind of real-estate... which should be owned by the civilian capitalists... railway stocks were exchanging commodities and if they were bought up by the state, the market would lose an important means of exchange, making obstacles for the financial market as well as the commerce of the society... Railway could increase the value of the land and population, that was why the railway served the public interest, and it was the objective and the spirit of it... Comparing the cases between Prussia and U.K.... we knew the pros and cons of nationalization. I expressed my view of objecting to the government's spending great sum of circulating money to buy up the railway. However I suggested that the government should have a better supervision on the railway management, and promised guaranteed profits for the railway stockholders...[158]

Curiously enough, in the debate, both the investors and entrepreneurs claimed that the private railways could not serve the public good and asked for the nationalization of their devalued shares, while those people who objected to these capitalists claimed that the market should be respected and the state should not intrude into private arenas which were truly a manifestation of "publicity."

The debate cooled down temporarily when the Sino-Japanese war broke out during 1894 and 1895. After the war, however, the same groups of investors and representatives of the chamber of commerce asked for the selling off of the state railway to the entrepreneurs when the economy and stock prices were boosted up

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[157] Kotani ed. 1892: 293-298, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a
[158] Kotani ed. 1892: 281-289, reprinted in Noda et al. (eds.) 1988a

122

again. Then, when the economy plummeted in the years of the Russo-Japanese war during 1905 and 1906, arguments were "again and again," as expressed by the commentators at the time, "turned upside-down."

4   Consequences of the debate

There was no winning or losing of the debate, but the social consequences of these discussions on the newspaper and in the diet were instant. Even though the diet members finally rejected the proposal of the nationalization submitted by the Bureau of Railway in 1891, the rumors of the buying up of private railways made the stock prices recovered quickly.[159] The government, investors and politicians clearly knew that the final goal was not necessarily the nationalization of railway, but the capitalists' speeches, activities and gestures of petitioning were an intended act to stimulate the market.[160] Without going into much of the historical details, I pinpoint just a few major characteristics.

First, concepts like public or national interest were redefined and appropriated to be a popularized intellectual constructs in common use. It sounded intriguing that, by the strategic use of referencing to the cases in the Europe or in the world, "the nature of railway" and the definition of "national interest" shifted between "market" and "state," "public" and "private" over and over again. People either agreed with or objected to the nationalization, and charged that the opposing party's arguments were made because of the "private self-interest" while their own were made for the sake of the "public" and the "nation." These concepts were intellectual constructs. They were contested and redefined according to their preferences, but the common use of these constructed words and concepts gave shape to a unified discourse on what the railway should serve and what qualified as a legitimate nation or policy.

Second, it is important to note that a common issue of railway building was made, in which different parties came in to use shared languages to discuss about. A scholar

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[159] Noda 1980: 253. It is another story to be explored in the next chapter of how railway construction became a means to solicit votes from localities by politicians. For the detailed political process and the historical backgrounds of the role of the government and the newly established diet, see Ericson 1996; Matsushita 2004.

[160] All of the historical stories were too long to tell here, as the debate continued for another fifteen years, and, if one prefers to take a long-duree perspective, similar concepts and logic of discussions were employed again in the 1970s and 1980s when the state, because of another political reason, wanted to privatize the National Railway by arguing "the economic efficiency according to market principle".

investigated into the history of the nationalization of railway, who reviewed some thousands pages of discussions, and concluded that "having some variations of styles of presentations, different camps who either agreed with or rejected to the nationalization were all using similar arguments, and I could not find any characteristic worth mentioning."[161] The most significant point was exactly the evolution of these "same styles of arguments and concepts" employed in the debate. Notwithstanding different concerns among diverse social groups, concepts of the "public and national interest" proliferated and were manipulated widely. After the nationalization of railways, they settled down the meanings of the "national and public interest," which were "manifested in the nature of railway".

Third, by that time everyone understood that railway building was important, and they could well express for whom the railway should serve. The problem shifted away from why railway should be built to how railway should be constructed to fit whose needs. Here, one can refer to Carol Gluck's important work *Japan's Modern Myth* which well illustrates how the ideological languages defining what a "nation" was proliferated in the late Meiji period. Gluck argues that the state and its ideologies did not politically shape people's mind in one direction. The contents of ideologies were not very important; ideologies worked when "socio-linguistic transitions in common life and speech" was possible and a "universe of ideological discourse" could be shared.[162] Saying that the railways served as "engines of civilizations",[163] for example, was a clear example of how people articulated their courses of action and interests, like gaining profits from railway stocks, in languages available in the society. These languages proliferated when people tried to argue about what the nature of railway was, even though they were actually dealing with the problems of high finance, soliciting votes from localities, or strengthening their political power in the process.

In other words, the belief towards the "function" of railway building was strengthened in this period, when different people were using similar words and concepts to frame their "needs" and "interest" to participate in the discussion of a common topic. Only when the discourse on what railway building should serve was formed, in which everyone discussed and talked about it, the railway, as a

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[161] Tominaga 1940, quoted in Noda 1988: 3-4.
[162] Gluck 1985: 247-249
[163] Gluck 1985: 261

commentator expressed well at the time, became "an institution unifying the society as an organic whole." Perhaps it was an unintended consequence of the debate that, on the one hand, people created concepts and languages that argued and defined what national interest was all about, or what the boundary between public and private should be drawn. On the other hand, they made up some languages describing the use railway as a collective belief. From then on, railway building was indeed an institution, but it did not exist as a given objective reality governed by hidden universal laws. It was collectively argued and defined to be so. Once its existence was asserted by comparison and claim-making, an institution was *discoursed* to become a social reality with some underlying "essence" which could seemingly be located by some "objective methods."

5 Epilogue: dissolving the problem of capitalism, nationalizing the railway

Between 1890 and 1905, railway was a major concern for many. The reasons were however not necessarily because people were interested in the use of railway. Japanese Marxist scholars were right on one essential point that railway building in the late Meiji period became a national issue because the state and capitalists were trying hard to deal with the problem of high finance. The 15-year long debate and discussion of the railway building could be interpreted as a continuous negotiation between the state and the capitalists on the problem of capitalism. In 1902, Ôkuma Shigenobu observed that,

> The question of railways had become a kind of economical barometer; when times were bad the public wanted the Treasury to buy up the private lines, and when times were good the clamour was for the Treasury to sell the lines owned by the State.[164]

For the capitalists, railway meant the problem of capital investment. The issue of the nationalization of railway was merely a set of languages and theories to frame their requests and legitimize their responses. The debate on the railway building and nationalization continued until 1905, during which investors' attitudes were changing with the stock prices. State bureaucrats were busy to respond to their requests, and diet members wished to expand their power to have a say in the railway expansion — another story to be delineated in the next chapter. Yet, capitalists including investors,

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[164] The translation is Ericson's. Ericson 1996: 242

entrepreneurs, and bankers, were definitely the major initiators and participants of the discussion.

Then, why the private railways were finally nationalized? Economic historian Shimada argued that the core issue for the late Meiji government was the impossibility of the further issuing of government bonds and loans through internal market. In order to raise foreign loans and capital, changing to a gold standard currency system was necessary.[165] After the Sino-Japanese war, the economy was stagnated because of the huge governmental spending in military budget, and a foreign loan was borrowed. Over-borrowing in previous years made the further issuing of government bonds both in the national and the international market impossible.

The central concern was the use of reparations obtained from China. For the capitalists, they wished that the state could use this money to provide relief measures for them. To stimulate the economy, they suggested that the state should pay off the debts first. The state, however, wished to use this money, a huge reserve of gold in London, to change its currency system from silver-based to gold-based to fit in the international standard such that further foreign loans were possible. It was why the nationalization of railway became a major concern for both the state and the capitalists at the turn of the century.

Capitalists urged the state to introduce foreign capital into the national market to stimulate the stagnated economy; the railway problem became the key.

> In the arenas of commerce, people expected the government to introduce foreign capital to pay off loans within the national market, and it was the reason why they highlighted the issue of nationalization of railway. After the Sino-Japanese war, the increase in military bonds and then taxation made the economy contracted. They suggested the raising of government bonds in the international market to introduce foreign capital to the national market. To do so, it was the reason why they asked the government to buy up private railways as a means for the government to channel capital to the society, revitalizing the economy.[166]

In other words, if the state borrowed foreign loans and then used this money to buy up the private railways, the railway shares held by the investors and entrepreneurs could then be sold to the state in exchange for cash. Investment could then be encouraged and the economy be stimulated.

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[165] Metzler 2006
[166] Shimada 2001

This was indeed a marvelous suggestion. The discussions of the nationalization of railways in 1890 and 1897-98 were mainly induced by economic down-turns. When businessmen lost money in railway stocks they made claims in newspaper and petitioned to the state, but many businessmen and the government itself considered these claims mere political gesture to boost up the confidence of the market. Yet it was not the case at the turn of the century. Nationalization became a good solution for these investors and entrepreneurs seeking new sources of capital.

Shimada suggested that the problem of the nationalization should be considered together with the making of the three Acts of Mortgage of Railways, Factories and Industries, as well as the Act of the Industrial Bank of Japan. Acts of Mortgage were possibly the idea of Shibusawa Eiichi. During his trip to Europe, he found that it was a common practice for investors in Europe to mortgage the railway, as a property, to the banks to borrow money. His suggestion was soon brought to the government and his original intention was that, through the establishment of these laws, investors and entrepreneurs could use the railways and industries as collateral for the foreign loan. Yet the government and also most of the investors of railway stocks preferred the government to be the sole body which controlled and channeled the foreign capital by mortgage on railways as well as factories and industries. The Industrial Bank of Japan was established in 1902 as the major institution for introducing and managing foreign capital. In short, people suggested that railway could now be mortgaged and cashed back into capital.

When the diet passed the Railway Nationalization Bill in 1905, the lower house was still restless. Many shareholders of those profitable railway firms who had influence in the diet opposed the bill. But the majority of other investors certainly welcomed the bill, because most of them could make good fortunes in these appreciating stocks of small and medium railway firms. Yet after the bill was passed, the economy plummeted temporarily. This downturn, however then, made the nationalization process of buying up shareholders' stocks smoother. Indeed, the government gave a very good price that was higher than the market price to buy up most of the shares of those private railway firms in return for government bonds, as in the days in the 1870s and early 1880s. After that, the state was resourceful enough to cancel the railway share market and most of the railway shares disappeared from the stock exchange.

Capitalists did not have a well united front in negotiating with the state in the

process. At the turn of the century, the state had a new means of raising capital from the international market. It no longer relied solely on its own capitalists, and it was now financially powerful enough to buy up all the railway stocks, making railway no longer a troubled issue in the arenas of high finance. The Foreign Minister in the cabinet at the time opposed the bill and resigned, because he had close linkage with the Mitsubishi family, representing the tiny opposition force of those who held shares of major profitable private railway firms. Yet, most of the railway investors found cooperating with the state more profitable. Shibusawa Eiichi, for example, regretted that his claim to "market principle" became forceless in arguing why private railways should be preserved. When he tried to convince his business fellows, the state officials and the diet members that the autonomy of the market should be respected, he found that no one supported him. The state wanted to have a greater power to control high finance. From then on, the state and the capitalists worked closer and capitalists now lost much of their independency. In some sense, the nationalization of railway laid the path to the "economic control" (*keizai tôsei* 経済統制) in the prewar period or the so-called "developmental state" in the postwar era.[167]

In the Meiji period, for a long time, the capitalists were loosely organized as a single class with a clear vision and consistent attitude of its own. They extensively made shifting claims of "railway building" as a manifestation of the public and national interest, but these claims became legitimate reasons also for the politicians in the diet and the Railway Bureau to nationalize railway as a means to extend their power. Most loosely organized capitalists lost their ground in making legitimate arguments and they could only work closely with the government. They could only rely on the state to provide political patronage and channel resources to them. Except for a few entrepreneurs, the nationalization made most capitalists and the state happy. A consensus between the state and the capitalists was indeed forged; the railways were literally nationalized to be a manifestation of the national and public interest. After the nationalization of railway, the only thing capitalists lost was perhaps merely their legitimate ground to claim that pursuing private interest could serve the public, and this will be another story that is beyond the scope of this study.

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[167] Gao 1997; Johnson 1995

Section Five   Conclusion

To sum up, in the Meiji period, railway existed as abstract ideas and ungrounded claims. Railway building was first used as a claim by the state who wished to obtain foreign loans for its own financing. Finally, the debate on the nationalization of railway was also used as an excuse by the capitalists who wished to do the same in 1905. But the above consideration of financing was masked by the less than truthful claims that they used to justify the necessity of the railway. This is an institutionalization process of the belief towards the railway by means of discoursing, in which the state and the capitalists made railway to be a public concern and they created concepts and myths to constitute the usefulness of the railway — for military purpose, for the development of the economy, for the welfare of the people, for the public interest, and for the nation. Through the popularization and the collective use of these myths by many others, railway became something essential which could be expressed in concrete words.

In this chapter I have tried to delineate the historical process through which the state and the class of capitalists constituted themselves through railway building. We have seen how railway building was intimately related to the building of the modern state and the capitalism, which were tackled here as institutional structure which legitimized actions and practices. The power of the state and the interest of the capitalist class were not pre-given; they were constructed. Railway building was a key arena where these power and interest were legitimately defined.

In section two, I have seen that although the oligarchs had gained political power, their governance was not legitimated. Without financial resources, they tried to use railway building as a reason to borrow money from the London market. The power of railway was soon to be realized by these power elites. These experiences brought by the railway became a common experience for them to act as a united whole of a state ruling class. Promoting railway construction, then, became a political vision framed as a "civilizing" mission that was shared among these oligarchs.

The problem is how the state achieved its mission. In section three I have reviewed how the state tried to ask the merchants to construct the railway. The state did not wish to utilize all its resources in the railway construction and hoped to organize these merchants in raising capital. This plan was motivated by political purposes, but it failed because the merchants did not believe in the new government or

the new business. The state then turned to the former power elites of daimyo and warrior class for help by utilizing and channeling their government bonds into establishing the first private railway company. The success of this company made railway a profitable business and through making profits in stock exchange different investors were consolidated into a class of capitalists with common interest who also became rather reliable partners of the state. The use of the railway was expressed in terms of the magic of capital: the accumulation, circulation and speculative character of the railway shares.

In section four I have discussed how the burst of speculative bubbles and the crisis of capitalism made railway a public concern. Those capitalists framed an economic problem to be a discussion on the purpose of the railway. They urged the government to buy up their railway shares because, as they claimed, railway had a "monopolistic nature for public and national use." For almost fifteen years, the pendulum of capitalists' attitudes had swung between buying up private railways and selling off state railways. They created a debatable issue and a massive bulk of languages with which many others discussed the use of railway, and different groups of people manipulated these common languages according to their preferences. The institution of railway building now became "useful" and "necessary," when different actors collectively discussed about the issue and framed their agenda by using these languages and by using the foreign experiences strategically.

Japanese Marxist scholars who worked on railway history in this period were right at one point that the nationalization movement was a process in which the capitalists and the state bureaucrats tried to control the high finance; railway building was the means of accumulation of capital. Also, to echo Polanyi and Wallenstein, if one wish, we can treat the issue as basically a manifestation of the globalization process of integrating Japan into the international financial market.[168] When the state wished to introduce the foreign loan into Japan at the turn of the century, it changed its currency system into gold-based. Both the state and capitalists found out they could mortgage railway to foreign banks. Finally, most of the capitalists found that the railway shares were no longer profitable and sold it to the state for capitalization. The state became the sole authority, according to Japanese Marxist scholars, in control of the railway building as "a form of state monopoly of capital."

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[168] Polanyi 1985; Wallenstein 1979

130

The Marxist approach, however, ignored an important aspect of how actions were legitimized. It ignored how claims were commonly utilized by different social players like the capitalists, bureaucrats, diet members, and military officers who joined in the discussion to constitute their role as an interest group representing someone's welfare. On the contrary, later historians who abandoned a Marxist approach focused on the details in the political process and assumed different interest groups as pre-given social actors in the political negotiation process. Needless to say, all of the scholars ignored how the belief towards the use of railway was constructed.

Railway historian Hoshino is very right to debunk the myth of "state-led railway policy" and forcefully pointed out that this claim was merely an ideology produced by the Railway Bureau after the nationalization of private railways in 1906. There was no such thing as a unified and coherent state-led railway policy before. The social consequence of the negotiation process of nationalization movement of the railway we have discussed in section four had concealed its institutional origin which we have encountered in section two. Not surprisingly, people were selectively forgetting and reinterpreting histories to arrive at a coherent worldview suitable for their time. As Carl Becker writes,

> There is thus a profound truth in Voltaire's witticism: "History is only a pack of tricks we play on the dead."...... The kind of tricks we play is therefore likely to depend on our attitude toward the present.[169]

In this case, it is clear that the time sequence of the conventional narrative of an institution was a reverse of the actual time-sequence; institutional myths were created in a post-hoc manner to recreate its origin.[170]

Thus, this chapter has delineated the institutional process in which railway was made to be a discourse, first by the emerging state and then by the skeptical investors. Railway was first experienced among state builders as a civilizing tool which can transform the nation and was then perceived by the former warriors and the merchants to be a chance of making fortunes in stock markets. When the collective belief among investors towards railway was busted together with the burst of the speculative bubbles, the collective trust towards railway could no longer be sustained and defined

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[169] Becker 2003: 88

[170] This conclusion is perhaps also true for Hoshino, for example, who treated the issue of nationalization of railway as mainly a case study of the political process between the negotiation and contest between public and private sectors. As a respond to the privatization movement in the 1970s and 1980s, he finds out the railways were actually not necessarily owned by the state. The rediscovery of historical facts were again, accidentally or not, matched the demand of the author's time.

in terms of capital. To compensate, investors made claims of the public use of railway at the time of economic downturn, but when the prices of their stock were high they redefined the public interest as market autonomy in order to ask for selling off the state railways.

After the nationalization of the private railways, capitalists no longer had much influence as they had had before. The state now controlled the major financial apparatus and the capitalists relied on its political protection. Their railway shares became government bonds again. Indeed, they actualized their earlier claims of railway as a manifestation of the public and national interest, and they sold it for a good price to the government. The state finally nationalized the railways to have "its manifested nature of publicity" actualized. From then on, it is the state and the elected politicians in the evolving party politics who tried to use the issue of railway building to expand its power, and they became the sole authority to define what was meant by the national interest of railway building. After 1905, railway became literally national, which was something reinvented and redefined in the name of the "people," and railway building became a ritual for the people in localities to become "national".

Chapter 3

Ritualizing the Nation:
Defining the modern state, democracy, and railway (1885-1936)

Is what we call "obeying a rule" something that it would be possible for only *one* man to do, and to do only *once* in his life? — This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression "to obey a rule."

It is not impossible that there should have been only one occasion on which one person obeyed a rule. It is not impossible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood; and so on. — To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions).

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique.

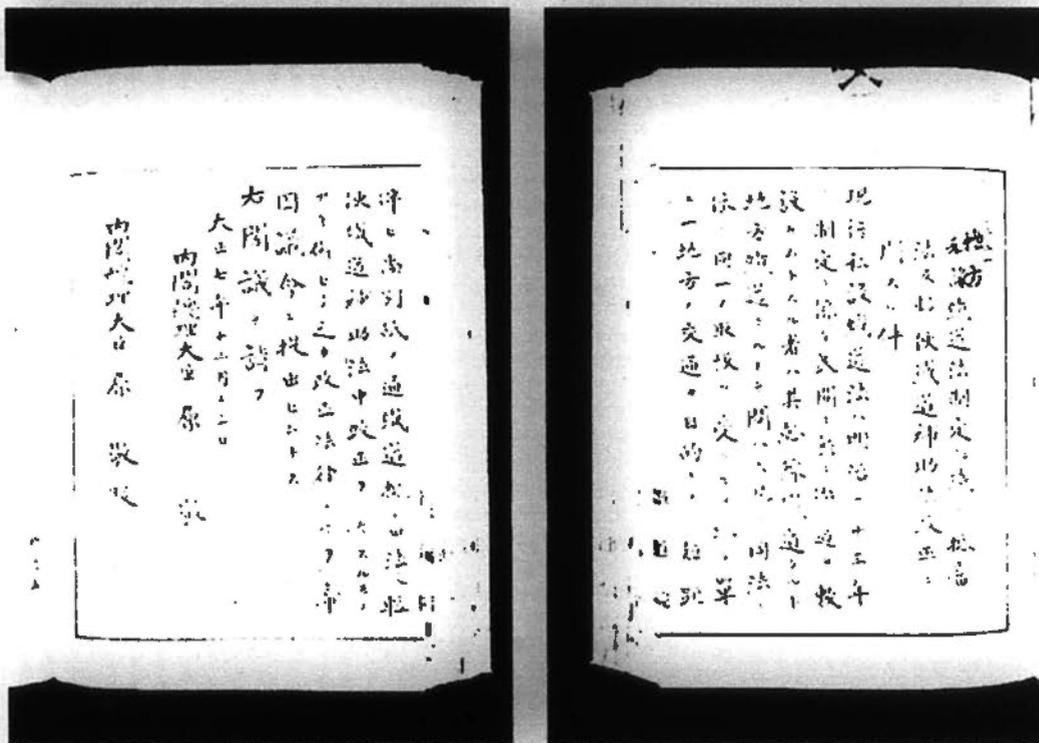*Philosophical Investigations*
§199, Ludwig Wittgenstein

Figure 3.1   The first page (right) and the last page (left) of *the Amendment Law of Railway Construction*, 1919, signed by Hara Takashi. National Archives of Japan.

Section One   Ritualizing power structure and the establishment of the democratic polity: methodological accounts of the institution of railway building

The institution of railway building was further strengthened from the late Meiji to the Taisho period (1912-1926). By utilizing the concept of ritualizing, this chapter delineates the institutionalization of the belief towards the use of railway by examining many concrete practices among localities. Ritualizing refers to the inventing and sharing of common modes of conduct. If discoursing is the invention of "theories" of a social reality, then ritualizing might be considered as the invention of "methods" by which ones actually participate in actualizing and realizing the institutional belief through tangible means of shared actions.

As we have reviewed, the emerging capitalist class created many abstract ideas to articulate the myth of the use of railway. In the Taisho period, however, new social players like the localities and politicians replaced the capitalists to support and expand such belief and they continued to strengthen the railway myth by inventing new methods to ask for or facilitate the building of railway. The belief towards railway building was now also supported by concrete practices.

From the 1890s to the 1910s, the idea of political representation started to develop that led to the so-called Taisho Democracy in the 1920s. In Japan's modernization process, many localities received little support from the state in developing their rural communities. Local railway building became a project of hope in improving their situation. Yet without enough support from the capitalists or the government, the localities could hardly build expensive railways on their own. At the same time, the emerging politicians, who wished to seize power from oligarchs, tried hard to absorb these local demands by claiming their role in "representing local interest." Election became now a new political ritual and the issue of local railway building became a national agenda through which local interest and national interest could be redefined and mediated.

This chapter examines these practices which were invented by and shared among the local groups and politicians. It analyzes how the localities wrote proposals or petitioned to different authorities and how the politicians gained power by highlighting the issue of local railway building in the diet. These practices could be considered as some sorts of "methodological accounts." Through introducing and

analyzing these practices, I will argue that ritualizing did not only further actualize the belief towards railway but the democratic values of representation and political participation were also expressed through and manifested in these practices. In other words, when ones asked for a railway, it was quite similar to consider it as a political ritual which expressed the wish to participate in the nation-state. One might not necessarily lay tracks, but the very act of asking for it by the localities and the making of promise to build it by the politicians had already made the symbolic significance of railway very real and the democratic polity tangible for commoners.

Section Two   Enacting the nation at the local level: rituals of railway proposals writing (1885-1905)

1   Introduction

This section argues that the railway did not really physically bring the country together in the first place. When people were asking for a railway the political entity of "nation" was also being enacted. The key is the shared ritual of writing proposals to seek help from the state to lay tracks for their communities, through which people borrowed and manipulated different cultural categories invented and defined by the newly established modern state to justify their request for railway as a politically legitimate and acceptable request. Railway building then became one of the important engines that helped both the consolidation of the belief towards railway and the popularization of the cognitive categories of the nation. I argue that railway building in the late Meiji period was one of the major forces that helped the establishment of some forms of modern political ritual intermediating between the local societies and the central state.

To start with, this chapter discusses about the mechanism which helped the formation of a modern sense of nation. These "local" communities were originally highly autonomous small "states" before the Meiji era with different political and social situations. People in some of the domains did use the word "nation" (*kuni*), but instead of referring to the nation of "Japan" today, it described their rather different histories and cultures of a particular "domain." One can never appreciate the power of the modern nation without considering how the local societies were co-opted into the modern state and how they were brought together under the name of the nation.

The power of the modern concept of nation did not originate from the mere content of the idea itself, but from how it was enacted through the ritualization of shared mode of practice. When railway routes planned by the state and companies expanded geographically, the ideas that defined a nation diffused among the local communities. More exactly, the planning of railway stimulated the emergence of the shared practice of writing a proposal asking for the construction of railway among the localities that enacted the modern nation.

New categories and concepts defining the localities, economy, society, and nation were borrowed from the institutional environment, notably drawn from the state ideological discourse which defined the use of railway that we have reviewed in the

last chapter. This could be illustrated by a huge number of well collected and archived documents prepared in different local places. If the local people wanted to attract the railways to pass through their places, they wrote and publicized proposals and letters to various authorities, like the state, the diet, investors, or the army. In the petitioning process, they explained in written words and printed documents of why their places were a better choice for the planned routes. To justify their request for the railway, people from the local communities adopted an accepted format of proposal writing and manipulated the ideological languages drawn from the new state discourse in order to write their application proposals. When they tried to prove how important their local areas were to the "nation" economically, socially and politically, the constructed cognitive categories accounting for a nation were popularized and articulated into a new theory of the Meiji nation-state.

One would be surprised by the fact that almost all of these local groups intriguingly used the same words and concepts to justify the need of railway building to their places. Despite the diverse variety of geographical, economical, and historical contexts among these local groups, they all argued that their communities were part of the "nation."

It was then a widespread writing practice emerging from the mid-1880s onwards to make a claim for the railway in terms of the "national interest" rather than of the private and local interest. It revealed remarkably isomorphic practices enacting the nation through the common use of shared cognitive categories at the level of local societies. These railway proposals were then evidences created in the very process of applying for the building of railway. It requires an explanation of why these geographically diverse places with distant markets and physical structures would use strikingly similar languages and arguments to write these railway proposals.

In this section, I analyze some of these proposals from selected areas and periods from the 1890s to the 1900s and I argue that when the railway plans continued to expand, these practices had been standardizing into a shared mode of conduct to define the local interest as the national interest, and the local economic development as the national economic development. By investigating the documents, in which the belief in railway was translated in terms of the "national interest" and coded through the writing practices, it is shown that railway helped national unification not because it physically bridged different localities together, but because it helped to create a shared sense of the nation through the conforming practice of using shared words and

concepts in written documents. As a result, while arguing that their places were important and deserved a railway, the localities asserted the existence of a "local market and society" as an important constituent component of the "national market and the national state." Since the 1890s, petitioning for railway building then gradually became a political linkage between the central state and the localities, and railway proposals became the documents for this ritual; a ritualizing process thus emerged such that the belief towards to potential use of railway cognitively glued different communities under the same invented and imagined entity called the "nation."

2   Variation of geographical and historical contexts

Before directly going into those written proposals, we should first briefly introduce some historical and political backgrounds in the mid-to-late-Meiji period, especially on how those diverse local communities responded somewhat differently to the railway construction plans at different stages. Given varied geographical situations and a wide range of local market structures, the railway could not be economically useful for all communities. Technically speaking, once tracks were laid it was highly unwise to build another line nearby.

In the Meiji period, most of the people lived not in cities but in rural areas. It continued to be so in the Taisho period, even though the Taisho period was often characterized by its emerging urban culture. The world of the rural society was very different from the urban one. Modern transportation was one of the social infrastructures that could fundamentally change the rural society. Local networks of exchange based on foot and animal transport on land could be transformed dramatically by the railway. The case of Iida area in central Japan analyzed by Wigen, for example, shows us that a national market of major commodities like rice transported by river and sea was gradually replaced by railway transport since the late Meiji.[1] Indeed, those areas without railway networks were soon detached from the emerging national market and were rapidly degrading.

There were obviously great temporal and geographical variations among the diverse communities located at different places. As the state or companies could not

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[1] Wigen 1995

build all railways at once, there were different priorities to construct railways across different geographical areas. Those communities located near major routes between cities with less physical obstacles for railway construction were the first groups of candidates exposed to the changes.

(a)   A brief revisit of the concealed origin of railway belief: a local point of view

In the early 1890s, major truck lines were built between major cities but not necessarily extended into the villages. The problem was to what extent did the rural people know that the railway could bring about positive changes to their communities, before these benefits promised by the railway were actualized when locomotives entered the villages. If everyone in local areas had known that railway was useful, who had paid for the construction?

Let us take a look at a small interesting episode introduced by a historian.[2] At the early 1890s, a Meiji intellectual wrote an account on how his village fellows realized the effect of the railway. This gentleman, Kobayashi, lived in Warabi-shi (蕨市) in Saitama, originally a posting station (宿場) of the Nakasendo route. Unlike Kobayashi who had seen the railway in Tokyo some years before, his village fellows did not know what a railway was. We were told that the villagers simply decided to avoid attracting the railway line to come near their village, even though the planned route of Nippon Railway would soon pass by. He wrote that, only when some "people who sold their land to railway companies" had a chance to take a ride on the train and still some others went to watch the railway passing by near their paddy fields, people started petitioning to the railway company requesting to create a station for their own. The village people started to organize some members to discuss with the company and prepared for the expenses of constructing the station. The station was finally opened in 1893, quite some time after the completion of the railway section near their place in the mid-1880s.

To explain why there would be a station, Kobayashi asked how "people came to realize the power of the railway." He wrote that a chance for village people to experience railway was a key reason. But if we study his account carefully, there were several suspicious points. Perhaps selling real estates to the railway company seems to be the major incentive for village people. Kobayashi wrote that at the beginning the

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[2] This interesting case is given by Oikawa. Oikawa 1996: 114-116.

village head asked everyone not to sell lands to the company, based on reasons like "rice harvest will be affected" or "morning dew of the rice will be dropped." These were possibly some good excuses to bargain for a better price with the railway firms. His account did not give us these details but instead shifted to the description of the enlightening experiences brought by the railway that made everyone excited, and the village people then came to realize the prosperity brought by the railway in the future. Indeed, Warabi-shi became more prosperous after some years' of the opening of the station, as the volume of passengers and cargos continued to grow.

What his account and the historian's descriptions lacked, however, were a detailed analysis of the negotiation of money matters involved in the land transaction process. Indeed, scholar argues that it was quite rare for local people to object railway building at the time of Meiji.[3] If it did, it was mostly due to land troubles. Land transactions were however some possible consequences brought by these early railway projects.[4] People employed some apparently ignorant reasons to assert that the railway was not useful. If the railway was finally built, as in the above case, people accounted for their history by employing another narrative to recreate a "functional" story of their success, which mostly emphasized the localities' visionary thoughts on the great use of railway in modernizing the economy of the communities.[5] Hence, the logic of Kobayashi resembled what we had encountered in the last chapter on the concealed origin of railway in Japan, in which people tried to make up rationales to account for how people came to know the power of railway, without analyzing the possible process involved.

Railway was still a new thing to the rural people it the late 1890s. The significance of analyzing this case is that it was concerned about a local community located besides the route of the first private company in the early stage. Most of the railways at the Meiji period were simply not planned to serve the rural people at first. In most of the geographical areas, the railway simply did not pass by. In other words, in the early stage of railway building, it affected a very limited number of local communities and involved a very tiny group of land owners. If the local people responded to the outside changes and built a railway, they started explaining the use

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[3] Aoki 2006
[4] Indeed, the committee of railway construction in the diet suggested the implementation of the land expropriation act at the 1893 to fasten railway construction in order to "increase the public interest of the nation through the flexible utilization of this act."
[5] For sure, there were numerous cases of unsuccessful railways. See Katô 1997.

of railway and inscribing their memories in some forms of history. Something they considered not important, however, had been forgotten.[6]

During the mid-1890s, railways built by the state and private firms were expanding to link between major cities, and the symbol of railway became a popular icon as a part of the state ideology.[7] When the railway network expanded, the belief towards railway got popularized and diffused quickly from the state and a small number of the local communities to the others. By investigating the spread and diffusion of standardized practices, namely, writing a proposal to ask for a railway among local communities, one can examine how new categories constituting "nation" were adopted from the political state and were manipulated, when the local people tried to justify their claims of the necessity of it. Writing up proposals for railway building among the localities, as an isomorphic mode of conducts, became an emerging ritual that made the "localities" and "nation" into real entities. The make-up and popularization of the railway belief were hence spreading with the new political belief towards nation.

(b)   Political ritual from above? The local consequences of the state planning of railway building

Since the 1890s, the railway became more or less accepted by the policy makers or investors as an infrastructure or perhaps reliable investment tools. Councilors in the newly established diet elected from the local areas became another driving force in determining the railway construction plan. The original request of buying up private railways made by the capitalists to the government, as we had reviewed, was transformed by the diet members into a scheduled railway building plan in the form of the *Railway Construction Law* which was passed in 1892. As a result of the negotiation between the bureaucracy and politicians, the proposal of nationalization of railway was manipulated by the diet members into a law of construction plan.

With the completion of most of the crucial lines in the mid-1890s, elected members in the newly established diet and the government started to plan the construction of the next batch of railway lines. When the authorities and companies

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[6] We cannot really tell from archival materials to what extent people believe in the use of railway or not, as the historical data left to us were also part of the institutional process of memories for the people to make sense of their experiences, by recreating a history to explain how visionary they were to realize the use of railway. Foucault 1978b.

[7] This point will be discussed in the next chapter.

tried planning a line on the map to link different cities, there were alternative choices available for them to decide the possible route passing through different areas. In order to gain votes from the elites from the local communities, politicians started to intervene into the decision making process of the railway planning by making construction schedule.

This research, however, focuses less on the role of diet members in deciding the railway construction plan in this period, because these emerging groups of diet councilors in the 1890s were not yet to be the only authority in making decision in the local railway planning.[8] Instead it pays more attention to the gap and the contrast between the diverse situations of the local communities and their highly homogenous and unified responses when they tried to react to the plans made by the higher authorities.

3 "Nation" inscribed in and enacted through archives of railway proposals

The proliferation of these printed materials of railway proposals among the localities was perhaps one of the first important practices that enacted the Meiji nation-state. The Meiji state failed in building most of the modern institutions of the nation-state at the local level in their first two decades of governance. Until the early 1890s, people escaped from schools and conscriptions and burnt down local government offices' register.[9] For railway building, however, the local people showed great enthusiasm.

(a) Competing for a railway

Who were the key actors who wrote these proposals and made up arguments to justify that their place deserved a railway? There were many variations and we are not going into the details of it, but it is fairly safe to assert that they were the local businessmen and small industrialists. They were not organized merchant groups and investors like those from cities such as Osaka or Tokyo, but they were some wealthy local persons who participated in some forms of local industry, business and trade of

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[8] This was a major difference comparing with those well-established party politicians elected in the later Taisho years, who would finally win out as the only political authority in representing the "local interest" and had much more power on the matter. Also, this section pays less attention on the decision making of and negotiation between many interest groups in the political process, a history many scholars had already researched on.

[9] Oguma 2000; Hane 2003

142

various kinds of daily products. They were sensitive to the changing market structures brought by the railway construction since the 1880s. The real effects of railway which brought instant advantages to transporting local goods to the emerging national and international market were already visible in the early 1890. Railway did alter many old transport and logistics of goods and persons, and it started to transform the diverse local markets into a national one. Prices of goods were quickly averaged among different places.[10]

When the central state controlled the inflation in the early 1880s, it also meant that products from rural places selling to cities were no longer as profitable as before. The local entrepreneurs and merchants asked for railway not only because they knew that the railway possibly reduced transportation expenses, but it leveled price gaps dramatically between the cities and different localities. Combined with the effect of deflation, those local places without railway connections were comparatively disadvantaged — they sold products to cities at a lower price but bought more expensive goods from outside — the local merchants who were sensitive to market prices were perhaps the first group who realized the possible effects brought by the railway.

Another point that required brief introduction is the historical origins of those railway proposals. These documents prepared by the localities were a direct response to the *Railway Construction Law* passed in 1892 in the Imperial Assembly. This law was virtually a national construction plan of railway and a product of political negotiations when elected diet members successfully transformed the financial problem into a discussion to urge the government to build more railways. But this construction plan did not specify clearly the exact route for many local places. For example, the entry of Chûô Line reads:

> Starting from Hachiôji at Kanakawa Prefecture *or* from Godenba at Shizuoka Shizuoka Prefecture, passing through Kôfu and Suwa, and then Ina *or* Nishi-chikuma, and finally to Nagoya (My emphasis)[11]

To understand this law, one need not be familiar with the geography of Japan but only to realize that this law composed of the detailed plans of about thirty-three railway routes spreading throughout the country. The most important thing to note are those so called "comparative lines" (比較線) cited in this law. The state planners were

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[10] Katô 1997; Wigen 1995
[11] Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1971 vol. 3

concerning more on the development of the country as a whole. To avoid conflicts between the diet members, this law was simply a working construction plan, which suggested many unspecified planned routes. For the localities, however, they were obviously concerned about whether or not the railway passed by their places.

There were two immediate consequences. First, those candidates located on the "comparative lines" were very nervous about whether they would be chosen or not. Candidates of the local groups locating on those potential routes published proposals for petitioning to the central state asking for a railway. Second, those places who were not included in the law — the first national plan of routes — were even more nervous. It made them more active to urge their representatives in the diet or other possible authorities to help, notably the investors and the army. Both of the groups, which virtually meant most of the local communities throughout the country, were then actively producing these documents that we are going to analyze.

The reason why the localities could not build railway by themselves was simple: local merchants could not invest on their own. They lacked the methods to cooperate with other merchants to solicit a huge enough capital. In fact, even the state and the organized merchant groups from the cities failed to do so at first. The more convenient way for them to do was to ask somebody to pay for them. The problem then became how they could convince others to build for them by appropriating discourses on the great use of the railway to the nation to articulate their arguments and to forge relations to the state.

(b)   How to write a proposal to ask for railway building?

In this section, I am going to investigate some of those railway proposals and documents and argue that the writing of proposal created a "collective meaning structures" to enact and ritualize a new nation.[12] On the one hand, people wrote documents by claiming how special and distinctive their "local places" were. On the other hand, many of these former autonomous domains claimed to be an integral part of the "nation." In other words, the very act of writing proposals among different places to assert their distinctiveness was an isomorphic and shared practice. Ironically they used a highly conforming and stylized ways of presenting themselves as unique and indispensible parts to the state.

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[12] Wuthnow 1989

Thanks to the librarians and historians, many of these railway proposals, pamphlets and documents were well archived and some of them were even published.[13]

These proposals were produced and circulated for the ultimate goal of asking the state to build a railway passing through their lands. Places already with major railway route passed through had no great incentive to prepare these petitioning documents; available printed materials were prepared in the 1890s by the many areas located on the "comparative lines" stated in the law.

To know the social processes of the sharing of cultural codes and cognitive schemas that defined a nation, it requires our sensitivity to how concepts and ideas were used and articulated into arguments through the political practice of writing and printing. Writing proposals according to the many new cognitive categories, rhetoric and formats accepted by the new state became a diffused and isomorphic practice to gain legitimacy. My purpose is then to examine how the myths of nation were actualized by the conforming practices among the localities. While it is common today to refer to Anderson (2006) on the importance of printing *capitalism* to the emergence of nationalism in the context of Europe, it is more relevant to refer to the works by McLuhan (1962) and Ong (2002) to know how the practice of writing and printing itself — a technology and a collective practice that people needed to learn to use — "restructures people's consciousness."[14] They suggest that the social rules outside the text were fundamental. Literacy and the ability to prepare these printed documents in written words, mostly with maps, charts, and statistical data, were an emerging and conforming practice and an official medium communicating between the new central state and the localities.[15] Unlike most scholars who paid attention to the contents of the emerging ideologies at the time, Kimura suggests that people did

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[13] We cannot tell how many of these documents printed and distributed in the 1890s were preserved, but many of them were well identified and collected. *Collections of Local Railway Documents* (Noda et al. eds. 1989 vol. 28) includes a useful table consists of about seventy items identified from the National Diet Library and the Transportation Museum. This collection published about twenty of these proposals in the volume. There were certainly more of these archival materials to be discovered. Thanks to Matsushita (2005: 72-73), he located some collections of these pamphlets and proposals collected by a Diet Member at the time, which were now preserved in the Tokyo University Library, and by the Minister of Army, which were now preserved in the Military Archives in the National Institute for Defense Studies. I had spent more time on studying the latter collection with hundreds of these pamphlets.

[14] McLuhan 1962; Ong 2002

[15] Contrast with writing and printing as ways of communicating with political authorities by a restricted class of literate local group leaders, the orality tradition among commoners — especially before the mass schooling started to establish its legitimacy in the early 1900s — was another important dimension for consideration.

not necessarily know what those ideological slogans in the texts really meant.[16] She suggests that the very act of writing, reading and using rhetoric slogans constituted the core political practice of the new nation-state. By the same token, the research investigates into some of the huge numbers of the railway proposals not by interpreting the contents of these texts, but considered the very act of writing and distributing these printed proposals as an indication for the spreading practice among the localities that was a highly conforming practice for the different localities. In short, the idea of the nation was ritualized after the writing practices had restructured the local leaders' mind.

Like writing a good academic research proposal, the railway pamphlets and documents for petitioning also had some common guiding rules. The local people were also smart enough to write and justify their needs of railway construction in the languages and logics acceptable by the political authorities. By examining these emerging and unspoken rules, a new consciousness on the "national" and "local" identity was taking shape. Concluded from my own readings of these documents, there are some general characteristics common to all of them, namely, the legitimizing arguments by using the national rhetoric, as well as the representing of a social reality by the appropriation of national categories.

(c)   Legitimizing arguments by using national rhetoric: a sense of comparison and conforming (Akita, Ôu Line)

One important reason for the construction of railway at the local level was a sense of competition and people argued that the distinctive features of their local places made them a more competitive candidate deserving the railway.

Let us look at a case in the Akita prefecture at the early 1890s. Discussions were already held in the prefecture assembly for years. Neither the prefecture nor local merchants could afford to build a railway for themselves. Assembly members argued that the prefecture government should keep petitioning to the central state to build for them.

> Four or five years ago our prefecture had already been suggesting the construction of railway, and now the Yamagata prefecture had requested the state

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[16] On this point, Kimura's work (1998) on the birth of "Youth" in the Meiji may give us some hints as well. She borrowed the theory of Bourdieu's "Practice" and Chartier's methods of analyzing written documents to explain the emerging political consciousness among some rebellious youths. English version of Chartier's work was translated by Reeser and Spalding 2002.

to lay tracks. We were adjacent to them and we had no reasons to stay silent. A three-year old child also knew that railway was useful to the economy and society. Yamagata, Iwate, Aomori had railway plans, how come we did not have one? We would suffer in terms of wealth and knowledge and we could not maintain our local economy. (14th Nov 1888)[17]

We have no idea if a three-year old child in Akita really knew the importance of the railway or not in 1888, but the local merchants (who were possibly assembly members also) did. When a route was planned nearby, the local groups compared with each other and competed for a railway route or station to be built somewhere near their communities. Some people, however, realized the following potential charges leveled at them.

It was not because Yamagata had asked for railway so that we intimated them. Definitely not! It was simply because when Yamagata asked for a railway so that we should take this good chance to ask together. The reason was that railway construction was not an affair restricted to Akita alone but it was a national affair. If one laid tracks only in Yamagata but not in Akita, it was not the benefits of Yamagata but the loss of the whole country of Japan... (14th Nov 1888)[18]

This argument was wisely articulated. One should be extremely careful on the use of the term "Japan," which was a relatively new concept compared to "Akita." Everyone knew where and what the place "Akita" referred to, but to assert that there was a "nation" surpassing all "local" interest was relatively a new idea which offered a legitimate claims for them to urge the central state to do something for them.

We can observe how the arguments were gradually built up by asserting the supremacy of "national interest" from a group of Akita people in Asami, now renamed as Hiraka-machi in Yokote-shi, who wrote a letter to the engineers when the government survey team came to their place.

We welcomed your trip to our place for the survey mission, which was based on the *Railway Construction Law*. We were not considering the limited interest from a view point of our small place but should judge from the millennial great mission of this railway construction. For the sake of the true interest of the nation, we could not but speak out and submit to you a report comparing Asamai and Yokote. For the sake of the national economy, military and development, we hoped you could familiarize yourself with these data so that you could make a fair judgment. (20th August 1893)[19]

The document they had submitted gave some "objective" comparison of the two

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[17] Akita ken 1962: 495-500 (archival number 216)
[18] Akita ken 1962: 495-500 (archival number 216)
[19] Akita ken 1962: 519-524 (archival number 227)

potential lines and "logically" concluded that the line passing through the areas where the drafters of the proposals lived was a more rational choice. Like those capitalists who argued that international comparison was essential to uncover the "universal law governing an institution," the localities argued in the same way that a comparison between localities revealed "the fact" that comparative railway routes should be carefully and objectively compared according the "objective interest of a nation."

While the above letter was reprinted in a book of collection of the local historical data, another proposal was found in archives in the state government. It seemed that after the survey team left, the engineers did not give a favorable decision to Asamai people. They petitioned again to the central state by asking somebody living in Tokyo to send proposals to the central government directly.

> We should forget the gain and loss limited to only a local place and should consider the real interest of the nation and the public. We, local people of Asamai were absolutely not using one-sided view and distorted opinion to argue before all of you, but we only cared about the nation and the public's interest... We used concrete arguments without any private concerns by giving you substantive data. (December 1893)[20]

They emphasized that their viewpoints of the construction work, economy, and military were "from a perspective of the national economy as a whole." Their rhetoric turned to emphasize reasons like the strategic role of their place, which was also famous for silkworm production in the prefecture that were "vital to the national interest," so that "those invalid ideas originated from the cities" (possibly referring to their rivals in Yokote) should be expelled.[21] The local people did not invent these reasons by their own; instead they borrowed them from the state at the time and articulated them into their rationales.

The most intriguing point is that these proposals always argued their case by asserting their particularities of their places and, ironically, the political loyalty as well as the potential of economic development in terms of "a national perspective." To convince the reader, i.e. the central state, almost all proposals highlighted that their suggestions were objective and fair to reveal the "nature of the national interest."

Indeed not every local place in the country had the same pace of railway construction, but this was nothing unique to a small town in Akita. The following

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[20] Military Archives in the National Institute for Defense Studies. Archival reference number M27-11, 196. Number 35
[21] Military Archives in the National Institute for Defense Studies. Archival reference number M27-11, 196. Number 35

illustration was taken from a proposal on petitioning for the building of San'in-Sanyô Railway in the Western Japan at around the same period in 1893. Criticizing their opponents' similar proposals as biased, they explained that they wrote from "a perspective of the national economy" (國家経済的観点), giving us "highly objective" data and statistics of why their place was a better choice for railway route. At the conclusion, they said,

> Without a trace of any private concern and with a true-hearted passion for the country, we should carefully study this century-long grand railway project. People who discussed the railway issue cared only for the local places and they were blinded by their own desires and interests. They forgot about the country and manipulated the map and statistics for their own sake. They surrendered to their own desires... They simply followed others and they were good at this. Everyone talked about the railway and we also discussed about it, but our eyes were fair enough and we devoted ourselves to this grand project... We did not have any private concerns but only a naked heart of patriotism (愛國) severing for the country to make our arguments.
> (San'yin-Sanyô Renraku Tetsudou chûô-sen ikensho January 1894)[22]

The above rhetoric may sound meaningless to contemporary readers, but one should not discard these "myths" merely as unimportant politically correct statements. It was vital to put these myths into the official documents and discussions. Petitioners assumed that the political authorities could recognize their efforts to write in the same ideological languages to take part in the new collectivity called the "nation." People at the time may perhaps conveniently borrowed these new political jargons for their own interest and did not really believe in any "national interest" — we cannot even tell if this statement is true or not from the archives alone. Yet to write that "national perspective should be considered" gave them legitimacy for their claims to the state.

    The theoretical significance lies in the very act of inscribing these borrowed wordings and logics. We are talking about two geographically different places, one at Northeastern Japan and another at Western Japan. Almost without exception, proposals produced at the same period were written in the same way. On the one hand people had a strong sense of comparison with other localities, as indicated by their counter-logic by saying "we were not merely intimating others but were arguing from a perspective of the nation and the national economy." On the other hand, the theoretical puzzle was why different geographical groups would employ the same

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[22] Military Archives in the National Institute for Defense Studies. Archival reference number M26, 196. Number 8

languages and logics.

At the time of the 1890s, people who wrote these documents did not necessarily think that there was a nation called "Japan." Writing proposals was an isomorphic process of sharing categories which defined and created both the entities of the "nation" and the "localities." State ideological discourses were effectively inscribed in their documents and a sense of the national and local identity was formed. Writing a railway proposal that argued about the uniqueness of their place in contributing to a larger collectivity became a ritual which restructured their political consciousness.

(d) Appropriation of national categories to represent a social reality: Representing a new social reality by maps and statistics

The conforming practice among the localities of writing railway proposals by using many of the new political languages and logics was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for people to imagine and enact a "nation." To justify their plan, new cognitive categories that gave shape to a modern society were employed also to construct and represent a "local society," resembling the state ideological discourse at the late Meiji period. To argue that the "local place" was an integral part of "the nation", they also needed to incorporate many substantive components which constituted a "nation." People provided contents to fill in those new categorical concepts, like geography, populations, economy, and military. Maps, charts, statistics, and graphs were used to present their data to prove the significance of the place. As seen in the last section, the capitalists and state bureaucrats imagined about the railway as an international institution governed by universal laws; by the same token, local people imagined an entity called "nation," in which the "local society" was also invented to be a new and legitimate constituent part of the nation.

So what kinds of cognitive categories made up the very concept of the "nation"? After reading through hundreds of pages of these well printed pamphlets and proposals, with only minor stylistic and rhetoric differences, one could find that these materials were all well presented and structured under standard categories. Reading merely the contents and numbers of these proposals is meaningless to us. One should first be curious about how well these data were categorized and structured in similar fashion. Available materials normally included very finely charted maps, graphs, and tables, which were carefully presented to explain the uniqueness of their place such that laying tracks to these places could be of the interest to the nation. The structured

ways of presenting data gave us some important hints on how an institution of nation was formed.

Benedict Anderson is quite true to emphasize that census and maps are some of the key mechanisms which give birth to a modern nation.[23] But the localities also took an initiative role in employing many of these methods to present and categorize their data. The following is one typical example of how a proposal was organized:

> Table of Content
> Pros and cons of two lines from the geographical point of view
> Pros and cons of two lines by comparing quantity of produce
> Comparing census and taxation
> Comparing the effects of railway on two lines
> Pros and cons of two lines from the military point of view
> Construction
> (The aim of choosing the Ina Route, Chūō Line)[24]

The above table of content could be considered as a more or less standard format of a railway proposal that one could find in the 1890s. One may call these categories "classification systems" (DiMaggio 1987) or "cultural schemas" (Ortner 1990).[25] But the point to be made here is that these cognitive structures were not pre-given; the very act of writing these proposals helped the proliferation and actualization of these categories, which constituted the identity of the "locality" and the "nation" at the same time.

The key was how the localities asserted themselves as an integral part of a nation. Conceptual categories, like physical features, populations, taxation, numbers and types of produce, could only be articulated and shown by different forms of representations like maps, charts, and tables. These styles of presentations were now considered to be a legitimate proof of "objective facts," even though many of them complained and charged against others' presentations as "distorted maps and numbers to cheat the government and the people." In any case, a representation refers to symbolically reorganized social realities, i.e. re-presenting them as objective facts. As a kind of "impression management," proposals were made to present and craft their local identity, as well as to re-present themselves as a legitimate part of the nation.[26]

There are several forms of representations, for example, a map. It was attached to

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[23] Anderson 1994
[24] Noda et al. 1989 Number 6
[25] DiMaggio 1987; Ortner 1990; See also Douglas 1986
[26] Goffman 1959

map out the possible routes and physical features for the railway construction. To appreciate the importance of a map, it is necessary to point out that the inventions of the modern geography as well as cartography[27] were a fundamental component of a modern nation.

One can find various forms of maps among different proposals. While some maps were drawn according to the modern standard, as requirements of civil engineering for the railway construction. For example, Figure 3.2 shown in the next page was drawn according to the cartography methods in the Edo period. An interesting observation one could draw was that there was a small map of Japan and a chart of logistics of produce on the left hand side. The geography of the new nation was an important frame of reference.[28] Another interesting thing was that even though the old names of domains were still referred to as "nation boundary" (国界), but the same word "*kuni*" now connoted roads (国県道), the new infrastructures of the new nation-state. A mixture of these two meanings system still coexisted.
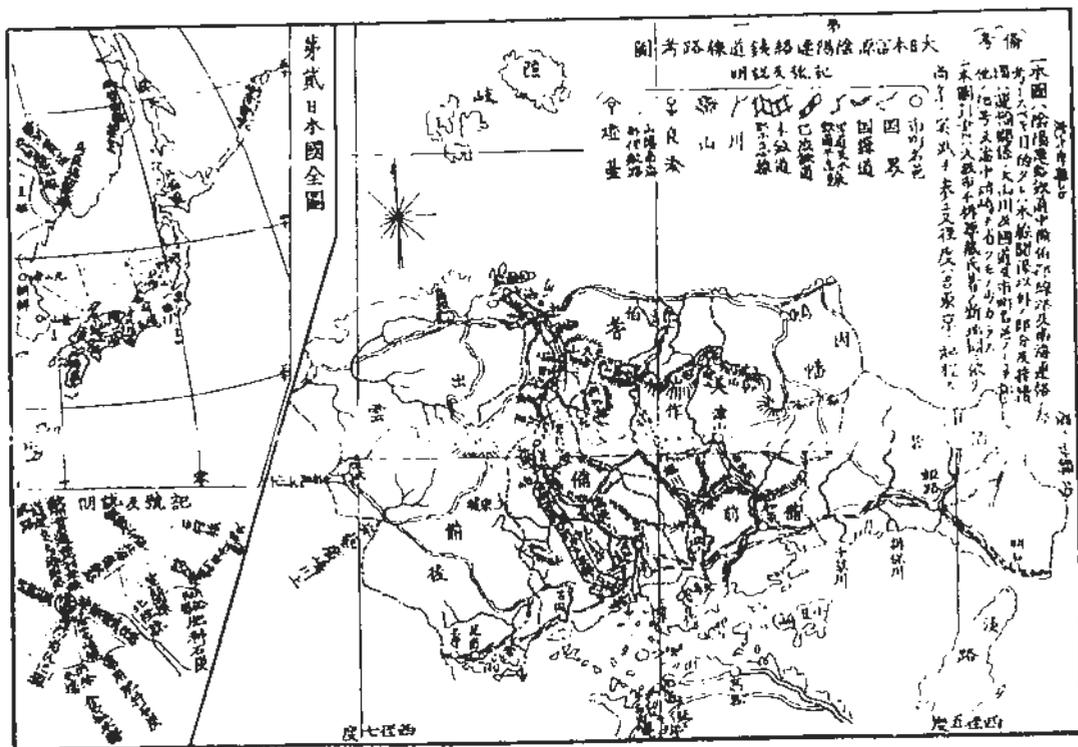
Figure 3.2   A map attached in a railway proposal[29]

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[27] Mizuuchi 1994

[28] Yonemoto (2003) is right to argue that a national consciousness could be seen from maps back to Edo period, but one should remind the fact that many maps the author referred to were composed by the Edo government instead of localities. Here I refer to a local point of view of how a "nation" before was transformed to mere "localities" in a new nation of Meiji.

[29] Noda et al. 1989 Number 17, including its appendix of statistical report.

The changes were that the seemingly distinctive "localities" were pictorially presented in the map and situated in a wider and indispensable entity called the "nation." The purpose of these maps was to support the written arguments, which asserted that the railway served not only the local interest but also the national economy. These writers emphasized the distinctive nature of their "local places" to make them a better candidate of the railway construction, while this assertion was legitimate as far as one could use "nation" as a new frame of reference.

The above argument could also be drawn from another important form of representation, which was the extensive use of statistical data. This was crucial to justify how important a place was to the nation by showing numbers. While there were not yet standard ways and format for presentation — tables, charts, or simply a patch of seemingly unorganized numbers to contemporary readers — people tried hard to gather and display hard data and numbers to convince others that there were really activities called the "local economy." A common way of presentation could be as follow,

> (At the end of a proposal) We agree the building of route A instead of B because we truly concern about the national strength and its development. To do so, we should assist military and economic development… [Railway building] was not only for an individual or merely one local place but for our empire. Now I should attach maps of comparative lines and some statistical table (統計表) at the appendix, providing proofs of actual facts (充実の証明).

> [Titles and Names of seven districts and villages]

> (Presented at July, 25th year of the Meiji [1893],
> *Opinion on Chūō Tetsudō Comparative Routes between Suo and Nagoya*)[30]

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[30] Noda et al. 1989 Number 4

Figure 3.3   An example of a survey adopted from an appendix of a railway proposal "Survey of import and export of produce into Chûba-Kaidô Area"[31]

People provided detailed breakdown of data and numbers of cargos and goods. For sure, speculative budgets of costs and benefits of the railway construction were normally also attached. Yet many other proposals attached more detailed census data on the population, taxation, conscription, areas of taxed farmlands, land price, or even the numbers of schools and post offices. Special products of a place were emphasized. To contemporary readers, these are perhaps quite standard ways of presentation, and these presentations of data might not be totally new at the time of the 1890s. But at that time organizing these statistical data and the relevant presentation formats were some very new ways to communicate with the Meiji political authorities. "Statistics," a western concept introduced by Fukuzawa, who was a borrowed conceptual and methodological tool to prove and achieve civilization. In his words,

> Hence, probable patterns within a country cannot be discerned from one event or one thing. Actual conditions can only be determined by taking a broad sampling and making minute comparisons. This method is called "statistics" in the West. It is an indispensable method for investigating and evaluating human affairs. Modern Western scholars, relying completely on this method, have made great advances in learning. If we chart the figures for land area and population, the prices of commodities and wage rates, and the number of the married, the living, the sick, and those who die, the general conditions of society will become clear

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[31] Noda et al. 1989 Number 4, including its appendix of statistical report

at a glance, even things one ordinarily cannot calculate... Since Japanese has not made such tables of statistics, we have no accurate idea of such patterns in Japan... (*An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*)[32]

Statistics, then, was also a new ideological language. Data were and should be organized to show how objectively a place was prosperous. A place could only be valuable if it brought benefits to the nation. The "local economy" should be presented by "sutachisuku" (スタチスク), statistics, in forms of charts and tables "objectively."

Mary Poovey in her *A History of the Modern Fact* (1998) reminds us that what counts as "objective facts" depends on the historical and political contexts. She traces the production of knowledge in modern Europe, from the cases of double-entry bookkeeping to the coming era of statistics in the 1830s. Generating these "facts" with numerical representations became commonly accepted as legitimate for a variety of political and social requests in the mid-nineteenth century. In the case of Meiji Japan, as shown in the quotes from Fukuzawa, the use of "facts" was a part of western knowledge which gained good political legitimacy. It was because the legitimate foundation of the Meiji polity was exactly drawn from the magic of westernization and civilization. The use of these seemingly boring numbers, tables, maps, and statistics was indeed a highly shared political practices. This was a new common language to be imitated, learnt, and inscribed in written words and numbers that were accepted and mandated by the new nation-state and diffused among the localities. The common use of these cultural and cognitive constituents was thus an integral part of nation-formation.

4   Writing railway proposals as an isomorphic practice: a collective representation of nation reconfigured

The state did not order and instruct the localities to write a proposal in such a way, but people tried to borrow many ideological concepts and cognitive categories from the state and imitated others to write these proposals. When they had realized this, they subsequently made the charge against others as "simply following what others have claimed" and "forgot about the country and manipulated the map and statistics for their own sake." Yet I would like to highlight this intriguing observation

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[32] Fukuzawa Yukichi 1973: 52

that almost everyone claimed they were not asking railway for any private, local interest but were for the interest of the nation.

This was perhaps a perfect case of "structural isomorphism" as described in chapter 1. But from the above analysis, it also clearly "reflects a wider social process...which create[s] legitimacy by adopting recognizable forms and create[s] identity by touting their uniqueness."[33] Old local domains were now called the "localities" and the new central government was now called the "nation." They had a defined set of rhetoric of "the local and national interest" and their request could only be legitimate by defining the local interest as the national interest. Local people started to get familiarized with the way to present their "local identity" as a legitimate actor of the "nation," even though both were newly constructed entities with a shared set of categories and format of presentations. Only by asserting and employing these basic components to present themselves, they could justify that their places were indispensable for national interest, and thus deserved to have a railway built for them by the state.

Writers of these proposals hoped their readers — political authorities who decided whether they deserved a railway or not — to read their proposals, but we should not suppose that these documents would be studied by authorities carefully.

To conclude, this section argues, when the plan of railway building expands, the idea of nation was spreading into every corner of the country. Precisely, locomotives did not need to be actually built, but the plan itself was important to stimulate responses from diverse groups of communities. It was also not the content of the ideology of nation that mattered, but the homogenizing process of cognitive categories constituting the "nation" and the spreading of the categories among the local communities that deserves our explanation. We should try to explain how the idea of the nation or local interest were articulated and diffused into a highly uniformed practice among geographically diverse local communities when they tried to react to different railway plans made by the state or investors. The entity called nation was actualized in highly ritualized practices through, namely, writing a proposal to appeal to and justify the rationales and their needs for railway.

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[33] Pedersen and Dobbin 2006: 898

Section Three   **The nation turned inside-out: localities, politicians and local railway building in the coming era of political parties (1905-1937)**

1   Introduction

In the last section I have reviewed many proliferating local demands for railway building. Through proposal writing, on the one hand localities utilized many of those newly invented national discourses and cognitive categories that helped the collective sense-making of the new idea of nation. On the other hand this helped spreading of the railway belief. Writing proposals might also be seen as a new kind of political practice which inscribed many discourses on the use of railway into concrete written words down to the level of local authorities. In this section we will continue to see how ritualizing of a variety of practices transformed many abstract discourses into collective actions that gave a sense of realness towards the institutional myth.

A critical reason for the further ritualization of the institution was the coming of the democratic polity. Emerging elected politicians became the key agents in absorbing many of these local beliefs and strengthening them by bringing this issue up to the level of state politics.

During the Taisho period (1921-1926), local railway building projects gradually became an important platform upon which the interests of the political center and the periphery could be negotiated, translated and mediated. From the 1890s to the 1930s, many of the localities, where the railway network had not yet reached to, became more active and organized in asking the capitalists and then the state for the railways though without much success. Through more shared and formalized ways to ask for a railway among the localities, the emerging politicians co-opted this influx of local demands for the state's active help in infrastructural development. Politicians played an increasingly major role in representing the local interest by introducing the railway to their electoral districts. They started gaining political legitimacy in substituting for the Meiji oligarchs and other political players in governance under the new system of representative politics.

This section thus analyzes why and how the railway building was further interweaved into the political practices, thereby redefining the very meaning of the political foundation of legitimacy. I argue that the demand for local railway building was becoming a major "nexus of power," ritualizing the changing definition of and

157

relations among the localities, the central state and the wider world polity. The final aim is to show how "localities" became the legitimate foundation for the central state and how newly defined meanings of national interest were developed with the expansion of the local railway building plan, as manifested in the Hara Takashi's polity (1918-1921), in which the new ideas of political participation and democracy were manifested in and ritualized through local railway building.

2   *Stories of Political Parties*: **local railway building and election as life and death decisions**

It is then a question of how these practices became institutionalized. For the sake of comparison, the following report quoted from the book *Stories of Political Parties*, published in 1930, gave us some hints on how railway building was related to election, in the early Showa period.

> Many political party members in local areas are quite mobile and do not have any fixed memberships. Sometimes if government party A uses railway as a bait to attract the local people, then hundreds and thousands of them will submit the application form for party A's membership; it has nothing to do with the "party's ideology" (政党の主義), but it is the "localities' interest" (地方の利益) that attracts people's attention so that they are not necessarily supporting party A. Or if party A loses power and party B gains control of the parliament, perhaps party B will use the railway problem again to attract the local people and ask them to submit application form for party B's membership again. If party A gains popularity [because of railway promotion] then party B does the same; this is why so many people have "double membership" (二重党籍) and are members of both Seiyûkai and Minseitô.[34]

As the writer said, this had nothing to do with political ideology. This report described the "double party membership" problem in 1930 and nicely summarized the story of "the whole village joining a political party."[35] The localities asked for the politicians' help for channeling state resources for the railway building, while the politicians wanted votes from the localities to secure their seats in the diet. As a result, the change in ruling party after election made many local places to shift their political stance. As we will see in different reports from the 1910s to 1930s cited in the following, this kind of seemingly weird phenomena was not uncommon.

The report illustrated and defined the very nature of ritual representing a new

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[34] Nomubra 1930: 225-226
[35] Awaya 1988

political order based on representative democracy. Repetitive and collective actions, in this case meaning the election in democratic governance, became a must for both the politicians and the localities to participate in. For the localities, railway building symbolized one of the few advantages provided by the state and their requests of these advantages were legitimized by their votes. For the politicians, in addition to recruiting party members, they received money contribution through party fee and voluntary donations, and probably black money from construction firms.[36] To many commentators and rivals of political parties, these were portrayed as "corrupted" dealings.[37]

This comes to the later point about ideological struggles or perhaps two evolving world views towards a rational economy: One could say this new way to think about economy was a Keynesian kind of economic thinking, in a sense that the state now played a legitimate role to stimulate the economy by active reallocation of resources or by infrastructural building. This was originally seen as irrational or even harmful to the nation when party politicians advocated for and justified their election campaigns. We will tackle this issue at the last part of this chapter.

If the belief of the usefulness of railway building was taken for granted for the localities, and if the key to win an election was the ability for a politician to secure resources for local development, the very act of railway building and election became the same ritual for people to affirm their belief in the "railway" and the "nation" — a nation legitimately founded on the common practices of railway building qua national election, justified by the unspoken economic ideology of local development qua national development.

Douglas correctly argues that "institution makes life and death decisions."[38] The local railway and the election were two sides of the same coin. They became rituals of confidence because one could no longer distinguish whether the railway or the election was useful for the local economy or for the national development, but the collective efforts to participate in these rituals became a self-fulfilling prophecy. If one won an election the politicians could bring hopes and resources to those who supported them by laying tracks; if one lost it was fatal to the community. To compare and contrast, let us trace the making of this institution and move back to the era when

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[36] Mitchell 1996
[37] See for example Itô 1914
[38] Douglas 1986: 111-128

politicians had not yet became the political players who helped the localities to build railways.

3 Changing agents in ritualizing the railway belief: from capitalists to politicians

Localities deprived of political influence and means of soliciting capital could not build railway. Politicians, as we know now, finally won the political struggle in Taisho.

The politicians were not the only possible candidates. The oligarchs and the growing bureaucrats (including the military), who still dominated the state in the late Meiji, preferred the inter-city lines over local ones. Railway was costly which meant that the state could not afford to lay tracks everywhere. In the competition among rural places, some places were bound to be at a disadvantage to attract the government's attention. It at least implied that the national interest defined by the oligarchs and the bureaucrats did not include all of the rural and local places. It was also why those localities' efforts to write proposals were mostly futile, as proved by the hard fact that not many tracks were laid.

This section then describes the changing social agents who strengthened and kept promoting the belief towards railway. We will see why and how the capitalists gradually left and the politicians came in the scenarios, while the localities played a more important and active role in participating in the political process since the late Meiji. It shows that railway building was no longer a matter of local infrastructure building but gradually became a manifestation of a new collective form of political participation.

(a) The retreat of capitalists in local railway building: Narutô City, Chiba, 1880s

Most capitalists lost their interest in the railway simply because railway shares were no longer profitable after the nationalization of most private railways in the 1900s.[39] The case of Narutô City, located in the Sôbu Line and in the Chiba

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[39] Indeed, localities faced great difficulties in the 1890s when the collapse in stock market made most of the shell railway companies burst and consequentially the halt of railway construction work. It was then very common for one to flip around local histories all over Japan to find similar stories of how early railway plan was initiated in the late 1880s but stopped at 1890s, then not until the 1910s when politicians came to be their another hope of railway building.

Prefecture, provided us a very good illustration of the retreat of the capitalists and the lack of the capitalist institution that greatly hindered local railway development in the 1890s. A local historian collected some archives about a local entrepreneur called Yasui Harutami, a "visionary local ancestor" who paid great efforts to introduce the railway into his place.[40]

> Mr. Yasui was called Hanzo and later, Harutami... Mr. Yasui was well-educated and had already been exceptionally smart since his childhood... He was charming and had a lofty manner... At the 20th year of the Meiji [1887], he suggested the building of Chiba railway, distributed opinion letters, organized among people who had the same thought, and started the railway company... Twenty years before, people still did not know the importance of railway. In the meantime, the one who was visionary and courageous enough to suggest and organize the railway company was Mr. Yasui. He worked hard on this since the 20th year of the Meiji. After that, he ran here and there, worked very hard, but still he could not have a sound business. He spent all his money and became ill. Finally, he could not manage to witness its success.[41]

The above paragraph was carved on a stone monument which was erected in 1912. This was the result of the collective effort among people in Narutô to pay respect to Mr. Yasui as an important ancestor and to present him as a representative local person.[42]

Capitalism — the capitalists and capitalist institution — failed in helping the local railway construction. At the 1880s, Mr. Yasui relied heavily on personal networks. His diary clearly indicated how he walked through the whole area to convince potential investors and officials. Most of these investors were wealthy person in their villages who did not have the connections. Yasui had a hard time to attract investment from Tokyo and Osaka. In order to submit a proposal to the government, the initial capital of the company was used for basic survey and collection of statistical data of the freight volume in the area. The stock price was once raised to two to three times more than the original price because people gossiped that the Chiba Railway had the military's full support in the late 1880s. Yet the stock bubbles exploded together with the construction plan and hence the myths and beliefs in railway once shared among the capitalists were lost. At last, the company spent all

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[40] Tsukamoto (1999) provided a very comprehensive account of the railway from the viewpoint of this local ancestor. He edited a very useful materials which recorded well of how Mr. Yasui tried hard to organize the railway company.

[41] Tsukamoto 1999

[42] It is important to note that the interest in local history was a contemporary phenomenon for community to investigate and recreate their past for the strengthening of local identity, i.e. the data we relied on is a product of contemporary concern.

the initial capital, Yasui was sick and deceased, and so he "could not manage to witness its success."

From the above case, we can see that the capitalists were no longer the main supporter for railway construction. In the case of railway business, as many major lines were nationalized, the remaining private railways were limited to some profitable lines with stable revenue and restricted to either urban-based or inter-or-intra-city transportation.

One may ask, then, why the local communities still have confidence in the railway, when the officials or the capitalists became conservative in railway building when the speculative bubble exploded? The key is to understand that the very definition of "economic interest" meant very different things for these social agents. The capitalists aimed at the speculative returns from railway shares or the business revenues from railway operation while the localities' "interest" was restricted to the success of the introduction of the railway to its place.

(b) The coming of politicians: Nishiki-machi, Yamaguchi, 1910s

The Hiroshima Prefecture edited its local history in which an oral history record is very useful for us to understand how different social actors came in or out of scenarios in different historical periods. The interviewee, Mr. Sumi, was born in 1904 with a degree from Keio University in 1928. He was elected to be the councilor of the local assembly from 1955 onwards, and continued to have political influence in his village, Nishiki-machi, in the Yamaguchi Prefecture. He was interviewed at 1995 on his personal experience about a privatized local railway line, the Nishikigawa Seiryû Line, or the former Gannichi Line of the JNR, linking Iwakuni and Tsuwano.[43]

I had already quoted his expression of the railway as a "mystique" at the start of chapter 1. But the following quote reveals an important fact that why the capitalists failed to assist the localities to build railways in the 1910s.

> In my area, the first railway plan was originated in 1912, initiated by a gentleman called Nagada of the Iwakuni. He was an elected councilor, the mayor of Iwakuni, and also the editor of *Jitsugyô no Nippon* [Business Japan]. This man walked from Iwakuni through Nishikigawa to Tsuwano by himself, and talked to localities about his railway plan.

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[43] Sumi was interviewed because he was the head of this company and the railway preservation social movement was a hotly debated topic among localities at the 1990s after the privatization of the JNR. To remind that it is necessary to know the following historical record was a product of contemporary concern among localities in order to understand why he would say so.

Then [people in] Hiroshima started a project to build railway connecting to Tsuwano, passing through Iwakuni, ...[names of places]..., then to my village of Nishiki-machi...which was thought to be useful to transport materials from inner Iwakuni of Tsuwano directly to Hiroshima. For sure, the city of Iwakuni was also enthusiastic about that.

Mr. Nagada knew the Yasuda Zenjirô of the Yasuda Zaibatsu very well, who concerned very much about railway business and invested into railway project in Eichigo and Kagoshima. At the 2nd year of the Taisho [1913], Mr Nagada brought Yasuda to our places... Fifty members from villages along the projected route came to Iwakuni and had a dinner reception for him at where he stayed. At the time, Mr. Yasuda said, "railway cannot be profitable immediately after its construction. It takes time... After I walked through the place by myself I found good resources of timber and ore, so I decided to invest a half million yen to build the railway. Yet everyone please also contribute by buying shares." You know five hundred thousands yen was really a huge amount of money at that time! He even said, "If that does not work I will solicit capital from Tokyo and Osaka..."

Participants clapped their hands after his speech, and became highly enthusiastic to buy the shares. The survey team came and even construction materials were prepared. Yet in 1913 the First World War came. Mr. Nagada consulted with Yasuda and concluded that it was difficult to continue... At 1918 the war ended... But the railway construction license had already been extended for several times and was finally cancelled. In addition, Yasuda was dead... and inflation made the successor unwilling to continue the construction. It was also difficult to find new investors. Finally our movement changed to asking the government to build for us until now.[44]

Even Yasuda Zaibatsu at the time was famous for its willingness to invest in the local railway, but we can see it depended heavily on the external economic environment. Finally the only patron that people in local areas could rely on was the government. What had caused the changes? Entering the Taisho period, the politicians came in. Mr Sumi continued,

I can still remember when I was a child, survey team with a red-white stick would come to my village if there would be an election soon. But after the election the survey ended, and it kept on for twenty years. No one knew whether there would be a railway. Finally, some localities organized a bus company, and my father became the first president.[45]

He remembered he saw that the survey team, who were possibly outsiders of the town

[44] Yamaguchiken 2000: 852
[45] Yamaguchiken 2000: 852

with "red-white stick," regularly appeared in the area when an election was near.[46] The important point to note regarding this short piece of interview is that it was one of the few records showing how the politicians came into scenarios and what they had (and had not) done. When the survey team with a red-white stick appeared, it signified a changing political practice. With the help of politicians who claimed to represent the local interest, asking for railway building became a *common* platform in which political participation in state affairs among commoners was made possible. This was probably the first, and still to be one of the few political ritual which successfully glued together the central state and the local communities in modern Japan.

One may also interpret that the issue of railway building could also be a manifestation of political participation. In other words, we should instead pay attention to why the problem of local railway building would be curiously and arbitrarily coupled to party politics since the late Meiji period.

(c)   From written documents to organized petitioning movements

The coupling between the problem of local railway building and the coming of democratic representation should then be considered in the wider political context. As we have reviewed in the last chapter, from the 1880s onwards not only the capitalists but also the diet members and local leaders found the suggestion of "military railway" made by the army highly useful when they tried to convince the state to construct local branch lines that the investors and the central government had no interest or priority to build.[47]   In the research process I also explored documents well preserved in the Military Archival Library. Interestingly, I found that the localities all over the country at the late 1880s wrote their applications in the same way by referring to the necessity of "military purpose" of railway. Among most of the proposals I have reviewed, railways building in remote villages in the mountain were said to be important because, echoing the army, costal lines were open to battleship bombardment, while those villages located near the sea stated that the proposed routes were near army camps or vital to transporting supplies. It sounded like all places over

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[46] Noted that the above quote was possibly the interviewee's first hand experience, while the first quote were not necessarily the interviewee's first-hand experience but possibly what his father told him. Unfortunately, it is hard to tell from this record alone whether the localities approached politicians or not before the interviewee's father decided to organize a bus company.
[47] Ericson 1996: 201

the country were "strategic places."[48] As these applications were collected by the Minister of Army at the time, the most interesting thing was that one could find many crosses besides these "military reasons" all over the archives. The Minister of Army at the time might find that most of these reasons were stupid excuses. In other words, this writing ritual was far from sufficient to make their request successful. Many did, but more did not.

The Imperial Diet opened in the 1890 was a key institution in which the elected politicians soon played an important role in articulating what the local interest meant in order for them to claim to represent for. Indeed, the only thing the diet members could do in the 1890s was to ask the government for more resources for local development. The ones who held power were still the Meiji oligarchs. The localities and their representatives could only seek for political patronage from and personal attachments to those oligarchs in power in order to seek help from the state.

This was difficult. One can take a look at an interesting case of the City of Kure (呉市) in Hiroshima. With a naval base, Kure was and still is an important military place in western Japan. Like other places during the railway fever at the mid-1880s, the local leaders, especially entrepreneurs and merchants, wished to have a railway built. As the city government had published two well documented booklets on the history, we have one of the best detailed accounts for the railway building movement.

The earlier pamphlet first recorded the failed efforts to solicit the initial capital in the mid-1880s.[49] After the Imperial Diet was established, the local people turned to urge their representative to find ways to convince and ask the Meiji oligarchs for the line connecting the naval port city of Kure and the major line near Hiroshima. Though it was supposed to be finished quickly with very good reasons and the construction plan had indeed already been passed for years, due to financial problem of the state the construction was delayed. The record indicated how the localities took tremendous efforts to hurry the government before the completion of the line in the late 1890s.

> After the plan of Kure-line was rejected by the Financial Minister Matsumoto, we knew that the Transport Ministry was angry. Councilor Naito [the diet representative] was depressed and met with Matsumoto, and tried to convince him by explaining the importance of the railway (of Kure) to the national defense of the country and also about the changing situation of East Asia. Yet Matsumoto

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[48] Matsushita 2004
[49] Similar cases could also be found in many local places in Northeastern Japan (Shidugawachô Kyôiku linkai 1977; Okazaki 1999; Isobe 1989) and in Ibaraki (Nakagawa 1980a; 1980b; 1981a; 1981b), among others.

said "I do not have even a yen for it, please wait for one or two more years" and it escalated to a quarrel...

... [Councilor Naito] had no options left and could only go to visit Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo, arguing how urgent the nation's situation was and how important the construction of Kure-Line was to the national defense. Crying in tears and blood, and reminding how dangerous it was when there was no railway connection to Kure at the time of Sino-Japanese War, Naito said "you asked we wait, we could wait, but could you make a decision within the time of your cabinet?" Then the three-hour long great debate suddenly ended and Naito finally closed his mouth. Yamagata fell into a trance and was engaged in a deep thought for a while, and there was a ten minute dead silence in the room. Yamagata opened his mouth finally, and said that, "I now clearly understand your points. For the sake of the emperor and the country, I should not hesitate to help you and arrange an urgent meeting on this matter immediately within one or two days, and I hope the diet can pass the construction plan very soon." Councilor Naito passionately cried in hot tears, his head sank, and he was deeply touched by Yamagata's help.[50]

The writer exaggerated in order to convince his readers of the great efforts their ancestors had paid.[51] We never know how true the description was, but Yamagata's respond was surely dramatic enough. Perhaps Yamagata simply fell asleep, but let's suppose he was hearing and smart enough, he possibly wondered how true their "patriotism" was when they asked for a local railway. Kure was indeed a naval port and the localities' claim in terms of the national interest was fully justified, but Yamgata kept silent for ten minutes after the councilor took three hours to convince him. Maybe Yamagata wanted to test the councilor's true intentions, as the councilor needed to convince Yamagata by crying "in tears and blood" to make him believe in their patriotic motivation. Yet one can no longer distinguish to what extent people's motivations were real or not, because everyone used the same languages and did the same ritual. The state-localities relations were necessarily arbitrary because the political practice based on personal attachments to authorities was not predictable when compared to standardized application procedures.

The finish of the section linking the city of Kure and Hiroshima was only a start. The local leaders were then asking for another seashore route to connect Kure and other villages.

Not surprisingly, the localities knew that neither the government nor any

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[50] Sangosen Zentsûshiki Shukuga Kyôsankai 1935: 8-10
[51] But at the time of 1899, even Councilor Naito, for example, was not much praised, as politicians were still inferior to oligarchs and did not have much power.

investors would have interest to build the section of this sea-side local route which served only the localities, because there was another parallel major line. An organizing committee aimed at facilitating the railway building was established in 1912 and the line was finished in 1935. We do not go into details of their history, but it is quite worthwhile to mention that before the completion of this line, it took more than thirty years for the local committee to keep petitioning to the state, "more than hundreds times counted."

The petitioning has been continuing, and right after the WWII the local people sent the following letter, originally written in English and republished in the second booklet of the history of Kure Line, to the GHQ of the US government, asking for the upgrading of the line.

c/o Kure Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kure
April 18th, 1949
Col. H. T. Miller Chief,
Civil Transportation Section,
GHQ, SCAP.
Dear Colonel:
We, undersigned members of the Committee formed for the purpose of making the present Kure branch line [of] the Sanyô Main Line, should be very grateful indeed, if you would be so good as to take the trouble to read the following petition and to give your very favorable and sympathetic considerations to the proposals as suggested therein on matters of double-tracking and electrification of the Kure Line (Mibara-Kaitaichi), as such steps are considered by all concerned to be essential for the strengthening of railway transportation as a general and for the development of local industries...

Although it was only a single track-line, the transportation facilities by its construction, became a sort of epoch-making event in the history of the development of local industries and cultures, contributing tremendously to the present prosperity of the coastal district which is proud of such industries as shipbuilding, vehicle and machinery-making and metal and chemical industries. If the double-tracking of Kure line had been realized at the time of its construction... cities and towns... would have constituted a great commercial and industrial belt along the coast... thereby contributing conspicuously to the nation's cause on the matter of the increase of production and the development of foreign trade...

Since the termination of the War, our country has been striving for the achievement of the world peace by means of foreign trade and tourist industry — two greatest national policies.... Mt. Noro, national park designate and innumerable other beauty spots along the Line make, without any exaggeration, a real sea-side park of the fine scale which will not fail to attract many tourists in the future... Local people are inclined to be kind and warm-hearted. Tourist will,

therefore, find the place full of poetic sense and picturesque scenery and as such, together with many delicious food available in all seasons, certainty be charmed by the very congenial and attractive atmosphere of the place...

Whether the district along the Kure line veiled so long and so tragically by militaristic stiffness, will be able to make debut before the footlight of international tourist, with splendid charm and vital attractiveness or not, depends entirely upon the earliest realization of the double-tracking and electrification of the Line...[52]

We have no idea how this document was prepared. This letter was written in English and sent to the GHQ, and the plan was soon approved by the new authority. We can see that there were two sets of ideas, one about the old rhetoric of national economic development, another new one about the "world peace and tourist attraction." These were myths, both old and new, corresponding to different political authorities that made their proposals more legitimate. While the contents of these ideas were not so important, what is important is what kinds of practices were made legitimate by these ideas. The localities had kept on petitioning to the political authorities for resources by writing proposals and petitioning with the help of the politicians.

4 Ritualizing the Taisho Polity from above: the coming of party politics legitimately founded on local railway building

By the Taisho period, railway policies became a vital arena in which new players of party politicians and localities, who entered the political scene of the Taisho Democracy, tried to ask for further expansion of local railway construction.[53] Yet the belief in railway was further ritualized and interwoven into the new political practices of representative election and hence local railway building became the very essence of the changing definition of the Taisho polity.[54] Taisho politicians displaced the oligarchs and the bureaucrats by redefining the "national interest" of the railway, from

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[52] Okada 1955: appendix

[53] The nationalized railway became a huge organization of the Government Railways which served the nation and the economy. Different from Kinzley (2006) who analyzes the make-up and also the running of the Government Railways, the current approach put most of the attention to the political underpinnings of railway policies. Also, railway issue was still largely concerned about but not limited to the problem of high finance as in the late Meiji period, as the debate at the time shifted to whether the money should be spent in improving the existing networks and organization or in constructing more local lines.

[54] One important shortcoming of the current research is that it does not account for Japan's colonial railway in the context of colonialism due to its limited scope of research.

serving the central state, cities, and commerce as in the late Meiji, to helping the localities, rural, and the local development. In other words, through the making of local railway building as an important political agenda in the diet, the politicians tried to seize power from the oligarchs by absorbing local demands of the railway building and by claiming its legitimate role in representing the *local interest* as the national interest. Railway building became actually a practice which made the idea of political participation visible. The following section thus tries to delineate why and how that would be the case.

(a) Background studies: Hara Takashi and the changing legitimate foundation of the nation in the Taisho period

Hara Takashi (原敬 1856-1921), the president of Seiyûkai (政友会)(1914-1921) and former prime minister (1918-1921), was an important figure in modern Japanese history that the current research should definitely discuss about. Considered to be the first "Civilian Prime Minster" without noble background, Hara was (in-)famous for his national policy of infrastructure building in localities. He was referred to as the founder of the politics of *gaden-intetsu* (我田引鉄), "introducing railway to our paddy fields," a phrase coined by his political rivals at their time. Yet this Japanese style of barrel politics, or in a more formal term, *rieki yûdô* (利益誘導) or "interest-induced," was not limited to the time of the Hara cabinet. Today this term was commonly used to attack those "corrupted" politicians who introduced expensive but rarely used infrastructures to their electoral districts to solicit votes.

The rather negative image of *gaden-intetsu* in the current discourse on Japanese politics, like being characterized as the origin of corruption and economic inefficiency of expensive infrastructural building in the rural areas, was already very common in the 1910s when Hara and Seiyûkai's political rivals attacked them as "using railway construction to seduce innocent localities."[55] To understand the secret of Hara Takashi's polity and the important role of railway building underneath his popularity among the civilians, however, requires our historical imagination to go beyond the above preconceptions of corrupted politicians and innocent localities.

To start with, Mitani Taichirô's *The Formation of Japanese Party Politics* (1967)

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[55] These images became more popular when the Japanese National Railways was thrown into question from the late 1960s until the privatization problem of it in the 1980s, when the whole worldview of economy and nation was re-institutionalized again.

is perhaps the earliest comprehensive treatment on Taisho politics and still the best reference we can rely on.[56] He argues that there was a fundamental change of the legitimate bases of Japan in the 1910s. On the one hand, Japan had faced a rapidly changing international reality. On the other hand, the Taisho governance faced the problem of political succession.

First, it is important to consider the changing international environment at the Taisho time. While barefaced western imperialism since the late nineteenth century was tamed,[57] the Japanese cabinets under the oligarchs' influences all failed to respond to the changes in the 1910s, for example, the China and Russia revolution, the increasing importance of America, and the demise of European imperialism in East Asia.[58] The rise of party politics was a direct response to the failure of the diplomatic policies of the old oligarchs who had made Japan isolated in international relationships.[59]

After the First World War and the Paris Conference at the time of the Hara cabinet, the western countries started to condemn military might or colonization. Hara was extremely sensitive to the changing international situation, whose diplomatic visions were shaped by his earlier experiences in international law which assisted him greatly.[60] In his vision of the Taisho polity, a nation was no longer legitimately founded on the imperialism, colonial exploitation, and military might as in the Meiji era. At his time, an ideal and legitimate nation could not be isolated and the strength and reputation for a nation should depend also on its diplomacy and commerce power. The rise of Hara Takashi and party politics in the Taisho was then a response to the

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[56] Unlike most political historians, the research examines Hara Takashi not as an individual politician and this is not a conventional historical study of the complex Taisho party politics. Investigating Taisho politics for the first time is like entering a forest that one lost in the detailed political process. Among many important scholarly works produced on Taisho Democracy focuses mainly on the changing political process within the arena of politics. Thus works by Najita (1967) and Duus (1968), for example, focuses more on the complex relationships between parties and different political players. Instead of the political skills of a particular politician, the current research however pays attention to the macroscopic changes of political legitimacy of the Taisho polity as seen the rise of party politics in related to local railway construction, an important insight brought by Mitani. See also Matsuo 1966; Toyama 1966; Kato 1974; Banno 2001.

[57] Polanyi 1985; Meyer 1988

[58] Mitani 1967; Kawada 1998

[59] Mitani 1967; Kawada 1998

[60] During his earlier time serving as diplomatic bureau in the 1890s, for example, Hara was experienced in international law and diplomatic affairs on treaty amendments. Several works by Hara at this time (that scholars tended to overlook) were mainly on the subject matter. The diplomatic vision and sensitivity of Hara Takashi assisted him to a great deal that he could rightly manipulate the issue of foreign affairs in securing his wills to power during the demise of oligarchs at the late 1910s.

changing legitimate foundation of a nation-state in the world society.[61]

Mitani argues that the changing political structure of the Taisho state, in which the oligarch power was gradually replaced by the party politicians, should be considered as a direct response to the above international environment. Embedded in the international environments since the Meiji restoration, the political legitimacy of the Meiji state was founded on its de-facto success of modernizing the country, i.e. to the extent that the Meiji government could install those institutions resembling and being recognized by the "West" at the late nineteenth century. Mitani borrowed many insights from Weber to argue that during the Taisho period in the 1910s, when these old Meiji leaders, i.e. the generation who had really experienced the Meiji restoration, were dying out, there was a succession problem requiring new legitimate bases.[62] *Genro* (元老 elder statesmen) like Yamagata and Saionji still had the power of making the final political decisions, like assigning prime ministers and cabinets, but *genro* became only "the symbolic representation" of the Meiji glory and merely "an institutional arrangement of charismatic legitimacy."[63] In reality their actual influence was only restricted to the military and they lost much control in bureaucracy.[64] The demise of the oligarchs provided much space for the development of parties during the changing political circumstances in the 1910s and the 1920s. Amid this background, Mitani argues that through analyzing the important figure of Hara Takashi we can understand the emergent role of the political parties, who successfully replaced *genro*, bureaucracy and the military to seize power in governance.

(b) Party politics founded on local railway building

I will then discuss the role of elected politicians and localities respectively in forging a common understanding of the importance of local railway building and a new collective sense of nation. We have reviewed some key historical conditions to account for the emergent party politics in the Taisho period, arguing that the localities became the newly constructed legitimate constituent of a nation. But I argue that the important linkage was to ascertain how these abstract claims made by the politicians

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[61] Meyer 1988; Kawada 1998
[62] Mitani 1967: 211; Weber in Roth and Wittich (eds.) 1968: 938-939; see also Weber's discussion of party politics in Germany at the same period for comparison. Weber in Roth and Wittich (eds.) 1968: 1381-1481; Weber 2004.
[63] Mitani 1967: 39-42.
[64] Mitani 1967: 44

were also intertwined into the actual practice and thereby lending legitimacy to both the politicians and the localities' attempt to solicit and allocate resources from the central government to the rural developments. I argue that railway building was becoming a central agenda as well as a common platform of communication between the two in this period. The process was not dominated by either side as both sides exerted some influence on each other. The following sections analyze the interplay between them, and the particular difficulties they faced respectively in the political center of the diet and the periphery of the rural localities, especially in the Northeastern Japan.

(i)   "Political Conflict and Party Defect" in 1910

We first turn to the discussion of Mitani's argument as well as some historical documents that he used. Even though Mitani's argument was centered on the process of law-making in the central state, his book was famous for his thesis of local railway building as democracy building, appearing only at the end of the chapter regarding the political debate of reconstructing railway gauze of major routes.[65] His final conclusion was largely based on a book called "Political conflict and Party Defect."[66]

This book appeared in 1914 and was probably the first systematic account of "the corruption of Seiyûkai" politicians who extensively used different means to "seduce naïve local people." The term "real interest political strategy" (実利政略 Jitsuri Seiryaku) was also not Mitani's invention but coined by another author Hosoi,[67] referring to how the politicians promised to channel central state resources to the local development, especially infrastructural building like laying tracks or repairing dams. It was basically a journalistic report of the "corruption of party politics" in the year around 1910. The author, Hosoi, simply listed the "crime of corrupted politicians" in each prefecture. At the foreword, he explained clearly his argument of why the election strategy of Seiyûkai was harmful to the country.

> Policies (政策) should go first and then the gain in power (政権) followed, but these party politicians reversed the means for the end... To scramble for power, on the one hand, they made compromise to those [oligarchs] who still held power. On the other hand, they cheated the people in order to gain local support and votes, while at the same time chasing after private interest and gain (私欲私利). Seiyûkai dominated the House of Representatives... It seduced naïve local

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[65]   Mitani 1967. Najita 1967.
[66]   Hosoi 1914.
[67]   Mitani 1967: 165

172

people (純朴なる地方民を誘惑する) under the beautiful slogan of postwar management (戦後経営) by having excessive infrastructural building, that led to the financial crisis and brought great pressures to the economy. The nation was endangered.[68]

Indeed, this was quite an interesting response to the emerging party politics. Election, though by no means a universal suffrage, was a new political ritual at the time around 1910. To the author, the politicians only cared about their seats in the diet, which was to put the cart before the horse ("a reverse of the means (power) for the end (policy).") In his views, these politicians, exclusively Seiyūkai's members, were concerned only about chasing after "private interest and votes," while the local people, without specifying whom he referred to, were equated to simple-minded naïve peasants. These were not only rhetoric of propaganda, but a new set of language to conceptualize a changing political reality. To our concern, one should be clear of the key phenomenon that he strongly opposed to, which is quoted as below.

> All over the country, the only way that politicians could seduce local people was to send survey team to areas controlled by the opposite party. They showed that they were willing to lay tracks and build roads, forcing local people to join in the party and asking them for money contribution in return. Yet they did not have any intention to have construction work. Survey instruments were left behind. But they did not come back and the roads were still ruined. Sometimes it was not good if the railways were not finished for a long time, then they built some extremely short roads here and there. If new party members joined in and if the party received contribution, they would continue the construction; if not, they would stop construction.[69]

Though exaggerated, it is logical to conclude that this kind of phenomena became quite visible, or at least became a sign of warning to the author, in the early 1910s. The survey team was the sign of how the central state power, now seized by the politicians, tried to impose the new ritual, that of election and railway building, into the localities.

The key is that, however, those languages in the first quote were used in an ad-hoc way for him to make sense of the new political practices in the second quote. These were indeed both a theory of economy and a language of national morality. To the author, to explain why the railway building suddenly became prevailing in the localities, he said that these were caused by the private interest of the politicians who

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[68] Hosoi 1914: 5-7
[69] Hosoi 1914: 7-8; also quoted also in Mitani 1967: 181

put the cart before the horse. To justify his stance, he condemned that the selfish politicians raised foreign loans for the local infrastructural construction that endangered the nation.

So what were those new political practices brought by the election? Indeed, the author reported the shortcomings of the party politics, i.e. the "bad" practices done by Seiyûkai, and listed those cases prefecture by prefecture.[70] Among forty-five major prefectures he listed, ten of them were reported of cases that the Seiyûkai used the railway building as the main method to attract votes. This election tactics was quite reasonably limited to those underdeveloped areas, i.e. areas unconnected to the railway networks.

One distinctive feature was that *all* Northeastern Japan prefectures, in addition to many other areas in Eastern Japan, were reported of "party corruption." For example, in the most representative case of the Iwate prefecture in 1914, the home electoral district of the future Prime Minster Hara Takashi, the author told us "Seiyûkai is the same concept equal to early completion of railway" (政友会即鉄道速成) in Iwate. Survey teams were sent all over the prefecture. Two-third of the areas was said to be already controlled by Seiyûkai, even though this is somewhat exaggerated. In reality they only occupied half of the seats of the prefecture assembly.[71]

Yet Hosoi's observation is still valid. Relying on the railway building history for hard facts, only after Hara Takashi became the Prime Minister in 1918 that small local railways started to blossom in the prefecture, linking all major towns and villages.[72]

Though without much concrete analysis, the same description of "real interest political strategy" appeared in the chapters of Miyagi[73] and Fukushima prefectures.[74] According to Hosoi, Hara's propaganda also extended to Aomori. Some light railway lines were abandoned by Hara if that area was controlled by another party. Seiyûkai even turned a politician into its member by promising his electoral area a railway.[75]

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[70] Although the author, Hosoi, a journalist, claimed himself to be fair and objective, this was a book of propaganda written for combating Seiyûkai's rapid expansion, from which one could easily identify the author's exaggerated tone against Seiyûkai's new methods to attract votes. Yet what he said was probably true to some extent. Mitani, in the last part of his analysis, simply followed the Hosoi's list to build his argument.

[71] Hosoi 1914: 237-238; Mitani 1967: 166

[72] Except the major truck line of Tôhoku Line (which was built by the former Nippon Tetsudô and was opened at 1891 to Aomori), some small lines for industrial use or by horse power, and a section near the hometown of the poet Miyakawa Kenji.

[73] Hosoi 1914: 304-305; Mitani 1995: 166

[74] Hosoi 1914: 170-172

[75] Hosoi 1914: 128-129

In Nîgata, a case of "the whole village joining a party" was also reported.

> When Hara was the President of Railway Council… [Seiyûkai] asked the whole village to become party members, in exchange for a railway of eleven miles long with six stations. They also… favored a village by choosing a more expensive route, which costs ten millions more, just because of political considerations.[76]

Hosoi's book was perhaps the first comprehensive but unavoidably biased account to chart out the above process. Indeed, not only Seiyûkai but the opposition parties also tried to manage to build a railway to one's electoral district. Yet this kind of report is not totally non-sense. For example, in 1922, right after the death of Hara Takashi, another journalist reported on the conflicts between the prefectural officials and the politicians.[77] A politician from Kenseikai planned a light railway route and went to the prefectural head, who was from Seiyûkai. Without any reasons, we were told, the plan was rejected. This man went to the head for an explanation. The head said, " Huh (フ フ ン), why don't you propose this project when it's the turn for Kenseikai to become the ruling party?"[78] In 1930s, then, we had numerous reports as cited in the previous section on the double membership problem — similar practices became widespread and shared by different parties irrespective of their political ideologies within that twenty years.

(ii)   A promise made by cunning politicians to seduce naïve localities?

Hosoi's report also reveals that in the Sakata area, a port city in Yamagata prefecture, Seiyûkai even changed the whole political situation by highlighting the railway issue in 1910. A Seiyûkai representative came to convince the local chamber of commerce and heads of villages that the localities should go to Tokyo to have petition with the help of the party.[79] Indeed, almost nine hundred people joined Seiyûkai immediately. This caused a panic to the local party and they immediately went to negotiate with the Seiyûkai representative. This party broke up into fractions. Some tried to organize speeches to oppose against this kind of strategy, but more joined Seiyûkai or cooperated with them. Hosoi reported another interesting account of how "cunning politicians" organized these "naïve local people" to have petition in

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[76] Hosoi 1914: 82-83; Mitani 1967: 166
[77] Itô 1922. See especially report of Iwate prefecture on how Seiyûkai dominated local politics by using railway issue, page 31-40.
[78] Itô 1922: 43
[79] Masumi 1988: 164-166

Tokyo afterwards.

> When local representatives went to Tokyo petitioning for railway building, Kobayashi, Seiyûkai member and also the director of Railway Council, sent a taxi from his own company to pick them up at Ueno station in order to surprise them… He then asked them waiting in a strange room and asked his staff to talk with these local petitioners in great courtesy… When Kobayashi was back, these staff also used the same respectful tone to talk to him. The local people were greatly impressed when they saw these staff respected them in the same way as if to their superior. These localities had just been overwhelmed by the nice trip of speedy automobile… After discussing a while they already created an atmosphere of great enthusiasm in full support of railway building… yet this was only a trick to cheat the naïve local people…[80]

It depends on one's definition whether the above method was a trick or not; similar kinds of petition was not totally new to local elites.[81] But what made the difference was that Seiyûkai politicians did pay great attention to these local people by sending a taxi — a magical technology again — to make these petitioners "overwhelmed" and a prestigious official to respect these "naïve local people." These were all new political practices. Hosoi continued,

> …But treachery would finally be exposed. As predicted, this kind of ridiculous drama also appeared in the localities. Two rail lines were planned and approved, and a survey team was sent immediately. An office of construction was ready and the team started surveying in the area. The local people who observed this were impressed. They set up parties to celebrate and invited a representative from Tokyo to join in, who actually knew what really happened… Yet at the moment right after the change in ruling cabinet, the construction was halted. The localities were angry and blamed the new cabinet's "passive policies." Instead they appreciate Seiyûkai's virtuous deeds (功德). Later, the [Seiyûkai] representative told one of the localities that "actually Seiyûkai had already known that the Railway Council did not have any budget from the very beginning…," which made the local people surprised…[82]

If one believes in a drama, this drama is no longer a fiction but a new social reality. This quote reveals an important point of why at the time of the 1910s, the success of Seiyûkai relied ironically on its failure to construct railway for all localities at once. If their opposite parties or political rivals (whether oligarchs or bureaucrats) at the central state refused to help the localities, even if they had very good reasons to do so, their refusal became very good excuses for Seiyûkai to explain why they failed to help

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[80] Hosoi 1914: 259-260; Mitani 1967: 166

[81] According to Mitaini, these local people were possibly not naïve peasants. At the time to have a right to vote, these were mostly wealthy people. They were indeed "local famed leaders", or Meibôka; see Mitani 1967: 171-172.

[82] Hosoi 1914: 259-260; Mitani 1967: 166

the local people. For example, in Shimane Prefecture, one of the prefectures without any railway connection until the 1900s, we are told that Seiyûkai always used the problem of railway building to attack the opposite parties for decades.[83] If political rivals could not even formulate good reasons to counteract that, they lost their legitimate ground. As Hosoi's report indicated, starting from 1910 at the era of the dawn of party politics, Seiyûkai set up a good political ground in which irrespective of one's political ideologies, both Seiyûkai and its political rivals were trying hard to formulate rationales to justify or oppose to setting local railway building as a legitimate political agenda. Mitani, then, nicely summarizes that the "real interest" approach of Seiyûkai was emerging. The opposite political rivals started to formulate a "moralistic account" to try to counteract these politicians' successful "real interest" political strategy because the politicians actually gained new moral ground by establishing a common agenda allowing the backup of the localities to support their legitimate role in state politics.

(c)   "Advertise goat head and sell dog meat"? Significance of the promise

The politicians' claim to help laying tracks and the localities' will to build railway were mutually enforcing, but one did not necessarily lay any tracks in reality; instead the promise to build was more important. This is related to a theoretical point that later historians, who disagreed with Mitani, argued that the political parties did not really build local railway.[84] This criticism was actually made from the time of 1910. In the case of Akita prefecture, Hosoi reported,

> In South-Akita, Hara ordered the prefectural head to clear any obstacles to the expansion of the party's influence, like even changing a police head in a village. Yet the light railway plan between Ômagari and Kurosawajiri [now Kitakami City] became the most important bait to win the hearts of the people... This railway was already planned for ten years... The Seiyûkai promised orally but did not really construct it...
>
> I want to analyze the fundamental problem of how Seiyûkai used the light railway construction to expand its political influence. Its *Light Railway Construction Law*... did not specify whether the diet had the power to decide any plan or not, and it did not specify the places... It simply relied on the government office to judge... Originally the bureau office decided the building plan, but then Seiyûkai used this law to expand its party influence. Seiyûkai orally promised to lay tracks to about twenty places, and this plan relied on foreign loan for

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[83] Hosoi 1914: 275-276; Mitani 1967: 166
[84] Itô 1991; Ariizumi 1985

financing resources. The so-called "postwar management" actually made the financial status of the state unsecured, causing the collapse of national fiscal plan, and violating the spirit of publicity of political party.[85]

This quote reveals several interesting points which are relevant to some important theoretical concerns. The quote mentioned the *Light Railway Law*, which was implemented in 1910. As the writer argued, this law had much grey zone that the politicians could possibly manipulate.[86]

The author pointed out that the politicians did not really intend to build railway. One should note, however, that this was not simply an empirical question.[87] He concluded,

> The promise [the party had] made on railway construction was just like the one made by a prostitute to her customers…They had spent the state budget to send survey team… even they did not really hurry for the construction, they showed an imposing manner that perplexed the local people. People might call this advertise wine and sell vinegar (羊頭を掲げて狗肉を売る or literally "advertise goat head and sell dog meat"), but Seiyûkai did not even have any goat head to advertise from the start.[88]

"Advertise goat head and sell dog meat," in this context, refers to the gap between the politicians' long-term promise to build railway and the fact that they did not really want to build it. Although Hosoi's assertion was not totally true, he revealed an important question of to what extent the politicians' promise was fulfilled.

To refer to the local railway building in Taisho Democracy as merely pork-barrel politics does not exhaust and account for the complex rearrangement of how railway building evolved into an important national political agenda and was also legitimated by a totally new political ritual, namely election. It was because as long as the politicians could never finish its networks promised, this dream would continue and be reinforced by election, an important political ritual of contemporary Japan. The unquestioned belief towards the use of railway and the hope of channeling state

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[85] Hosoi 1914: 202-206

[86] After the nationalization of railways in 1905, under the private railway regulation it is very difficult for one to open a private railway. This law with fewer restrictions was originally planned to facilitate some small scale local railways. This relates to the later discussion by Mitani on his famous delineation of how the problem of railway gauzing became the focus of party politics in the mid-1910s. Watanabe 1990: 89-115; Matsushita 2007: 154-163

[87] Later historians wanted to show why Mitani's observation is not applicable to everywhere at anytime in Japan (Itô 1991; Ariizumi 1985). This criticism was granted but perhaps irrelevant. Mitani's concern is on the making of the legitimacy of the new polity, in which politicians emphasized the issue of local railway building.

[88] Hosoi 1914: 203-206

resources to the localities promised by the politicians were mutually reinforcing.

In sum, participating in local railway building implies the participation in the national politics. The emerging politicians gained their legitimate role in the central state to represent the local interest by inventing many practices (like sending survey team) which absorbed or further strengthened many of those local demands and beliefs in the use of railway. When the politicians succeeded in seizing the state power, the local politics were restructured and a new state-local relation was forged. Now the national interest manifested in railway building was redefined in terms of the local interest. All these ideas of "political participation," "representation" and "local interest" were all new intellectual and political constructs. The politicians became the bridge to absorb and transform these local beliefs towards railway into a nation-wide one and to ritualize railway building to be a manifestation of the idea of political representation. For one to promote or ask for local railway building, it was equivalent to democratic participation among commoners.

5   Ritualizing the Taisho Polity from below: Petition among localities

At the 1910s, the railway myth was further strengthened among many localities and was made real through many concrete collective movements, through which the idea of political participation was manifested. One should consider these newly invented practices as a collective sense-making process that now the localities were activity participated in actualizing their will to power. This section returns to a political practices, namely, *seigan* (請願) or *chinjō* (陳情), or petition, in some selected local scenarios.[89]

Petitioning was not limited to the railway affairs, and one could have petition to political authorities other then the politicians, including the emperor. Petition was both an invented and collective political practice. If writing proposals was not enough to show one's sincerity, going for petition would be a more direct way. By the Taisho period, many of these proposals came from those areas without railway networks, for example the Northeastern Japan.

Again, the localities should not be considered to be merely passive, innocent

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[89] For a general survey of this legal concept and related practices, see Watanabe 1995.

actors. They were neither ignorant nor were manipulated easily.[90] Mitani and the later historians pointed out that not until universal suffrage (for male) was adopted in 1928, these "naïve localities" were actually local elites or gentry who needed to pay tax in exchange for the right to vote.[91] Taking into account the local point of view is very important for us to examine the changing collective understandings of the Taisho polity. If we treat the authority of a new polity, the legitimacy of which was based on representative election, not as a given but a collectively constructed entity, the localities' active participation in asking for railway building could also be seen as a ritualizing process in actualizing, strengthening and spreading the railway belief by inventing political practices through which they could take part in state affairs.

(a) "Petition as an Institution and its Effect"

Studying the political dynamics of the law-making alone, as what Mitani did, could tell us little of the social dynamics underneath. Instead, the current research argues that railway petition was the most important political ritual which linked up the politicians and their local voters, when the former promised but could never complete a railway line for the latter, and when the latter legitimized the former's governance in the central state. To keep petitioning for decades was not rare in undeveloped remote areas. The legitimacy of this democratic domination was, however, ironically based on the underdeveloped localities, or the rural, instead of the city.[92] In short, the politicians highlighted the "rural" as their new legitimate foundation of democracy.

What is important to note, however, is the political significance of how proposal writing in the Meiji gradually became a formalized and legitimized political practice of petitioning in the Taisho. What is a petition? Petition was also a legal term which was defined by the Constitutional Law and it also followed the standardized procedures stated by the National Diet of Japan (or under the Imperial Constitution and the Imperial Diet from 1889 to 1947). In contemporary legal definition, *seigan* (請願) referred to the petition with formal introduction (紹介 *shōkai*) from diet

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[90] One of the shortcomings of Mitani, as a political scientist, is that he relied exclusively on a top-down perspective and focused on the political process of the making of The Amendment Law of Railway Construction in 1922. The consideration of how localities' consciousnesses were developed into a shared national one is based merely on the book by Hosoi as we had seen.

[91] Mitani 1967: 171-172

[92] Kurihara 2001

members, while *chinjō* (陳情) did not require any help by the politicians in advance.[93] Comparing with sending proposals to authorities, petition also further required standardized written documents, but this was a formalized practice chartered by the Constitution. This concept also implied some forms of visit, preferably with some "introduction" by the elected politicians, even though other authorities like different governmental bureaus or even the emperor could not be ruled out.[94]

While numerous menus had been published, I pick up a booklet called the *Petition as an Institution and its Effect*, published by the National Diet Library in 1950.[95] According to this booklet, since the 1890s, the Imperial Diet started receiving petition letters and railway proposals, but by the Taisho period, the House of Representatives outweighed the House of Peers as the major target of petitions. In the fifty-year history of the prewar Imperial Diet, the booklet told us, on average, seventeen petitions were received by the House of Representatives and nine by the House of Peers per day. Within the five years between 1916 and 1920, for example, about ten thousand petitions were received by the House of Representatives.[96] While it is hard to predict how many petitions were related to railway, the statistics at hand revealed that, within three months, 145 out of 311 petitions received between February and April of the year 1949 were about transportation.[97] It included asking for constructing railway routes, upgrading and changing transportation infrastructure, and reviving express trains.

The most important question to ask is perhaps *how* one could make a petition. Possibly serving as an ideal reference, the pamphlet contained an attachment of a writing sample of railway proposal, dated 1947, which was written by a local committee in Fukushima Prefecture asking for a railway. This four-page proposal was

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[93] See the brief introduction [http://www.shugiin.go.jp/index.nsf/html/index_tetuzuki.htm], accessed 1st September 2009. See also Furuya 1977, who investigated the making of this right of petition, the changes of the Constitutional Law and the relationship of the imperial institution.

[94] For relevant historical background, especially the relation between "direct petition" (直訴) and the political tradition in pre-modern and modern Japan, see Hara 1996, who discussed why and how direct petition was considered to be a taboo in the Japanese political context. What he did not discuss, not in his scope indeed, was exactly another side of democratic rituals of petition, facilitated by railway building. For related theoretical and historical-sociological reference in the context of the England, see Zaret 1996.

[95] This reason to choose this material is because it gave us very good details of how one should make a good petition and a good review between the differences between the pre-war and post-war petitions. Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Chōsa Rippô Kôsakyoku 1950

[96] Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Chōsa Rippô Kôsakyoku 1950: 53

[97] For the remaining petitions were also about infrastructural building like repairing dams, asking for post offices and telephone lines, road constructions, forest management, electricity, and hospitals.

similar but more organized than those we have read in the previous sections, including categories like objectives and rationales. Listed in an orderly manner, the following is an excerpt from the booklet:

> The 22nd year of Showa [1947]
> "Petition Letter"
>   Committee aiming at the completion of Abukuma Railway
> (A)   ...The local resources were helpful for national reconstruction but the lack of transportation brings obstacles to the new nation... [descriptions of the inconvenient situation along the projected railway route]
> (B)   In the near future, the local development of resources and processing industry requires rationalization and modernization. At the same time, this brings us both spiritually and economically a healthy, democratic and cultural living. To achieve this, the completion of transportation network, in particular the construction of railway is absolutely necessary. All local people are enthusiastically hoping for this.
> (C)   [Description of the detailed geography of the projected route]
> (D)   [The history of petition in this area]...while sixty years ago the Nippon Railway Company planned to lay tracks in our areas, the naivety of our ancestors who made a living by raising silkworms wrongly believed that the black smoke of locomotives was harmful to their production...   We later understand how important a railway is to local development of culture and are regretful for our innocent thought in the past. For fifty years, we just hope we can do something to be benefited by the railway...
> Names (with eighty-six signatures)

Similar to those we had reviewed, this written proposal clearly showed us three layers of rationales which were derived from different historical periods. Reason A was a product of Meiji discourse while reason B was a postwar one. Reason D, however, was a new kind of reasoning that justified account for why this locality, as a late comer, did not build railway because of the "naivety of ancestors."[98]

One should be aware that "petition" involved also formal invitation or help from the politicians. There were different kinds of activities, like going to Tokyo to meet with different authorities. Hundreds and thousands of documents written in a similar fashion and language were sent to the diet *and* teams of petitioners of railway were organized to go to Tokyo approaching the politicians or other political authorities. These emerging collective political practices made the belief towards railway no longer only a slogan or an idea but a ritual which made the will itself very real.

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[98] One should pay attention to how this new myth of historical origins was created. Also, although this document was written from 1947, immediately after the end of the war, the researcher identified relevant archival materials produced from the local records that different kinds of activities were required. Okazaki 1999; Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Chôsa Rippô Kôsakyoku 1950: appendix

(i)   Pumpkin petitioners from Engaru Line, Hokkaido, 1924

Both the localities' belief towards railway and the legitimacy of democratic representational politics became more real when they collectively petitioned. Among the few illustrative cases identified, I pick up two cases with vivid details on how the local communities organized their trips to Tokyo.[99] Yet it is very important to analyze how they presented themselves as a politically legitimate member of the nation, who deserved a railway, and also how the petition for railway became a ritual mediating between the political center and the periphery since the Taisho period.

The case of the "Pumpkin Petitioners" (カボチャ請願団), which attracted the attention of the newspaper in 1924, might give us some hints of what really happened. A team of local petitioners who came from Engaru, near Asahikawa in Hokkaido, were reported to be packed in the lobby of the diet. As rice was expensive in their area, these fifty something petitioners brought pumpkin lunch boxes and had their lunch in the lobby of the diet. The team leader, an eighty-year-old man, was interviewed by newspaper reporters about their petitioning for a railway.

> I am also a common people (百姓 hyakkushô) so I understand everyone's [petitioners'] feeling... Our team with fifty something members has larger numbers of participants than the Akôrôshi (赤穂浪士) and we even decided to stay at Sengakuji (泉岳寺). We went to Meiji Shrine with our pumpkin, hoping that our wishes (to ask for a railway) could be realized.
> When we went for petitioning (*chinjô*) to ask for a railway and met with different officials of vice-ministers (*jikan*) or the bureau chief (*kyokuchô*), over ten policemen as well as newspaper reporters were already there. When I expressed our wishes to them, a member of us, who was an old man, suddenly stepped forward to the bureau chief and said, "It is just like what our leader said! Please kindly help us!" He flung himself down on the floor in tears, and then everyone started crying.[100]

Perhaps their somewhat exaggerated performance brought them coverage in the newspaper — surely an important political gesture — but their feelings and

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[99]   While numerous cases of petitions among localities were recorded and had been identified by the author, most of these events were recorded by one or two lines in books of local histories. In addition, detailed descriptions of the petitioners' networks with political authorities were not found; even the research identified many names of politicians in many archival materials, one could never tell to what extent the writer told us the whole truth and the selective criteria of the fact the writer presented to us. Without saying, even these two selected accounts are very illustrative but they still gave us limited information, especially lacking the information on the political networks these local petitioners relied on.

[100]   Wada 1970

expressions were not equal to a performance in a drama. Indeed, the old man kept sending pumpkin to those officials from 1924 to 1932 until the railway was finished. Also, the above narration was about how people linked themselves to the political center. The popular story of Akôrôshi became a widely shared story line for them to make a legitimate petition to the state and to communicate with newspaper readers.[101] The Meiji Shrine then became their next religious-political site for legitimizing their request to the new political center of the Japanese government.[102] However, the key is that the narrative this old leader employed justified his trip as a legitimate political act to ask for help from the central state and that he gained support from the wider audiences. These pumpkins petitioners still had several other trips such that the local police received orders to stop their petitions.[103] Indeed, the localities were not innocent.

(ii)   Without the help of politicians: Otari Village and the Ôito line, Nagano Prefecture

To search for more hints, I found another episode from a book *Memory of Railway in Otari Village*.[104] The following quote was drawn from a collection of written reflections by the local people living in the Otari village, a small community located in the edge of Nagano Prefecture, next to the Niigata Prefecture and near the Japanese Sea. Otari is now located at the Ôito Line and next to the vacation site of Hakuba.[105] This quote, "on the last petition in Tokyo," was a personal reflection written by a gentleman who accompanied the petition team.

> The last travel for petition before the completion of the line was between 9th to 12th May at 1954... Village head, assistants, treasurers... [with] about ten people including the district councilor (I remember he lost in his election at the time). We reached at Shinjuku at four in the morning and we then took a break... The head made many phone calls and waited for instructions of petitioning from different people.... Then we reached the headquarters of the National Railways at eleven. The walls, stairs, floors were all made with marbles which made our

[101] For a historical-sociological analysis on the uses of the story of Akôrôshi, see Ikegami 1995.
[102] Hirayama (2005a) gives us hints on how the Meiji shrine became a source of political legitimacy.
[103] See the following websites: [http://itokhotsk.iobb.net/ganbo/100/taisyou.htm], [http://itokhotsk.iobb.net/ganbo/100/syouwa.htm], [http://engaru.jp/town_introduction/enkaku/engaru.html], last accessed 1st October 2009.

[104] Otanimura Tetsudô Kaigyô gojûnen no Ayumi Hensaniinkai 1987
[105] The researcher does not visit the place by himself, while he wants to thank for the information provided by Mr Lee Chun Yan, who visited Ôito Line frequently. Ôito Line was now a famous tourist site among some fans because it was the main place featured in an animation. The place between the station of Minami-Otari and Itoigawa was nearly uninhabited, and train passed

footsteps loud... When we walked to the third floor we did not know where to go and I asked everyone to follow me... Reaching the reception, I asked in an extremely polite way, "I am very sorry to disturb you. As you see we are all rural people (*inaka mono*), would you mind to give us some directions?" The young lady at the reception was very nice and asked, "What are your purposes?" "We are coming to petition for the construction of Ôito Line..." "Oh please visit the general office."... We got into the office and were packed onto a small sofa, while suddenly a young man over there recognized our village head. The head was surprised and found out that this young man once came to the village to have a vacation. I felt it was just like suddenly meeting a Buddha in the hell. With his help, we finally found the secretary of the head office of general affairs, who was an old woman ... She said, "You guys are so poor... let us do it in this way. I take the responsibility to help you deliver your message to responsible ministers, diet members, and committee members. Please leave your name cards and reference materials." I was so impressed that my eyes swelled with tears.[106]

In contrast to the earlier case of active reception by the politicians reported by Hosoi, the above case might be considered to be a more reasonable account from a local point of view. The gap between cities and rural was extremely great. While it seems the writer was not a veteran petitioner, this account provides a very true feeling of behaving and self-identifying as an innocent local person (*inaka-mono*), this sacred trip of petition really meant something to the petitioners.

While the last petition among Otari villagers was held in 1954, the formal petition could be traced back to 1925, when the village head of this village became the chair of the cross-villages committee that aimed at hurrying the completion of the line.[107] In 1908, the first railway proposal was sent to Hara Takashi, the Home Minister at the time, but it seems that there was no further follow-up and no special entries was recorded in the source. Yet, when the Light Railway Law was passed in 1910, a law allowing more rooms to apply for the construction of local railway, Gotô Shimpei, the Railway Minister at the time, who was actually said to be holding negative view in local railway development and emphasizing on reconstructing major routes, decided to place a new local railway line on the map. Interestingly, he sent a politician elected from Nagano and a mayor of the city of Matsumoto to build relations with the localities. The construction license of this route was soon granted. Amid these backgrounds, it is reasonable to guess that the construction of this line

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[106] Otanimura Tetsudô Kaigyô gojûnen no Ayumi Hensaniinkai 1987: 220-221
[107] The thirty-year long petition movement was about a generation's time, which is not exceptionally long in comparison with other records I had identified. Indeed, similar to many cases all over the country at the same period, as we had seen, the efforts to solicit capital among localities in the area failed at 1893. If one counts this history, as identified in many records, one could say "railway building was initiated since the generation my grandfather."

was actually not really under the political patronage of Seiyûkai party politicians, but along the line of the bureaucratic system and the opposite party, even though the *elected* politicians were still the pipe of power who could effectively handle the state-local relations.

Indeed, the chair of the committee, who was also the village head of Otari, Mr. Tozawa, had petition once or twice in every year afterwards to hurry for the construction. In his memorial, he wrote,

> In November of the 14th year of the Taisho [1925], I made up the railway proposal and went for petition to the Railway Bureau. I met the Parliamentary Vice-Minister [the official under the Bureau Minster] Furuhata, who was the father of the Mayor of the Matsumoto City. He said "Let's go for site survey directly" and brought the construction head and bureau officials together in the next month. In the next year [1926], July, I joined with councilors and town representatives to meet with Furuhata in Tokyo again. We thanked for his help and visited other officials in the bureau, like heads of the sections of construction and planning.
> In November of the same year, I joined with twelve representatives... to visit the Railway Bureau, and the officials said that they would start construction very soon. We then went to visit secretary-generals (幹事長) in both of the headquarters of Seiyûkai and Kenseikai asking for help. Then we visited also a newspaper reporter in the political section for help, who became the head of South-Otari Village after the war.
>
> At the 2nd year of Showa [1927], May, it became the Seiyûkai Cabinet and I went to Railway Bureau by myself, making greeting to the new Parliamentary Vice-Minister Ueno and asking for his help. He asked me "where is the Ôito Line?" and I showed him the map. After my explanation, he replied passionately that "actually I am from Toyama. This line is interesting. Let us work hard on this." Afterwards, when he passed through Itoigawa in the Hokuriku, he walked through the planned route to have look. He was really a good man who impressed me.[108]

While we cannot tell much about the political backgrounds from this quote alone, it is quite reasonable to anticipate some of the political dynamics involved. Sometimes he visited Tokyo by himself, while in later periods he joined with five to ten members from other villages or local councilors and they visited the politicians in different parties besides the Railway Bureau. Indeed, it seems that even the Bureau head Gôtô Shimpei did not have real intention to have the planned line to be completed. When the governing party changed, however, the construction was always halted, such that Mr. Tozawa petitioned frequently to hurry them. It is clear that the localities also

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[108] Quoted in Otanimura Tetsudô Kaigyô gojûnen no Ayumi Hensaniinkai 1987

knew that the promise might never be actualized. If we continue to read the materials, the name list whom Mr. Tozawa expressed gratitude to kept expanding. If possible, they went to more authorities for petition, putting pressures upon them by inviting more of their political rivals.

Was petition useful for them? It is hard to judge. The construction of the line started in 1913 but was halted afterwards. In order to hurry for the completion, the joint-village committee went for petition almost every year. Every year after they went to Tokyo, some authorities would respond to them by sending a survey team, constructing some more sections, or at least sending officials to walk through the areas with them. Even when the major section was finished in 1935, the formal petition continued, however, from 1923[109] to 1954, except during wartime, and the projected line connecting Nagano and Nigata prefecture to the side of the Japanese Sea was finished only in 1957. To one's surprise, the petition still continued. Between 1963 and 1985, nineteen petitions (*chinjō*, i.e. without formal introduction of councilors of the diet) were sent, for purposes like asking for more train services, express train services, more train stations, and electrification.

Otari village was quite different from those areas under heavy influences of party politics. Yet what we cannot see, like the flow of votes and money in the backstage, i.e. the incentive, and the belief in the use of railway, which might help improving the places, were perhaps more important. It was a ritual in a sense that as far as one continued to believe in the use of railway, the petitions ritualized the allocation of legitimacy in a hierarchy of political power and interest from the central state down to every local corner in the nation.

(b) The use of petition: in what sense was petition a political ritual?

Is petition useful? Or to put it in another way, is this ritual "functional"? It was, to some extent, at least in the above cases of Engaru and Otari, even though we could not tell much about the hidden scenarios of political or even economic interest from the archival materials. If one compares these materials on petitions with those in the last section on the corruption of politicians, then it is rather safe to conclude that political interest was involved.[110]

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[109] To note that 1923 was the year after the Amendment Law of Railway Construction passed in 1922, and this local line was included in this new national railway plan.

[110] Perhaps for those localities without much political influences had more tendency to have petition

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The report of *Petition as an Institution and its Effect*, however, ironically told us that it is hard to tell. While the law stated that all petitions should be discussed among the councilors, if one counts to what extent these petitions were accepted, submitted to and discussed among the elected councilors in the House of Representatives in the prewar Imperial Diet, the author told us it was about fifty percents (for the House of Peers, it was about thirty percents).[111] One should not forget even if the petition letters were "accepted" (*juri*) a railway might not be immediately built.

Indeed, according to a researcher working as a staff in the National Archive, from the start of the Taisho period until the end of the war, numerous archives of the railway proposals sent to the diet could be found, while in another archive, governmental documents from the bureau of transport were found that systematically rejected almost all applications.[112]

Those well written petition letter and applications were mostly ignored or rejected. The localities met with these politicians or authorities, but construction work was rarely completed. For those distant areas, making a petition to Tokyo was expensive. A document indicated that a wealthy landlord in Hiroshima Prefecture sold much of his forest for contribution to the petition, which made him nearly bankrupted.[113] If that was the case, why bother to have petition? The pamphlet *Petition as an Institution and its Effect* ended up with a very honest conclusion:

> [The author] discussed with two or three bureau officials in charge of processing petition letters and asked them if petitions were useful. They said, "The effect of petition...," and then laughed, "I don't think any, right? It is only a comfort (気休め)." This answer was very common. It was actually troublesome or unnecessary to send these petitions letter [attached with documents] but people did this with great care. We should frankly recognize this fact. This reality might not be the consequence of any of the shortcomings of the institution [of petition] itself. The original intention (本義) of petition could not exceed the regulations. Even though we had honestly processed (誠実なる処理) [these petitions documents] there were also some limits. The only thing we could do is to do investigation and to think about their request; perhaps this passion (熱意) [of

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and leave records for us, while those had mutual benefits with political authorities, i.e. a railway promise votes in exchange with votes or investment, tended to turn things down and left no visible records.
[111] Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Chôsa Rippô Kôsakyoku 1950: 50
[112] My own research in the National Archive also finds out that looking at the index of archive index, one could interestingly find two distinctive features. Proposals submitted to the cabinet were all about granted promise to hurry railway building, while those application letters were all rejected by the Bureau of transportation. See Kawano (1996; 1998) for a survey of the related archives.
[113] Shimotsuke 1980

processing] was more important.[114]

This was indeed a very intriguing conclusion. We are told that the petition was indeed useless but that was not because of the problem of the institution of petition itself. Such is the view held by the writer this booklet, an expert to process documents, who could not think of any rationales of why the bureau in charge should need to process pieces and pieces of documents without any real effects. The only important thing, or the last possible way to deal with these meaningless paper works, was to convince oneself that the honesty and passion to process these documents was important. In other words, though this ritual had no real effects at all, the passion to process them among staff and a feeling of comfort among petitioners were the only reasons the writer of this booklet could make sense of this strange practice.

The railway belief became more real when the localities participated in the ritual of petition, through which the localities were indeed contributing to the redefinition of the legitimate foundation of the nation. One can no longer distinguish to what extent one petitioned for railway or for a sense of political participation. This ritual of petition made the value of universal participation in nation-state, or the idea of citizenship if one wishes to use this term, tangible and real to some commoners in localities.

If one does not believe in any "passion" as an adequate explanation for why people continued this ritual, two remaining tasks should be accomplished: (1) a historical reconstruction of why this local practice was made into law by the politicians at the national level, and; (2) a review of how a new political and economic theory, or to be more precise, a new cultural account that was legitimizing the petitioning practices and defining a legitimate nation was created to make sense of this new political ritual which mediated between the state-local relation.

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[114] Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Chôsa Rippô Kôsakyoku 1950: 99

Section Four   **Re-moralizing the Hara Polity: gauzing tracks, making law, and the Japanese Keynes (1910-1937)**

1   Introduction: Mitani Taichirô's thesis of Taisho Democracy

In the last few sections we have seen how many practices gradually evolved among localities into formal ones. Discourses were put into rituals and myths of the use of railway were no longer abstract discussions. Politicians, who gained legitimate power by claiming their representation of local interest, should then put their promises into state agenda, even though it might still be a promise only. Their efforts could then be seen to consolidate many of the local practices into a nation-wide ritual called "local railway building" which defined the very nature of the Taisho polity.

To illustrate, this section concludes by summarizing and critically evaluating the thesis proposed by Mitani Taichirô (三谷太一郎) in his book (1967). The key issue is how the Hara Takashi's local railway plan was intermingled with the changing foundations of political legitimacy of the Taisho Polity.

This section first introduces the significance of Mitani Taichirô's thesis and evaluates the origins, consequences and limitation of this so-called "interest-induced politics" manifested in the making of the *Amendment Law of Railway Construction*. As discussed earlier, railway building gradually became a shared belief among many underdeveloped localities. After examining the political debate of upgrading the narrow-gauze standard of major truck routes of the Government Railway in the mid-1910s, Mitani argues that the making of the *Amendment Law of Railway Construction* was an indication of the changing legitimate foundations of the Taisho Democracy, which shifted from domination by the oligarchs and bureaucracy to the emerging politicians.

This section critically evaluates criticisms made by historians who argued that the above phenomena could not be applied to many geographical and historical contexts and that not all localities were seduced by the politicians' local railway construction plan. This criticism requires clarifications. I argue that it was the promise to lay tracks that counted and Mitani is still right to suggest that local railway building was the very essence of the party politics on which the Taisho Democracy was founded. Yet his characterization of Taisho Democracy as "demoralizing politics" requires some clarification or supplementation.

The term "demoralizing politics" referred to the changes from the ideologies-and-charisma-based Meiji oligarchic governance, whose authority was based on their success in modernization, to the interest-induced politics as promoted by Taisho politicians, whose legitimacy was found on the "representation of local interest" and their promise in railway building. Although legitimate ground of the Taisho democratic rule was based on allocating state resources in local development, the rebuilding of legitimacy of a seemingly "demoralized" democratic polity was indeed the heart of the matter, requiring both new political and economic theories, represented by two important political figures of Hara Takashi and Takahashi Korekiyo, respectively.

2   <u>Gauzing the railway and the nation</u>

To investigate the Taisho Democracy, Mitani picks up the railway gauzing problem as one of his three major characterizations of this emerging polity in the 1910s.[115] In this period, the problem of whether the state should reconstruct narrow-gauzed railway tracks of major truck routes into standard-wide gauzed ones became a hotly debated issue in the diet. While this reconstruction plan was initiated by the Railway Bureau, the politicians strongly rejected this plan and suggested instead spending money to expand local rail networks. Finally, however, the plan was opposed by the politicians. Instead of reconstructing the current tracks, the politicians suggested a nation-wide plan of building railway for local branch routes in rural areas and this decade long debate gave birth to *The Amendment Law of Railway Construction* in 1922.

I do not intend to repeat much of Mitani's classic analysis but to summarize the major backgrounds and then his arguments only. Since the Meiji period, the gauze standard of most railway tracks in Japan was narrow ones (1067 mm). Narrow-gauzed railway was rather cheap to build, especially if we consider the fact that tracks were indeed expensive for a developing country without steel-making technology.[116] By the Taisho period, the nationalized Government Railways became the biggest

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[115] The problem of railway building is only one of the concerns in Mitani's book, in parallel to the reform of electoral and administrative districts as well as changing diplomatic stance towards America and China in Hara's polity.

[116] Japan could only stop relying on import of steel to meet its requirement of railway tracks as late as 1930. Harada 1977

organization and the vital infrastructure of transportation.[117] We were told by railway bureaucrats at the time that the demands of the inter-city as well as the vital industrial rail lines were reaching its limits, so that the narrow-gauzed tracks which limited the railway's speed should be replaced by the standardized ones. On the contrary, the politicians told us that the money should be devoted to constructing new lines, especially since the local demands for unfinished local and rural railway lines were high. The issue here was about the priority of how one should spend in the nationalized giant organization of the Government Railway.[118]

There were two conflicting political camps representing two railway policies, i.e. "state-ism" versus "localism" represented by the bureaucrats and the politicians respectively.[119] On the one hand, the railway bureau led by Gotô Shimpei (後藤新平) proposed "reconstructing [major] lines mainly and expanding [local] routes secondly" (改主建従). The Railway Bureau, in as early as the late 1890s, started suggesting the expansion of railway tracks of truck lines from the narrow-gauzed one to the standardized one to meet the increasing demands of the inter-city transport, especially the Tôkaidô Line between Tokyo and Osaka.[120] After the nationalization in 1906 and under the order of Gôtô, a committee was commissioned in 1909 within the Railway Bureau to investigate the possibility of reconstructing major lines between Tokyo and Shimonoseki with the standard gauzed tracks. In 1910, the issue was undergoing rather smoothly, to the extent that the plan and the budget were granted in the Imperial Diet.

On the other hand, in the early 1910s, the Seiyûkai politicians led by Hara Takashi proposed "constructing [local] routes mainly and reconstructing [major] lines secondly" (建主改従) to oppose the reconstruction of tracks and suggested that the first priority should be expanding the railway networks. The politicians suggested that spending on constructing branch lines should go first instead of reconstructing major lines. In 1911, the politicians opposed to the government plan initiated by the Railway Bureau. The government agreed that the investigation required more circumspection. In other words, the railway bureaucrats and the elected politicians tried to discuss

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[117] Kinzley 2006
[118] For sure, the idea to reconstruct railway tracks into standard gauzed ones was not new in the 1910s. As early as in the late 1880s, the military officials already suggested this. In 1896, similar proposals were made by the Transportation Bureau.
[119] Kobayashi (1988) nicely summarized Mitani's point as these two principles of railway policy.
[120] Since the Meiji, the original gauze standard of most railway tracks in Japan was narrow ones (1067 mm).

about in what ways the Government Railways should be improved at the time, either by perfecting the current profitable routes to gain more revenues and to boost up commerce and industry relying on inter-city transport, or by constructing more to stimulate the local economy and development.

As we are neither railway engineers nor economists, I do not attempt to show the readers the astronomical numbers of relevant materials, which were produced between 1887 and 1922.[121] These materials argued for the pros and cons of reconstructing existing railway tracks into standard-gauzed one by showing the technical details or calculating budgets of the potential gain or loss involved. Opinion letters were written, engineering reports were produced, technical estimation and surveys were done, statistics and economic data were presented, scholars and engineers were invited. The key is to understand that many of these engineering surveys, budgets, investigation reports and technical manuals were products of political necessity. Yet the apparent engineering or economic problem was not inherent to the railway itself, but the will to the production of this knowledge was politically driven and external to the institution. All these materials could be viewed, then, under a theoretical understanding that the written practices and arguments made were based on different political players' worldviews. Their worldviews were constituted by their claims on what made a more "efficient" institution of railway that could better serve the "nation."

If one follows Foucault and if we consider these technological reports as a new form of knowledge, we can say that knowledge was indeed politically induced. Yet it is argued that instead of reducing the complex scenarios into the single reason of power in the Foucauldian paradigm, it is better to consider the production of these documents as a similar process of writing proposals and petitions. In other words, the production of these reports could still been seen as some methodological accounts in the process of ritualization, which helped the reestablishment of a changing power *relations* in an emergent polity.[122]

The politicians exerted much influence upon the construction of local railway. Even though the Railway Bureau had already planned for upgrading the major lines for nearly a decade, Hara Takashi finally abandoned the whole reconstruction project in 1919 when he took the seat of Prime Minister. This was the final victory of

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[121] Major documents were collected by Noda et al. 1992 (vol. 14).
[122] Foucault 1972

"interested-induced politics."[123] Party politicians, in Mitani's view, departed from the very definition of "national interest" represented by the Meiji oligarchs. Not surprisingly the infrastructural concerns among the localities "activated the political dynamics of localities."[124] The ability of these local elites to work efficiently with the emerging politicians to bring railway to the rural land shuffled the political situations of many localities which in turn shook the legitimate foundation of the Meiji polity.[125] The local elites became an integral, legitimate base of this new polity.[126]

3   Emerging political legitimacy: the making of the *Amendment Law of Railway Construction*

According to Mitani, the debate on railway was a manifestation of the political struggle between the bureaucrats and the politicians for a more legitimate role of governance in the central state. The critical moment to signify that the camp of politicians finally won this battle was the making of The *Amendment Law of Railway Construction* (鉄道敷設法改正案), which was passed in 1922. It was an amendment of the previous *Railway Construction Law* in 1892 because it was still a national construction plan codified in a legal form, but it listed an extra of 149 railway routes with 10221 miles in the construction plan, nearly a double of the distance of existing tracks. Like the original one, the *Amendment Law* simply listed the potential routes in point form and there was no priority of the construction indicated.

The following quote may give the reader an idea of how these politicians tried to define their legitimate right and to pursue political interest by enforcing the institution of railway. This quote was taken from a pamphlet called "The Amendment Railway Construction Bill and the value of the so-called railway networks" (鉄道敷設法改正案と所謂鉄道網の價値) published in 1921. It was possibly written by some pro-Seiyûkai politicians to defend the *Amendment Law of Railway Construction* under debate at the time, when the bill was passed in the House of the Representatives but rejected by the House of the Peers in 1921. This material, then, was prepared to

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[123] Mitani 1967: 165; 173
[124] Mitani 1967: 171-172
[125] Mitani 1967: 189
[126] In the cases of the making of *Railway Construction Law* in 1892 and the *Railway Nationalization Law* in 1905, Meiji oligarchs, capitalists and politicians tried to manipulate political languages to discuss about problems in high finance. Even though the railway issue was indeed still intimately related to economic situation, the law made in 1922 was differed greatly with that of the previous laws.

explain their stance and to attack the politicians who opposed the bill. It provides us a vivid and lively account of the moment when the diet was in an uproar. It started with some statements asserting the ultimate value of railway.

> Railway is not merely an artery, a nerve, or a function of metabolism. It is a life form. It holds the sacred power to revive the dead, an inspiration and a creation... Railway holds this miracle magic... Railway helps supply each other's needs and create values. We do not need to elaborate further on the importance of railway to the nation... Yet look at the fact of contemporary Japan. We have only 8700 miles of tracks at inland...[127]

We were told that railway *is*, instead of *should be*, a magical form of life that could revive the dead. Yet the writer maintained that the rail network was far from complete to actualize its full power. Indeed, the writer then gave us a table listing all the transportation statistics over the world and he linked up the GNP with that of railway millage in different countries. He concluded that even Japan was one of the five great nations in the world, Japan contributed less than one percent of railway distance of the world.[128] To compete with the world, a new construction plan was needed.

> Looking at the planned lines listed in *The Railway Construction Law*, we had already completed or nearly completed all the specified routes... The spirit of this new *Amendment Law of Railway Construction* had three major spirits.
> (1) Abandon the distinction between major and light railways;
> (2) Abandon the distinction between planned routes (猶定線) and priority routes (第一期線);
> (3) For those means of transport serving the local area, especially for planned routes, we should offer licenses for the local railways (地方鉄道).
> Following these three principles and according to the landscape, logistics of current system, and the use in local development and military defense, we had decided to approve 149 new planned routes (6300 miles) out of 820 surveyed lines (19200 miles).[129]

A scholar argued that one of the reasons for the birth of this law was because most inter-city major routes specified in the original *Railway Construction Law* were completed in the 1910s.[130] As seen in the making of the *Railway Accountancy Law* (鉄道会計法) passed in 1909, both the Railway Bureau and the Seiyūkai were on the same front in securing financial independency of the Government Railway and

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[127] Sumii 1921: 2-3
[128] Sumii 1921: 4-6
[129] Sumii 1921: 7-11
[130] Kobayashi 1988: 165

making the railway budget independent from the state budget.[131] In other words, political players from both camps actually supported the strengthening of the institution of railway building, but their main difference was on the actual form of the institution. The contrasting orientation of railway policies then became highly visible and the bill under debate was then a problem of priority.[132]

> It was very good that most members in the House of Representatives agreed to this plan, even though many people in the House of Peers objected on the same day... Mr. Yuzawa [in the House of Representatives], who objected the bill, said, "The six thousands miles grand plan, first, does not specify the date of completion. Second, there is no budgeting for this plan. Third, the planned routes do not have any starting and end points. The schedule and budget of this grand plan and its source of funding simply do not exist. The plan is totally unclear. It is just like drawing red lines on the map, saying that it is our national policy. It makes me wonder how thin our national policy is..."

> "...I can only say that the despicable political party (卑しむべき政黨) wrongly makes the national transportation become their means of party expansion. This bill is not a serious one... just like issuing non-promissory bill without backup... I oppose the bill until one seriously investigates the feasibility of this plan... The abuse of railway building by political party can be proved by numerous cases like railways in Iwate... in Kyushu's Kokutô Railway, the hometown of the former Railway Minister... in Sado Island... and in Hokkaido..."[133]

This was indeed what we had seen about the charge of "seducing innocent localities by corrupted politicians" since the 1910s. This charge, however, made an instant counter-attack in the diet in the 1921.

> Another councilor Iwazaki objected Yuzawa's usage of "the despicable political party" and asked "I would like to clarify to which political party Mr. Yuzawa refers to. It sounds to me this word is an insult to all political parties." The diet was then in an uproar and in a quarrel (騒然として咆哮怒号の喧嘩場)...[134]

For an elected politician to say that the chase of power (securing votes by helping localities) as an immoral act surely became an insult to his fellow councilors in the diet. It is because it was a self-defeating assertion which destroyed the legitimate

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[131] One may consider this institution of special accountancy, or a state budget with only a single purpose, was still exist down to contemporary Japan, for example, of high-way building. This arrangement provided the legal status of a continuous upholding of budget on building a particular infrastructure, which was proven to be very difficult to remove. In principle, the revenues gained by railway, for example, could not be used for purposes other than railway construction and management. In reality, however, politicians and the government could keep pumping money into it from the government budget when the railway budget was in deficit.

[132] Kobayashi (1988: 165) is right to say that just only after the unexpected economic panic in 1907 and the economy contracted, contrasting claims among two camps became visible and sharpened.

[133] Sumii 1921: 11-12

[134] Sumii 1921: 12-13

foundation of party politics. For one to make a legitimate claim, two political camps tried to decide for whom the railway should serve and whose interest should be the "national interest" without referring to a moralistic discourse.

> Mr. Yuzawa objected to the 15 miles railway plan in Sado Island. He did not know how hard that the Sado people had competed for a railway project. It was a dead or alive decision for them. If one thought of the development of Sado which actually contributed to the overall prosperity of the nation, Mr. Yuzawa could not object to the railway plan by discarding Sado as "an isolated island in the distant sea (絶海の一孤島)."[135]

By asserting that even the Sado, "an isolated island in the distant sea," was an integral part of the nation gave legitimacy to the politicians' pursuit of power and also the localities' pursuit of economic interest as well. It was legitimate for the party politicians to gain power by representing the localities, and this saying redefined the very meaning of politics and economy.

> A political party had its own principle and insistence (主義主張), but what was the contents of these principles? These were not empty words or abstract ideas but concrete stuff... It was why there was nothing special for one to make the expansion, popularization and the completion of railway network to be the party's principle... The opposing party said that we seduced the localities by laying unnecessary tracks and tightening the budget in the future... Just like bankers who issued a bill, when the term for payment came due one should only commit *hara-kiri*. For a responsible party, we should try our best to actualize the plan... While the Government Railway should look at the overall profit (利益), the state should construct unprofitable railways if necessary because one should not only consider interest [of the railway] alone. In that case, the state should clearly explain why constructing a particular railway would be necessary to hundreds or thousands of people. It was why a political party with support (実力 ある政党) should build railways that they had promised. Even if it was unprofitable, one should build it if it was necessary for the country. This was why the promise a party had made was not due to the expansion of the party's power, it was just necessary... Let us assume that a party promised a railway to win the hearts of the local people, but the construction was actually based on the use of railway, either because of the [economic] interest of the railway itself or because of the real necessity of the state. Whatever the reason, one should understand that the railway was necessary. This was why it was an "evil [manipulative] deduction" (邪推) to object the bill by arguing that it was all because of the expansion of party influence.[136]

Though written in a somewhat confused way, this nicely articulated argument depicted how the legitimacy of an institution was framed. The writer first tried very

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[135] Sumii 1921: 15
[136] Sumii 1921: 16-17

hard to convince the readers by asserting the ultimate function and the use of the institution of railway building — railway as "a life form." If one accepted this axiom, then one could understand the arguments that followed. It turned the argument around to say that only a useful railway could be built, either from the viewpoint of the state or the localities. The state tended to build major lines that were useful and profitable; the localities wished to have railway to develop their economy. By definition then, all railways were useful and rational to build! In short, the key was for one to believe in the first statement or not — was railway useful? If one accepted this central axiom, one accepted the arguments that followed.

4   "Demoralizing politics" of the Hara Polity

The passing of the *Amendment Law* was the most important ritual which represented the victory of party politics at last. This law redefined the legitimate foundation of the Taisho polity and defined the localities as legitimate members of the nation. The politicians' pursuit of power and the localities' pursuit of economic interest were now redefined also as a part of the national interest; or at least, the definition of "national interest" was no longer monopolized by the oligarchs, bureaucrats and military officials.

One important and intriguing example picked up by Mitani was the problem of the uniform of the Government Railways. Gôtô, the Railway Bureau head, extended the implementation of the policy of wearing standardized uniforms from the railroaders to the general staff in the Railway Bureau. Gôtô ordered the wearing of uniform among the bureaucrats to avoid "party defects" (党弊) and maintained that "uniform represents a neutral stance without relying on any party (不偏不党)." Interestingly, when the Railway Bureau was promoted to the Railway Ministry under Hara Takashi's Seiyûkai Cabinet in 1920, the uniform requirement was abandoned.[137] Mitani argued that Gôtô and the old oligarchs always emphasized the "moral function" of the party and condemned Seiyûkai not by "political" but by "moralistic" critique. Mitani said, "Gôtô disagreed not about the *method* of pursuing the party's interest [of power] but about the *very act* of pursuing the party's interest [of

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[137] Mitani 1967: 151-152

power]."[138] The localities' economic interest, from the point of the central state, was not economically efficient. It was why Mitani said that the final failure of the Bureau's standard gauze reconstruction plan signified the "collapse of the ethics of Meiji political oligarchs and the state-ism it represented."[139] Not surprisingly, interest-induced party politics, to them, was merely a fact of the corruption of the "national morality."[140] Though the change of uniform appeared to be a minor problem, this was again an important signal of the change of ritual.

(a)   Re-moralizing the demoralized politics

Yet to say local railway building was a ritual of the "interest-induced politics" does not imply an unconditional acceptance of these political practices. The shortcoming for Mitani's research is that he paid little attention to the problem of legitimacy. By merely saying that the Taisho Democracy and the party politics were a form of interest-induced politics fell into a theoretical trap because the so-called "moralistic" argument towards "corrupted party politics" was a counter attack made by the oligarchs, Seiyûkai's political rivals and also the railway bureau at the time. To take this view implies that one considered this law solely as a top-down political manipulation by the politicians.

The ideological resources for Seiyûkai's rival relied on a moralistic account and a traditional economic worldview based on to what extent railway generated revenues and contributed to the strength of the central state. Local railway building was an economically inefficient and "corrupted" practice brought by the politicians in the eyes of the oligarchs under the Meiji conception of stat-ism.

To make local railway building possible, the politicians and localities invented and shared new kinds of political rituals but these new modes of conduct required again legitimation. By merely asserting the "interest-induced politics" as the "demoralizing politics," Mitani missed the latter half of the story of how the new political practices gained full legitimacy. Indeed, the heart of the problem is in what ways this interest-induced politics gained a new moral ground.

The above interpretation suggests that the institution of railway building was indeed reinforced by political means in the changing political environment situated in

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[138] Mitani 1967: 152-153
[139] Mitani 1967: 173
[140] Mitani 1967: 173

the emerging world society at the time. The research highlights Mitani's point of the political consequences of debating the purposes of railway in the 1910s. On the one hand, this debate further strengthened the railway building as an institution, i.e. making more new claims to justify those political practices which expanded the belief towards railway. On the other hand, the institution of railway building gave rise to a new economic theory to justify why spending huge sums of money for laying tracks into mountains and rural areas.

Yet what remained unexplained was how the party politicians could successfully rationalize these new practices also in terms of the economy at the level of the central state. He did not account for why these economic and political "interests" were (re-)rationalized and legitimized.[141] The localities' pursuit of economic interest and the politicians' pursuit of power were indeed violating the very definition of economic efficiency in the Meiji worldview. This last section then discusses the emergence of new definitions of the nation, which was chartered by a new ritual — votes and elections — and supported by new myths — a political vision of developmental state and a new economic belief in development — which was long shared among the rural localities.

(b)   Were railways promised by politicians actually built?

Besides the problem of legitimacy of this newly established political ritual of party politics, some historians criticized Mitani's thesis on grounds of being too exaggerated in terms of both its scope and timing.[142]

First, these historians criticized that Mitani's thesis had severe geographical limitation. According to their researches, it was quite clear that not all geographical areas within Japan had the same needs of railway building, and the politicians encountered varied situations and responses in different areas and different times. In short, to say that the political parties, especially Seiyûkai, used railway to attract the local votes, did not apply to all places empirically. The second critique, intimately related to the above problem, argued that Mitani's thesis applied to only a very short period within the Hara and Takahashi Cabinet from the late 1910s to 1922 when the local railways were actually built. As Matsushita argued, the actual amount of state

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[141] Mitani was not saying politicians were immoral; instead he meant their political domination was no longer founded on traditional authority or ideology, but to what extent they could really bring benefits to the localities, i.e. railway building.

[142] Itô 1991; see also Itô 1987

budget spent on railway was affected by the economy and the availability of state budget at the time. Only after 1915, the First World War in Europe stimulated Japan's export, and hence boosted its economy. This made the government's spending on railway building possible.[143] Yet Japan's economy started to contract from 1920 onwards and the government upheld an induced depression policy until 1932. In other words, the central state did not have the resources to keep its promise to lay tracks for the localities. These two critiques questioned the applicability of Mitani's argument which was geographically and temporarily limited, i.e. applying to a few years in the areas of Northeast Japan.

For one to defend or fine-tune Mitani's thesis, one should then account for the discrepancies between the promise made by the politicians and the reality that not many local railways were actually built. Those contemporary historians' critiques were possibly right, but the critiques were not entirely fair to Mitani because he did not claim that his thesis could be applied to the later periods.[144] Furthermore, in the 1930s critics continued to say that the politicians used the railway to seduce the localities. For example, Kuriya summarized a report written by a journalist also in 1930 which called these railways as "party strategy lines" (党略線). [145] Others criticized that the politicians "distorted the railway map" in 1933.[146]

A pamphlet published in 1929 supporting Seiyūkai responded to similar attacks.[147] An interesting small booklet, *the reality of the railway construction problem*, argued that Seiyūkai did better than their opposing party in keeping their railway promise. It listed and counted those planned railway projects in all prefectures, for the sake of comparing which party did finish the construction railway. It also claimed its objectivity by tendering real figures as data as well as conducting systematic comparison of the merits and demerits of each party in each area.

Yet, if the above comments were true and if the party politics worked well, why

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[143] Indeed, railway was still an important issue in terms of high finance, but railway was no longer an excuse to borrow money or for mortgage; instead, the politicians kept urging the government to raise foreign loans and bonds to expand the institution of railway building. After the nationalization from 1906 to the 1915, the contracting economy and the shortening of money made most of the construction plan relying on the foreign loans. The use of the foreign loan was limited mostly to the completion of major lines. Matsushita 2004: 295-298.

[144] Another relevant problem is to what extent this conceptualization of the Taisho Democracy was extended and popularized in the postwar period down to the contemporary eras as "the Japanese way of politics." It is then a problem of continuity of the "interest-induced politics" and the institution of railway building.

[145] Awaya 1988: 234-235. For original sources, see Itô 1930.

[146] Awaya 1988; Ôwatari 1933; Utô 1933

[147] Suzuki 1929

many promised railway plans were not actualized? The historians are right at one important point that throughout the 1920s the interest-induced politics relied on an expanding economy and as a result the localities' requests were ignored or suppressed under the contracting economy.[148] The key is that Mitani's conceptualization of the Taisho Polity was founded on an assumption of an expanding economy. If the economy kept expanding, the revenues for the state increased. The state governed by the elected politicians could allocate resources to the underdeveloped localities. Historian Itô is quite right to argue that the central state could spend extensively in all kinds of local infrastructural projects for only a few years during the time of Hara and Takahashi's governance in the late 1910s.[149]

If the economy contracted, however, the above cycle would not work. First of all, modern election, as Weber succinctly pointed out, was extremely expensive.[150] This observation applied to the case of Taisho Japan too.[151] The party politics thus encouraged all kinds of corruption which channeled money from the business world to the politicians for their spending in expensive election campaign, especially the railway building which was intimately related to construction work.[152] In return, politicians worked closely with those private sectors that supported them by donating money or securing votes for the politicians.

If the economy did not go well, then the state could no longer sponsor any local development, and then the legitimate foundation of the politicians would be shaken. More seriously, the state-business cooperation became the target of the moralistic kind of critiques. Thus, a new economic theory that made government spending at the time of economic downturn possible was necessary. In other words, if one could derive this kind of new economic theory to legitimize the political practice originated in the Taisho, then the politicians could build railways *both* at the downturn *and* the booming of economy. We should then, turn to the arenas of economy again, to see how an interesting economic theory was used to legitimize the Hara polity.

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[148] Ariizumi 1985; Itô 1991
[149] Itô 1991
[150] Weber in Roth and Wittich (eds.) 1968: 1128-1129
[151] Nomura 1930: 232-240
[152] Mitchell 1996; Hosoi (1914: 148-151) even provided a details breakdown of the flow of money from construction firms to politicians in the Ishikawa prefecture when railway construction started.

5 A new cultural account of the Taisho Polity: the new economic ethic of railway investment

In the Meiji, the magic of the capital enchanted the railway; in the Taisho, the railway witnessed the birth of a totally new economic worldview: the state should spend more in local infrastructural building in order to boost the national economy.[153] Many critics at the time charged that Seiyûkai overspent money in building railways by relying only on foreign loans. Particularly during the short era of the two-party system, local railway building became a battlefield between Seiyûkai and its opposition party.[154] Their major arguments, however, were constituted around the notion of economic efficiency. To build a railway without passengers and cargos was not rational, indeed, in the eyes of many at the time. This section briefly analyzes how the "demoralizing Taisho Polity" became gradually legitimized by the rise of a Keynsian kind of economic reasoning underlying Seiyûkai's policy. This was invented by the "Japan's Keynes," Hara's successor, Takahashi Korekiyo (高橋是清), during the global financial crisis in the 1920s and 1930s.

As we will see, it was strictly related to the national and global financial crisis and the global financial situation from the 1910s to the 1930s.[155] For Seiyûkai to secure a legitimate ground for their election strategy, a new Keynesian kind of economic thinking, represented by the famous financial expert Takahashi Korekiyo was necessary. Quite accidentally, his economic thought provided perfectly good rationales to justify the public spending in the expansion of the local railway network in the early 1930s. In other words, quite contrary to the late Meiji period when railway building was merely a language with which people tackled the high finance problem, starting from the 1910s the election strategy gradually became a political ritual mediating a new central state-local relation. New cultural accounts, including a new political conception of democracy (represented by Hara Takashi in the 1910s) and a new economic Keynesian thinking (represented by Takahashi Korekiyo in the 1930s), legitimized the politicians' new political practices.

(a) Monkeys and Keynes in the high mountain

One can first look at a very famous "mountain monkey" critique raised during the

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[153] For a general survey of the idea of Keynesian Economy, I referred to Caporaso and Levine (1992), especially chapter 5.

[154] See below for Mitani's argument.

[155] Metzler 2006, see especially chapter 4

Hara Takashi's cabinet. When the diet discussed the plan of Yamada Line, which linked together Morioka, the electoral district of Hara, and the side of the Pacific Sea, the opposition party asked Hara that "Mr. Prime Minister, to lay tracks into the deep mountain, do you want the train to take mountain monkey for a ride?" Hara answered that "according to the Law of National Railway, train does not take mountain monkey."[156] On the one hand, this interesting dialogue highlighted Hara's definition of the nation, in which monkey was not a legitimate citizen; however, people living in the deep mountain were citizen who deserved the right to get a ride on the National Railway because they had votes. On the other hand, the critique highlighted the blunt pursuit of votes. Spending money in laying tracks into the high mountains did not make much sense economically at the time.

Some more traces of an emerging new economic conception could be provided in the following example, happened around the time when Seiyûkai actively helped the construction of the Suigun Line in Ibaraki Prefecture in the 1920s. While one could find many memorial stone statues commemorating important politicians and local ancestors, one of the statutes attracted the author's attention.[157] This statute was built to celebrate the completion of the line, and on the statue there was an inscription of five words written by Hara Takashi. He wrote,

"The mountain is not valuable because it is high"
(山高故不貴；山高きがゆゑに貴たっとからず)[158]

This vague phrase was counter intuitive and required elaboration. If a high mountain was not valuable and underdeveloped, why one should build expensive railway to a remote village located in a high mountain instead of laying tracks between cities which was more useful and profitable? This was why Hara was criticized. Indeed, from either the time of late Meiji or even the contemporary economic view of point, it is not cost effective. Yet Hara's interesting response depicted an opposite cultural

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[156] According to the local research, this popular story is exaggerated. On the one hand, after the line was finished the trains were highly utilized for freight transport and packed with local villagers. It only became a typical under-utilized local railway after roads were paved. On the other hand, the one who opposed to Hara was on the problem of whether this line or another route, the later Kamaishi Line, in the same prefecture should be constructed first. Kamaishi Line was also the major scene in Miyazawa Kenji's national novel. See "The history of Kamaishi (釜石の鉄道史)" from [http://www.city.kamaishi.iwate.jp/kyoudo/column/column-kyoudo3.html] and the entry of "Yamada-sen (山田線)" from Wikipedia [http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%B1%B1%E7%94%B0%E7%B7%9A], Accessed 14th Feb 2009

[157] Ishii 1960: 83; Hosoi 1914: 214-216; Kanazawa 1934

[158] Kanazawa 1934

account of economic efficiency. Indeed, this was the first half of the statement drawn from a popular school textbook called Jitsugokyô (実語教; or "a guide to truth") since the late Heian to the early Meiji period. The second half of the statement was:

"[The mountain] is valuable because of the trees"
(以有樹爲貴；樹有るをもって貴しと爲す)[159]

A local railway in the high mountain was opened and a memorial stone statue was erected in which Hara wrote these words. Now one can interpret what Hara wrote in its context. Although the mountain — remote, rural localities — is not valuable, but if ones plant trees (laying railway tracks), it became useful. The stone statue erected beside the newly opened railway station, with a sign of an honorable civilian prime minister who helped the construction of trains. It delivered a very clear message: because of the railway, the high mountain now became valuable and we were an integral part of the nation.

Hara claimed that a mountain monkey, according to the law of Japan, was not a legitimate citizen of the nation and thus could not take a ride on the train. But the Japanese, irrespective of where they lived, deserved the right to get a ride. Riding on railway was a basic national right of the local people, as what Hara suggested, if the government wished them to contribute to the national development, which were now founded on economy. In short, the geist — or the new "myth" if one prefers — of Hara's polity and his representative party politics could only gain its political legitimacy if and only if, on the one hand, they could fully actualize their promises of improving the local interests in order to win an election and, on the other hand, they could replace the oligarchs and bureaucrats by redefining their legitimate role in governance in the central state by claiming both the right and responsibility of the localities to be a legitimate member of the nation, contributing to the economy of it. Railway building was then redefined as a right for citizens.

(b) Whose nation? Hara Takashi's polity and the redefinition local interest as national interest

The implications of the underlying political message and economic rationale were now visible. It is highly rational for the state to relocate resources to those undeveloped localities, making it possible for the unproductive places to contribute to

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[159] Kanazawa 1934

the national economy. It might also mean that by giving them basic infrastructure these poor remote places could now be a useful part of the nation instead of a burden of the country. From the view of the classical economy in the 1920s, one could also say that it was highly unwise for the state the pump resources into those construction that had no great return; or even from the contemporary neo-classical economic worldview, the state should not invest in an undeveloped place where the marginal utility was far lower than the expected return. What were the historical contexts that made such a new frame of political-economic thinking possible?

Following Mitani, it is argued that through the illustrative case of Hara Takashi's polity and his railway plan, we can better examine the changing legitimate foundation of the nation at the time of Taisho. By "polity," I refer to Meyer's definition as "the system of creating value through the collective conferral of authority."[160] Thus, by analyzing Hara as a representative figure, we try to delineate the changing definition of the "national interest" at the Taisho time, which were manifested in his thoughts, political skills and practices.

"Representation" was surely a new ideology a "new fiction."[161] But it is crucial to ask why this political and intellectual construct promoted by the politicians and utilized by the localities was accepted as legitimate also to other social players. Contrary to the Meiji oligarchs, whose political legitimacy was founded on their de-facto "visions" to foresee the national mission to civilize and actualize the national interest in terms of "Prosperous Nation, Strong Military," Taisho politicians claimed their governance as legitimate in terms of political representation, i.e. under the names of the people and the local interest. Hara's polity was a very new idea that the nation's interest could be justified in terms of the local development.

For Japan to compete in the new world order, Hara considered that a nation should now concentrate on developing its economy on the one hand, and on eliminating the inequality between cities and rural areas within the nation on the other hand. To Hara, the national interest should not be limited to the narrow state-ism as defined by the Meiji oligarchs. The localities were and should be essential parts of the nation, contributing to its overall development. Local interests should not be ruled out because local people were the essence of the nation. Under this light, it was why the local railway building came into the scene. The localities could fully take part in the

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[160] Meyer 1980: 111-112
[161] Morgan 1988

206

economic development only if those physical obstacles between the cities and rural areas were removed.

To see how Hara's polity had worked, one may not necessarily go into the political ideas of Hara Takashi, especially he rarely formulated his political arguments in abstract ideological terms. It was also one of the reasons of his acceptance in the localities, as the secret of the legitimacy of his polity was exactly founded on the simplicity of his political ideology without abstract political ideas. The ideology of Hara polity was simple enough: allowing the localities to fully participate in development of the nation by promising them a plan of railway building.

Hara's view towards transportation was shaped by his early experiences as a journalist in the 1880s. His early experiences gave him a real sense of the deep economic gap between places within the same nation that shaped his thoughts on what a nation meant.[162] He spent four months to walk through the Northeast Japan and Hokkaido[163] and reported that "nowadays even (the rural) people know there is an entity called Japan, but still they do not know there are foreign countries... This is why people are not patriotic enough. To eliminate this problem, transportation is essential."[164] More importantly, in an article named "problems on the isolation between urban and rural" written in 1882, he said,

> Even in Europe and America with steam ships, railway and other means of communication, inequality still exists between the urban and the rural ... let alone our country... The isolation between them is very visible... The central government always makes laws without considering the situations in localities... and local people cannot endure the bad consequences of that... This is why I would like to record the reality of this deep isolation between the urban and the rural.[165]

If there was anything that motivated Hara's political career constantly for decades, it was his ideal vision of a nation where the gap and inequalities between cities and localities within the country should be eliminated.

To summarize, Hara's idea was a kind of response to the rapid globalization at his time, when the rapid economic (including financial and industrial) competition between the emerging nation-states centralized resources in the cities and created huge economic inequality between the urban and rural areas. Hara could roughly

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[162] Hara Takashi Kinenkan 1998: 1-4
[163] Hara Takashi Kinenkan 1998: 1-2.
[164] Hara Takashi Kinenkan 1998: 1-2.
[165] Hara Takashi Kinenkan 1998: 1-2.

sense this problem by his experience, and he suggested that if railway could remove the internal physical barriers and the local people could take part in the country, the localities could both contribute to the economic development and enjoy the prosperity.

He summarized his political view in his written article published in a magazine a few months before his inauguration of Prime Minister at 1918.

> To conclude, the further development in these four basic infrastructures — roads, railways, harbors, maritime — contributes to our nation's prosperity and enhances our national prestige, especially after the war (World War One)... In this war, the European countries are impoverished and they are tired about warfare... We should develop a good adaptive strategy, that is, the perfection of the transportation infrastructure. We should not only focus on foreign policies, but also the internal and national development of the institution of products of civilization (国内の文物制度の発展). The underdevelopment of culture and wealth is caused by the inconvenience of transportation in localities. You may say those people living in remote areas are simple-minded and likeable. But times have changed, it is clear they cannnot be winners in the modernity. The further development of Japan relies on the furnishing of transportation, and to improve our civilization we should think of the nation as an equal and uniform whole. This is not merely a problem of advantages and disadvantages (利害問題) of the localities (地方) but also of Japan as a whole... It is because if we do not enrich our whole country (全国) we cannot have a healthy development of the nation (国家). We should emphasize that it is very different to enrich the strength of a small number of people than that of many. To increase the overall strength of the country, then the nation will prosper. We always talk about *kyokoku* (挙国 the whole nation). Even we share a same objective (of prospering the nation), but if our means does not correspond to the aim, then *kyokoku icchi* (挙国一致) cannot come true. From this point of view the development of transportation is vital.
> "The urgent mission of perfecting transportation infrastructure" (1918)[166]

The leveling of national standards among the cities and localities was the spirit of the so-called "four political agenda" of the Hara Cabinet. But as we have seen in the previous sections, among different infrastructures, railway building was still the most important political gesture to attract the localities' attentions. When interpreting the above passage, it is important to bear in mind that under the changing international environment, Hara hoped to use the infrastructural building to "eliminate the gap between the localities and cities," aiming at the vitalization of the localities that could make them an indispensable part of the national development, redefined in terms of economy and business instead of the military might.[167]

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[166] Hara 1918
[167] Kawada 1998: 155-163; Kitahara 1997

Also, one should see that Hara was trying to redefine the meaning of "national interest" such that different concerns and interests could be redefined into new political practices. He talked about how good Seiyûkai was in terms of its ability to help the local infrastructural building. The local people surely understood what he really meant: the state, governed by the party politicians whom were elected by them, now brought real benefits to their places. These "local interests" and "benefits" were very real when their representative councilors sent railway construction workers to their lands to conduct survey work. For the politicians, those claims of "for the sake of national interest" were myths created by the very practical concerns to win an election. By all means, railway building thus became a platform on which the national and local interest could be mutually defined.

It is of utmost importance to see how Hara redefined and appropriated the meanings of the "nation" by enforcing and legitimizing the identity of being "local" — "local interests" is equated to "national interest". Thus, on the one hand, it was justifiable for the parties elected by the people to allocate more resources for infrastructural building in the localities. On the other hand, the localities could receive benefits and parties could expand its power by securing more votes. A real sense of "interests" was constituted by a redefined political myth, and vice versa.

It was clear that these political statements corresponded to the election strategy of Seiyûkai in securing votes from the localities, as what the party's political rivals always criticized. It was actually the very new conception of what a legitimate state should do: from appropriating resources from the localities as in the Meiji, to channeling resources to help them to develop. Hara perfectly redefined what the national interest meant and fitted the local interests and the state interest together. He gained votes and power; localities gained a promise of railway building; the nation gained a better infrastructural foundation for economic development in the new international environment. In other words, in the 1910s, the "localities" were created as a new constituent of the Taisho Polity in the world system of nation-states.

(c) <u>Epilogue: Takahashi Korekiyo's legacy — When investing local railway building became economically rational</u>

Quite accidentally, in the early 1930s, a new Keynesian kind of economic thinking, represented by Takahashi Korekiyo, provided the perfectly good rationales to justify the public spending in the expansion of local railway network. While the

story of Takashi Korekiyo was highly interesting, I have no intention to write and explain the origin of this complicated financial story in details.[168] But my purpose is to highlight some crucial points that might help explain why Seiyûkai's local railway building plan, which could not be thought of as a rational economic policy before, was strangely redefined as a rational one in the 1930s. This short section explains in what ways this new economic thinking mandated Seikûkai's election strategy and spending in the local railway building. In other words, it became economically rational and thus politically correct to lay tracks, even these trains might transport only "mountain monkeys" to "a mountain without any tress" in the localities.

To be sure, from 1922 to 1932, the late Taisho period was characterized by: (1) a contracting economy and a policy of induced depression and, (2) a two-party political system.[169] The local railway building became a battlefield between Seiyûkai and its opposition party, when Seiyûkai overspent money in building local railways by relying only on foreign loans. Again, local railway building became a hotly debated issue because of financial matters besides those political concerns. Economic Historian Metzler has reminded us that until the early 1930s (except during the World War I and the outbreak of the global financial crisis of the Great Depression in 1929), "induced-deflation" policy was the ideology of the political economy among major countries. In Japan, amid the background of gold embargo after World War I, state overspending was conceived of as a cause of inflation and thus the appreciation of national currency, which made the export and thus the state financial situation difficult after the short economic prosperity in the late 1910s.

Amid this difficult financial situation, Metzler has summarized two distinctive economic policies among the two political parties in the 1920s and the 1930s.[170] The political parties argued about economic policies in terms of either "negative" or "positive" policies, or in Metzler's term, "monetarist" or "Keynesian" measures. The former policy suggested restrictive measures oriented towards deflation, which was the mainstream economic thought among the major world countries at the time, and the latter positive intervention through active infrastructural building oriented towards

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[168] For the story of Takahashi Korekiyo, see Smethurst 2007. Again I have no intention to delineate the difficult mechanism of the high finance in this period. Interested readers may refer to Metzler's succinct discussion; see Metzler 2006.

[169] Metzler 2006; see chapter 4

[170] Metzler 2006, chapter four

inflation, which was indeed a curious way of economic thinking at the time.[171]

Meltzer characterizes the period from 1918 to 1921 as "the Great Divide" in Japan's economic history.[172] This period overlapped with Hara's cabinet and his "demoralizing political strategies" of extensive local railway building, which was supported by an unexpected economic booming due to the outbreak of WWI which stimulated Japan's international trade surplus. This short booming brought state spending in local infrastructural building possible. The sudden inflation also caused popular revolt and Hara's spending might also be seen as a response to the national unrest. One should note that Hara's success, as a "Civilian Prime Minster," and his generous spending in laying tracks into the deep mountains were indeed heavily shaped by the distinctive historical and economic situations at his time.

After Hara's death in 1921, the 1920s was again, however, dominated by the restrictive financial measures and state-induced depressions. While I skip most of those financial rationales behind, it is important to note that most local railway projects were again halted in the 1920s and local railway building became again a pretext for the politicians to debate on their standing of either a positive or negative economic policy. When Seiyûkai wished to implement a positive economic interference, they highlighted the importance of local development and railway building, while their rival party attacked their spending in local railway was immoral in wasting money and was in fact a kind of party corruption.

The Great Depression in 1927 became the water-shed for the two parties to reflect on their economic reasons. Meltzer, however, commented that Takahashi Korekiyo became heroic in his new economic policy of active state spending. Meltzer coined the Japanese state, from 1932 to 1936, as "Capitalist Recovery in One Country" in the world. By active state intervention, Takahashi encouraged expanding state budget to encourage inflation instead of induced depression.

Skipping most economic rationales behind, especially the consideration (again) of the international gold standard and the global financial market, Japan's economic recovery had very little to do with local railway making. The secret of "Takahashi reflation" between 1932 and 1936 had more to do with his "re-suspension of gold standard (meaning depreciation of the yen), increased government spending funded by deficit bonds (meaning monetary expansion); and low interest rates" which were

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[171] Metzler 2006: 67
[172] Metzler 2006, chapter five

211

all new ideas at the time.[173] In other words, railway, again, was not a magic.

As a consequence, curiously, this economic rationale and standing matched with the political stance of Seiyûkai's local railway building. Laying tracks indeed stimulated the economy, according to Takahashi Korekiyo's Keynesian way of thinking. The concern of the research, however, was that this kind of economic theory, accidentally, legitimized — re-moralized — Seiyûkai's "corrupted" politics by using the local railway building and that further strengthened the railway belief. Now, no matter the local railway building really helped national economic development or not, the success of Takahashi made the belief and those supporting the political rituals justifiable.[174]

One may consider the so-called developmental state thesis in the post-war Japan as the successor of Hara's and Takahashi's ideas, as manifested in Tanaka Kakuei's national plan in the 1960s by building railway — this time, the shinkansen or the bullet trains — in order to reallocate resources to the local development in order to fill the gap between the city and the rural.[175] If that would be the case, one can consider Takahashi as the Adam Smith or the high priest of Japan's political economy, and railway building as the invisible hand crafted by Hara. The political practices and economic myths converged. The problem is not whether railway really brings the power to revive the economy or not, but the accidental coupling between Takashi's economic thinking and Hara's political practices was forgotten. As written in the pamphlet quoted, now railway "holds the scared power to revive the dead, an inspiration and a creation."

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[173] Metzler 2006: 248-252

[174] Careful readers might question, then, why in historical realities, the ultra-nationalism displaced the party politics and democracy. Hara and Takahashi were all assassinated by the right-wing believers; one of them was indeed a railway switchman. Fascism was then a critical idea that made democracy side-tracked. I do not intend to go into this critical problem, even though the next chapter on nationalism might provide some hints to the question. Indeed, colonialism, imperialism and colonial railway building became another critical issue that the research cannot tackle with due to its limited scope.

[175] Johnson 1995

Section Five   Conclusion

Railway indeed united the country. Yet it was perhaps not necessary to lay tracks, the claim and the promise to build them, enforced by a variety of ritualistic practices, had already made the belief towards railway very real. The institution of railway building after the *Amendment Law* in 1922 indeed finally made the land under the same nation; its legitimate ground was now redefined by the politicians and localities. Railway building became also an important manifestation of the spirit of the representation and universal participation in the Taisho polity. Yet receiving moralistic attacks from political rivals, the elected politicians should then seek new economic rationales to argue that the making of this law was rational. They were required to justify why spending in local infrastructural building — local interest — could be defined as "national interest."

Until people wrote proposals, petitioned and passed the formal law in the diet the railway building was only abstract myths. In this chapter we have examined different "methodological accounts" by which the localities and the politicians employed to ask for local railway building. These "methods," including writing proposals and petitioning for a railway, became ritualized practices spreading among the localities. The ritualizing process further strengthened the belief and, more importantly, expanded the scope of it down to the local level. The belief was no longer mere myths created by a limited numbers of state-builders and capitalists but now it was ritualized into shared modes of conduct among the localities and the politicians. Through collective participation in asking for local railway building, however, those shared practice became critical because the very promise to lay tracks by the politicians, who claimed to represent their interest in the national diet, became a life or death decision for the localities.

In the Taisho period, railway gradually became an unquestioned political practice and a platform mediating between the new state and localities, or a nexus of power, in which a new definition of "nation" and a collective conception towards it were put into ritualized practices in forms of election as well as law, legitimated by new cultural accounts of politics and economy.

The railway belief in its use in modernizing Japan and the new political belief in representation became two sides of the same coin, namely, democracy. To ask for local railway building ritualized not only the belief of railway but also ideas of

political participations, representation and citizenship.

One important point to note is that even representational politics was introduced, instead of individuals which served as the sovereign subject of the newly defined polity, the subject of party politics and "citizenship" was *chihō* (地方) — rhetorically referring the local or the rural — that provided emerging parties new legitimate claims to secure votes in election and assert their role in politics. Instead of making up the "people," the very legitimate foundation of the party politics and the subject of sovereignty of Taisho democracy were *chihō*, or localities. It was *chihō*, but not "people," that became the invented idea that provided a new legitimate foundation for Hara Takashi's seizure of power. By redefining "nation" in correspondence with the cultural definitions emerging in the world society at the time of Taisho, Hara' polity absorbed the local demands and tried to allocate state resources to help local development.

Hara Takashi's polity, however, was historically and geographically limited. Extensive state spending in the local development was only possible at the time of economic booming, limited in the period between 1918 and 1921. Empirically, his "corrupted party politics" was also limited to Northeastern Japan. Yet the symbolic meanings of his political standing were great, because the idea to develop local infrastructures provided a new legitimate foundation of the idea of democracy. Curiously, Takahashi Korekiyo's financial policy and economic theory, which perfectly matched Seiyūkai's political strategy, could also have been a product of Hara's polity.

Now railways were no longer myths. They became then tangible through rituals. Some tracks were laid, even though more were still railway plans and promise. Some did travel by railways, but more did not. However, acts that were directed towards the railways became part and part of a collective memory in an important phase of the political modernization in Japan. It is exactly through this participatory experience, even if it is only visionary in nature, the logic of confidence is firmly established. The next chapter then delineate in what sense people shared a new national imagination through railway travels.

Chapter 4

Imagining the Nation:
Railway as sacred travel, secular pilgrimage, and the national imaginative horizon (1890-1937)

Whence comes the idea that the beginning of a series is a visible section of rails invisibly laid to infinity? Well, we might imagine rails instead of a rule. And infinitely long rails correspond to the unlimited application of a rule.

Philosophical Investigations
§218, Ludwig Wittgenstein
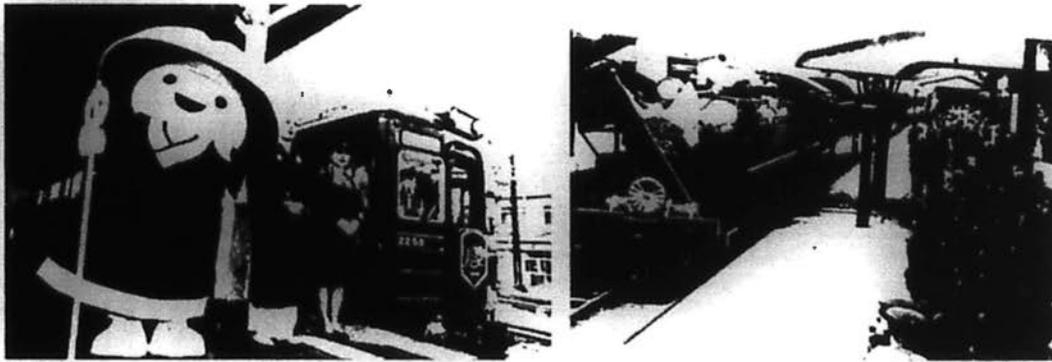
(Left)

Figure 4.1   The Nankai Railway (南海電鉄) and the Kôyasan (高野山), a famous temple founded by Kûkai (空海), had the new ceremony to promote the new special train service linking Osaka and the temple. (28th April 2009 from Mainichi-Shimbun)

(Right)

Figure 4.2   People welcoming the royal train at Saikisato Station, Kyushu, 1949 (Downloaded from http://panorama.photo-web.cc/satobus/index.html, last accessed 1st September 2009)

Figure 4.3   A current railway map of the Hankai Railway, in which one could identify major temples, shrines, parks, zoo, entertainment facilities, and a site of an imperial tomb
(Downloaded from http://www.hankai.co.jp/waies/index.html, last accessed 13 August 2009)

Section One   The national imaginative horizon and railway travel

Utilizing the concept of "imagining" as the final pillar of the institutionalization process, this final substantive chapter delineates the most curious aspect of why the institution of railway was charged with cultural imaginations. As argued in previous chapters, from mere discourses composed of abstract claims to concrete practices of asking for railway, the belief towards railway building was made even before tracks were actually laid. Yet many railways were built and some people started to travel. This chapter first examines for what purposes people are organized to travel by railway in the historical contexts from the late Meiji to the early Showa period (roughly between 1890 and 1937). Then it examines how these travelling experiences produced these cultural imaginations. This chapter specifies the social mechanisms that consolidated those discourses and rituals into a firmly established and sustainable *cultural* imagination. When railway travel was used for establishing the political or religious authority of the emperor and became available for many tourists, railway became an imagination shared among all commoners. In other words, this chapter delineates how the institutional belief was fixated by the social organization of travelling experience, spreading among commoners.

This chapter delineates this process by introducing the third theoretical tool of *imagining* as a key mechanism of institutionalization and providing a variety of contextual scenarios, from imperial railway trips, travel and tourism to delineate in what ways railway became a totem of the nation. One might consider railway as a totem, but I pay more attention to the enchanting process of this cultural imaginary, conceptualized here as *imagining*. Following the Andersonian approach, to examine the making of an institution one should then expose those historical contexts that gave rise to the collective process which enchanted the totem.

A firmly established institution required collective enshrinement and enchantment by symbolic power to become a *cultural* nexus of power in order to perpetuate itself – but the problem is how. An institution could not be well established by discourse and ritual alone, unless people created and *shared* the same cultural meaning towards the social reality in which they are embedded. Imagining, thus, refers to the historical and social processes of the collective cognitive sense-making, making these diverse experiences into a shared system of symbols. My task at hand is to delineate these processes which led to diverse experiences and feelings becoming shared.

1   Travel, pilgrimage, and the national imaginative horizon

As discussed in the theoretical review, Anderson pays attention not only to printing capitalism but also to travel. Anderson extensively borrowed the concept of "journey" from anthropologist Victor Turner on his research of pilgrimage.[1] Pilgrimages, as put by Turner, are those "'journey' between times, statuses and places" serving as "meaning-creating experiences."[2] These regular religious journeys to holy grounds in turn become shared experiences among believers who may even speak different languages. Holy grounds are thus the physical manifestation of imaginations of a pre-modern social reality, i.e. religion.

> Their centrality was experienced and 'realized' (in the stagecraft sense) by the constant flow of pilgrims moving towards them from remote and *otherwise unrelated* localities... [A] vast horde of illiterate vernacular-speakers provided the dense, physical reality of the ceremonial passage; while a small segment of literate bilingual adepts drawn from each vernacular community performed the unifying rites, interpreting to their respective followings the meaning of their collective motion. In a pre-print age, the reality of the imagined religious community depended profoundly on countless, ceaseless travels.[3]

The actualization of "religion" thus relied on these regular travels to provide dislodging and *transcendent experiences*. To produce a collective sense of sacredness, then, refers to those cross-boundary experiences — cutting through the reconfiguration of everyday conceptions of time and space.[4] We can probably say sacredness and transcendence refer to the feelings of spatial and temporary, yet highly ritualized, dislodgement from everyday life and one's immediate social groups.

The concept of pilgrimage, at this point, is intimately related to the current investigation of nation. Referring to what has already been mentioned in chapter 2, the first railway experiences among passengers altered their whole political vision. If nation is the modern religion, the change from pre-modern pilgrimage to modern tourism is critical to the social (re)construction of an imagined collectivity.

The guiding questions to be investigated in this chapter could then be put as

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[1] Anderson 2006: 19 chapter four; see also Turner 1974
[2] Anderson 2006: 53
[3] Anderson 2006: 53-54
[4] At this point, I borrow heavily from the insights of Japanese medieval historian Amino Yoshihiko, who conceptualized the production of these religious, sacred experiences as the principle of non-relation-ness, or *muen* (無縁). He extensively refers this concept to those monks, travelers, gamblers, prostitute, who are all having "sacred job" in the medieval settings. These are those "non-commoners" who live with mystic power or the gods. The feature of these people are their lives were detached from a fixed social group and often travelled across group boundaries. See Amino 1996.

follows: What kinds of changing experiences were brought by railway? Why would that be the case? Who were responsible for encouraging and organizing people to travel by railways?

2   Two forms of travel

In this chapter, I delineate how a national imaginative horizon was gradually opened with the use of railway. By *horizon*, I refer to what Alfred Schütz describes as "a phenomenon characteristic of all mental experiences and cognitive efforts."[5] Institutionalization of nation through imagining, thus, refers to the expansion of an imaginative horizon in which different *experiences* are cognitively and collectively organized. Specifically, this chapter examines two forms of travel, looking at both levels of political elites and commoners.

Travel was central to the broadening of the modern national imaginative horizon. In the case of modern Japan, organized trips were mostly politically and religiously driven; trips were either for governing or religious reasons. While both commoners and political elites had travelled frequently since the pre-modern era, the railway became the key component in both forms of travel. On the one hand, the ruling class from pre-modern shoguns to modern emperors relied on highly ritualized trips to establish their authority, i.e. the Alternate Residence System in the Edo period and the imperial railway trips since the late Meiji era respectively. On the other hand, commoners enjoyed pilgrimage in the Edo period and the modern tourism in the Taisho period respectively. Both forms of travel expanded the imaginative horizons greatly among governing elites and commoners, as they had a chance to transcend from their original communities and to imagine a new collectivity through these travel experiences.[6] With different backgrounds and native languages, travelers on the roads might experience what Anderson described: "Why is this man doing what I am doing,

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[5] Schutz in Wagner (ed.) 1970: 318; Wagner defines that "…There is a core, or 'kernel,' of each apperception, recollection, problem, etc., which is surrounded by a 'fringe' of related, at the moment not central, impressions, factors, memories, considerations, expectations, etc. Together, they form the horizon of the given phase of mental awareness. The fringe areas may be structured (e.g. foreground, middleground, background) and thus form several horizons around the same core of conscious experience." Wagner in Wagner (ed.) 1970: 318.

[6] One can then ask why a nation is not imagined in the pre-modern era if travels were also common. A simple response is that the travels among commoners were not well organized ones by higher authorities and the travels among political élites and commoners were indeed two independent systems. We will see how they converged only at the time of the 1930s.

uttering the same words that I am uttering, even though we cannot talk to one another?"[7] In the pre-modern contexts, these experiences strengthened their identity as "ruling class" and "believers," yet by the modern period, railway travels made a national consciousness of "because *we* are Japanese" possible.[8] I argue that this happened in the early Showa period when both forms of travels — imperial railway trips for political domination and tourism among commoners for entertainment and religious purposes — shared the same discourse and ritual.

Travels, from pre-modern to modern Japan, were politically and religiously organized. Pre-modern form of political trips among daimyo and pilgrimage among commoners were gradually transformed to imperial travel and modern tourism in the modern period. When both imperial and commoners' railway travel shared the same languages and had the same format, railway became like the totem. Despite one's status, when both the elites and the commoners had their railway travel, it was similar to people dancing around totem in festival. Travel and tourism were modern forms of ritual in which status was temporarily dissolved, social structures suspended, and a stage of "communitas"[9] emerged allowing individuals to be transcended by the collectivity.

In section two, I will borrow historian Hara Takeshi's thesis on "visual domination," by which he referred to the use of railway by the modern imperial family as a means to control the newly established nation through railway travel. We will see why the religious-political authority of the modern imperial institution was made possible by sending the emperor to travel around the country by railway. At the same time, not only the political elites but many nameless "common people" became active in railway travel. Section three, then, explains how the emergence of modern travel and tourism were brought by railway companies, thus enabling and encouraging the common people to imagine the nation through leisure and travel. Finally, we will see how two forms of travel gradually converged, though with much conflicts, in the early Showa Period. On the one hand, the emperor's railway travel became an

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[7] Anderson 2006: 54

[8] Anderson 2006

[9] To borrow a famous concept used by Turner, "communitas" is "opposed to 'community' which refers to a geographical area of common living" and refers to "a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes, together constitute what one might call anti-structure… Communitas strains toward universalism and openness… [and] is asserted for the 'part' at the expense of the 'whole.'" (Turner 1974: 201-202). One may also compare this concept with that of Amino's "*muen*."

efficient means of political domination which established its transcendental authority. On the other hand, commoners' new form of pilgrimages, promoted by the railway companies, gradually shared common myth and ritual proposed by the imperial ideology. Two modes of railway travels successfully joined two worlds of sacred and profane, politics and religions together, resulting in a common national imaginative horizon opened by the railway.

Section Two Railway as sacred travel: imperial railway trips as political domination and its creation of national imaginative horizon

This section delineates first the storyline among governing class whose trips were for political purposes. It depicts how the imperial institution made use of the railway system in establishing authorities and domination through organizing trips. Discussion in this section was largely based on a thesis called "visual domination" in modern Japan that examined how the institution of railway worked intimately with the imperial institution, in a work *The Visualized Empire* (可視化された帝国) written by Hara Takeshi, a historian of political thought.[10] Hara delineates how the use of the railways by emperors of Meiji, Taisho, Showa, as well as Crown Princes in traveling throughout the country, as well as colonies, gradually became a unique mode of domination of the imperial empire. The Meiji emperor and the Crown Prince Yoshihito (the late Taisho Emperor) in the 1900s were arguably the first "Japanese," because they did travel all over the country by the railway extensively and systematically to meet with their national subjects.

1   Visual domination and *sankin-kôtai* in the Edo period

I have identified an interesting account about some old rural women who paid worship to trains.[11] The reporter of the account often heard that rural people would worship to locomotives. He did not believe in these rumors and thought it was the imagination of urban people who tried to stigmatize rural villagers as superstitious. Yet in one trip in the Northeastern Japan again near Hara Takashi's electoral district in 1957 he witnessed that two people who were formally dressed paid worship to the train by joining their palms together as if in a prayer.

The reporter found it difficult to ascertain whether paying worship to a modern technology was superstitious or not. Perhaps the rural old women used an old ritualistic way to deal with something superior to them by prostrating themselves on the ground, which was conceived by the reporter as a religious act. Indeed the problem was not to distinguish theoretically whether this ritual was "political" or

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[10] Hara 2001
[11] Hama 1985

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"religious."[12] The above account brought us an interesting insight about the changes of the form of rituals employed by those old women to deal with authorities superior to them.[13] In the old era, people postulated their bodies on the ground when they saw other people or objects representing authorities (religious or political); in the modern period, people do this by saluting to or shaking hands with them.

Hara interestingly pays great attention to the change of ritual affecting the way that people worship or salute to the means of transportation, which were enchanted by the higher political authority. He observes that in the early Show period (from the 1920s to the early 1940s) when the emperors travelled around his land by train, at each station and along the railway lines local people were organized to salute or bowed to the royal train, or *omeshi-ressha* (御召列車), in which the Emperor or the Crown Prince was seated. Hara argues that a very efficient way of political domination through the emperor's railway trips was settled in the pre-war period. Hara has theorized the mechanism of political control in the case of Japan as "visual domination" and defined it as follow:

> Visual domination is direct, concrete domination by a particular individual. People understand that there is someone who has tremendous authority. The presumption of this sort of domination is that simply when that person approaches, people will assume a respectful posture. There is no need to use words to explain this person's authority.[14]

Legitimacy is not achieved by charisma, ideology, election or bureaucracy, but the regular ceremony in which the very act of the gazing of higher political authority defines a power hierarchy. Concrete examples he refers to are the political ritual of *sankin-kôtai* (参勤交代 the Alternate Residence) in the Edo period and the emperor's *gyôkôkei* (行幸啓 Imperial Trips)[15] in the Meiji and Taisho period. Considering this form of domination, Hara has argued that the use of railway by modern emperors was

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[12] I do not go into the reporter's puzzle at the current moment. Indeed this is the key to solve our puzzle of why our theoretical concepts trapped us in explaining the origin of an institution. See section five in this chapter.

[13] See also for Clifford Geertz's "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example" for an interesting account of explaining ritualistic changes of a funeral. He argues that one should observe the mismatch between ritual change and cultural understandings. I will explain on how our concepts towards politics and religions confined us in interpreting these rituals in the final part. Geertz 1973: 142-169.

[14] Hara 2006: 67

[15] Hara uses the term *gyôkôkei* (行幸啓) to summarize different types of imperial trips, including *gyôkô* (行幸), which means the Emperor visits a single place; *junkô* (巡幸), the Emperor visits two or more places; *gyôkei* (行啓), the Crown Prince visits a single place, and; *junkei* (巡啓), the Crown Prince visits several places. See Hara 2009:52

indeed a continuation of the use of palanquin by many feudal lords, or *daimyô* (大名), in the *sankin-kôtai* in the Edo period.

Hara's major argument is that political domination was made possible through visualizing these imperial railway travels. The Emperor neither met nor directly saw each of his subjects at each station face-to-face. Instead, grand railway pilgrimages and welcome rituals along the railway lines and stations were extensively organized. To present themselves as legitimate national subjects, local representatives got themselves organized to welcome the emperor and the royal trains along the railway. Through these imperial railway travels and welcome rituals, loyal "subjects" as well as "political body," using the perspective of Foucault, were disciplined, ritualized, and produced. Curiously, the emperor was hidden inside the train and hence invisible to the public; the authority was transferred to and symbolized by the train. "Visualized Empire" thus refers to the gradual ritualization of a proper spatial and temporal organization of the royal train and the welcome ceremonies along the lines. These extensive railway travels helped establish the imperial authority first by visualizing these rituals and ceremonies, while the authority was manifested in the symbol of the royal train and the railway network.

Hara's argument was based on his refute or amendments towards Fujitani's earlier research of Meiji imperial ceremony in the book *Splendid Monarcy*.[16] Borrowing the "theater state" thesis from Geertz's *Negara*[17] and insights from Anderson,[18] Fujitani examined how, in the case of Meji imperial ceremony, "the invention of tradition" resulted in a national imagination. Even though Fujitani's focus on ritual and ceremony since the mid-Meiji period is an important one, Hara argues that the uncritical borrowing of Anderson's thesis on "imaginations" and the inattention to Taisho and early Showa periods made Fujitani jump to the conclusion that ceremonies as invention of traditions produced an imagined community as early as the late nineteenth century. Hara critically pointed out that this conclusion was exaggerated in terms of historical preciseness and theoretical considerations. Common people in the Meiji period could not achieve a full sense of the nation through imagination in some occasionally held imperial ceremonies in Tokyo. These were all important, but Hara argues that different welcome rituals during imperial railway

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[16] Fujitani 1996; see also Makihara 1998
[17] Geertz 1980
[18] Anderson 2006

travels all over the country since the 1900s were more crucial. To him, it must not be assumed that a nation could be automatically produced through ceremonies; instead one should examine all the details, scope and process of ritualization. To Hara, railway traveling was important because the visual domination, as a political mechanism, ritualized a sacred imperial institution through a growing political control of space and time as seen in imperial travel.[19]

The importance of Hara's contextual analysis is that his explanation on the emergence of nationalism does not rely on either the internal attributes of the railway system or the political will in creating imperial rituals and ceremonies. The emperor or the imperial institution was not pre-given entity, but was also created in the very process of railway travels. It is those experience of travelling around the country by railways itself that constructed the very existence of the imperial identity.

Hara terms the above mechanism of the use of railway in establishing authority as "visual domination." The *political and collective use* of railway enchanted both the emperor, who sat in the carriage to bless those subjects waiting along the tracks and stations to welcome his coming, and, more importantly, the train. Hara calls this the "political mysticism" and "fetishism" underlying Japan's modern political-religious experiences.[20]

Another important point to note is that the concept of "visual domination" was borrowed from Fujitani, yet his focus was on the "making of a modern citizenry with an interiorized sense of themselves as objects of an unremitting surveillance" through those imperial pageants, which "coerced the people into becoming objects of the emperor's gaze."[21] On the contrary, Hara critically differentiates himself from Fujitani. He points out that gazing was not a one-way process but the *mutual* gazing during those imperial travels that created both the identity of the royal subjects of the emperor *and* the identity of the modern imperial institution, when Emperors and Crown Princes were asked to frequently and regularly visit the land that they governed.

The following part then briefly summarizes Hara's arguments and findings for the sake of our discussion of the imagination thesis. To delineate the process, Hara divided five phases of development and his periodization was based on the forms of

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[19] Hara 2001: 387-388
[20] Hara 2006: 69-70
[21] Fujitani 1996

organized travel among governing elites.[22]

Phase One	Before Meiji Restoration
Phase Two	The restoration period of reform
Phase Three	1872-1890 (The 5th year to the 23rd year of Meiji)
Phase Four	1890-1921 (The 23rd year of the Meiji to the 10th year of Taisho)
Phase Five	1921-1945 (The 10th year of Taisho to the 20th year of Showa)

In phase one, a well established political ritual of a nation-wide scale of organized travel among feudal lords, namely, Alternate Residence System or *sankin-kôtai*, paved the foundation to visual domination in modern Japan. In phase two and three, the visual domination was quickly and curiously reincarnated in the imperial use of railway. In phase four, a growing tendency to formalize imperial travel as a nation-wide or even empire-wide imperial ritual subsequently split the "political body" and "natural body" of the king.[23] Also, the political authorities were incarnated into the means of transportation by which the emperor or the crown prince traveled. In phase five, the natural body of the king was subordinated to the imperial ritual and the technological requirement of railway system, and a more stable power relation between the authorities and the formation of the subjects was thereby institutionalized. In the following, I will briefly present concrete historical cases in order to illustrate the mechanisms of visualizing discussed so far.

(a)   Visualizing authorities in the grand political ritual of *sankin-kôtai*

What is *sankin-kôtai*? For nearly three hundred years, hundreds of *daimyô* were required to report duty periodically to Edo and to travel back and forth between their fiefs and Edo, where the shogun was located, in addition to placing hostages in Edo. Throughout the year either the *daimyô* or their close relatives were kidnapped in Edo. The stability of the system of centralized feudalism in the Edo period relied on both the hostage system and the Alternate Residence System. These seemingly absurd practices, which required different political leaders and their relatives and followers walking around the country, became a very effective way to control hundreds of highly autonomous political entity, without using violence or ideology but relying only on an administrative method to coordinate and control hundreds of highly autonomous and thus potentially rebellious fiefs.

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[22] Hara 2001: 13
[23] Kantorowicz 1957; see discussion below.

Yet more importantly, Watanabe (1997) argued that *sankin-kôtai* was an extremely efficient means of political control not only because *daimyô* were required to pay for the expensive travel, but also the ritual of regular travel itself became grand ceremonies to show off the political authorities down to the level of common people.[24] The key is the *gyôretsu* (行列, the long procession) of the *daimyô*. The numbers and compositions of troops in each *gyôretsu* were prescribed by the Edo government according to the status of each daimyo, from tens to thousands. The daimyo rode in the palanquins and brought followers to form a procession. In Watanabe's words, *sankin-kôtai* became a grand performance of *go-ikô* (御威光), literally the "aura of an authority." Visual domination thus refers to how the aura of the daimyo was manifested in the procession in the Alternate Residence System.

When different daimyo and their troops and followers marched back and forth on the roads between Edo and their domains, people along the roadsides prostrated themselves to the procession and the palanquins. Watanabe described lively about what happened on the roads.

> Samurai's *gyôretsu* was neither a parade nor pageantry. [The procession was just] walking in progression gravely and in a stately manner for a long time. "When hearing the sound (of to knee! [下にいろ]), people nearby and the land became a dead silence. Work was interrupted, windows were shut, people hurried back to their home... Travelers knelt with forehead touching the ground, waiting after the superior's means of transportation (乗物) passed by."[25]

Here it is clear that Watanabe disagrees with Fujitani's theorization of political rituals as merely parade or pageantry. Both Watanabe and Hara argue that Tokugawa polity did not have a well-formed ideology. The key ideology of the Tokugawa polity relied on these *daimyô* trips, as well as others court rituals.[26] For example, the seriousness was at its maximum point for Shogun's formal procession, or *onari*:

> Though [it] changes with time, examples include cleaning the roads a few days in advance, paying attention to fire prevention, moving carts away places which could be seen from the roads. Even forgetting a broom on the road may cause a huge blunder (大失態). Orders were given to make sure dogs and cats were tied properly, fire was prohibited, and people should have their breakfast in advance... The long procession was then passing along the roads in towns and samurai houses in the dead silence... It was similar to the passing of deities.[27]

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[24] Watanabe 1997. For other major research on sankin-kôtai, see for example, Yamamoto 1998; Chûda 2003; Mito 2001.
[25] Watanabe 1997: 23
[26] Ikegami 1995
[27] Watanabe 1997: 25

By quoting a writer in the Meiji era, Watanabe called this as "political mysticism" (神秘政略) because the lack of ideology and legitimacy of a military government could only rely on the aura of the authority (威光) and its format (格式) to sustain its status quo.[28]

> The polity's ideology was always confused... but neglecting the overall vagueness and weakness of the logical legitimatization of the polity, the strict hierarchy of status was being performed in all circumstances as "facts." It was required that a daimyo was being like a daimyo (大名らしく), and it was the same for samurai and commoners... It was a tautology, but to know that it was a tautology was not easy.

In other words, the so-called "visual domination" was not only a show to make people see the authorities but also to allow them to have a sense that the authorities were subject to their gaze as well. The key, however, was that only the procession was shown. The political authorities were incarnated to the palanquins and the system itself.

Quite similar to what is argued by Geertz,[29] a political theory relies on well established practices to make those invented rituals become natural, just like a religious and cosmic order. For almost three hundred years, hundreds of daimyo and thousands of their followers marched on solemnly around the country. *Sankin-kôtai* was perhaps the most distinctive case to use transportation as a means of political control in the world. The only legitimating political theory the Tokugawa regime could rely on was the exaggerated ritual of transportation. It was not a question of why but how to act properly. The visualization of the polity by means of *sankin kôtai* made this political order visible. This is what is meant by visual domination. The realness of the pre-modern polity, however, could only become an important source of national imagination if this mode of domination could be re-institutionalized into the modern nation-state.

(b) <u>Visualization of the polity as a political theory</u>

Let us examine several important concerns that appear in Hara's *Visualized Empire*. First, although the nature of political authorities and institutions changed

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[28] Watanabe 1997: 20
[29] Geertz 1980

greatly when entering the modern period, he argues that visual domination was still the major mechanism of political control in the case of Japan, which was preserved from the Edo period and then re-invented in the late Meiji period.

Second, political mysticism as found in visual domination relied on fetishism. It means that the power held by an authority (whether religious or political) was transferred to the object representing the power hierarchy. He defines fetishism such that:

> The authority of the ruler is not limited to the capital area, but rather extends to the provinces. Throughout the country people are conscious of the ruler's authority, and loyalty to the ruler at the grassroots level is solid. When the ruler visits the provinces, the local people are mobilized, but the ruler doesn't necessarily even need to present himself in the flesh. Simply as a result of, his means of transportation (a palanquin or a train, for example), the ruler's influence is transmitted, and a sort of fetishism develops.[30]

He uses this word "fetishism" literally that people worship and respect to the thing instead of the person who holds authority, so that "the authority of the lords and shogun was transferred to their palanquins, and a fetishism focused on these palanquins developed. The more luxurious the shogun and the lord made their palanquins, the more people turned out."[31] People simply recognize a concrete object which symbolizes the authority.[32] Even green tea, which was used by the Tokugawa Shogun, was transported on roads in similar ways that the tea was enchanted by political authorities and people prostrated to the box containing the green tea.[33] A fetish, or an incarnation of authorities, developed towards the means of transportation in the Japanese case. To examine political ideology in Japan one should not only look for the concrete "fetish" — from palanquins to railway through which authorities could be re-incarnated, one should also see through those underlying changing social relationship that constructed this power conjuration.

The above points are more important to our concern, if we consider transportation not only from the angle of political domination, but also from a viewpoint of how the political organization of pre-modern transportation continued to influence the modern form of the railway institution. The imperial use of railway by

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[30] Hara 2006: 67
[31] Hara 2006: 70
[32] Moreover, fetishism involved an element of sacredness, that secular and sacred authorities were not well distinguished. One worshipped to the god and to the palanquins in similar manners.
[33] Watanabe 1997

the Emperor, as well as two Crown Princes in the late Meiji and early Taisho, recreated some sort of "power circuit" — or even a religious authority — resembling that in the pre-modern period.

2   The two bodies of the polity

The problem is to what extent and how visual domination in the Edo period was reinvented in the consecutive eras. Watanabe argues that the abandonment of the *sankin-kôtai* system was indirectly related to the collapse of the Tokugawa polity. It was because the rigid world order represented by the system and power hierarchy manifested in the processions were suddenly thrown into question with this suspended political ritual, just a few years before Meiji Restoration.[34] Between the 1850s, when the *sankin-kôtai* system was abolished, and the 1890s, when major railway networks were built, both the Meiji government and the invented imperial institution lacked much legitimacy. The continuation, or a re-invention, of pre-modern form of visual domination was indeed fundamental. Railway, by all means, became a key institution controlled by various political or social forces which facilitated all of these changes of the imperial use of the modern railway in creating a new national imaginative horizon. When the imperial institution, which substituted the feudal lords, wished to establish its authority, the most effective way to do so was to take train, instead of palanquins and procession, for travel.

(a)   Transition to the modern period

In the early stages of Edo and Meiji periods, Hara pays more attention to visualizing than to imagining because he argues that it is better to capture modern Japan as a "visualized empire" first before the birth of an "imagined community."[35] The reason is that, as stated earlier in this chapter, Hara criticizes Fujitani that a national imagination is difficult to achieve simply by governmental ceremonies and parades.[36] The invention of tradition described by Fujitani was restricted in the locale

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[34] Watanabe 1997: 40-47
[35] Hara 2001: 12
[36] Fujitani's *Splendid Monarchy* is indeed a cornerstone which provided us important theoretical framework in understanding the nature of the early Meiji state, but his rather static "historical ethnography" restricting to early Meiji imperial ritual did not account for the change and dynamics that successfully linked the pre-modern way of political domination to the modern nationalistic one. A newly invented state ritual could not immediately help the invention of the imagined community. It is

of Tokyo. On the contrary, to Hara, the Meiji period (phase two and three) was only a transition period. The imperial institution was neither commonly accepted nor known to the public as the sole legitimate authority. Imperial rituals, public or private, were still under invention. Hara pinpoints the exact timing of the completion of a national scale of imperial rituals, by means of railway, only as late as the 1920s.

In phase two, during the reform time in the 1860s, the newly "restored" Meiji emperor had only a few trips when he walked through the Tôkaidô Road between Tokyo and Kyoto. Very few restrictions on the roads were enforced. As it was only a transition phase, let us turn to the last three phases.

In phase three, i.e. in the early Meiji era, however, the new government tried both old and new methods to recreate a new political order, including the visual domination through some new forms of formal travels, imperial trips or *gyôkôkei* (行 幸啓). The most famous one was possibly the opening ceremony of the railway in 1872.[37] According to Hara, there were eight major trips in this period. The Meiji emperor visited major government facilities like shrines, temples, schools, courts, and barracks, which were considered as either important national or cultural sites for newly established modern state institutions.[38]

The first point to note is that while the new government hoped to use the figure of the new Meiji emperor as a manifestation of political charisma of the new country, there were many competitors. Religious leaders like Buddhist *Hôô* (法王) from Kyoto or Shinto *Kuni-no-miyatsuko* (国造) from Izumo were also very active in walking around the country to preach, or *junkyô* (巡教).[39] To commoners, they were living gods. Places where these high priests travelled to were flooded with people. Even the bath water used by these religious leaders was taken by those people who believed that it contained magical power.[40]

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true that early Meiji government actively invented many ceremonies, but the forming of national consciousness by means of imperial ritual had limited scope of influence and required times for sedimentation.

[37] While many books and accounts of railway history will definitely describe this as an important event, I choose not to mention much on this. The reason is that the target of the audience in the ceremony was quite limited, possibly for foreigners instead of the public. More importantly, the major concern in this chapter is to depict the scope of these imperial railway trips in expanding the national imaginative horizon.

[38] See also chapter four in Gluck (1985).

[39] Hara 2001: 45-67. See also Hara (1996) for an interesting account of how different religious thoughts were competing when the new imperial institution wished to adopt the Ise instead of the Izumo belief system.

[40] Hara 2001: 64

Compared to other religious leaders whose charisma were drawn from traditional local folk beliefs, the charisma of the emperor relied on its role as a civilizer and his magical power came from the western modernity, i.e. emphasizing on the future rather than the past. In his trips, as both a civilizer and a military leader, Meiji emperor and his followers (varying from seventies to several hundreds) wore western tailcoat suits and that surprised the commoners.[41] Instead of a "political" leader as secular figure in the Western sense, the authority commanded by the Meji emperor over the commoners was probably near religious ones who practiced a new magic imported from the Western modernity.

Yet the Meiji emperor was only one of these figures. If political domination in Edo period was enforced through rituals — or to the extent that politics was religiously conceived by means of ritual[42] — then the emperor could not even monopolize political or religious kinds of charisma before 1890.

Another point of concern is that the body of the emperor was shown before commoners. He travelled by rickshaw, horses, horse-drawn carriage, or on foot such that he could directly see and be seen by commoners. There were no stringent restrictions put upon commoners who watched the parade because of curiosity. An observer was impressed by the changes of more civilized rituals. When many people prostrated themselves on the ground (*dogeza* 土下座) as in the old days, policemen shouted at and told them to stand up to watch instead (拝む, which could be translated also as worship).[43] As the security measure was not strict, the emperor even received direct petitions, which was quite rare both in the Edo period and in later periods.[44] Following the Confucian teaching that "a sage does not talk much," the emperor seldom spoke in public as religious leaders and popular movement leaders did when they were preaching or giving a speech.[45] The emperor directly observed the people at work and hence he was observed by the commoners.

The various incidents that the emperor went on trips in tailcoats and observed his subjects directly were all important in Hara's visualization domination thesis. Yet this form of imperial travel in the Meiji period was indeed *an exception*, compared to

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[41] Hara 2001: 35

[42] While Maruyama Masao surely disagrees with this superficial saying that politics is religion, the concepts of politics and religion were surely undifferentiated as in the Europe. Maruyama 1988; see discussion in the conclusion of this chapter.

[43] Hara 2001: 42

[44] Hara 2001: 43; see also Hara 1998

[45] Hara 2001: 65-66

those practices in *sankin-kôtai* before as well as those imperial railway trips later after the 1890s. The introduction of railway for emperor's trips was crucial.

(b) "The King is Dead. Long Live the Train!"

Starting from the 1880s, the Meiji emperor frequently used trains as means of transportation to visit local government facilities or attend military ceremonies and rehearsal in local barracks. Here, the resurrection of visual domination happened. One major source of changes was that after 1890 major inter-city railway networks were completed. Railway networks gradually became literally a "power circuit," through which the visual domination could successfully spread. The problem is how.

In phase four (1890-1921), the crucial difference was that when the emperor travelled frequently by train during his visits to different provinces or even colonies, people could not see the body of the emperor. Instead, people were now mobilized to be ready at the stations and along the lines when the royal train was passing by. They were now organized to salute in the same body ritual to the train, i.e. the substitute of palanquins, instead of the emperor.

What account for the above changes? Here, Hara borrowed Kantorowicz's famous idea of "the King's two bodies" to exemplify the institutionalization of the visual domination by means of railway transportation.[46] In Kantorowicz's original framework, a new political theory in the medieval Europe (especially in the Great Britain), which was based on the old theology, gradually evolved to be a new, modern political-theology. There was a split between "body natural" and "body politic" of the king, both in political theory and practice. The natural body of the king was human-like and this physical body was vulnerable to pain and death. The political body, however, became the "polity-centered kingship." The "body politic" was eternal, just like the invention of the idea of Corporation — originally a religious group organized around the corpse of the saint but gradually evolved into a body controlling property and wealth.[47] Symbolized by the phoenix reborn from ashes, even when the natural body of the king was dead, the monarchy and the political body would continue, implying the political lineage would never die. Kantorowicz conceptualized this new way of conceptualizing kingship originated from the Christian theological

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[46] Kantorowicz 1957; Hara 2001. See also Fujitani (1996:155-171) for relevant discussion on applying Kantorowicz's thesis in the Japanese context.
[47] See chapter VI in Kantorowicz 1957.

thinking as "corpus mysticum." This new political theory became the foundation of the modern western idea of political sovereignty and nation-state, that any change in rulers and dynasties could no longer break the eternal continuity of the polity.[48]

Hara argues that a very similar process of making "the king's two bodies" was underway in phase four, spanning from the late Meiji era to the Taisho period.[49] On the one hand, the natural body of the Meiji Emperor became invisible.[50] Various religious rituals were invented within the palace,[51] but the emperor became unseen in the public. When the emperor was travelling around outside the palace, he was hidden within the train. On the other hand, when the king was inside the train before the public, what was shown, however, was the "political body" represented by the fetish, i.e. the royal train. When people worshipped and saluted to the train in the stations, the visual domination as in *sankin-kôtai* was reinvented and a new "political mysticism" was reborn in modern Japan.[52] To express in similar fashion as Kantorowiz, entering the late Meiji down to the early Showa before the end of the World War II: "The King is Dead. Long Live the Train!"[53]

To be sure, however, the king was not giving orders to ask his subjects to do so. Perhaps both officials and commoners simply thought that one should properly deal with the authority. These welcome ceremonies were for sure invented tradition, yet Hara argues that the mode of domination was reinvented. An earlier example could be identified in 1877 along the Tôkaidô Line, where the royal train frequently passed by. At Ôgaki, for example, newspaper reported that,

> By calling all officers on duty…, police authorities helped to control the public order at the railway stations. The stations were packed with people who welcomed the emperor (奉迎者), including interested party (有志), bureaucrats and primary school students… Entrance to the station… was restricted… Firefighters were dressed in uniform and waiting at the station. They were followed by city bureaucrats, councilors, members from business chamber, friendship club (交友会), youth club (青年会), association of doctors, as well as

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[48] See also the discussion by Bendix (1978).

[49] The key difference, however, was that in the west, it was the invention of theology, modern political theories, and law that made the political body, like a corporation, survived; in Japan (possibly in China as well), comparatively speaking, it was the invention of ritual that made this possible. I also borrowed this idea from Faure (2007).

[50] Hara, as a historian, does not elaborate this theory extensively. He used this pair of concepts to refer to several things. For example, to be discussed below, he used "natural body" to refer to the emperor's descendant, i.e. the Crown Prince, who showed his body before the public.

[51] See also Takagi 1997

[52] Both concepts are parallel to Kantorowicz's of "corpus mysticum," a naturally dead body with a political eternity.

[53] Makihara 1994

234

staff from banks and all kinds of companies... local groups, news reporters...
who all dressed in tailcoats, frock coats or formal Japanese wear (羽織袴) with a
badge... All of them waited at pre-assigned areas within the station.[54]

While we do not know who and what exactly these people and clubs were, but
through ritualization people were dressed up to be politically acceptable social
representatives. Various new social identities and an order of hierarchy were created.
In Hokkaido, for example, Ainu were required to dress in "traditional" way when they
were waiting for the royal train passing by at the station.[55] These "social groups" as
well as the political authority of the emperor were ritualized to be real when these
people saluted to the royal train passing by.

In this period, however, we do not know their dress codes and body rituals in
great details, but possibly they were not very strict and unified. If we compare this to
the early Showa period, which we will discuss soon in phase five, these welcome
rituals were not very organized by local efforts. But, by the time of 1920s tremendous
governmental and local efforts were invested to restrict behavior according to
extremely detailed dress code, body rituals and timetable to produce a sacred arena
along the area where the royal train would pass by. The completion of the imperial
ritual of railway in a nation-wide or even empire-wide scale took about fifty years to
implement. It lasted from the 1870s until the early Showa period in the 1920s.

One should also pay attention to the role of communication — not only
transportation but also media — in strengthening the polity and in extending the
imaginative horizon of the nation. The political body of the emperor also appeared
before the public in a photo, the *goshinei* (御真影) or "his majesty's real image." This
photo was not "real" but only a snapshot of his portrait painted by a foreigner. This
photo was indeed a *kage* or literary "shadow" of an image which was produced in
mass volume for distribution in schools for newly invented rituals. His majesty's
political subjects (teachers and students) were required to bow to this "image" *as if*
the emperor was there. These photos were stored carefully in a special room in
schools for use in important school ceremonies.[56] The spread of this invention of
tradition in local schools became popular after 1890.

It is also important to note that some rituals were a continuation of past ritual.

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[54] Gifu Nichinichi Shimbun, 6th April, 1877. Readopted from Hara 2001: 80-81
[55] Hara 2000: 408, footnote 165
[56] Taki 2002; see also Hara 2001: 386, footnote 8.

For instance, mobilization of students in stations to salute to the royal trains was a continuation of school ritual.[57] Among local schools along the Tôkaidô Line, for example, it became the annual activity for students to queue and wait in the stations nearby and salute to the royal train.[58] Other rituals, like collectively yelling *banzai* ("Long Live [the Emperor]") was also invented in this period.[59] When soldiers were sent for war, they gathered at the station and yelled "banzai," thereby making the station as the nexus of these collective national sentiments.[60] Commoners were organized to worship and pay gratitude to these constructed fetish.[61] To Hara, all these seemingly minor changes, which became visible in the 1890s, were indeed fundamental. These changes indicated the reinvention of visual domination through "mysticism of politics" and "fetishism" as in the Edo period. In the late Meiji the fetish and the political body was a modern technology of railway.

The railway and the photos[62] (and later, postcard and movies[63]) used in the military and public rituals were all manifestations of a newly established political body. Originally they represented and created a sense of authority. When the railway and the photos were presented, it was "as if" the authority was there. The authority was gradually and collectively made to be a new social reality through imperial railway travel.

The railway network gradually became a huge circuit through which power went down to the body and the soul of the national subjects. Children grew up in schools rituals that required them to bow to a photo; people were required to dress in new and proper uniform in ceremonies welcoming the royal train, as if the emperor was there. While one may argue that this assertion was exaggerated to some extent, as the royal train did not pass through all railway routes; even if it did, for most of the places it passed for few times. Yet the key of Hara's argument is that the railway became the stage of ritualization through which the imperial identity was established. It was possible only by means of visualizing and it relied on the nation-wide railway

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[57] Hara 2001: 82-83
[58] Hara 2001: 149-150. For sure, this practice was limited to some geographical areas where the train can pass by.
[59] Makihara 1994
[60] Makihara 1998
[61] Let us not forget, besides the rather simple usage of "fetishism" by Hara who refers to the worshipping to dead objects, Marx uses this term to mean the magic of a fetish was enchanted by the collective exchange of the item; see Osbime 2006.
[62] Taki 2002
[63] Hara 2001 211-212; see also Satô 1994.

networks to expand the scale of ritual. This was akin to and was even more powerful than the visual domination in the Edo period.

This visual domination through imperial railway travel was, however, not without any prices, and the one who paid sacrifices in this grand ceremony was, ironically, the Crown Prince, the future Taisho Emperor, who would become the successor of the eternal polity.

3   The Body Natural: when the railway travel liberated the Crown Prince

In this section, referring to phase four of Hara's analytical scheme, we focus on the railway trips of the Crown Prince Yoshihito (嘉仁), who became the later Taisho Emperor, in the 1900s. This section has two concerns. First, it discusses what Hara refers to as the "natural body" of the monarchy system, represented by the Crown Prince's trip. The body of the Meiji Emperor was no longer seen in public, except in some major ceremonies. The public could only realize the existence of the Emperor in the public by those objects representing his authorities, for instance the royal train or his photo which became the political body. Hara argues that in the 1900s, his decedent, i.e. the Crown Prince, became the natural body of the emperor. He could be seen in flesh before the public.

The second concern is that Yoshihito was arguably the first Japanese who travelled along all railways lines in the Japanese empire, including even the colonies of Korea and Taiwan. If railway became an important infrastructure encouraging national imagination, the Crown Prince was the first one who did really travel to most of his land by means of railway. He met his national subjects whom he had never met before. The keys are the underlying political dynamics as well as the social consequence of his travel.

The Taisho Emperor was commonly considered to be mentally ill, short-lived or even a "crazy" emperor who had once rolled his paper with written speech into a telescope and used it to stare at the assembly in the diet.[64] Yet Hara's controversial book (2000) on this figure, which was indeed a precursory project of the *Visualized Empire*, depicted a totally new image of the Taisho Emperor.[65] Hara argued that this myth was only a political creation, and the Taisho emperor's mental illness had much

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[64] Hara 2000: 4-12
[65] Hara 2000

237

to do with his social pressures as the emperor, in particular all kinds of strict imperial ritual requirements and job pressures after 1912 when he succeeded the throne.

One should first pay attention to the wider social consequences of the Crown Prince's railway trips. On the one hand, as a representative of the Meiji Emperor, the Crown Prince's trips in the 1900s and 1910s aroused and heightened commoners' national consciousness. He represented the eternal continuity of the imperial lineage through exposing the "natural body" of the monarchy before the public. On the other hand, as these trips were claimed to be informal ones, welcome ceremonies and rituals were not strictly required. Yet this created much confusion for those who wished to welcome the Crown Prince properly. Such uncertain ritualistic requirements in the Crown Prince's railway trips gave us some intriguing scenarios which highlighted how the split of the two bodies of the monarch created political tensions.

The original idea of having railway trips for the Crown Prince was for improving his mental and physical health. The young Yoshihito, who had once shown great individuality, was under heavy surveillance and did badly in studying. As he was weak, an advisor, Arisukawa no Miya (有栖川宮) , was appointed to help improve the situation.[66] As both a part of the Crown Prince's education as well as a semi-formal political mission, he suggested study trips as part of the future emperor's curriculum. Indeed, he intended to let the Crown Prince have railway travel to be away from the source of pressures in the palace.

From 1900 to 1912, the Crown Prince had many "low profile trips," or *bikô* (微行), by means of railway. He visited many historical sites and had direct observations of the people's life all over the country. The status of Crown Prince allowed many grey areas for less formal welcome ceremonies.[67] When the Crown Prince had railway trips around the country, he represented the Meiji Emperor's "natural body" which was shown before commoners, in the similar fashion as what the Meiji emperor had done before the 1890s.[68]

The Crown Prince's first trip in October 1900 was planned secretly. He visited most prefectures in Kyushu for a month in order to visit the major barracks. Yet the

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[66] One should be reminded that it was the first time for the newly invented imperial system to decide what should a crown prince learn or do.

[67] As *bikô*, the Crown Prince and Arisukawa no Miya, in addition to the Home Minster at the time, Hara Takashi whom Yoshihito really trusted, wished to have rather flexible schedules and to allow more chances for the Crown Prince to stay close with the commoners.

[68] Hara 2000: 104-179 (including the later Taisho Emperor in the 1900s and also the later Showa Emperor in the 1920s.)

plan was suddenly announced just four days before the trip, which sent the local governments into a state of panic to prepare welcome parades and decorations in a hurry.[69] But very soon the Imperial Household Minster announced that decorations, fireworks or traffic regulations were not required; local governors then withdrew orders of organizing students and local organizations to welcome the Crown Prince along the railway lines and roads.[70]

The interesting point to note is that in *bikô*, these kinds of "welcome," or *hôgei* (奉迎), also existed but not so seriously organized and prepared. For example, the Crown Prince even took normal train (with additional carriage for his exclusive use), to the extent that villagers with great curiosity could even rush into the same train during some of his later trips.[71] In 1900, a newspaper reported that "people from distant village and cities nearby came around the Hakata station to see the royal train. They appeared besides the train routes to see or worship to the Crown Prince (玉顔を拝し奉り) in silence and they stood firm and some of them saluted when the train was passing through."[72]

Hôgei in higher formality were also organized. In 19th October 1900, when the Crown Prince's train was passing through Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Saga, Nagasaki Prefectures, all the heads of the cities, towns and villages were required to wait for and show welcome to the train at railway stations nearby. At the stations where the train did not stop by, only important authorities like village heads, councilors or people with honors were required to attend *hôgei*.[73] But it is important to note that compared to the Meiji Emperor's trip, rituals were not officially required. People responded differently to these semi-formal *hôgei* ceremonies. Some did it in great formality but in different ways, some even did not do anything.

The first trip in 1900 was a great success. The Crown Prince dramatically recovered and felt liberated by traveling around. He observed many new things, in particular the real lives of the commoners.[74] The most intriguing scenarios were the

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[69] Hara 2001: 106-107.
[70] Hara 2001: 108-109
[71] Hara 2001: 141
[72] Fukuoka Nichinichi Shimbun 22nd October 1900. Quoted from Hara 2001: 116
[73] Hara 2001: 115
[74] Another trip was immediately planned. The Crown Prince was arranged to visit ten prefectures in Northeastern Japan in the next year. During the planning stage, Arisukawa no Miya called all prefectural governors concerned to Tokyo to warn them not to misrecognize *bikô* as official visit. However, because of the sickness of Yoshihito, the trip was shortened and he visited only the Niigata, Nagano, Gumma and Ibaraki in 1902.

occasions when the Crown Prince, who always expressed various opinions, asked questions and changed travel plans the which made officials and commoners, who just wished the authority to follow the plans, surprised.[75] In his sudden visit to the vineyard, he asked the owner many questions and lastly commented that "for a Japanese to do this by his self hardship I am very impressed" and upon hearing this, the owner was impressed and cried.[76]

Perhaps we do not need to go over all the details but to summarize some distinctive features of these trips. These semi-formal railway trips have two possible consequences. Firsly, the trips liberated him from great pressures in the palace and it became a very good chance for people to be close to the future emperor. Indeed, the Crown Prince, perhaps a more liberal emperor in the future, represented the natural body of the monarch who really talked to and was seen by the people. On the other hand, his style was not necessarily welcomed. To what extent people should organize to welcome the Crown Prince were not strictly codified and prescribed in programs. In what ways should the Crown Prince behave and whether he should talk or not became controversial. It was the train travel that liberated the future emperor from imperial pressure, but the officials and commoners, who collectively participated in creating the sacredness of the political body of the monarchy as the manifestation of their nation or polity, required an emperor that was patient enough to carry out all those rituals without his thoughts and unnecessary opinions.

These trips indeed liberated the Crown Prince and brought the commoners before the natural body of a changing polity – a democratic polity which was also redefined by his most trusted Prime Minister Hara Takashi in the late 1910s. Yet these were not welcomed. The historical facts brought to our eyes and the narrative which held these facts together, however, were politically shaped to show us an opposite picture — a Prime Minister Hara Takashi, whose corrupted party politics seduced the localities by railway, and a weak and mentally ill Taisho Emperor, who took railway trips for

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[75] In Takasaki City, for example, orders were given in advance to warn that security should remain flexible to respond to any changes made by the Crown Prince. Indeed, he suddenly asked his rickshaw to change almost all his destinations. Newspaper reported that the Crown Prince "was so happy to pass through many small avenues", decided to visit a school because of his sudden opinion that made "officials without preparation going into a panic" and even sneaked away during a meeting.

[75] He was witnessed by a citizen in a park and, after being found, told the governor and police head that "there is nothing to worry about." He also gave comments which surprised people around, like suddenly commenting that the teaching of English in a school was not adequate and recommending to hire some foreign teachers, or even forcing a local governor to arrange an extra trip to visit a distant vineyard. Hara 2001: 138-139; see also Hara 2000: 88-89.

[76] Hara 2001: 138-139

pleasure instead of official matters. Contrary to confused institutions of democracy and open monarchy, the glory was on the Meiji oligarch rule and the great Meiji emperor.

What are the reasons? The visualization of the "polity" as seen in the Crown Prince's railway visit made his natural body shown before his subjects. But at the same time it heightened the concern towards a proper ritual that repressed the will of the Crown Prince himself. His freedom was irrelevant, and the rituals were strengthened as evident in the increasing tendency to organize imperial railway trips and ceremonies in order to consolidate the "political body" to represent the polity. As the newly invented and frequently used concept of polity, or *kokutai* (國體), literally suggested that there should be a body (*tai*) of the nation (*kuni*) visible and comprehensible. This could only be accomplished by serious rituals, in which the "political body" overruled the "natural body" of the polity by ritualizing the time and space. To do so, tight train schedules and ceremonies were needed. This even made the emperor crazy. The logic of the railway system and the logic of the imperial ritual became the same thing, when entering into the late 1900s.

4   The Body Politic: when the train schedule made the new emperor crazy

In the 1900s, the king's two bodies were split. As the Body Natural of the polity, the Crown Prince Yoshihito was shown before the public in his "informal trips." The Body Politic was represented by the operation of the royal train. More elaborated ceremony required more rigid control over the body ritual, time and space, becoming apparent in the late 1910s. While the Crown Prince had once much freedom in determining his travel and did not follow the plans and schedules, this was not allowed when it became clear that he was going to be the next Emperor. This was symbolized by the tragic death — mentally and physically — of the Taisho Emperor.

Unlike those early trips, in which the Emperor could change the travel plans, the will of the emperor himself was no longer relevant concerning the operation of his royal train. Hara interestingly identified a special equipment in the royal train in the 1880s called "monitor of travel control" (運転制禦表示器) through which the Emperor could order the speed of the train.[77] In other words, the will of the Emperor

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[77] Hara 2009: 53-56

could override the train system if he wished. Yet this curious equipment disappeared in the new royal train in the 1910s, implying that the will of the Emperor was no longer relevant.

In the 1900s, Meiji Emperor's formal trips were restricted to mainly annual military visits. On the contrary, the Crown Prince was the major body in visual domination and he spent one to two months in average per year in local journeys in the late 1900s.[78] His informal trips became well known to the local officials and common people,[79] to the extent that "local elite... turned the emperor to local benefits" like local construction projects.[80] Heads in those prefectures, where the Crown Prince had not yet visited, petitioned to the Imperial Minister to invite him to come.[81] The consequence was similar to the spread of party politics, but instead of democracy, it was the spread of the monarchy ideology.

When most railways were nationalized in 1906 to be the Imperial Government Railway, notices concerning the security and safety of the royal train appeared. For example. In 1906, the Minster of Railway made amendments on all regulations of the royal train, including the definition of *omeshi-ressha* (御召列車) which then included the Crown Prince's ones.[82] Codes of operations and security were all added with fine details, like when the royal trains were in operation, other trains running in opposite direction, in parallel tracks or on bridges over the tracks were required to slow down or stop to ensure safety.[83] A "guiding train" (指導列車) was introduced from 1911 onwards, which was the train running ahead of the royal train to ensure safety and to signal the coming of the royal train in advance for those who were waiting to welcome the royal train.[84]

Another point was that the ritual arrangement along the railway lines became well established in the mid-1900s.[85] In 1902, a railway company in Western Japan

[78] Hara 2001: 193-216
[79] Hara 2000: 172-173; Hara 2001: 188
[80] Gluck 1985: 97
[81] Hara 2001: 207-208
[82] Hara 2001: 151
[83] Hara 2001: 191
[84] Hara 2001: 191; Hara 2003: 44-46
[85] The earliest example concerning the ritual code among commoners along the lines, where the royal train will pass by, appeared in 1893. A detailed one with concrete contents, however, appeared in 1899. When the Meiji emperor travelled to Ibakara, the railway company sent notice to staff members, required that staff should wear uniform, use their to right hand to take off their hat when the royal train came, but it did not specify whether the staff or commoners should or should not salute to the train, except asking "to make one's body forward to some extent." Yet these body rituals were only gradually strengthened in the mid-1900s. Hara 2001: 87-88

announced detailed rules to specify who should attend welcome ceremonies and wait on the station platforms where the royal train would pass. By "disciplinary organizations like military officers or students," however, should also be allowed to wait on the opposite platform or the empty lands in the station.[86] This was an arrangement of space according to their distance with the emperor in the power hierarchy.[87] An official notice was distributed to schools in 1905, when the Minster of Education responded to increasing number of imperial travels and announced formal ritual code for students. This manual taught how a student should salute to the royal train, including how one should bring and raise the gun and how one's hand and leg should move when the royal train approached the station.[88] A more detailed notice was distributed from the Minster of Education in 1910. When the teacher "saw the royal carriage coming to about ten footsteps at the student group's right-hand side" the teacher should give command and students were required to bow "about thirty degrees" forward. This code was however too strict to the extent that the prescribed body movements were unrealistic within the time that the royal train was passing through the station. The time was too short for one to complete the whole series of actions.[89] Also, female students, who were once allowed to say the *Kimigayo*, were now required to stay silent.[90] The imperial railway travel gradually enforced a more elaborated and unified codes of ceremonies regarding the imperial use of railways. When the royal train passed by, the station then became a sacred, disciplinary and silent space of political ritual.

5   The conflict of the king's two bodies: the collapse of the Body Natural

Hara is right to comment at two points that made the late Meiji an interesting era. On the one hand, between 1908 and 1912, it was the moment that the frequent imperial travels by the Crown Prince became nation-wide.[91] The completion of truck networks made his "informal travel" frequent. Some schools had even trained students to practice the station welcome ceremony.[92] On the other hand, the natural body did

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[86] Hara 2001: 87-88
[87] Hara 2001: 87-88
[88] Hara 2001: 164-167
[89] Hara 2001: 191-192
[90] Hara 2001: 191-192
[91] Hara 2001: 208-209
[92] Hara 2001: 208-209

not disappear completely and the personality of the Crown Prince made ceremonial plan and ritual codes difficult to make.

The Taisho Emperor put personal freedom at the first place. With great curiosity, he even visited a place that was very plausible to be a love hotel of some kinds.[93] The government became more nervous in making the Taisho Emperor to be something untouchable and sacred, or a kind of "Chrysanthemum Taboo." If Hara's portrayal of the Taisho Emperor is true, his railway trips showed us a political figure with distinct personality, possibly leading to a more liberal monarchy system and imperial ideology which might be different from the one of the Meiji.[94]

Yet the freedom the Crown Prince enjoyed during the railway travel did not satisfy many. The oligarchs complained about the selfishness of his acts and kept asking him to follow the Meiji Emperor as the role model, i.e. following the schedule and simply stood before the ceremony to let the mass yelling *banzai* before him.[95] According to Hara Takashi who accompanied the new Emperor, he recorded in his diary that the Emperor's intentions to simplify those rituals were ignored for five times.[96] The gradual increase of official work as the Emperor tragically made him quickly collapsed, physically and mentally, soon after his temporary succession to the thrown as *senso* (践祚)[97] (1912-1915).

Other important examples include the enthronement of the Taisho Emperor in 1915. As the ritual of succession was legally prescribed to be held in Kyoto, people along the Tôkaidô Line were organized to welcome the royal trains. Indeed, the royal train was a moving altar, in which replicates of three imperial sacred items were put in the sacred altar of "the shelf of sword and jewel," or *kenjidana* (劍璽棚), itself a replicate of the "sacred place," or *kashikodokoro* (賢所) in the palace, situated in a

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[93] The newspaper reported this. Also in 1913, some paparazzi kind of reporters took the Taisho Emperor's photo without permission when he was visiting before the ancestral tomb. Even Hara Takashi, the Home Minster at the time, felt that it was serious. Yet the Emperor replied, again, "It has nothing to worry about." (Hara 2001: 195-197). Hara 2000: 175-178

[94] Among many interesting episodes described by Hara, the following one is especially intriguing. The Crown Prince, for example, had once suddenly wished to visit his friend called Sakurai when attending military ceremony in Kansai in 1911. Appearing at the door in a surprise, his friend was shocked. The Crown Prince told Sakurai that he was going into the next military camp. After asking how far it was, he told Sakurai, "it is near so I can take a horse to go" and disappeared. Two hours later, however, the Crown Prince appeared again at eight and said, "Sakurai, the military rehearsal starts at nine so I come again." He finally left the house at nine which meant he was late. See Hara 2000: 175-177

[95] Hara 2001: 190-191

[96] Hara 2001: 221, 226-227

[97] *Senso* was the stage when the ritual of succession was not held yet, so that the status of the new Emperor was not formally confirmed.

special carriage of the royal train.[98] In other words, the royal train was enchanted to be a moving imperial altar, and those welcome ceremonies became a grand religious ritual towards the imperial ideology.

The extensive use of railway with invented traditions, which were seen to be imperial, helped establish the authority of the imperial authority. People forgot it was their collective efforts to make this happen. They believed that the moral authority of the king requires their proper use of trains.

The breakdown of the mind of the Taisho Emperor was thus neither accidental nor could be explained by medical reasons alone, but it was related also to the growing collective ritualistic tendencies. The government and commoners increasingly tightened the format, scale, and ritual code in those welcome ceremonies in the 1910s, especially when the royal train was passing through their lands. The Minster of Education distributed new notice in improving proper methods of saluting in welcome ceremonies in stations and along tracks, that students were required to bow forty-five degrees.[99]

As symbolized by the completion of the Tokyo Station in 1914, located at the front of the palace, and the grand enthronement ceremony of the Taisho Emperor in Kyoto in 1915, they signified the establishment of a new imperial ritual at a national level. The ceremony was however the turning point that the Body Natural of the Taisho Emperor quickly deteriorated. Wishes by the Emperor himself to simplify those rituals were ignored, even though some commentators at the time, for example, Yanagita Kunio, critically pointed out the danger of the harm to the health of the new Emperor.[100] The Taisho Emperor soon collapsed after the ceremony for a moment, but was called back for those imperial travel duties for official ritualistic instead of leisure purpose. Yet these trips greatly differed from those before with much less freedom. In 1921, the Emperor lost his memories.[101]

Hara guesses that in 1921 the emperor was forced to give up his status as emperor and to let the Crown Prince to be the Prince Regent.[102] Hara comments on

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[98] Hara 2009: 54-55. The sacred jewel and the replicate of the sacred sword were brought during Empire's overnight railway trip every time. Yet limited to the trips to the enthronement ritual in Kyoto, the replicate of the sacred mirror was also brought. This place was available in the first royal train from the Meiji period, and the practice continued even to the 1970s though with interruption.

[99] Hara 2001: 232; 411-417, foot note 19

[100] Hara 2001: 230-231

[101] Possibly to avoid the exposure of the body of the emperor, a new regulation was distributed to restrict the eligibility of those participants of welcome ceremonies in stations. Hara 2001: 234-238

[102] Hara 2001: 239-240

this emperor's tragic death in 1926 as follows,

> Except a few years before and after the enthronement ceremony, the Taisho
> Emperor did not succeed the visual domination developed in the late Meiji
> period and passed away. In other words, before the completion of the Body
> Politic, the Body Natural was collapsed. In the 1920s, the Emperor was so sick
> that he could only spoke a few words as in his time of childhood.[103]

Hara commented that it was indeed the growing tendency of rituals, authorities, and regulations that crashed the Emperor's mental status.[104] In any case, we can no longer know the truth beyond those political myths which were created to conceal it.

The purpose to tell this story is to illustrate that the imperial use of railway travel was the key. It temporarily liberated this tragic emperor from the palace, while the growing ritualization of these travels was at the same time used as a new mode of domination. To put in other words, through railway travel, the two bodies of the king were made but ironically conflicting with each others. The Body Natural was not convenient for governance and the Taisho Emperor's body, who was tragically situated in the whirlpool of a growing ritualistic requirements demanded by the polity and the collectivity, could not sustain.

Political elites reinvented the old mode of visual domination by gradually strengthening the level of ritualization of those imperial railway travels. Only through these well ritualized imperial railway trips, they established the identity of the imperial institution as the moral agent; only through welcome ceremonies they disciplined the commoners as the loyal subjects. Combining the two, people then really imagined that they were in the same community when they saw the royal train.

6   The Imperial Government Railway as the high priest of the imperial rituals in the 1920s

The completion of the Body Politic and visual domination by railway were best illustrated by two grand rituals: the imperial funeral of Taisho Emperor in 1927 and the ritual of enthronement of the Showa Emperor in 1928. The funeral could be best

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[103] Hara 2001: 241

[104] A political myth was collectively created to explain his sickness and mental illness, which was said to be originated from his childhood and was because of the failure of his education to correct his self-centeredness. The image of this emperor as a crazy one became a popular imagination and a taboo. Hara guesses that it was also the reason why the Prime Minster Hara Takashi, who often accompanied the travel of Taisho Emperor, sealed his dairy after his death not because of his experiences in party politics but in imperial affairs. Hara 2000: 21-14; Hara 2001: 241-242

interpreted as the final victory of the Body Politic over the Body Natural. Notwithstanding the funeral representing the temporal death of the Body Natural, the ritual of enthronement represented the resurrection of the eternal continuity of the polity.

As the official English name of Government Railway at the time — "Imperial Government Railway" — literally suggests, this institution became the modern administrative center of organizing these two grand imperial rituals.[105] A railway historian, who edited the republished collection of the official record of these two rituals compiled by the Imperial Government Railway, describes the role of railway in imperial rituals as follow,

> Japan's railway was responsible for the transportation in the rituals of enthronement of the Taisho and the Showa Emperors for two times. Railway tried its best in transportation related to rituals. It was the only task for the Government Railway in the political system at the time.[106]

On my hands are then five thick reprinted volumes of official records of the two rituals, with more than one thousand and five hundred pages of description and nearly three hundred graphical data.[107] It includes all details that one can find in the Government Railway in preparing for the funeral and the enthronement rituals, from the preparation of nine hundred thousand mourning bands distributed to railway staff, to the making of freight carriages especially designed for transporting sacred rice dedicated to the new emperor.[108] Indeed, the amount of money spent in the ritual of enthronement in 1928 was astronomical. In 1990's standard, it was nearly seven hundred billion yen, and one can compare it with the same ritual of the Heisei Emperor which was only about one hundred billion yen.[109]

It is quite right for Hara to comment on the enthronement ritual as an "invented folklore" (作られた民俗).[110] Security along the tracks was strict, for sure, to the extent that other trains were not allowed to pass through railway bridges above the tracks and the use of toilets on all other trains using the same line was prohibited.[111]

By all means, this was strictly a religious event, as seen from the fact that the

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[105] Noda et al. (eds.) 1990: 1
[106] Noda et al. (eds.) 1991: 2
[107] Noda et al. (eds.) 1990: 1; 1991: 1
[108] Noda et al. (eds.) 1990: 5; 1991: 3-4
[109] Noda et al. (eds.) 1991:2
[110] Hara 2003 58-60
[111] Hara 2003 58-60

royal train was a moving alter transporting also the sacred items. Harada comments that the record for the preparation of transporting the *kashikodokoro* to the royal train spanning eighty pages reveals the fact that,

> State-Shintoism was well presented in the procedures in the move in and transportation of necessary religious infrastructures for use in the imperial ritual. As a modern transportation unit, the infrastructure and the organization of the railway promoted the God-like authority, while at the same time it was refreshed by the wave of modernization... Those who were responsible for [railway] transportation became rationalized in the preparing and executing the rituals, while the goal they aimed at was only the serving of God-like authority.[112]

His point brings us the most important finding: railway helped invented the religion of the nation, and it became the hidden god. These rituals were all the necessary consequence of the continuous utilization of railway travel as a mode of visual domination. These railway travels established the identity and authority of the imperial institution. Only by the delineation of contextual facts that one can come to the conclusion that it was the collective ritualistic use of railways that made the emperor, as well as the royal train which symbolized the imperial authority, to be something supreme and representing their polity.

7   Imperial railway travel as a conjuration of the collectivity

The successor of this modern imperial institution, Hirohito (裕仁) or the Showa Emperor, was however an ideal emperor, in a sense that he performed his ritualistic duties in the public according to schedules. He visited all prefectures in Japan as well as colonies of Taiwan and Karfuto by railway when he was the Crown Prince and the Prince Regent (摂政) in the 1920s.[113] In his enthronement in 1928,

> along the railway lines between Tokyo and Kyoto, all commoners, who attended the welcome rituals at all the stations, knew the precise time — in hours, minutes and seconds — when the royal train would pass or stop by. Attendants started to wait at least one hour in advance. They lined up in an organized way and did not produce any sound when waiting for the royal train. When the scheduled time arrived, they followed the order of "*rei* (礼)" and bowed for thirty degrees. For those who waited along railway tracks between two stations, in some cases there were over twenty thousands people, they waved their national flags and saluted to the train. This is just the same as what Yanagita Kunio says, "the unification of

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[112] Noda et al. (eds.) 1991: 4
[113] Hara 2009: 68-69

public sentiment in this time was perhaps the first time in history."[114]

If the above imperial ritual in the late 1928 could be seen as the completion of the visual domination and the establishment of the imperial institution, the critical historical moment for inducing changes would then be in the 1900s and the 1910s.

Both of these changes were directly related to the uncertain social atmosphere of Japan at the 1900s and the 1910s. Taisho was a curious era. I do not intend to explain fully on the situation of the time, but one should be reminded that, on the one hand, it was the high time after the golden era of late Meiji, like the victory of the Russo-Japan War. On the other hand it was also a confused period with many uncertainties. In the 1910s, the fear among oligarchs towards a more liberal monarchy system and a government led by increasing number of elected politicians were symbolized by the death of the Meiji Emperor in 1912. These might not be mere coincidences between the assassination of Hara Takashi, who was the first Prime Minister whose power was mandated by his local railway building plans, by a railway switchman, and the mental illness of the Taisho Emperor, whose health was once restored in the 1900s by railway travel but soon collapsed because of official railway trips.

In the 1910s, the emperor and the royal train became the center of the national ceremony. But one should avoid treating the imperial system as the sole reason that caused the later ultra-nationalism. We are witnessing growing collective influences emerging from the wider social contexts. These might be induced by social uncertainties brought by the expanding empire, increasing inequalities, the modern problem like poverty faced by the cities, the global influences like imperialism, economic crisis affecting both urban and rural populations, conflicts of ideologies, and all kinds of known and unknown collective emotions, named and un-named collective sentiments. If democracy, which was institutionalized by means of the promise of local railway building by politicians, could not help solve all these questions, then it was perhaps that the imperial system could help people to imagine a moral power from a higher order — an authority which was however strangely established by visual domination through imperial railway travels.

It is argued that we should focus on the mechanism and consequence, instead of the possible causes, leading to this. I do not further quote resources to illustrate the

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[114] Hara 2009: 69

massive scale and scope of the imperial railway ritual in this period, but just cite the words by Hara on the consequences of these imperial railway travel and rituals.

> Every place where he visited an inspection stand was built… People welcomed him. They gathered around the inspection stand… to sing the national anthem, parade, and generally to produce an atmosphere suggesting the unity of the throne and the people. In this manner, Japan's national essence based on the notion of an unbroken imperial line was made apparent to all throughout the land, including in the colonies, and Emperor Hirohito was made into a living god. The concept of an inviolate national polity (*kokutai*) was codified into law with the promulgation of the Peace Preservation Law in 1925.[115]

The Showa Emperor, indeed, continued his imperial travel after the war, even though in this time he showed his natural body again before the public. People in Ishikawa "were especially devoted in welcome ceremonies." In Yamada-Line located in Morioka prefecture (the area that the old women were said to be worshipping the train), people "who lived in ten miles away also came to worship."[116]

One should pay particular attention to what Iwakura Tomomi had said in early Meiji years in justifying the building of railway that "his majesty [The Meiji Emperor] should have his ritual of ancestor worship in Kyoto. If his majesty often moves along the roads, it clearly disturbs civilians and it is troublesome." (chapter 2) Perhaps in the early Meiji, no one could predict that the emperor would disturb civilians even if he did not walk along the roads but by railways. Possibly, those who built the railway as an excuse to borrow money could hardly imagine that the railway could even become a religion of the nation.

The emerging power circuit of an empire was taking shape by these collective and invisible forces. On the one hand, the extensive use of royal train created a travel experience for the imperial members to realize and manifest itself as the governing subject of the nation. On the other hand, through the use of railway networks, the collective welcome rituals along tracks and stations created a united sense of national subjects for and among the commoners. Combining the two, the railway became the "power network" through which a collective imagination towards the totality could be established. The political use of railway travel made it into the religious medium through which a common imagination towards a changing collectivity could be expressed. At the 1920s, the institution of railway was politically made to be a

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[115] Hara 2006: 74
[116] Hara 2009: 68-69

conjuration of collective effervescences.

Section Three   **Railway as secular pilgrimage: commoners' railway**

                              pilgrimage and its adoption of national imaginative horizon

One of the key changes in the railway infrastructure roughly between 1900 and 1915 was that Japan's railway networks linked not only major cities but also extended to most of the prefectures in the nation. Excluding most rural areas, all major cities or towns were connected to railway under the newly nationalized Imperial Government Railway which was a huge organization around 1910.[117] Technological inventions appeared at the same time, like the advancement in civil engineering, the making of national steam locomotives, national advancement in steel-refinement for making tracks such that imports were no longer the sole source of fine steel,[118] and the invention of a new kind of "automatic coupler" (自動連結器) which were used to efficiently link the train carriages.[119] These technologies greatly boosted the efficiency of the railway system. Passenger service increased that led to the popularization of travel and mass tourism since then. In other words, the railway did become the most important *national* infrastructure roughly from this period onwards.

Yet technological advancement within the system cannot solely account for why people invented and used them. Starting from the 1900s, Japan had many railways, which were built or promised to be built by the state, capitalists or politicians for different reasons. Yet the one who constructed them were not those who managed or used them. I have already examined why railways were built or claimed to be constructed because of many irrelevant rationales which came from outside the institution itself. Then, to further explain the maintenance and expansion of an institution in terms of its functional attributes like technology simply begs the question of "so what these railways are for?" or "why bother to travel?"

Uda, a scholar on the cultural history of railway, argues that given the mountainous geography of Japan, road transport for goods in the Edo period was not especially developed and it relied heavily on sea routes near shores.[120] Uda is perhaps right to compare that railways in the European context of industrialization had a strong character of transporting goods; short-distance transport relied heavily on

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[117] Kinzley 2006
[118] Harada 1977
[119] Hashimoto and Kuriyama (eds.) 2001, chapter 2
[120] Uda 2007: 188-189

inland and long-distance trade on sea route in the past.[121] During industrialization, Japan simply jumped directly from sea to railway transport for freight transport. In other words, the geography and the old mode of transportation did not especially facilitate the building of railway for freight transport. In any case, for many historical reasons we had already accounted for in previous chapters, railways were indeed built extensively even though people's prediction towards the great use of it might not be necessarily fulfilled.

Yet roads in the pre-modern Japan were well-developed, compared to France, for example, where roads were badly prepared until mid-nineteenth century.[122] The reason, as we had already discussed in the previous section, was a political one, i.e. the Alternate Residence System. Vaporis provides us with very detailed scenarios on how both political elites and commoners travelled frequently.[123] Road system, hostels, communications were all well established not only because parades for *sankin-kôtai* became well institutionalized, but also because organized merchants made extensive use of these road systems for information exchange. In addition, not only the political elites and business men but also the commoners travelled frequently. In this section, we would focus on the question why the commoners travelled frequently by train and in what sense these new forms of pilgrimages were organized to create new travel experiences and cultural imaginations.

1   The pre-modern root of railway tourism: pilgrimage in the Edo period

One of the main reasons that people went for travel was for religious drives — the will to transcend everyday life. In the medieval Japan, as argued by Amino Yoshihiko, people who frequently traveled were considered to have something to do with sacred power.[124] In his influential and ambitious book *Muen, Kugai, Raku* (無縁・公界・楽), Amino called the kind of attributes that those frequent travelers carried *muen* (無縁), originally a Buddhist concept which literally meant "no-relation."[125] These pre-modern sojourners included traders, journeymen (*shokunin* 職人), monks,

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[121] Braudel 1982-1984; but see Eugen Weber (1976) for the account of the badly developed road system in France before the nineteenth century.

[122] Weber 1976

[123] Vaporis 1994; 1997

[124] Amino 1996; for an interesting account of Amino's thoughts, see the interview done by Oguma (2005).

[125] Ikegami 2005b: 88-90

253

who solicited contributions (*kanjin* 勧進), priests, artisans, women who engaged in the trade of financial brokers, prostitutes (*yūjo* 遊女), and gamblers (*bakuto* 博徒).[126] They travelled frequently and surpassed social boundaries without settling in the communities.[127] As an outsider who crossed these social boundaries and knew many things from different cultures, they were both a source of danger and purity.[128] More importantly, places like bridges, checkpoints, roads, piers, hostels alike (関津渡泊) were also places of *muen*, or *muenjo* (無縁所). These places were located on the boundaries and belonged to nobody. Travelers with numerous travel experiences, or *henreki* (遍歴), were intimately related to transcendental religious forces external to the social groups which were immobile in nature in the pre-modern periods. In other words, travel was sacred and travelers brought mystical and transformative power to the secular world.

In the Edo period, however, more and more commoners went traveling, primarily in various forms of pilgrimage. Nelson Graburn's long essay on the Japanese history of domestic travel and tourism wonderfully captured the essence of travel in this period in just three words in the title of his article: "To Pray, Pay and Play."[129] The commoners travelled to ask for inner-worldly benefits by praying to deities outside their communities. In addition, they paid for the trip and bought souvenirs for their fellows in the same village, who contributed for their travel fee, and played during travels as a temporary relief from pressures in everyday social life.

Vaporis provides detailed accounts of the relation between travel and states in the Edo period.[130] Because of the Alternate Residence System, the Tokugawa polity put much effort in improving major transportation infrastructures like roads and hostels. Travels were originally strictly prohibited, at least by law. Yet gradually the commoners could apply for travel permits by claiming to visit temples and shrines.

Indeed, in recent years scholars had researched extensively on pilgrimage in the Edo and in the Meiji period.[131] Vaporis argues that by the late seventeenth century,

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[126] Gamblers were those travelled frequent and earned living by statistics, which was considered to be a taboo knowledge owned by the deities.

[127] For discussion on similar topics in the context of France, see Davis 1975.

[128] Douglas 1984

[129] Graburn 1983

[130] Vaporis 1994

[131] Reader 2005; Thal 2005; Guichard-Anguis and Moon (eds.) 2009. I also made good reference to a work written by a Chinese Scholar, Liu (2009).

travel and pilgrimage were already intimately related.[132] Official attempts to control pilgrimages almost always failed, to the extent that people did not bother to apply for travel permits in the late Tokugawa period.

Vaporis called the development of travel as "secularization of pilgrimage," because tourist spots like temples became new centers of popular cultures and entertainment. Tourist infrastructures and travel industry like hostels, teahouses, souvenirs, travelogue and tour guides were very common. Vaporis depicts an interesting picture that in the middle of the eighteenth century, three village headmen filed an application to the officials for travel permits to Ise Shrine and Hachiman-gû in Kamakura but finally did not visit those places but went to Edo.[133] By the nineteenth century, "a six-year old boy repeatedly threatened his parents that he would leave one of the groups of young children that were planning to travel on pilgrimage to Ise... The mother, upon discovering that her son had indeed left, went after him in hot pursuit."[134] Long-distance and multi-destination trips among the commoners were gradually becoming popular.[135]

In another important work *The Tôkaidô Road*, Traganou analyzes how the popularizing of travel became an important drive for cultural production and representation, i.e. "traveling as representation" became "medium of national knowledge.[136] Examples include images of Tôkaidô Road in woodblock prints and travel diaries as well as maps that were especially important cultural representation. Yonemoto (2003) argues that maps were originally restricted to political purposes, but since the late 1770s, many travel writers created maps and accounts to "annotate" and "narrate" a newly imagined entity called Japan. They invented different texts, maps, pilgrimage guide maps to recreate "the small, self-contained world of the pleasure quarters as a separate country, one that, like the foreign countries of earlier satirical fiction, often bore an uncanny resemblance to Japan itself."[137]

The key idea is that extensive travelling experiences facilitated the proliferation of cultural representations and accounts of them. People tried to capture those travel experiences in different cultural forms. As a consequence, those without a chance to travel could expand their imaginative horizon through these travel accounts. This is

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[132] Vaporis 1994: 4
[133] Vaporis 1994: 3
[134] Vaporis 1994: 4
[135] Vaporis 1994: 4
[136] Traganou 2004
[137] Yonemoto 2003; the quotes also appeared in the book review by Siebert (2004: 342).

the reason why Traganou called these representations of travel in Tôkaidô Road as a "medium of national knowledge."

To round up, in medieval Japan those who travelled frequently were considered to be sacred. Then, pilgrimage became popular in the early Edo period; people could go travelling for pilgrimage. Travel was just a means to holy sites. Yet by the late Edo period, "the secularization of pilgrimage" emerged; travel became a popular form of entertainment, resulting in what Graburn called "to pray, pay and play." Finally, cultural accounts and representations not only consolidated many of these travel experiences, but they also became a medium to account for the new imaginaries of an entity called "the nation."

As a consequence, in the late Edo period, travel and tourism were already popular. If the warrior class's *sankin-kôtai* gradually became guided tours to Edo, then the commoners, who went for pilgrimages, could be seen as backpackers. On the one hand, *daimyô* and the political elites' official trips facilitated the development of transportation infrastructure like road maintenance and hostels. The Alternate Residence System also made Edo into the center of cultural consumption.[138] On the other hand, pilgrimages among the commoners were popular. Different sacred sites were joined by travel writers to be a set of organized tour routes. In both cases, an shared idea of "Japan" was emerging from many travel experiences as well as manifesting in different accounts and representations of these experiences.

2   "Railway as pilgrimage-centered"

By the 1900s, many railways were actually built. In 1931, ethnologist Yanagida Kunio, in his famous work of "The History of Everyday Common Culture in Meiji and Taisho period" (明治大正史世相編), interestingly characterizes "the use of railway" in Japan as "pilgrimage-centered" (汽車の巡礼本位) in his chapter of "the new transport and cultural carriers." While this very short comment is not very well organized and presented, it points out that pilgrimage and railway were intricately related with each other in the context of Japan.

Yanagita Kunio,[139] as well as other contemporary scholars,[140] correctly describes

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[138] Vaporis 1997
[139] Yanagita 1993
[140] Hara 1998: 13-17; Uda 2007

that railway fundamentally changed the rural life. For example, urban popular cultures diffused immediately into the rural world after the railway networks began to form. In the pre-railway era, however, urban fashion often delayed about one to three years in villages comparing to Kyoto. Yet not only goods and passengers were transported, but people also started to have train rides to travel, to explore, and to imagine through these new modern experiences transcending from their everyday social life. These collective experiences of transcendence, however, became vital to give birth to an imagined and newly constructed collectivity, in which people shared a common spatial and temporal framework bounded by the sovereign secular state in the world society.[141]

Yanagita's points are simple. First, he thinks that railway was the culture carrier and unifier. It fundamentally changed many old trade routes and altered the rural culture. Although he does not use the word "national," railway made physical barriers and geographical and climate differences obsolete. The nation came together for the first time in deep winter when heavy snow temporarily interrupted physical communication between places in the past. In other words, "Japan" was never united in the whole year for all places, until railways were introduced.[142] Also, popular culture was transmitted quickly to villages, and the railway became the facilitator and equalizer of new life styles throughout the country.

His second point of asserting that railway in Japan was "pilgrimage-centered" is however more intriguing. Asserting the long tradition of pilgrimage, Yanagita related the development of railway to leisure activities that railway "attracts tourists for travel,"[143] to the extent that "Japanese transportation infrastructure were travel-centered, neglecting the fact that their uses were not for economic purposes."[144] Entering into the Meiji period, "groups of male and female happily travelled together, and new combinations of sacred places and spiritual sites in Seto inland areas... and Tôkai areas. If one can freely pick up their partners during these travel without religious elements, it became *meisho-meguri* (名所巡り, or "a tour to different famous sites") in contemporary time [in the 1930s]."[145]

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[141] Meyer 1999

[142] See also Oguma (1997) on the discussion on the relation between nationalism and Yanagita Kunio; Hara (1998:17) for his brief interpretation of Yanagita's railway discussion from the angle of cultural unification; Uda (2007: 157-172) for a comprehensive and restructuring of Yanagita's analysis.

[143] Yanagita 1993: 210

[144] Yanagita 1993: 212

[145] Yanagita 1993: 211

Third, to Yanagita, travel was the liberation for village people who lived intimately within social groups. During travel, he writes,

> People did selfish things in groups, as seen in their behaviors in trains…These group behaviors became also visible to those lone travelers, whose travel behavior was just like what they did in their home.[146]

He explains that it was because travel was indeed liberation from everyday social pressures. What travelers did in the train was a proof of the continuation of pilgrimage in the past.

The last point is that, the liberal power of travel was manifested in railway and it became a source of imagination. Yanagita's example was that among those villages where the railway was constructed, there were reports of hearing unknown sound of *yamakagura* (山神楽 unknown music heard in deep mountains which was said to be played by deities) and big bang made by *tengu-daoshi* (天狗倒し unknown sound which was said to be made by long-nosed goblin).[147] These "collective hallucination," as called by Yanagita, were also well collected by ethnologists. Reports of *nise-kisha* (偽汽車), or faked trains which were tricks of *tanuki* (狸) or ghosts, were widespread.[148] While one may consider these folklores as people's ways to deal with potential changes, one can also agree with Yanagita that from the beginning, railway was the symbolic sources of changes and imaginations to the commoners.

> For those who commented the great achievement of the culture of iron in boring technological terms simply ignored the feelings of the majority of the commoners. If one can see railway from far away, one can have a sense of a special feel of stirring (特殊の壮快が味はひ得る)… In this island country, besides rivers, only this hazy line of light (見霞むやうな 一線の光) [i.e. railway tracks] could bring people's imagination to where no one has gone before.

Similar observations were not uncommon. For example, contemporary sociologist Mita Munesuke also comments on Miyazawa Kenji's railway imaginaries in his novel, that railway was indeed the imaginative media for one to connect to the world.[149] The key is that, however, one might not necessarily really travel by railway; instead the will to travel became objectified and expressed in the medium through which one can

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[146] Yanagita 1993: 211-212
[147] Yanagita 1993: 57
[148] Matsutani 2003; 2004
[149] Mita 2001

actualize this imagination. In other words, originally one traveled and liberated itself by taking railway to the outside world, yet this will to transcend was objectified in a fetish or a symbol, so that "this hazy line of light could bring people's imagination to where no one has gone before."

To summarize, railway, to Yanagita, both integrated and liberalized culture. It brought new imagination to different areas while it transformed the local cultures into a standardized national whole. We can see there was a sense of ambivalence of both control and liberation as brought by the railway, as depicted by Yanagita.

Yanagita's assertion of the many features of railway travel is granted, but he neither further elaborates his points nor illustrates well in details about the transition from the tradition of pilgrimage to the modern use of railways in the 1930s; perhaps he supposes that his contemporary readers were familiar with that. We need more theoretical elaboration and contextual delineation to see why travel, railway, and imagination together could be possible.

Furthermore, he characterized the railway as "pilgrimage-centered." This nice phrase is well chosen yet it is argued that it requires some further illustration. The key was that the pilgrimage became secularized on the one hand, while travel itself became sacred. Victor Turner, in his famous article "pilgrimages as social processes," argues that the pilgrimages resembled to the liminal stage of *rites de passage*.[150] He says, when believers walked "towards the 'holy of holies', the central shrine, as he progresses, the route becomes increasingly sacralized..."

> ... At first, it is his subjective mood of penitence that is important while the many long miles he covers are mainly secular, everyday miles, then sacred symbols begin to invest the route, while in the final stages, the road itself becomes a sacred, sometimes mythical journey till almost every landmark and ultimately every step is a condensed, multivocal symbol capable of arousing much affect and desire.[151]

Turner's emphasis was that the pilgrimages and travel became the *rites de passage* if we put those believers and travelers in the contexts of their life course. Reaching the holy sites became secondary to the *journey*, and there was no need of higher value to justify the process of pilgrimages itself. To say that the travel and pilgrimages as sacred, it implies that travel was no longer only the means to holy sites, but the travel

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[150] Turner 1974. One can say that Turner's emphasis on the "anti-structure" and "liminality" shares similar concerns with Amino Yoshihiko.

[151] Turner 1974: 197-198

259

— *rites de passage* — became the source of meanings as well. It was the very meaning of *sojourning* that no specific goals were needed and the purpose of journey was the journey itself. The sociological task will then be the delineation of the historical process in which the railway made many of these travelling experiences possible and how these real travelling experiences were abstracted to become cultural imaginations, so that one could envision the whole nation and the world when seeing a train but without really going out.

3   Railway and the coming age of modern tourism

Let us review some previous efforts to examine Yanagita's thesis of "Railway as Pilgrimage-centered," which had examined the coming of modern tourism brought by the railway companies by inventing different forms of pilgrimage.[152] Specifically, Uda mentioned numerous cases that the railway companies invented many new practices in order to attract passengers.[153] For example, Hankai Railway, established in 1885 which connects Osaka and Sakai, was perhaps the first company which realized the possibility to attract more passengers to visit the *Sumiyoshi Jinja* (住吉神社), a shrine along the line.[154] Another case was the Kansai Railway in 1903. This company responded to the opening of the Fifth Industrial Exposition (内国勧業博覧会) by providing discounted tickets in order to encourage the passengers to take the liberty to visit famous religious sites along their service routes after visiting the Expo.[155] Indeed, around the late Meiji period in the 1900s, those private railways in the Kansai areas with many traditional sites were especially active in exploring business chance by publishing advertisement, providing discounted travel tickets or upgrading facilities.[156] Most of these travel campaigns included pilgrimage routes with a set of pre-packaged sites including natural scene, old tombs, shrines and temples. An example of the travel package included "an exhibition event in Nara, sakura-viewing in Yoshino Mountain or visiting the Great Buddha in Hôryûji (法隆寺), as well as extra discounts for travelling to festival, or *matsuri*, in shrines and

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[152] For general references, see Mainichi Shimbunsha 1968; Nakagawa 1979; 1998.

[153] Uda 2007, see especially chapter three, page 173-210

[154] Uda 2007: 177; 191

[155] Uda 2007: 177; for discussion of the history of exhibition from a sociological perspective, see Yoshimi (1992), especially the case of Kobayashi Ichizô of Mino'o Arima Railway, page 165-172.

[156] Uda 2007: 177; 191-197

temples..."[157]

If one follows MacCannell's approach to the sociology of tourism, then the making of many of these tourist sites and spots was definitely "a semiotic of attractions;" these sights were "signified" by markers, or "signifier."[158] In the current case, railway companies were indeed the "markers" which actively employed national discourses to signify many "sites" that one should go for a visit.

This theory of the making of tourist spots is well formulated though the semiotic approach may have overlooked the institutional environment in which the marking or the symbolization of a particular site of tourist interest was legitimated. The semiotic signification of particular tourist sites of interest, especially shrines and temples, was actually politically accepted as a representative site of the national religion or national-cultural heritage that one should know and experience by travel. This brings us insights to see why a collective cultural sense of nation was brought into existence by railway.

It is important to point out that these "religious sites" or "cultural heritages" were invented traditions as part of the nation-building project by the Meiji government. To use the railway for pilgrimage was indeed a re-invented tradition. Takagi, for example, pointed out that many imperial tombs were suddenly "discovered" and imperial rituals were "reestablished" in the Meiji period.[159] These invented rituals, especially paying visits to shrines, were part of the state's efforts to establish Shinto as the state ideology.[160] Indeed, most temples were abandoned in the early Meiji period due to the state's policy of "Abolish Buddhism and Destroy Shākyamuni" (廃仏毀釈) movement.[161] Before that, Shinto was not quite an independent and systematic "religion" as Buddhism. Buddha and deities were mixed and many shrines were indeed administered by monks. After the early Meiji period, many of these temples, shrines, or old buildings were abandoned, including the wood tower of the Hôryuji which was nearly sold to merchants for firewood at first and then to foreigners for display in the museum.[162] In other words, not until the 1900s many of these important cultural heritages were not of interest among the government and commoners.

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[157] Uda 2007: 192
[158] MacCannell 1976: 109-133
[159] Takagi 1997; 2005
[160] Takagi 1995
[161] Yasumaru 1979; Haga 1994
[162] Ubukata 2005: 21-22. He reports similar cases in the Big Buddha in Kamakura, that these "cultural and national heritage" were indeed reinvented only since the late Meiji period.

In order to establish the international reputation to be a nation-state, after comparisons with the Europe, the intellectuals and the Meiji government hurriedly pushed forward the making of the law of protecting the "cultural heritage and famous scene" in 1897, especially for the protection of old shrines and temples.[163] The state, situated in the world society, wanted to prove its legitimacy to the world by asserting its sovereignty, i.e. the state should be governed by its "national" citizen. To do so, the Meiji state actively invented discourses and rituals to make it appear to be "national." Discourse on "educating national citizens" by means of marking specific sites as national heritages was created. Travel, in this sense, became the circuit of power when many people were organized to visit different "national sites."

In this political context, modern tourism was indeed under the influence of nationalism, as many of these sites were legitimated by the state discourse. Yet nation-building was again a collective process; the state, again, was not the sole agent which forced people to visit these sites. Many of these sites and touristic spots were however invented by the railway companies — the key actor and marker which signified a site of tourist interest. People did travel frequently in the past, but the railway companies as the promoter of travel invented new forms of pilgrimage.

4   Urbanism as a (rail)way of religion

We have already examined the "tradition" of pilgrimage in the case of Japan. In the following sections, we will see how it was re-invented by railway in the context of the modern tourism, especially the ones in suburban tourism for religious purposes.

The urban railway companies invented many modern Japanese religious practices. They utilized people's old habits of travel but redirected and reinvented them into new kinds of religious pattern. We can refer to the well written and intriguing research by the historian Hirayama Noboru.[164] His research is about *hatsumôde* (初詣), or the first visit to shrines or temples in the year, which is still very common in contemporary Japan. People paid their first visits to shrines or temples in the year to worship or ask for the protection of deities for the year.[165] Hirayama tries to show why many urban railway companies curiously transformed those rather

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[163] Takagi 1995. See especially chapter 9, 10, 11.
[164] See Hirayama 2005b; 2006
[165] For a very brief review, see Reader and Tanabe 1998, chapter 1.

262

traditional religious rituals, especially *sankei* (参詣), or visits to shrine or temple, into a new practice of *hatsumōde* (初詣).[166] This intriguing argument depicts that many religious practices were invented only since the late Meiji period when the proliferating urban railway companies were competing for and trying to attract new passengers in order to raise their revenues. The railway companies, as well as temples, shrines and tourist infrastructures, (re)invented many of pilgrimages because of inner-worldly secular business concerns. Railway was not an infrastructure that simply carried passengers who wished to visit temples and shrines. Instead, the urban railway companies enchanted those religious institutions by introducing new travel experiences.

Entering into modern period, all three motives for travel (to pray, to pay, to play) were still the same. The difference, however, was that the most important form of railway pilgrimages should be considered as an urban (and suburban) phenomenon. These new forms of pilgrimages and modern tourism first appeared in the cities. In other words, even though in the pre-modern period many commoners in the villages had a chance for pilgrimage, this practice was largely transformed by the urban railway companies such that the pilgrimage among commoners was mostly held between urban and suburban areas. The new form of pilgrimage and the coming of modern tourism had much to do with the railway companies providing city-based services in the first place.[167]

We can take a first look of the case of Kawasaki Daishi (川崎大師) cited by Hirayama.[168] Located just beside the first Japanese railway route between Shinagawa and Yokohama, into the mid-Meiji period in the 1890s, many visitors took the railway to visit this temple. People "enjoyed travelling on railway and walked around" by paying their visits in the first month of the year, and temporary supplementary trains were organized to transport them to the temple.[169] The interesting point is that people visited those temples and shrines within their community in the past, while these modern visitors came from the urban areas, i.e. from outside the community, by trains. Hirayama cities an example in 1893 that,

In the first day of the year, four additional trains from Shimbashi were arranged

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[166] I learnt a great deal from Mr. Hirayama from personal communication, and many of the insights and historical findings quoted in the followings were surely the credit and scholarship of him.
[167] Hirayama 2005b: 60-61
[168] See also Reader and Tanabe (1998: 60-67) for a background of Kawasaki Daishi.
[169] Hirayama 2005b: 62-65; 2006: 89-91

for these visitors paying visits to the temple of Kawasaki Daishi... Yet visitors were still crowded at Kawasaki station... passengers competed with each other to get a ride on the train... There were quarrels but fortunately there was no injury... This day was actually a very good day without wind. It was ideal to have a walk along the Daishi river nearby...[170]

Taking the train for about an hour to the temple located in the suburban areas was surely a new travel experience. Not only for pray, people also enjoyed the new transportation as part of their trips.

Hirayama reminds us that this example of *hatsumōde* was indeed quite a new invention. These visits, or *sankei* (参詣), in the city before the Meiji period were limited within the walking distance of the visitors. It implies that in the Edo, for example, one went to and prayed for charm from local deities on foot. In other communities outside the cities, with geographical variations, it might be the monk or the priest who paid visits to the community in which the temple or the shrine was located. Taking the train to those temples or shrines in the suburban areas, however, was totally new forms of practice.

Another key difference is that in the Edo period, the first visit was not necessarily the first day of the year, or *ganjitsu* (元日). One should also pay attention to the changes of old lunar calendar to the new solar one, in addition to their own dates of practices and rituals, that different temples and shrines might have their own day of visit, or *ennichi* (縁日). Also, the temple and shrine for visit at each year were different according to the lucky direction of each year, or *ehō* (恵方). The lucky direction was changing in a five-year cycle to determine which shrine or temple one should go in that year. Combined with all these considerations, people visited different temples or shrines according to the yearly lucky direction, and they might decide on their own according to the date specified by a particular temple or shrine. In other words, unlike in contemporary Japan's *hatsumōde*, there was neither standardized venue nor date for these visits.[171] Before the coming of railway companies, there were only visits, or *sankei*, according to lucky directions, *ehō*, mainly in major cities, while a variety of practices were found in other places.

By the late Meiji period in the 1900s, the various dates and venues for *sankei* became standardized to be the first day of the year, and these changes were mostly

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[170] Hirayama 2005b: 63
[171] Hirayama 2005b: 60-62

due to the advertising strategy of the railway companies. Hirayama argues that the key factor was the competition among rival railway companies. For example, in the Tokyo areas, the Kawasaki Daishi, the Narita-san (成田山) in Chiba, Horinouchi-soshi (堀の内祖師) in West Tokyo were all famous examples that were located near two or more railways routes. The rival railway companies attracted people from the urban areas to take railway for about thirty minutes to an hour to these temples by, for instance, selling discounted tickets, putting into place extensive advertisement and printing postcards as special tickets for memorial stamps.[172] Those companies also designed and promoted excursion tickets (周遊券), which included major temples or shrines with small ones and other sites of interest so that passengers were encouraged to travel around specified places by railway.[173] In the 1910s and 1920s, railway travels to the suburban areas became an important entertainment for urban populations, and the first visit became somehow a "tradition" invented by these urban railway companies.

In the Osaka areas where there were more private urban railway companies, the competition to attract visitors to suburban shrines and temples was much more severe. Hirayama identified an archive containing a diary written by a Shinto priest who managed a shrine located in one of the suburban areas in Osaka in 1908:

> Today was the *setsubun* (節分, the day before the beginning of spring in the lunar calendar). The railway company had advertised that we were at the right direction for lucky visit to shrines (*ehô* 恵方), so that many people from Osaka came here for a visit. The shrine today was very busy… Yet in the next year the shrine would not be in the right lucky direction so that we should think of methods to advertise (4th Feb 1908).[174]

According to Hirayama, in Osaka people paid their first visit in *setsubun* instead of *ganjitsu*. The interesting point is that according to his reading of the diary written by the priest, there was no indication of people from the cities visiting the shrine before 1908. Another crucial change was the worries towards the constantly changing "lucky direction." In 1925, for example,

> In this year, the shrine was located in the yearly direction of lucky visit (恵方) so that many people came here from Osaka. Hanshin Railway had advertising campaigns in the city. They paid great efforts in advertisement, as well as improving infrastructures of stations. They indeed succeeded. From the early

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[172] Hirayama 2005b: 66-67
[173] Hirayama 2005b: 67-68
[174] Quoted in Hirayama 2006: 91-92.

morning visitors from Osaka were coming in continuously. This phenomenon did not happen in the past (1st Jan 1925).[175]

Hirayama quoted other entries from this priest's official dairy, citing that "today is very busy. It was all because of the advertisement of the railway (2nd Jan 1925)."[176] While the year of 1925 might not really be the first time that many urban visitors came to the shrines, railway companies started to reframe the concept of lucky direction into a new concept of *hatsumôde*. The railway companies as well as the temples and shrines were actually competing for specifying the true lucky direction of the year. In 1916, for example, a newspaper reported,

> Keihan Railway said Hachiman-shrine was in the true lucky direction of this year while Kenden Railway said Inari-shrine was ... Actually, neglecting the right direction, as long as one paid visits he or she would receive benefits (御利益)... If one had the belief that no matter taking Keihan Railway or Keiden Railway, or going to Hachiman or Inari shrines, as far as one donates money then one gets more happiness...[177]

We now have a new concept of *hatsumôde*, instead of *ehô*, because to both the railway companies, shrines and temples, changing lucky direction was not good for business. Instead, simply saying that "to go for first visit is a tradition" was more convenient.

Needless to say, the extraordinarily efforts in advertising were surely "semiotic of references" that marked the specific site of interest as worthwhile for visit. In Tokyo and Osaka, over-heated price competition of the discounted ticket package was common. The railway companies then provided sponsored souvenirs, lucky draw with prizes of "a charm with golden or silver figure of Ācala (不動尊像)."[178] Extra train services like express trains and special carriage with tea services were provided that attracted more travelers.[179]

As seen from the cases in Tokyo and Osaka, roughly by 1910s rapid urbanization characterized the Taisho Democracy with new leisure activities centering on city life. The completion of suburban routes among the railway companies based on the two cities facilitated new forms of entertainment and religious practices. In the late Taisho and the early Showa period in the 1920s, *hatsumôde* became a standardized and common "traditional religious practice" in the beginning of each New Year for urban

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[175] Quoted in Hirayama 2006: 93
[176] Quoted in Hirayama 2006: 93
[177] Quoted in Takagi 1995: 205; also re-quoted in Hirayama 2006: 94-95
[178] Hirayama 2007: 29-30
[179] Hirayama 2007: 29

population. In Tokyo, trains ran all-night before the first day of the year, which is a practice that still continues today.[180] In 1930, Osaka,

> In the spring, *hatsumôde* became a battlefield between railway companies competing for passengers. All urban private railways companies extensively advertised *ehô* or travel. Keihan Railway used the slogan of "New-year service (年頭サービス)" and provided discounted pilgrimage ticket, including Arashiyama, Kyoto, Inari [Fushimi Inari-Taisha (伏見稲荷大社)], Momoyama, Hachiman [Iwashimizu Hachimangû (岩清水八幡宮)], that costed one yen and fifty cents only ... It cooperated with restaurants and sold packaged tour for those in Osaka with railway tickets free of charge... Hankyû Railway advertised the Seven Lucky Deities (七福神) along its lines, and had lucky draw of pure gold or silver amulets, as well as extra railway tickets to Takarazuka. Railway and deities joined hands together and devised new strategies like lucky draw of amulets (電車と神様が握手し抽選でお守りを振り出すなどこれは新戦術). Hanshin Railway provided extra services in the New Year's eve... Hanwa Railway... competed with Nankai Railway for the right lucky direction and they bumped against each other...[181]

With the help of mass media like newspaper, these religious sites were marked by the railway companies and joined together into a network of pilgrimage routes. This was however an urban phenomenon. The commoners were driven by railway from the city to the suburban areas to pray, play, and pay. Worshipping and asking for inner-worldly benefits were surely important religious incentives for the commoners. Temples and shrines surely welcomed the sudden inflow of believers (and contributions as well, for sure). Railway companies, however, became the new priest of the modernity that made unnecessary journey meaningful.

The apparently arbitrary forms of pilgrimage and secular incentives enforced and expanded the scope and effect of the railway as an institution. It was the trains that became religious but not those shrines, shrines and the tiny golden amulet. Those intriguing economic and political reasons that used to justify the building and expansion of railways were forgotten, and those motives became invisible while the train kept moving on those expanding tracks. The result is that one will no longer consider why this would be the case. It is because for a religion or an institution to perpetuate, one does not ask why, but simply follow what others are doing without asking where its origin may be. In 1934, Yomirui Shimbun reported that,

> Tokyo station was packed with passengers who went for pilgrimage to the Ise Shrine...on the last day of the year, there were 27 temporarily scheduled trains

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[180] Hirayama 2003
[181] Requoted from Hirayama 2006: 96

for *sankei* visit to Narita departing from Ueno, Ryôkoku, Shinjuku, and Shinagawa stations at nine forty at night... Visitors for *hatsumôde* to Meiji Shrine were packed in Harajuku station, with over eighteenth thousands passengers for the whole night last year... Near the midnight trains stopped by every four minutes, and then four to five thousands of passengers were unloaded... (1ˢᵗ Jan 1934).[182]

The railway was now culturally and religiously charged. The railway companies, through the restructuring and reformulating of many seemingly old ways of visits to temples and shrines, created new travel experiences as both a sacred entertainment and a new urban form of secular pilgrimages.

These pilgrimages were secular only in the sense that they took the form of popular entertainment, as these travels were calibrated and well adapted to the urban contexts. Yet they were still pilgrimages. It was the very temporal nature that the yearly regular visits came to endow the passengers with a sense of liberation. Religious experiences did not include only praying in holy sites, but the journey itself was an integral part of this whole new experience of religion in the urban settings.

Why people believed that these pilgrimages to those religious sites invented by the railway companies to be authentic? The key perhaps is that it was the railway companies, but not the temples or shrines, that took the initiative to play the role of marker that characterized a specific site as religious and national sites with "authenticity."[183] Indeed while these new sites of touristic interest (religious or cultural heritage) were invented by the railway companies, it is also important to point out that those chaotic travel experiences (remembering that those passengers packed into the crowed trains) constituted the very sense of transformation and alternation during travel. Those religious sites were now considered to be authentic because of the journey; the journey itself charged those sites with sacred power. The railway companies were also the higher priest to organize and channel those passengers to go around their railway networks. A functional explanation, which considers that trains merely transported believers to shrines and temples, is a misplaced one. One can call them the Hidden God if one wishes. The railways were now more transcendental than those shrines and temples. One should realize that all of these travels could be exempted and trips could be avoided from the first place. The railway companies organized a new collective reality by means of guiding one's transformative travel

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[182] Requoted from Hirayama 2003: 11, 17
[183] See MacCannel 1973; Olsen 2002

experience. These efforts to reorganize the travel experiences then helped the expansion of an imaginative horizon, and hence the institutionalization of a greater collectivity.

Now one may ask: What determines the legitimacy for money-making among the railway firms and shrines as well as asking for inner-worldly profits from deities among the commoners? The answer may sound simple: the nation-state.

5   When railway became the religious circuit of the nation: the unification of two forms of railway travels

The problem of the conflict between making profits and morality in the western history of capitalism, which troubled Max Weber, had never troubled the shrines and temples in Japan very much. It was not a sin for one to pray for personal fortune.[184] As seen in this chapter, most Japanese religions and deities had never prohibited believers to ask for inner-worldly benefits.[185] Indeed, because of business concerns, the railway companies encouraged these prayers to travel to pray for inner-worldly profits without much legitimacy problem.

The problem is not the purpose of worship, but about how to organize railway for the people to worship deities in an acceptable way for the state. This is then a problem of how legitimacy was attained through negotiating for a proper meaning and form of railway travel — to pray, play and pay not only for the self but also for the nation.

If one reads the last quote in the previous section carefully, one may find that besides *Narita-san* in Chiba, people also travelled to Ise Shrine and Meiji Shrine for *hatsumôde*. Indeed, these were two important shrines in the ranking of State-Shintoism.[186] Hardacre, for example, considered Shinto as one of the ideological tools for the Japanese state to gain legitimacy and control of the mind of the people.[187] The state required the separation of Buddhism from Shinto shrines and the registration of shrines and then ranked them in a hierarchy according to the relation of the deities to the imperial's one.[188] In the early Meiji period the state

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[184] To remind from chapter 2 that it was not especially wrong for one to make profits as long as one can frame a politically correct rationale in the state-capitalists negotiation of the nationalization problem.
[185] There were exceptions, for sure. See also Garon 1997; Reader and Tanabe 1998.
[186] Hardacre 1989, chapter 4
[187] Hardacre 1989
[188] Hardacre 1989, chapter 4

became the battlefield of Gods.[189] Many deities were reinterpreted or vanished due to political reasons.[190] Following this argument, Takagi's previous research on the origin of *hatsumôde* took this perspective to consider it as one of these ideological inventions of the state.[191] The railway pilgrimage could then be considered as the state's effort to implement its political domination through the diffusion and standardization of religious rituals in the Shinto system down to the mentalities among the commoners, as seen from *hatsumôde* as a religious practice.

Hirayama's research actually tries to refine the simple interpretation of the argument of State-Shintoism.[192] As we have seen, many of these religious practices were indeed inventions by the urban railway companies because of purely business incentives. Instead of the state telling what people should do, those railway companies, to a large extent, invented those religious practices. The commoners were also not passive victims of state ideology of Shintoism. They went for pilgrimages not because the state forced them to do so; they went for fun and to pray for inner-worldly benefits and protections from deities.

Yet at some point two forms of travel and the state discourse to describe the meanings of these travel experiences converged. The railway companies and commoners adopted those rituals and myths defined by the state, so that everyone in the country took the railway to travel and to worship deities as defined in the hierarchy of State-Shintoism.

In the case of travel and religion, we have already seen two rather separate yet somehow mutually complementary pilgrimage practices and travel experiences. On the one hand, the *sankin-kôtai* and imperial railway travel among political elites established the political order and the imperial identity. On the other hand, the pilgrimages, both old and new, among commoners created new travel experiences when they paid for travelled to play and pray. But the most intriguing part is how the commoners adopted the many discourse and ritual invented by the state. To put it in another way: when those two separate forms of railway travel for different purposes among the emperor and commoners become the same one?

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[189] Yasumaru 1979
[190] Hara 2001
[191] Takagi 1995
[192] Hirayama 2003: 1

6 "Kansai Private Railway as thought": The Civilians' City versus the Imperial Capital?

We should ask, then, how those deities, which were promoted by the railway companies, were gradually substituted by the emperor and those gods defined in the State-Shintoism? Why taking trains for pilgrimages among the commoners became worshipping to the imagined community? In what sense the two rather independent systems of discourses and rituals — an invented monarchy by visual domination through imperial railway trips on the one hand, and the diverse forms of pilgrimage invented by the railway companies on the other hand — were gradually merged into the same one? What were those possible conflicts involved?

(a) The legend of Hankyû Railway

Besides his research of the emperor's railway trips in establishing the identity of the imperial institution and political domination in modern Japan, Hara Takeshi also writes an interesting book on the rise and decline of private railway companies in the Osaka areas.[193] Contrary to Tokyo as the "Imperial Capital" (帝都), he argues that the urban culture in Osaka had once shared a high degree of autonomy as a "Civilians' City" (民都) in the Taisho period from the 1910s to the 1920s. But when the emperor took his royal train to visit his subjects in Osaka and the visual domination extended to this Civilians' City, the spirit of urbanity, freedom and autonomy developed by the private railway companies were surrendered and politically subordinated to the conformity of the "nation," as manifested in those imperial rituals and discourse. Hara's curious argument to analyze the "private railway as thought," however, gives us some hints on how the two different railway travel experiences converged around the late 1920s.

To illustrate his argument, he analyzes those emerging private railway companies. Unlike those private ones before nationalization which held inter-city networks, these new private railways were based on cities and developed new lines to suburban areas. In particular, Hara focuses on Hankyû Railway (阪急電鉄) in Osaka, which extensively extended its suburban railway networks and developed real-estate side by side. The founder of Hankyû, Kobayashi Ichizô (小林一三), borrowed the idea of garden city, or den'en toshi (田園都市), and considered using the building of

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[193] The discussion below is also based on Hara 1998.

suburban railways to develop his real-estate project.[194] He first bought up those undeveloped lands around the growing Osaka city, and then laid tracks to those areas.[195] He sold these lands and newly furnished houses with small garden, electricity, sewage system along his railway by promoting a western and middle-class living style. Sand (2003), similar to Hara's research, coined the development of real-estate project along Hankyu as "landscape of domesticity" and Hankyu as the "cultural entrepreneur."[196] The emerging middle-class, or salaried men, could commute to the city by taking the electrified railway. Kobayashi then built a new department store at the terminal station, Umeda (梅田), so that commuters and housewives could stop by and enjoy shopping. On the other sides of the routes, he constructed zoo, swimming pool, park, spa and especially the famous *Takarazuka Kagekidan* (宝塚歌劇団, The Takarazuka Revue).[197] People who lived in the areas as well as outsiders could take the trains in holiday, providing revenues for the company, while the whole areas developed by Hankyū could have leisure activities on their own.

According to Hara, Kobayashi wished to develop the suburban areas and connect them by Hankyū railway to produce a rather autonomous urban culture in western style. Hara conceptualized Kobayashi's railway kingdom as "the cultural arena of Hankyū Railway" (阪急文化圏), which resembled a rather autonomous kingdom with distinctive living culture of their own.[198] More than ten real estate projects were developed in the late 1910s along the two lines connecting Osaka to Takarazuka and Kobe. The "suburban utopia" became the paradise of growing middle class family.

Hara pays attentions especially to the building of Hankyū Department store which was also the terminal station next to Osaka station of the Imperial Government Railway. Department stores in Umeda and Takarazuka were surely iconic sites of Hankyū.[199] They served as the symbol and center of the newly established consumption and urban living culture promoted by Hankyū. In other words, living, commuting, shopping, leisure and cultural activities were all included that resembled

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[194] Hara 1998: 85-90
[195] Hara 1998: 82-88
[196] See also Sand's interesting interpretation of Kobayashi's business vision of an "erotized" homeownership program in chapter 4 in Sand 2003: 132-161; see also Robertson 1998.
[197] Hara 1998: 99-101; see also Robertson 1998
[198] Hara 1998: 82-121
[199] Hara 1998: 115-121

a self-sufficient and "suburban utopia."[200]

Other private railway companies also contributed much to the emerging urban culture of Osaka, like the Kôshien (甲子園) or theme parks by Hanshin Railway, the "New World" (新世界) entertaining complex with a high tower with an observation deck by Hankai Railway and the beaches by Nankai Railway. All these contributed to the making the Osaka Great City (大大阪) as the paradise for the urban civilians in the Taisho Period.[201]

Another interesting concern of Hara is Kobayashi's interest in developing high-speed elevated railway (高架鉄道), using international standard gauzed tracks.[202] The interesting point is that Keikyû Railway had even higher technological infrastructures than Government Railway, the license it held was however for tramways within the city.[203] This was indeed manipulating the grey areas of the law of railway regulation, because those major private electrified railway companies operating in Kansai areas applied for a license not as a private railway (私設鉄道) but as a local tramway (軌道). In principle this license was for running tram on roads, but in reality Hankyû was running its high-speed train mostly on elevated tracks.

Another symbol for Hankyû was its cross-over bridges near the Osaka station. As Hankyû was built later, Kobayashi built cross-over bridges over the Government Railway, so that passengers in electrified and elevated train could literally "look down" at those governmental steam locomotives.[204] Indeed, Hara cites that the state regulation concerning the operation of royal trains that prohibited any trains passing through the cross-over bridges when the royal train was passing through was somehow created because of Hankyû.

Integrating all of these distinctive living culture promoted by Hankyû as well as many seemingly minor characteristics of the railway itself, Hara argued that there was an underlying "anti-official" attitude, or *hankan shisô* (反官思想), in the spirit of Kobayashi and his Hankyû Railway Company.[205] Because of the using of standardized gauze, government railways could not enter; elevated tracks and high speed electrified trains symbolized not only its higher class status, but the

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[200] Hara 1998: 113-115
[201] Hara 1998: 104-112; on the history of city culture in the context of Tokyo, see Yoshimi 1992.
[202] Hara 1998: 64-66
[203] Hara 1998: 59-70
[204] Hara 1998: 91-94
[205] Hara 1998: 115

cross-bridge, terminal station and department stores became a distinctive feature of the Hankyû. By developing a unique management of his railway business, Kobayashi successfully organized a whole new experience for the urban social and cultural life for his passengers. Yet Hara argues that this "cultural arena of Hankyû Railway" faced challenges from both the state and those civilians when entering the early Showa period.

(b) The surrender of the spirit of autonomy among urban railway companies

These interesting and special urban cultures did not last long after the Taisho period. Specifically, Hara picks up two problems to illustrate the final surrender of the independent spirit of democracy as manifested in the urban culture developed by the private railway companies. The first is the problem of reconstructing the railway cross-over bridge owned by the Hakyûi Railway near the Osaka Station in 1929, or the "Hankyû Kurosu Mondai (阪急クロス問題)."[206] The second is the promotion of railway travel to those imperial sacred sites by many private railway companies in the 1930s. As argued by Hara, the rather anti-official and independent spirit of the civilian and merchant culture in Osaka was rather powerless against the growing imperialistic ideologies and rituals. This rather unique interpretation was important for us to see how the organization of railway travel experiences was indeed vital to the changes of the political culture.

For the problem of cross-over bridge, it was a battle between the Hankyû Railway led by Kobayashi and the Government Railway as well as the Osaka City government led by the mayor Seki Hajime (関 ・), which started roughly around the late 1920s.[207] Since the late 1910s, the Government Railway wished to electrify its railway sections between Kyoto and Kobe, and to upgrade the Osaka station. However the existing infrastructure, like the cross-bridge as well as those elevated tracks and the Umeda station, owned by Hankyû made the government plan impossible. While the Government Railway and the city government wished to force Hankyû to restructure its elevated trains and station back on ground, Hankyû resisted.

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[206] Hara 1998: 159-186
[207] Besides Hara, I also refer to Hanes's discussion on Seki Hajime and its plan of designing the Osaka City. Without saying, Hanes' discussion differs from Hara in some critical points, especially that Hara puts Seki on the side of the state and the imperial ideology while Hanes puts Seki rather in the middle between nationalism and liberalism. At the current moment I do wish to go into details of this potentially interesting debate on this historical character, but simply follow Hara's interpretation first; see Hanes 2002.

This was originally a minor conflict between the two parties, but the key for our concern was the borrowing of the imperial ritual and state discourse by the Government Railway as well as the Osaka City government in order to strengthen their arguments and to gain a higher moral ground. Indeed, this seemingly technical problem of railway engineering was picked up by Hara to illustrate the subtle change of political thought. Hara comments,

> Led by Hankyû, those private railway companies in Kansai made Osaka to be the "private railway kingdom" and built up an anti-official culture from the Taisho period. Yet entering the early Showa, when Osaka became "the Great Osaka," the existence of the emperor became dominant. He expected "the cooperation between the officials and civilians." Under the emperor's influence, the urban space of Osaka changed with the time.[208]

I will skip most of the details of the conflicts and simply quote two important points from Hara's analysis. First, the imperial travel became a rather good excuse, if not necessarily a political pressure, for the side of Osaka City government and Government Railway to force the cooperation of Hankyû. In 1925, Hirohito, as the Crown Prince, had his imperial trip to Osaka for the third time to observe some new city improvements and urban planning.[209] In 1929, the new Emperor visited the Osaka again, but when he took an automobile to attend the welcome ceremonies in Osaka, according to his followers, the rituals were not as good as those in other cities.[210] Indeed, the emperor never visited Osaka by his royal train before.

In this context, the rebuilding of Osaka station became politically charged with moral concerns. In 1931 the outbreak of war in Northeast China made the station to become the center of departure ceremonies for soldiers.[211] In 1932, the Imperial Ministry decided to arrange the imperial trip to Osaka to visit the especially important imperial tombs and shrines in the south of Osaka by royal train, passing through many tracks owned by the private railway companies.[212] Yet by 1933, the Hankyû Railway still resisted to the restructuring of tracks and stations.

This comes to the second point that, given this kind of invisible political pressures, the media started to report the issue which was highly biased and unfavorable to Hankyû. The Umeda terminal station, with its department store, was

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[208] Hara 1998: 158
[209] Hara 1998: 124-125
[210] Hara 1998: 153-155
[211] Hara 1998: 173-175
[212] Hara 1998: 196-203

coined as "the cancer of Osaka" (大阪の癌).[213] From the side of Hankyû, the government never came to discuss in details and forced them to pay for the cost of reconstruction (although Hara does not have much information on hands to inform us the underlying process). The newspaper in Osaka started to report on the issue but clearly supported the government side. Many local people were organized to petition in support for the reconstruction and the newspapers covered the issue by taking the side against Hankyû.[214]

> The plan of electrification between Kyoto and Kobe of the Government Railway lines was decided. The problem of Hankyû Cross-Over became a hot issue among civilians living along the Government Railway. Town and village representatives along the line were organized to petition to the Osaka City Government to hurry the project, with a petition letter signed by more than ten thousands civilians... The head of the construction section of the Government Railway said... "I regret that the national transport is halted because of one company..."[215]

Actually the new elevated Osaka station was already under construction. Hara commented that the critical reason of the failure for Hankyû to resist was the betrayal of the mass media and those civilians. According to Hara, losing the support of the media and commoners violated the legitimate foundation of the entrepreneurial philosophy of Hankyû.[216]

In 31st May 1933, the cross-over bridge was removed. In 1st June, people celebrated for the completion of the new Osaka station, which could be used for the imperial ritual. In 3rd June 1933, the royal train heading for the capital of Manchuria that carried the representative of the emperor Chichibu no Miya, who was the emperor's younger brother, stopped by the new Osaka Station when heading for the capital of Manchuria. Five hundred people queued up on the new platform to welcome the royal train.[217] In 1934, Kobayashi resigned and left the company, and the post of president of Hankyû was kept vacant for a moment.[218]

(c)   <u>Travelling through a new nation: touristic spots changing from department stores to sacred imperial tombs and shrines</u>

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[213] Hara 1998: 175-177
[214] Hara 1998: 181-182
[215] Hara 1998: 178-179
[216] Hara 1998: 178-182
[217] Hara 1998: 185-186
[218] The post was kept vacant until 1936. See Hara 1998: 181-182

276

Hara's unique and interesting account of Hankyû Railway has helped us to focus on the critical role that the organization of railway travel played in creating and consolidating a changing sense towards the collectivity as manifested in the imperial ideology.

Hara indeed pays attention to the overall emerging collective sentiments among the civilians. Those efforts by Hankyû to implement a rather western and middle-class based living style were futile when facing the growing imperialistic sense of nation. Instead of direct state influences, this was indeed some sort of moralistic and religious collective force, requiring a proper management of traveling experiences. A key change among private railway companies in Kansai areas was their promotion of travel to many sacred imperial sites in the area.

The changes from a "civilians' city," or *minto* (民都), to a "sacred capital," or *shinto* (神都), as put by Hara, of the Great Osaka areas were ironically related to the further booming of the private railway kingdom in the 1930s.[219] More private railway companies, like the Osaka Electrified Railway and Nankai Railway, actively promoted the railway travel to shrines and sacred places related to the imperial family in the areas. Indeed, these active inventions — or "re-discovery" — of old tombs or shrines by the private railway companies became common in the 1930s. For example, at the 1930s,

> [The president of the Osaka Electrified Railway] targeted on those people living in Osaka and provided more chances for them to have higher imperial and national spirit. He actively promoted railway travel for them to visit those shrines or heritages related to the imperial family or those patriotic representative persons... In industrial city like Osaka, working labor could only enjoy in pleasure quarters. This was not good to their thought and health. One should seriously consider this issue... The railway should then extend to Kashihara, Nara, Kyoto, Fushimi-momoyama, Ise, Atsuta, and provided train service to these areas...[220]

Why is enjoying in pleasure quarters not good and why is taking railways to visit sacred places better? Along the company's routes, there were many cultural heritage, shrines and tombs related to the imperial family. This railway company did not have many entertainment facilities and it tried hard to promote travel to the south of Osaka as well as to those important shrines. New pilgrimage routes were designed by private

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[219] Hara 1998: 211
[220] Hara 1998: 215

277

railway companies to encourage travel for the sake of obtaining a "patriotic spirit" (報国精神).

> Osaka Electrified Railway and Sankyû (参急, or 参宮急行電鉄) did not merely operate train services between Osaka and Nagoya as normal inter-city transportation. The former one built extra lines to Kashihara Jingû, and the latter one operated direct train services to Ise Shrine. This was the president's belief in "patriotic spirit." In addition, the opening of the new line to Atsuda Jingû in Nagoya strengthened the tradition of the "patriotic spirit" of the Osaka Electrified Railway.[221]

By the 1940s, all unnecessary travels for entertainment and leisure were abolished, but "pilgrimage for sacred places" (聖地巡礼) by this company to Kashihara, Ise, and Atsuda Shrines were promoted. Hara quotes the speech given by one of the president of this company in 1940.

> The heart of all national citizens joined together to worship the imperial founder of the god of Amaterasu... We joined together before the great Ise Shrine and Kashihara Shrine to thank for the grace from deities, hoping for the prosperity of the imperial family, the stability of the society, the victory of imperial army, and the victory of the sacred war. As a consequence, worshippers came all over from the country to join this grand ceremony. Our company was very happy because our railway routes passed through these shrines and we could transport passengers to attend this ceremony.[222]

7　The unification of state ideologies and religious rituals

This section tries to focus on the question of when the exact timing and mechanism which was made the unification of state ideologies and religious rituals possible. The time when the two forms of travel converged — two tracks joining into one — was roughly around the 1930s.[223] The mechanism worked to establish the legitimacy of the popular railway travel by employing the myths and rituals of State-Shintoism defined by the state to justify the necessity of these travels.

To illustrate this point, we can see an account of railway tourism given by Hara.[224] After 1937, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, many militaristic slogans began to appear. Curiously, the imperialistic discourses which appeared in the

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[221] Hara 1998: 213
[222] Hara 1998: 218
[223] The National Travel Bureau, however, had already produced guidebook for railway tourism to different shrines in the 1910s (Tetsudôinn 1919). Yet it published not only guidebook to shrines but also temples, hot springs at the same time.
[224] The following examples are taken from Hara 2007: 52-55.

newspaper were indeed travel advertisements despite its militaristic tone. The Keisei Railway advertised its excursion tickets for pilgrimages and hatsumôde from Ueno Station to Narita-san, Katori Jingû (香取神宮), and Kashima Jingû (鹿島神宮) as "Praying for the perpetual military fortune for the Imperial Army (祈皇軍武運長久)." Keio Railway used the slogan of "Praying for the victory!! (戦勝祈願!!)" in its travel campaign to sell discounted tickets to those shrines and imperial tombs along its line. Hirayama also provided an account of the dramatic change in the slogans of tourism on the side of the Railway Bureau after 1937.

> To reflect on the change of the social situation, the Railway Bureau provided priority travel services for pilgrimages and visits mainly to shrines instead of ice skating or skiing... [The number of] destinations to shrines included in the ticket packages were increased from three to ten, with about twenty percent discount of fares... Discounted train services for *hatsumôde* to Narita-san were available until the first week of January, including all-night service in the eve of the last year. Trains for skiing were however stopped... There were priority services for transport of primary school students to the Ise Shrine for collective visit... The head of the section of national-local travel in the Japan Tourist Bureau said that travel campaigns were organized under the slogan of "Enhance National Prestige, pay tribute to the souls of dead loyal soldiers and pray to deities and Buddha (国威宣揚、尽忠英霊供養神仏参り)"... It was surely a business calculation for not to promote hot springs travel because of the situation, or *jikyoku* (時局). (21st December 1937)[225]

One may surely interpret the above cases from the angle of State-Shintoism and these efforts as state-ideology, but Hirayama is properly right to comment that commercialism is also a key to understand the process. During the outbreak of war leisure and consumerism, in particular travels for play, were surely not good for the state. In order to make one's travel campaigns sound more legitimate, many seemingly fascist and militaristic slogans like "enhance national prestige" were used. Yet the nature of these shrine visits was still for the entertainment among commoners, especially when many leisure activities were restricted. In most cases the railway companies were still actively promoting travel, even right before the Pacific War started in 1942.

The key were the change of discourse and the convergence of the two rituals of travel. Hara is quite right to comment that it was difficult for those in Japan to imagine the war happening in China. These slogans like "perpetual military fortune"

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[225] Requoted from Hirayama 2003: 12

or "praying for the victory of the war," which sounded more politically correct, were still made because of business promotion for travel by railway companies.[226] For example, those packaged tickets normally included "hiking to Takao Hill" after praying in shrines.

> In the mid-autumn, Takao was crowded with people, and extra train services were provided for the fifteen thousands of hikers. In response to the changing situation (時局), the Tama Imperial Tomb was also crowded with visitors from the morning. (14th September 1937)[227]

Hara comments that these shrine visits promoted by the railway companies were indeed for hiking rather than praying for the victory of war among commoners. Perhaps not surprisingly, as many forms of leisure were restricted, the number of people who went to different shrines and temples for *hatsumôde* in 1937 became a record within history, and the number of people who visited Meiji Shrine or Ise Shrine kept expanding into the early 1940s until the outbreak of Pacific War in 1942.[228] Hirayama comments that State-Shintoism and commercialism of railway companies were equally important in explaining the expansion of *hatsumôde* in the Fascist era.[229]

In the year of 1937, Hara wrote that on the one hand, the emperor worshipped not only to *kashikodokoro* (賢所) in the three shrines (宮中 三殿) in the palace, where the alter Amaterasu (the god which was said to be the origin of the imperial lineage) was situated, but he also performed ritual in *kôreiden* (皇霊殿) and *shinden* (神殿), that enshrined ancestral souls of the imperial family and all the deities in Japan respectively. Hara comments that it was his first time to pray in the last two shrines in the ritual of *kannamesai* (神嘗祭), or the ritual of sacrificing rice to the Amaterasu, implying that the emperor was not only asking the Amaterasu but also praying to all the holy spirits of his ancestors and all deities from the land for the victory of the war. On the other hand however, because of profit concerns, the railway companies kept promoting railway travel for the commoners, who went to pay, play and pray (perhaps praying for their own benefits more than to the victory of war), but they "echoed to the situation" by making these travel campaigns politically correct.

Hara is properly right to say that the commoners did not know much about the war in reality but only through these slogans. This made the support of the war, as one

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[226] Hara 2007: 54
[227] Hara 2007: 55
[228] Hirayama 2003: 13
[229] Hirayama 2003: 13

actually went for travel, more fun; it also made the war, as the railway companies transporting more passengers, more profitable. The imperial ideology of state-Shintoism through "the standardization of Gods"[230] could only be possible if the two forms of travels among the emperor and commoners, however, were ideologically and ritually fine-tuned to be the same one. When the railway companies encouraged commoners to travel, neglecting one's intention as play, pray or pay, one had already immersed in and shared a political-religious universe, which was prescribed by scholars as "State-Shitoism" in the pre-war Fascist Japan and was indeed re-invented and supported by railway travel.

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[230] This term was borrowed from Watson (1985).

Section Four   **Pilgrimages for the high priest and believers: to imagine the nation through standardized ways of railway travel**

In the beginning of this chapter, I borrowed Anderson's concept of imagining and many of his insights in various "real" mechanisms which might lead to the social and national imaginary of the nation. Organized travels among élites and pilgrimages among commoners were particularly important mechanisms that crafted and expanded the national imaginative horizon. Railway travels expanded the national imaginative horizon. Yet one cannot explain it in terms of either commercialism or state ideology; this is perhaps only a pseudo contrast. Both reasons surely account for something.

The point, however, is that the convergence of two forms of travel practices among the élites and commoners and at the same time the matching of two sets of myths in rationalizing the meanings of these travels became prominent. For railway companies and travelers, to say that one's travel is for money and inner-worldly benefits may be the same thing as to say it is for the sake of the nation and the empire.[231] In the current case, we can see that those rationales for railways to organize pilgrimages by reinventing old religious practices and restructuring travel experiences may have nothing to do with any political or religious concerns.

Yet the consequence was that once a common discourse and ritual were shared, despite any original or true intentions of participants (i.e. whether these pilgrimages were for pray, play or pay), the two parallel rituals and myths concerning travel became converged and a legitimate presence of railway became culturally significant. To put it in the famous metaphor of Max Weber,

> Yet very frequently the "world images" that have been created by "ideas" have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.[232]

In the current case, the world images furnished by the state and the ideas of imperial institution were well established after the two forms of railway travels were joined in the same track. Railway travel became an institution ("the tracks" as in the metaphor) supported by a shared mode of discourse and ritual. Passengers (travelers) in the trains were located on these tracks and pushed by the dynamic of interest (whether the

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[231] Harrison (2000), for example, depicts that in Chinese modern history, even products like tobacco package contained a printed picture of the founding father and the government slogans after the establishment of the new China in the late 1920s. Harrison 2000

[232] Weber 1965

282

economic interest chased after by companies or the power chased by the state).

The key question was how the two tracks -- two forms of travels -- joined together and became the only track on which people's imaginations were directed towards similar sentiment and vision.[233] When the emperor and commoners travelled by railway in the same way, travelers who originally had diverse experiences (transcendental or not) started to imagine that they were fellow members of the same community which found its base on common beliefs and conventions. It was a national undertaking that rested upon a participatory and interdependent nature, highly stylized around the secularized ideology of modern individualism and citizenship.[234]

As history unfolds, the modern Japanese state succeeded to establish the moral authority of the emperor by sending him to go around the country by railway. As described in this chapter, it was a reinvention of visual domination with the help of the modern technology of railway. In addition, because of economic incentives, railway companies reinvented many of those pre-modern forms of pilgrimages. Yet around the Taisho period, the two forms of travelled started to converge.

Railway, originally a secular and technological infrastructure, was strangely made by political and cultural efforts to hold the "moral authority." Call it nation if ones wishes to, as now the railway was made to have the ability to liberate those modern desires for ones to temporarily escape from everyday living in the social groups they were embedded in. Both railway and nation could however contain and channel these new sentiments — in some sense chaotic, anti-structural, destructive --

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[233] Different gods and deities could now be defined by the same logic under the same heaven. The transcendental arena was now defined by the imperial's official religious hierarchy, i.e. only one sacred arena chartered by the nation-state. See Hara 1996; Yasumaru 1979.

[234] For sure, the theoretical distinction between politics and religion (or sacred and profane) was an intellectual construct originated in the European context, in which the pope monopolized the sacred order while the king monopolized the secular world. In China, the king was also the high priest. Japan, different from both, did not have a centralized state or a centralized church in the pre-modern period. Either states or sects in pre-modern Japan did not monopolize the sacred or the profane, and there was no clear distinction between the two. The Meiji government imported the Western intellectual distinction of secular politics and sacred religion, while started to monopolize both arenas. On the one hand it was the invention of the identity of the emperor and the imperial institution as the sole moral authority, which was made to represent the supreme status of the national polity. (For sure, these were all invented traditions.) On the other hand, the state wished to monopolize the religion, by making the Amaterasu, the guardian of the imperial family, to be the supreme god and arranging and unify all those deities under the same heaven according to the rank defined by the secular state. In other words, modern Japanese government wished to consolidate the supreme status of the emperor as the high priest of the state, who was subjected to their secular power in winning the heart of the country. Yet this was not easy. The unification of religions and sects into the only religion of Shintoism chartered by the state simply failed in the early years of Meiji. See Walzer 1970; Strayer 1970; Toulmin 1990; Yoshie 1996; Yasumaru 1979;

through guided tours and standardized cultural imaginations. This chapter was then a step-by-step delineation of how the diverse travel experiences among either level of elites and commoners were consolidated into a common shared cultural imagination.

Chapter 5

Conclusion:
Tracking the National Dream

Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest. 'From what' and 'for what' one wished to be redeemed and, let us not forget, 'could be' redeemed, depended upon one's image of the world.

<div align="right">

Max Weber
Sociology of the World Religions: Introduction

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Since the world expressed by the total system of concepts is the world as society represents it to itself, only society can furnish the generalized notions according to which such a world must be represented... Since the universe exists only insofar as it is thought, and since it can be thought totally only by society itself, it takes its place within society, becomes an elements of its inner life, and society may thus been seen as that total genus beyond which nothing else exists. The very concept of totality is but the abstract form of the concept of society: that whole which includes all things, that supreme class under which all other classes much be subsumed.

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Emile Durkheim
The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

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踏切を月の結界とぞ思ふ、
(ふみきりを　つきのけっかい　とぞおもふ)

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川口博子（1901~1994）[1]

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("Railway crossing, the Crescent's arena, I think")

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[1] Quoted from Watanabe, Hirayam and Kôduki (eds.) 1972

1   The last story

In an introductory book to Japanese ethnology, a senior journalist wrote how "the interest-induced politics, which changed the village people," was interwoven in railway and subsequently also in highway building, which became a "cultural icon" condensing the hope and despair brought by modernity among rural people.

> At the end of the 1970s, as a reporter I was sent to a local branch of Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture... At the time there was a fire in a tunnel, which was a construction site of Jôetsu Shinkansen linking Niigata and Gunma. Dead bodies were moved away from the site, and most of the workers were actually peasants from Aomori who came here to find temporary work (出稼ぎ). Politicians who decided the construction plan were those who gained support from villages. They were now in *miyako* [Tokyo], but those who actually built [the railway and tunnel] were those "village people"(ムラの人々); it really made me feel painful (痛感する).
>
> I had seen a huge poster "[Build] the shinkansen to Aomori!" in the prefectural headquarter over there in 1982... Localities' passion to introduce railway to Aomori was high because of their *onnen* (怨念 deep-seated grudge) that they had always provided labour power but received very little benefits (恩恵) [from the central state]. The prefectural governors always went to Kasumigaseki (霞ヶ関) or Nagatachô (永田町) for petition [both are political centers]. In most cases members of the prefectural assembly, heads of local cities, towns and villages accompanied them. When I joined their trips to collect data, we passed by those highways and shinkansen, which linked *mura* (village) and *miyako* (Tokyo) that were built with citizens' money. Ironically, I always wondered if they were really useful...[2]

What did the term *onnen* (怨念) refer to and why did the writer feel "painful" towards the rural people or, in his term, *mura* (villages)? He used the term *onnen* to describe the localities' unfulfilled belief and dreams in building railway and roads to the *miyako* in hope of improving local life. Connecting to *miyako*, or Tokyo, i.e. the symbol of modern Japan's political center, was both the hope and despair of modernity, and this belief could only be actualized by the construction of railway and road. The writer felt painful because, in the modernization process led by the central state, the local people contributed much but they received very little and suffered. Modernity created an economic inequality within the nation and a deep dislocation of people among localities. Politicians were the key figures to help securing resources from the central state to develop their places, yet both the writer and the local people that he described had a feeling of "exodus," a term nicely coined by Anderson to

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[2] Kumamoto 1997: 104-107

describe the very mobile nature of the people in the process of globalization and nation-building.[3] The despair brought by the modern state was overcome by the modern technology of railway building, and yet ironically it further brought forth a sense of alienation.

The writer expressed a sense of exodus and tried to explain the feeling of irony. The usefulness of railway was not to be proven by its power to develop the local economy, but by the very act of infrastructural building itself that became a very good boost to local economy, especially in providing more job opportunities or capital investment in the villages. He continued,

> In Aomori, the competition in local election was so strong that people named this famous event as *Tsugaru Senkyo* (津軽選挙). In one village, people even ate the voting tickets. In another, the electricity supply to a ballot-counting place was cut off. The election over there was in an uproar just because two candidates, both were conservatives, competed in the same *mura*. Why people competed desperately? "If one loses an election, there will be no more construction," as explained by a local commentator. Infrastructural construction and *mura* were closely connected, while the former was not restricted to making a better scenery look of the environment of the latter. "Politicians — heads of villages — construction firms — workers (peasants)" were in the same system, in which a politician winning an election meant that there would be construction works; if he lost then the local people could only go outside to find temporary work (出稼ぎ) until the next election... The election was pushed to an extent that even small shops were divided into different camps, and we could see how the well-established interest-induced politics shaped the life and mentality of the people in *mura*.

This paragraph summarized a very important point. Infrastructural building became the heart of election which was founded on interest-induced politics, in which elected politicians channeled resources from the state for local development to secure votes.[4] This election was then a particularly dramatized ritual, in which "people even ate the voting tickets."

From the above passage, the author was skeptical about the local people's beliefs in the great use of railway building, wondering if railways or highways "were really useful." The author further argued that to say that railway itself was "useful" in order to justify its construction was contradictory, because it also brought many unforeseen bad consequences like the exodus of the rural people. Winning or losing in an election was critical for a village not exactly because of the "use" of the railway, but of the

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[3] Anderson 1994
[4] Sakakibara 2003: 25-26; Calder 1988: 47

important driving force for the local economy arisen from *the very construction of infrastructures.* In other words, it was no longer relevant to investigate if these railways or roads were really useful for the economic development. As far as one built them, the localities could gain benefits.

No one, however, will ask: so why bother to build them? In this short conclusion, I will first review some important themes and findings of the research. Then, I will provide some sociological explanations to better understand these findings. Finally, I will try to advance a prospective research agenda that will further expand our horizon of inquiry in the field of sociological institutionalism.

2   Review of the research

Why railway? In what sense can we account for the long story of institutional building? Why people would be faithful enough to build something which seemed not to be necessarily "useful" for them?

This research argues that the collective efforts to the building of railway were all geared into the making of nation in modern Japan, even though people might not necessarily recognize those social forces which shaped one's actions. The institutional building process, as we have seen, was somehow "accidental," in a sense that those reasons contributing to the making and consolidation of railway building centered around purposive debates and discourses. Efforts on economic and political developments as well as cultural and social movements became highly formalized and organized. Eventually, they evolved into some highly stylized accounts of myths and rituals. To this end, it is quite distinct that railway building cannot be entirely explained by some functional attributes or a trajectory that rests upon mere societal needs that generate from within. For most of the time, people built and used railway out of many irrelevant concerns — investing in shares, securing votes, making pilgrimages. As a result of this, however, all these myths, rituals and imaginations contributed to the strengthening of this collective belief. People started to forget why they would want to build the railway and believed that they build the railway simply because the railway was useful for them.

The research also argues that railway building was a part of the long-evolving process of the nation. Instead of a project of infrastructural building in modernizing the economy and unifying the nation, the research argues that railway building is not a

288

conscious project intentionally and speculatively planned by a strong state. The intellectual puzzle would then be why people continued to demonstrate interest in railway building, even though they were not conscious of the reasons of doing so in the first place.

In chapter 2, we have reviewed that through railway building, many important capitalistic institutions and economic ideas which made up the modern nation-state were invented and utilized. Through arguing for the necessity of laying tracks, many ideological concepts were invented — what was meant by a rational economy? What defined public and private interest? Because of many incidents in the historical trajectory of the making of modern state and capitalism, people made up claims to make sense of the first crisis of capitalism in Japan. By curiously coupling the problem of high finance with that of railway building, they tried to discuss the great use of railway building in order to justify their economic and political practices, which were actually irrelevant to the railway. Thus, railway building first became a discourse, with packages of many of these newly imported and invented concepts defining what a legitimate economy and polity that aimed at progress and development should look like.

Only through debating about the use of and defining the economic and political meanings of railway, these social players could define its identity to represent some kinds of "interest" or "power" — as "state-builders," as "elite class," as "capitalists." Railway building was at first not an infrastructural and economical building. It was not a rational and conscious undertaking and was not well planned by a strong central state. It was an accidental making of discourse, composed of abstract claims, ungrounded ideas and mere talks which were however all geared to assert the great use of railway. Yet these ideas made up the whole system of ideas for modern capitalism. Only through the issue of railway building, the emerging state and capitalists could forge a common platform to tackle with the problem of the finance system. Pursuit of interest and discussion of high finance were legitimized by making claims to assert the "public interest" of railway building, even though economic interest could not be the single factor to account for the making of capitalism. The discourse of railway building became a source of legitimation when one wished to borrow foreign loan, forge state-class relation, pursue profits in stock market and negotiate the boundary between the public and private interests in the 1890s. In other words, the making of discourse on the use of railway building was complementary 1 to

the fine-tuning of the legitimacy of capitalism for the modern state and the railway belief was crafted around what had seemed to be the legitimate course of action — discoursing its significant presence in the process of modernization.

In chapter 3, we have witnessed the ritualization of many political practices among the politicians and localities who extensively promised and asked for the building of local railway respectively. New definitions of ideas like political participation and citizenship were manifested in many of these "methodological accounts" by which the localities and politicians tried to ritualize their practices. At the same time, the railway belief was no longer limited to a small group of state-builders and capitalists but was spreading over the localities and was being enforced by politicians in the diet. Railway building was now tangible and made real through participating in these political rituals. Power relations were redefined even though power could not be the only reason to account for the changing content of the nation in the Taisho period. Local railway, though not empirically a common issue to all electoral districts, became at least a hotly debated issue and an important political gesture among politicians to secure resources for local development. Indeed, the localities became the legitimate foundation for the Taisho polity which was glued by the political ritual of election. The making of rituals through which people actively participated in asking for railway became the cornerstone of the newly defined democracy for the Taisho polity and the railway belief was then fixated by these rituals.

In chapter 4, we have reviewed the historical evolution of two forms of travel and examined how they gradually converged. Although not every citizen in the nation had a chance to take a ride on the railway, an expanding horizon that founded its home base within a defined perimeter that engendered the fervor for belongingness and identity which in itself possessed very much a national character. Most importantly, this was made possible through railway travels that gradually emerged and evolved into a structural component of everyday life in modern Japan. Railways were used for either establishing the authority of the emperor through the reinvention of the visual domination or for attracting passengers for pilgrimages. These railway trips surely brought travelling experiences to those passengers. But imaginations were also shared by those who did not even travel by railways when people were mobilized to attend welcome ceremonies at the railway stations or along the tracks, and when railway companies utilized state discourse to mark and map out important touristic

sights that a national citizen must attend to. Not everyone took a train ride but all people could share these imaginations and the railway belief was considered to be very real if people could somehow participate in this collective imaginations. In other words, everyone could virtually join in the "imagined community" even if they did not travel or travel only for once.

We have tackled three major institutions of the modern society in the case of modern Japan, namely, capitalism, democracy and nationalism. My purpose, however, is not aimed at providing a full account for each of these institutional developments. Rather, my major purpose is to illustrate, investigate and explain the peculiar coupling of all of these major pillars in the development of modern society to the institution of railway building. The research argues that if one tries to account for the building of railway confining to internal attributes or local trajectories as advanced by modern functionalism, one would have overlooked the significant presence of many modern institutional arrangements that might have organized and evolved around a cultural script of secular individualism and modernity. Through the depiction of how different social groups had tried to construct myths, rituals and imaginations around the common agenda of railway building, the research provides an alternative framework to explain how modern institutional building gains its legitimacy that largely rests upon the triumph of modern individualism and universalistic principles of development.

3 Epilogue

Just a few days after the atomic boom was dropped on Hiroshima, citizens who survived saw a light in the dark night passing through a ruined city. It was from a running tram. Survivors in the city remembered that the light of the tram illuminated the city in the darkness at night. This light of the train brought hope to them.[5] Railway services resumed just a few days after the disaster. Railways became the lifeline of the living hell.[6]

In the first parliament after the war in 1947, politicians in the transport committee called their first meeting to discuss about fifty petitioning letters and proposals, most of them were asking for building or upgrading local railways. As the

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[5] Horikawa and Ogasawara 2005
[6] Nihon Kokuyû Tetsudô 1981

government halted all local railway buildings during war time, politicians had already received more than two hundred petitions on requesting for or upgrading the local railways, in addition to tackling with all kinds of transportation demands from the localities, which needed to be discussed immediately. The chairman announced that all councilors were required to be punctual in attending the meeting on the next day to discuss these petitioning letters and proposals.[7] The political practice of "attracting railway to one's paddy field" was still dominant in postwar Japanese politics, characterized by Johnson as the "developmental state."[8] This was even further expanded in Tanaka Kakuei's national development plan which promised to lay tracks to all localities — but this time, it was for the high-speed bullet trains or shinkansen.

The democratized and secularized Emperor started his pilgrimages by railway again through the country to meet with his "citizens" under the American occupation between 1946 and 1954. He was no longer a sacred god but a secular "symbol" of the nation. The secular symbol, however, took the royal train again to meet with his subjects. The emperor then became a human and took trains to visit most cities along both the major and the local railway routes. Although his natural body reappeared in the public again along the railway lines, welcome ceremonies were still organized in much the same way as in the prewar periods. Railway schedules were still punctual without delay. The visual domination by the railway remained unchanged, as argued by Hara.[9] Although the imperial railway travel soon disappeared after the 1970s as the imperial identity was crafted by the mass media, mass tourism by railway was still popular and was further strengthened in the 1970s. Important travel campaigns, like Discover Japan, explicitly used the image of the railway to promote mass tourism.[10] The mass media became another important platform on which the image of the railway became dominant, even though the current research does not further examine the social process of mediating.

After the war, Japanese nation's moral worldview founded on the religious ideology of the supreme emperor collapsed. Railways, however, were still running. Those practices that we have seen in the prewar Japan continued. A totally new conception towards the legitimate foundation of the collectivity and the nation was

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[7] Downloaded from [http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/syugiin/001/1360/00112081360043a.html], last accessed 1st October 2009.
[8] Johnson 1995
[9] Hara 2009:65-69
[10] Ivy 1995

required to be redefined again, but railway was still there. One can expect that the railway building, as an institution, would face huge challenges. Yet railway building, as an institution, continues with the dream of the nation until today — **the society is still running** — although this would be the theme of another research project on the problem of institutional changes.

The current research examined the institutionalization of the railway building in modern Japan. This institution would face more challenges in the postwar settings: highways and cars together with aircrafts in a globalizing world challenged the hegemony of railway as the only transportation infrastructure of the nation in the 1960s; railway workers started to use the idea of "class" to assert their autonomy to oppose the state in the 1970s; politicians were busy to use the new economic idea of liberalism to fight against the class-ideology, while the local railway building was accidentally considered to be economically irrational that caused the denationalization of the Japanese National Railway in the 1980s; the collective sentiments towards railways became a new cultural home with the help of the mass media since the 1970s. All of these faces could no longer be analyzed in the current framework of institutionalization analysis. It requires a new mechanism of institutional changes accounting for these social changes, another important yet less investigated sociological concern. This analytical scheme might require further efforts that inquire into the dynamics between incorporation and resistance.

Institution was built, but the institutional process in which people tried to capture those uncertain social feelings and to express those collective and personal sentiments, as well as to change the social reality through reforming this totem, will be yet another story to tell. Tracks were laid; the train was yet to go and the journey was yet to begin.

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316

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320

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