

Between the West and Asia: “Humanistic” Japanese Family Planning in the Cold War

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Abstract This article studies the formation of Japanese ventures in family planning deployed in various villages in Asia from the 1960s onward in the name of development aid. By critically examining how Asia became the priority area for Japan’s international cooperation in family planning and by analyzing how the adjective *humanistic* was used to underscore the originality of Japan’s family planning program overseas, the article shows that visions of Japanese actors were directly informed by Japan’s delicate position in Cold War geopolitics, between the imagined West represented by the United States and “underdeveloped” Asia, at a time when Japan was striving to (re)establish its position in world politics and economics. Additionally, by highlighting subjectivities and intra-Asian networks centered on Japanese actors, the article also aims to destabilize the current historiography on population control, which has hitherto focused either on Western actors in the transnational population control movement or on non-Western “acceptors” subjected to the population control programs.

Keywords international cooperation · family planning · population control · Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP) · Chojiro Kunii · Nobusuke Kishi

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1 Introduction

In the late 1960s, as overpopulation in the so-called Third World became an urgent priority issue, fertility control became an assumed element in development aid engaged by economic superpowers and international organizations.¹ At this historical juncture, the Japanese government began to participate in international cooperation in family planning, with a focus on Asia, while the Japanese activist Chōjiro Kunii introduced a new mode of delivering fertility reduction via a method he characterized as “humanistic” (*nigentekina* 人間的な). This method, which combined parasite control with family planning, was called the Integration Project (IP), and according to Kunii, it drew from the state-endorsed birth control campaign in 1950s Japan. It was this “humanistic” approach to fertility control that became the pillar of Japanese efforts to promote family planning overseas.

This article examines the process that led to the formation of Japanese family planning initiatives deployed in villages in Asia from the late 1960s onward. It focuses on the ascendancy of family planning as a political agenda in Japan, as well as the making of the aforementioned Integration Project, and describes how the discourse of socioeconomic development, Japan’s politico-economic agenda in the Cold War, family planning advocacy, and the politics of memory helped lay foundations for the Japanese decision to participate in international cooperation in family planning.² In so doing, I highlight two interrelated themes that significantly buttressed the Japanese ventures. The first is the geopolitics that informed the dialogues of overpopulation and ultimately gave rise to international family planning initiatives during the period. As Alison Bashford (2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2014) and Matthew Connelly (2006a, 2006b, 2008) aptly articulate, geopolitics shaped dialogues over population throughout the twentieth century while population governance remained an inherent component of the biopolitics of modern society precisely because population problems also dovetailed with issues that transcended state borders. In the 1960s, when contemporaries increasingly relied on the biopolitical solution to the world population problem and launched family planning initiatives as development aid in the so-called Third World, these initiatives, too, were subject to the influence of geopolitics. The aim of the article is to illustrate how geopolitics was entangled with the Japanese involvement in international cooperation in family planning during the 1960s and the 1970s. Drawing on the existing works that have clarified the intricate links between the Cold War and the US, international, and transnational family planning campaigns in the Third World (McCann 2009; Connelly 2008: 115–94; Greenhalgh 1996: 38–48; Wilmoth and Ball 1992; Sharpless 1995; Donaldson 1990a, 1990b; Teitelbaum and Winter 1985: 87–90; Bachrach and Bergman 1973), this article

¹ Japanese terms referring to fertility control have undergone changes throughout modern history. Roughly speaking, *jutai chōsetsu* (受胎調節), *sanji chōsetsu* (産児調節), and *sanji seigen* (産児制限) correspond to the English term *birth control*, whereas *kazoku keikaku* (家族計画) is the direct translation of the English *family planning* or *planned parenthood*. This article generally follows the convention that is used in accounts from the time period addressed in this article, but it must be noted that the above-mentioned words were also often used interchangeably. For details about the usage of the terms, see Obayashi 2006.

² The science of birth control and the scientists who specialized in reproductive health and population also played a critical role in giving rise to Japanese family planning for international cooperation, but this article adopts a different focus. For the role of the scientists in birth control in postwar Japan, see, e.g., Homei 2015.

depicts how Japan’s family planning programs overseas were also tightly interwoven with Cold War geopolitics.

In so doing, the article furthermore notes that Asia was singled out as a primary destination for the Japanese promotion of family planning overseas. I argue that the decision to focus on Asia was deliberate and derived from Japan’s specific position in Cold War geopolitics. However, I also consider that another kind of geopolitics—namely, the geopolitics buttressed by the ideology of modernization—was also critical for Japan’s decision. As many scholars have suggested (Bashford 2014; Parry 2013; Murphy 2012; Takeshita 2012; Ittmann, Cordell, and Maddox 2010; Schoen 2005: 216–35; Briggs 2002; Marks 2001: 13–40; Donaldson 1990a: 133–54, 1990b; Caldwell and Caldwell 1984; Bachrach and Bergman 1973), this ideology—the commitment to the notion of urban industrial modernity measured by the scale of demography and socioeconomic development—pillared the postwar Western³ family planning initiative in the Third World. Specifically, the modernization and demographic transition theories assigned the role of “population controller” to the West due to the allegedly “developed” state of its economy, society, and population, while the “overpopulated” Third World was expected to act as an “acceptor” of Western population control measures precisely because the region was considered “underdeveloped.” Thus a dichotomous and hierarchical power relation between the industrial modern West and the allegedly underdeveloped Third World, which often overlapped with the colonial power structure of the earlier periods (Ittmann 1999, 2013), provided a foundation for the Western initiative. By contrast, the Japanese counterpart was built on Japan’s delicate positioning of itself on the perceived world map, specifically somewhere between the “developed” West and Asia, imagined to be resourceful yet largely underdeveloped. Moreover, this geopolitical positioning of Japan crossed over with the positioning of Japan’s biopolitical identity, which oscillated between admiration for the “civilized” white Western race and a form of Asian fraternity buttressed by the notion of a homogenous “yellow race” and a shared culture (Majima 2013, 2014). This interaction between biopolitical and geopolitical positioning, which emerged in the Meiji period when the country embarked on its modernization project and pivoted Japan’s imperial aspirations in the prewar period, continued to inform Japan’s strategies in Cold War Asia (Koshiro 1999) and at the same time participated in the process whereby family planning emerged as an agenda in the discussion of development aid in Japan and Asia was selected as a target region within that process.⁴

The second theme has to do with the rhetorical display of Japan inscribed in the portrayal of Japanese family planning ventures.⁵ The article examines how Kunii

³ Here I use the term *Western* for convenience in order to depict a point of reference, and it is not my intention to treat the West as a homogeneous entity. What I mean by the Western actors in the context of the article corresponds to the phrase *population establishment* coined by Matthew Connelly (2008: 155–94).

⁴ Work on a link between Japan’s strategic deployment of its family planning initiatives and the colonial legacy is still awaited, but Sonja Kim (2008), Moore (2013: 131–34; 2014), and Tsukahara (2007) suggest continuities between technical projects in colonial Japan and Japan’s postwar technical assistance in Asia.

⁵ If we consider the Integration Project as a historical artifact, we could argue that this article attempts to explore how Kunii’s values, perspectives, and morals were inscribed in the IP’s portrayal. However, I am equally aware that “technical objects . . . simultaneously embody and measure sets of relations between heterogeneous elements”; thus “if we are interested in technical objects . . . , we cannot be satisfied methodologically with the designer’s or user’s point of view alone. Instead, we have to go back and forth continually between the designer and the user, between the designer’s projected user and the real user,

characterized the Integration Project as “humanistic” and how Kunii used the adjective to stress that this family planning program was both something unique to Japan and something that should be juxtaposed with the “international,” which he saw embodied in powerful and interventionist Western population control measures. I argue that this specific portrayal of his initiative was predicated on the aforementioned understanding of Japan’s socioeconomic position as somewhere in-between. In particular, the claim often heard in the 1960s that Japan was a “semideveloped country” (*chūshinkoku*) was critical, as it granted Japanese actors the license to claim that Japan could understand *both sides*, namely Western population controllers and those in “underdeveloped” areas subject to Western population control campaigns. At the same time, I contend that the Japan presented here was not a static entity, but instead constructed through a specific—and potentially strategic—interpretation of Japan’s recent past. The article demonstrates how Kunii built a coherent narrative of Japan’s past engagement with family planning that rooted his “humanistic” initiative in Japanese history. Here an active remembering of Japan’s past was an essential component enabling Kunii to highlight the originality of his allegedly “humanistic” initiative. The analysis of Kunii’s usage of the term *humanistic* to characterize his family planning program reveals how the Japanese involvement in international cooperation in family planning to some extent relied on fictions that presented Japan as a coherent entity.

Thus this article, in analyzing Japan’s engagement in family planning as development aid, offers fresh insight into the history of population control. By unpacking the claim that the “humanistic” family planning initiative was nurtured in Japan’s experience both as a population controller and a subject of population control and by contextualizing it within the history of the Cold War during which Japan oscillated between the West and Asia, this article overcomes the dichotomy prevalent in studies of postwar population control initiatives, which have thus far focused chiefly on the neocolonial imperial power system built on the legacies of Western colonialism or on non-Western “acceptors” of Western family planning initiatives (e.g., [Necochea López 2014](#); [Williams 2014](#); [Kuo 2002](#); [Chatterjee and Riley 2001](#)). At the same time, by highlighting Japanese actors’ subjectivities and intra-Asian regional networks centered on Japanese actors in the arena of development aid, this article borders the burgeoning scholarship that critically assesses postwar developmentalism within Japan ([Moore 2014](#); [Dinmore 2013](#); [J. Sato 2011, 2013](#)). Like these works, this article contextualizes a particular manifestation of developmentalism with the nexus between Japan, the West, and Asia with the aim of provincializing the Western-centered narrative of the legacies of postcolonial development aid. Finally, by critically studying the active utilization of collective memory in order to construct an arguably uniquely Japanese initiative, the article also aims to destabilize the understanding of Japan as a fixed and coherent political category that continues to act as a pivot in Japan’s engagement with international politics and development aid today.

between the world inscribed in the object and the world described by its displacement” ([Akrich 1992](#): 205, 208–9). The “projected user” of the IP, according to Kunii’s perspective, was the men and women in Asia, but because this article aims to elucidate Japan’s position in the world politics of international cooperation in family planning, it will focus on the “designer”—that is, Kunii. See [Murphy 2012](#), [Takeshita 2012](#), and [Marks 2001](#) for the analysis of contraceptive technologies from the STS perspective.

In order to illustrate the points above, in the first part of the article I will elaborate on the process that led Japan to participate in international cooperation in family planning, which materialized in the late 1960s. I will study the Japanese government’s entry into international cooperation and the concurrent birth of the nongovernmental Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP, pronounced *joycef*) in 1968. Applying the argument advanced by Bashford and Connelly, I will investigate how the geopolitics of population management encouraged Japanese actors to focus on Asia as a primary target region for its family planning campaign. I will focus on the highly prominent conservative politician Nobusuke Kishi, who played a critical role in the creation of the JOICFP. I will analyze how Kishi’s involvement in the promotion of Japanese family planning in Asia was motivated by his understanding of Japan’s international aspirations and of its in-between position in Cold War Asia. Then, in the second part of the article, I will examine the making of the Integration Project. I will untangle the semantic politics behind Kunii’s use of the adjective *humanistic* and demonstrate how the in-between position in which Kunii inhabited for the creation of the IP resonated with Japan’s position between the imagined West and Asia. In so doing, I will also show how through this process Japan was constructed as a respectable country suitable and eligible for participation in international cooperation in family planning.

2 International Cooperation in Family Planning in Cold War Asia

In Japan, birth control reentered the policy debate immediately after the Second World War. Before then, birth control had become popular in cities in the 1920s, but due to its association with socialism, the government suppressed the birth control movement (Ogino 2008a: 2–109; Fujime 2005 [1997]: 245–81; Ishizaki 2005; Callahan 2004; Frühstück 2003: 116–51; Norgren 2001; Tipton 1994, 1997). However, in the immediate postwar period, birth control gained currency partly due to the changing political climate under the Allied Occupation of Japan (1945–52) (Tama 2006, 2014; Ogino 2001, 2003, 2008a, 2008b; Obayashi 2006; Takeda 2005; Gordon 2005; Fujime 2005 [1997]: 343–77; Norgren 2001; Obayashi 1997: 208–9; Oakley 1978).⁶ Having witnessed population growth and evident food shortages, Japanese policy intellectuals and policy makers as well as Americans serving the Occupation believed that birth control could solve what they formulated as the “population problem” (*jinkō mondai* 人口問題) (O’Bryan 2009: 146–60; Dinmore 2006). Consequently, in 1951 the government’s cabinet adopted a fundamental policy that recommended the popularization of birth control across the nation as a population control measure (Obayashi 1987).

Over the 1950s, total fertility rates in Japan dropped significantly, from 4.54 in 1947 to 2.00 in 1960 (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labour of the Japanese Government 2014). Contemporary analysts often attributed the dramatic fertility reduction to the state birth control campaign, but it is more accurate to trace the declining birth rates during the period back to the efforts of other salient actors, including birth control activists, medical scientists, female healthcare professionals

⁶ See Sawada 2014a, 2014b for an alternative account of postwar Okinawa.

acting as “birth control field instructors” (*jutai chōsetsu jicchi shidōin* 受胎調節実地指導員), and, above all, men and women who actively sought contraception (Ogino 2008a: 182–254; Tama 2006: 250–61).⁷ The reach of the birth control promotion was extensive but diffuse, and this diffuse nature of population governance, reminiscent of Foucault’s account of biopower (1990: 135–59), was a factor in the dramatic decline of birth rates in 1950s Japan.⁸

By the late 1960s, the term *overpopulation*, a catchphrase characterizing the population trend in the decade or so before, seemed to have become a relic of the past. At that moment, the argument emerged that Japan should get involved in international cooperation in family planning by drawing from its recent success in population control. According to the proponents, Japan’s family planning program provided proof of Japan’s rightful position among the industrial superpowers. They claimed that Japan was the first country in Asia that had made a successful demographic transition, accompanied by the economic boom that had begun in the mid-1950s (e.g., Muramatsu 1967: 100–101). This argument meshed well with the international population discourse at the time, according to which the demographic transition from high to low fertility was a marker of urban and industrial modernity (e.g., Draper 1968). Eventually, in October 1967, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato signed the Declaration on Population with twenty-nine heads of states or governments.⁹ Thereafter the Japanese government began donating money to international organizations that specialized in family planning and/or population issues, starting with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in 1969. By the mid-1970s, Japan had become one of the major donors in international cooperation in family planning, ranking in the top five after the United States, Sweden, West Germany, and the Netherlands (*Nihon no jinkō kazoku keikaku kyōryoku* ca. 1975: 1–9).

In addition, the government worked on establishing bilateral cooperation on family planning. In so doing, the government set its primary target as Asia (Kunii 1967: 100). However, while Asia in the context of international cooperation in family planning referred to a broader area regarded as “underdeveloped,” according to the Japanese government, Asia chiefly meant Southeast Asia.¹⁰ In 1969, Japan concluded with Indonesia the first bilateral agreement on family planning as a development aid, and the list of countries expanded in 1973 when Japan concluded the same agreement with

⁷ However, Tama (2014: 53–55) also warns of a biopolitical vector disguised as “voluntary choice” (*jihatsusei*) that characterized women’s desire for contraception (and, crucially, abortion in the context of postwar Japan). Tama importantly points out that the “choice” was strictly limited to a privileged group of housewives in allegedly “healthy” heteronormative married relationships, whereas such a choice did not even exist among women who fell outside that category.

⁸ Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005) tackle population governance in China within a Foucauldian framework.

⁹ The Declaration of Population, which was drafted by the founder of the Population Council, John D. Rockefeller III, and presented to the UN’s secretary-general, U Thant, expressed the importance of population planning for human dignity and welfare. Shortly thereafter, in 1968, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was established (Ayala and Caradon 1968).

¹⁰ As I will describe below, this regional focus reflected Kishi’s political vision, but the issue of war reparation also played a role. Proponents of international cooperation in family planning in Japan argued for the implementation of family planning in Southeast Asia as a condition for government loans to the region, but often war reparation was an integral part of the discussion of the delivery of government loans in the region. See, e.g., Yamachi 1968.

Thailand, the Philippines, and Bangladesh. By the mid-1970s, it became apparent that family planning in international cooperation for the Japanese government predominantly meant development aid to the region of Southeast Asia.

The government deployed international cooperation in family planning by collaborating with the nongovernmental Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning. Established in April 1968 under the auspices of both the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Health and Welfare, JOICFP specialized in international cooperation in family planning and maternal and child health (Kon 1998; Kunii 1988; *Kazoku keikaku kokusai kyōryoku zaidan* 1978). The organization worked closely with personnel in the two ministries, and consequently their collaboration directly impacted on JOICFP's trajectory, particularly its focus on Southeast Asia. For instance, Indonesia, which as mentioned above was the first country to join Japan in a bilateral agreement on family planning, was among the first countries that received goods from the JOICFP.¹¹

Despite the close collaboration, the Japanese government was not the only body to which JOICFP was accountable. JOICFP was also officially affiliated with the IPPF; therefore its focus on Southeast Asia also reflected the IPPF's vested interest in the region. In the fiscal year of 1968, for instance, the IPPF decided to allocate the budget of \$1,551,000 to the region of Asia, of which a clear majority of \$922,000 was to go to the region that included Southeast Asian countries (*Sekai to jinkō* 1968a: 9), the South Pacific Region. Based on this decision, the IPPF Southeast Asia Region office asked JOICFP to supply ten thousand condoms and the same amount of Sampooon, the contraceptive foam tablet manufactured by the Japanese Eizai Pharmaceutical Company (*Sekai to jinkō* 1968b: 6). Therefore, in addition to the Japanese government, the IPPF also influenced the JOICFP's focus on Southeast Asia.

Thus the synergy of interests within and beyond Japan shaped Japanese participation in the international cooperation in family planning and the idea of Southeast Asia as the primary focus of Japan's family planning packaged as development aid. On the one hand, this described Japan's involvement in the global-scale biopolitics which in the 1960s and 1970s took a tangible form as family planning campaigns in the Third World. These campaigns, supported by what Connelly called the "population establishment" (2008), were a population control measure in the regions represented as "non-Western" and were predicated on the simplistic notion that diverse and complex socioeconomic problems and underdevelopment were caused by rising birth rates and could thus be quickly fixed by disciplining reproductive bodies through family planning schemes (Bashford 2006, 2008b, 2014; Connelly 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2008: 195–369; Demeny and McNicoll 2006; Symonds and Carder 1973). On the other hand, the world population problem from the 1920s onward "was as much about geopolitics as it was about biopolitics" (Bashford 2014: 3), because problems of overpopulation dovetailed with other interrelated issues, such as food, territory, and resources, which required considerations of international diplomacy. In this context, the Japanese involvement in international cooperation in family planning was integral

¹¹ The other countries that received goods from the JOICFP were Nepal and Taiwan. The goods donated were mostly contraceptives and automobiles. In fiscal year 1968, for instance, cars, condoms, and the contraceptive foam Sampooon were sent to Indonesia (*Nihon no jinkō kazoku keikaku kyōryoku ca.* 1975: 4).

to the global effort to find a biopolitical solution to the world population, but crucially it was also tightly embedded in the specific geopolitics surrounding the country.

That geopolitical configuration was Cold War Asia. During the Cold War, Asia was confronted with “hot” wars in Korea and Vietnam involving decolonization and revolution, while the Non-Aligned Movement, which culminated in the so-called Bandung Conference of 1955 (Shimazu 2014; Kweku 1995, 2007; Miyagi 2001), clarified the region’s important position in the Cold War as a site of competition between the Western bloc represented by the United States and the influential Communist countries of the region, namely, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union (Guthrie-Shimizu 2010; T. Hasegawa 2011). In this context, the United States highlighted Japan’s role as a valuable ally and buffer zone (Kweku 1995), thus the US administration loosely agreed that the reconstruction of the war-torn Japanese economy via American assistance would be pivotal for the US Cold War strategy in Asia (Guthrie-Shimizu 2010; Schaller 1997). In turn, post-Occupation Japan pursuing reindustrialization duly received American assistance (e.g., Dinmore 2013). However, Japan’s alliance with the United States also precluded trade with Communist China (Shimizu 2001: 49–77, 122–47; Schaller 1997: 77–95). Under the specific geopolitical circumstances, Southeast Asia emerged as an alternative partner that could supply raw materials and market opportunities to Japan (Shimizu 2001: 78–101, 174–201; Schaller 1997: 163–209). Japanese diplomacy throughout the period of the Cold War thus unfolded from Japan’s “in-between” position: the country was facing the United States on the one side and Asia on the other, and its chief objective continued to be how to balance the US-Japan alliance and Japan’s interests in Asia (Miyagi 2001: 9–18, 2004, 2008).

The intersection between Japan’s geopolitical agenda in the Cold War and family planning promotion in Cold War Asia was most acutely reflected in Nobusuke Kishi’s campaign. Nobusuke Kishi, brother of Prime Minister Sato and a highly prominent conservative bureaucrat-turned-politician from the prewar period who himself served as prime minister in 1957–60 (Hara 1995), was also a central figure in the promotion of Japan’s family planning cooperation in Asia. Kishi entered family planning activism in August 1967 when he had two meetings with Gen. William H. Draper (Connelly 2008: 186–88; Donaldson 1990a: 23–26), a member of the Governing Body of the IPPF and one of the most influential population control advocates in the United States, who was visiting allied countries and territories in Asia to garner support for his cause in the region (*Sekai to jinkō* 1968c: 12–13). After the meeting with Draper, in which he stressed Japan’s leadership role in the promotion of family planning in Asia, Kishi “showed interest in the importance of population in Asian issues” and agreed to chair the Japanese Council on Family Planning International Cooperation, the organization to which the JOICPF was accountable. He then deployed active campaigns to gain support from his colleagues in business and politics for Japan’s involvement in international cooperation in family planning (*Sekai to jinkō* 1968c: 12).

The Draper-Kishi meeting resulted from the convergence of interests in Cold War geopolitics. Amid the competition with the Soviet Union for access to natural resources and markets, the United States advanced foreign policy that promoted economic and technical assistance and international development aid to the nonaligned Third World countries (Biggs 2010; Klein 2003). However, from the 1950s, population control advocates such as Draper claimed that overpopulation would undermine

the US efforts to construct an integrated "free world" as it hampered economic growth and fostered political instabilities. They lobbied for family planning initiatives in the Third World for the sake of population control. Consequently, in the mid-1960s, the Johnson administration allocated a significant budget to population research and fertility control in developing countries, and by the early 1970s, population control had been well integrated into the US development aid program (Takeshita 2012: 11; Sharpless 1995; Donaldson 1990a: 47). This was the background for Draper's Asian tour and his meeting with Kishi in 1967.

In turn, the Cold War ideology of anticommunism and the Cold War exigency of the US-Japan alliance explained Kishi's reaction to Draper. As Kishi's biographer Yoshihisa Hara explains, anticommunism and his endorsement for the US-Japan alliance underpinned Kishi's political maneuvers quite early on in the postwar period (Hara 1995: 127–29). Furthermore, in the 1950s, he actively asserted the value of the US-Japan alliance when Japan was confronted with the PRC's quick commercial expansion to Southeast Asia and its rising prominence in the international Non-Aligned Movement (Kwon 2008; Shimizu 2001: 194–98). According to Kishi, Asia's center should be not Communist China but Japan, part of the Western free world. As he recalled, "To establish the position of Japan in Asia, in other words to clarify that Asia's center was Japan" was critical for his engagement with the United States (1983: 312). Kishi's aspiration in the Cold War informed his enthusiasm for Draper's proposition.

Moreover, Kishi regarded Japanese international cooperation in family planning as an extension of Japan's involvement in the economic development in Southeast Asia. Kishi, also known for his ardent support for the expansionist concept of the "greater Asianism" of Shumei Okawa, had valued Southeast Asia's economic presence for Japan's prospects since the prewar period.¹² As early as 1930, he viewed Southeast Asia as a reservoir of natural resources and believed that the region was destined to supply the resources to Japan if the latter entered the war with the United States (Wakamiya 1998: 53). In the 1950s, his perspective on Southeast Asia remained largely intact from the prewar period (Hara 1995: 190). In the words of Sayuri Shimizu (2001: 196), Kishi and his bureaucratic advisers "hoped to use Southeast Asian trade to feed the Japanese economy propelled by the Jinmu [economic] Boom" that began in the mid-1950s. The notion of Southeast Asia contributing to Japan's economy urged Kishi to be continuously preoccupied with the region's economic situation. Thus in the 1950s he advanced the idea of development aid to the region, and by extension, in the late 1960s, family planning as a technical assistance.

Yet Kishi was not only concerned with domestic economy or the US-Japan political alliance; at the time when Japan was trying to regain global recognition, its perceived status in the international community also spurred Kishi toward the family planning campaign. Over the 1950s, Japan's international status seemed to be on the rise. In 1956, Japan was admitted to the United Nations, and the following year it was elected to become a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council for the first time (Inoue 1996). In this context, the government in the 1960s considered Japan's effort in the arena of international cooperation and development aid another avenue through which

¹² For the context, see, e.g., Koshiro 2013; Nakano 2006, 2013.

to raise Japan's international profile. Thus during this decade the government established the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund and the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA), two professional agencies that specialized in giving grants, loans, and technical assistance to developing countries. At the same time, Japan made use of the regional aid frameworks of the Colombo Plan and the UN organization ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East)¹³ in order to lift its status and eventually join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), membership in which Japanese political leaders regarded as a badge of honor and a sign that Japan had been finally accepted by the clique of industrial superpowers (J. Sato 2013: 15). However, despite the aspiration, in reality the Japanese economy was not fully equipped to make Japan the world's top donor. Moreover, the government budget for technical assistance remained small (J. Sato 2013: 14, 16), amounting to only 7 percent of the national income in Japan in 1968 (Kishi 1968a: 5). Japan was struggling to receive a positive evaluation from the OECD, which listed aid for developing countries as a condition for a country's eligibility for membership (J. Sato 2013: 16; Sawaki 1993). Having overseen the development, Kishi came to the view that leaders of the OECD member countries in Europe and North America put forward the criticism that "Japan always thinks of itself alone and is not contributing to world peace at all. Japan has joined in the world's first-class nations economically [at the cost of Asia] so it should be more responsible for Asia" (Kishi 1968b).

Under the circumstances, Kishi must have come to consider the full potential of Japan's cooperation in family planning for saving Japan's face in the international scene. In the late 1960s, in tandem with the expansion of population programs in US development aid, international organizations—including the OECD—began to emphasize the importance of fertility control in developing countries. Draper approached Kishi at this particular moment in world history. After the Draper-Kishi meeting, Kishi also learned at the Development Assistance Group (DAG)¹⁴ meeting held in the Netherlands in August 1968 that "various countries harshly criticized Japan for not doing anything with international cooperation in family planning," which once again persuaded him that "the Japanese government and the private sector should understand that [international] cooperation for solving the population problem holds the key to the effective application of development aid" (Kishi 1968a: 6). In his attempt to raise Japan's international profile, Kishi decided to lobby for Japan's family planning ventures overseas.

The argument in support of Japan's involvement in international cooperation in family planning gained strength in the country during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the interests of Japanese, American, and international population institutions converged as a result of geopolitics. Kishi also began to endorse family planning at that specific historical juncture. For Kishi, the geopolitical position of Japan between the United States and Southeast Asia during the Cold War acted as a pivot for his vision of family planning. The result was Japan's participation in the Cold War international development aid system and the overt emphasis on Southeast Asian countries as the primary recipients of Japan's aid in family planning.

¹³ Japan obtained full membership in 1953.

¹⁴ Japan's DAG membership was approved in 1960.

3 Japan’s “Humanistic” Family Planning

While Kishi’s grand vision informed the Japanese campaign for the promotion of family planning in Asia, on the ground level Chōjiro Kunii, secretary general of the JOICFP, was drafting the organization’s deployment plans in Tokyo. Out of that emerged the Integration Project (IP), a family planning initiative combined with a parasite control campaign.¹⁵

Kunii made his debut in family planning activism at the time of the IPPF Tokyo conference in 1955, and within a decade he established himself as a central figure in the field (Obayashi 2006: 163–201). In the mid-1960s, as the president of the Japan Planned Parenthood Association, he embarked on his campaign to promote Japan’s family planning internationally. It was Kunii who enabled the aforementioned Draper-Kishi meeting and who exercised great influence on JOICFP’s philosophy and its initiatives.

The IP, for which the JOICFP became known internationally, was chiefly Kunii’s product. During the Occupation, having failed to implement the PRC-inspired cooperative movement (*gassakusha undō* 合作社運動) in Japan and having fallen ill from an infestation of hookworms, Kunii launched a parasite control campaign in Tokyo (Kunii 1964, 1989). From the mid-1950s onward, when Kunii joined with birth control activists, he advocated in two fields of health activism. With the launch of the JOICFP, he strategically merged the two in his activism through the IP.

The IP was buttressed by the combination of Kunii’s humanism and pragmatic approach to family planning initiatives.¹⁶ Kunii believed family planning as a development aid should be desired by local people rather than imposed on them by a third party, and he contended that parasite control could most effectively foster people’s sense of a desire for family planning.¹⁷ He considered parasite control an effective tool for encouraging people to accept a more sensitive health initiative for family planning, precisely because 70 to 80 percent of the population in the rural area—the area often targeted by family planning initiatives—suffered from parasitic diseases, and parasite control often yielded dramatic and tangible results in a short time span. Kunii also claimed that local people and health workers could establish a rapport through a parasite eradication program, and this could further facilitate the process of popularizing family planning in the local community. Finally, parasite control was relatively inexpensive and required little equipment compared to other public health measures, so Kunii thought it would be easy to deploy it in a target community where scientific foundations enabling a complex public health project were often deemed missing (Kunii ca. 1976). According to Kunii, the IP would improve human welfare and

¹⁵ Depending on the context, nutrition was also added to the list of items in the IP.

¹⁶ Another idea that buttressed Kunii’s family planning activism was what he called “earth-centrism” (*chikyu shugi*), which was linked to the burgeoning environmental/ecological argument during the period. Limited space precludes the elaboration of this point, but see, e.g., Kunii 1973.

¹⁷ Parasite control had long been an established part of international health under the patronage of internationally oriented philanthropic organizations, most notably the Rockefeller Foundation. However, sometimes it involved invasive and interventionist measures and thus could be far from being regarded as “humanistic.” Therefore the very fact that Kunii presented parasite control as a “humanistic” tool attests to my point that the characterization of the IP involved a level of active reinterpretation. For the history of parasite control and international health, see Palmer 2010; Birn 2006; Farley 2004; and Cueto 1994.

simultaneously offer the most practical methods to make a family planning campaign successful.

Kunii reportedly conceived of the idea of the IP in February 1973 during his visit to the Philippines to observe the family planning situation there (Kunii 1974). Thereafter he strove to realize his idea in practice. In February 1974, Kunii used his contacts to get in touch with experts in parasitology in Korea and Taiwan, where parasite control was being carried out nationwide.¹⁸ Kunii shared with them the idea of combining family planning and parasite control, and reportedly the Korean and Taiwanese experts “were delighted” with Kunii’s proposal. Consequently, Kunii launched the Asian Parasite Control Organization in October of the same year as an institution designed to facilitate the diffusion of the IP. In July 1975, in Nanto, Taiwan, the JOICFP started the first pilot project, which was funded by the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation.¹⁹ In November, with financial support from the IPPF, the JOICFP and the IPPF jointly ran another set of pilot projects in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Korea.

The pilot project in Taiwan became a prototype for other IPs later implemented across areas in East and Southeast Asia. Thus, although it was in no way representative of all the IP projects, the Taiwan project nevertheless embodied the general philosophy, structure, and procedures running through other IP initiatives (JOICFP 1981). The project began on 1 July 1975 and was introduced to the three districts in Nanto partly as a follow-up to the roundworm prevention project conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from 1971 to 1974.²⁰ The actual campaign was deployed in a local health center, which belonged to the Bureau of Hygiene of the prefectural or city authority. The Bureau of Hygiene made arrangements for the collection of stool samples while the family planning worker and public health nurse interacted with the people. Within this structure, the family planning worker visited an average of fifteen to twenty households a day to distribute a white plastic bag for the stool sample, but using this opportunity, she also had a one-on-one chat with an “eligible” person—defined as a married woman in the “fertile age”—about family planning. The test result was sent by mail, and those found positive for parasites were passed on to the public health nurse, who then prescribed oral tablets of pyrantel pamoate or Santonin and arranged follow-up tests for them (Seol Seo ca. 1976). Meanwhile, the family planning worker talked more with the women about limiting the number of pregnancies and, where appropriate, sold contraceptives using the network forged in the community.²¹ Thus family planning guidance and the distribution of contraceptives, combined with parasite control with a simple test method and antiparasite tablets, constituted the core of the IP.

¹⁸ Further research is required on whether or not Japan’s colonial legacy played a role in Kunii’s contacts in Taiwan and Korea (see n. 4). On the parasite control campaign in South Korea and Japan’s involvement, see, e.g., DiMoia 2013: 145–76.

¹⁹ The Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation was headed by Ryoichi Sasakawa, an important benefactor of the JOICFP in its early years. See Swenson-Wright 2010 and S. Sato 2006 for Sasakawa’s biography. Sasakawa, also a war crimes suspect, exerted an extensive influence in business and politics in Japan during the Cold War era, so the CIA was attentive to his actions. “Ryoichi Sasakawa,” 27 January 1981, Central Intelligence Agency, Nazi War Crimes Declassification Act Collection: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1705143/SASAKWA,%20RYOICHI_0001-5.pdf, accessed 28 May 2014.

²⁰ JICA is the successor to the aforementioned OTCA.

²¹ Contraceptives presented were condoms, oral contraceptive pills, IUDs (Lippes loop and Ota ring), and sterilization operations (both male and female) (JOICFP 1981: 24).

The feedback was generally positive. By the third year, the rate of those who practiced family planning in Nanto increased from 63 to 70 percent, while the rate of parasite infestation decreased from 37.4 to 17.2 percent (*Sekai to jinkō* 1978b: 56). Yasuo Kon, managing director of the Japanese Family Planning Association, visited Nanto three months into the project and claimed that “the data provided [already indicate] the visible effect” of the project and that he “had the deep sense that the program was well on track” (Kon 1975: 8). Delegates from Indonesia accompanying Kon also seemed to be enthralled by the project. According to Kon, they “kept saying ‘Fine!’ and ‘Beautiful!’” and were impressed by how the family planning worker “was amiably talking with the young mother holding a baby about babies, family planning, and parasites” and how she “handed out a pack of condoms and the young wife was paying money without hesitation.” This was particularly striking because, according to the worker, the woman “was initially so shy and was not prepared to hear about family planning, but as [the worker] frequented the woman’s house several times to conduct the parasite test, the woman opened up to her so much so that now she has to study more because [the woman] keeps asking her so many questions” (Kon 1975: 8; Kunii 1978: 8). As Kon saw it, the IP was working quite well.

While Kon’s glowing comments might have reflected the slightly biased perspective of a convert, he was also aware of certain shortcomings inherent in the project. For instance, he suspected that the success of the Nanto project could be attributable less to the IP itself than to the existing local infrastructure. In Nanto, Kon argued, communications between layers of bureaucracy were relatively smooth, partly because the hygiene division of the local authority was located in the region. In addition, Nanto was already well equipped with service labs and technicians. In the parasite eradication program conducted by JICA, local technicians had already examined the samples of up to sixty thousand primary school children (Kon 1975: 9). Moreover, Nanto had been chosen to act as a family planning model district since August 1965, when the Taiwanese health department announced its five-year family planning plan as part of its Fourth Four-Year Economic Plan (Kuo 2002; Huang 2009; Chen 2014). Partly for this reason, local family planning workers were already familiar with and enthusiastic about family planning.

Similar to Kon, eminent Korean parasitologist Byong-Seol Seo, who had visited Nanto on a separate occasion, held an ambiguous view of the effectiveness of the pilot project there (Seo c. 1976). Seo pointed out that the acceptance rate—the rate at which people took up the practice of contraception afresh—increased by 24.4 percent between the start date of the pilot project in July 1975 and February 1976. But he also noted that Nanto generally was already a high achiever within the whole of Taiwan when it came to population control and that the rise in the acceptance rate might be due to the rise in sterilization conducted through the government measure instead of the IP (Seo 1976: 8).

Despite setbacks, the IP became recognized internationally. Over the 1970s, the area covered by the IP expanded to other parts of Asia, Latin America, and Africa.²² In 1977, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) requested a

²² “Integrated Family Planning Project,” Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning Annual Report 1993, c. 1993, JOICFP archives.

formal agreement of collaboration with JOICFP for its population initiative in Boyacá, Colombia (*Sekai to jinkō* 1978c). Later, on 15–18 February 1978, UNFPA and the East–West Population Institute at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa cosponsored a conference titled “Technical Working Group Meeting on Integrated FP with Rural Development,” at which experts from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the United States affiliated with UNFPA, the Ford Foundation, and other national or regional organizations gathered to discuss the problems and future trajectory of the IP (*Sekai to jinkō* 1978a). Finally, the reach of the IP became so extensive that the UNFPA commissioned Kunii to write about the IP and his experience as a family planning activist. Consequently, in 1983, the UNFPA published and widely circulated Kunii’s booklet *Humanistic Family Planning Approaches*.

As indicated in the title of his booklet, Kunii adopted the term *humanistic* (*nin-gentekina* 人間的な) to describe the Integration Project. At a glance, the adjective seemed to exist naturally, as if it simply expressed the notion of humanism that had been a pillar of Kunii’s activism over the years. However, I argue that the use of humanism as a concept was also deliberate, reflecting Kunii’s critical stance on the transnational population control movement. For instance, when Kunii stressed that the IP was “family planning for people” (*nigen no tame no kazoku keikaku* 人間のための家族計画), he was juxtaposing his “humanistic” method with the top-down population control measure advanced in developing countries by “foreign” (*gaikoku no 外国の*) or “international” (*kokusaitekina* 国際的な) institutions, while in tandem contrasting his “family planning for people” approach to, as it were, the “family planning for the nation” perspective presented by actors such as Alan Guttmacher, who represented the “international.” Kunii advanced the criticism that “family planning today conducted internationally is directly linked to contraception for the sake of controlling population growth, and this ignores people and the society in which the people live.” He went on to suggest that family planning workers serving such an initiative tended to regard family planning primarily as a tool for population control and “talk only about the IUD and the pill” (Kunii 1977), the contraceptives championed by such “international” population control movements.²³ In other words, the use of the term *humanistic* was also Kunii’s critical response to “foreign” or “international” family planning initiatives that he saw embodied in coercive—or “inhumane”—elements.

The criticism of a top-down and narrow-scoped “international” population control model was nothing new. As Peter J. Donaldson aptly noted, even within the United States, where its development aid agency donated millions of dollars to such a simple family planning initiative as distributing the IUD (Takeshita 2012; Tone 1997; Hartmann 1987), population experts such as sociologist Nicholas J. Demerath advocated the kind of initiative that resonated well with Kunii’s (Donaldson 1990a: 55–65; Demeny 1975: 159–60).²⁴

²³ However, it is worth noting that the IUDs and the pills were provided under the IP, too. The limited scope of the article precludes a further discussion of the politics behind the adoption of certain contraceptives, but diversity might be key to understanding the contraceptive services provided by the IP. For a critical history of these contraceptives and their links to transnational population control alliances, see, e.g., Murphy 2012; Takeshita 2012; Laveaga 2009; Marks 2001; and Watkins 1998.

²⁴ Indeed, even among the proponents of family planning for population control, the support was not consistent, so population control could not escape controversies (Connelly 2008: 237–75).

However, what separated Kunii from others based in European and North American institutions was that Kunii's criticism of the "international" population control measure was predicated on an identity politics that involved his negotiation with Japanese history. When he promoted the IP, Kunii claimed his "humanistic" family planning approach was "an original idea Japan gave birth to" because "it originated from the experience of family planning in Japan" (*Kazoku keikaku kokusai kyōryoku zaidan and nihon kiseichū yobōkai ca. 1976: 2*). To justify his point, Kunii further explained why Japan's past engagement with family planning was "humanistic." For instance, he mentioned that the Japanese government's birth control program in the 1950s did not advance the population control agenda but instead put up a more humanistic slogan about the protection of maternal health. Similarly, Kunii claimed the Japanese government's initiative was more humanistic due to its effective collaboration with grassroots activists (Kunii 1977). According to Kunii, elements like these were woven into the IP, so "Japan should, with confidence, strive to expand it to developing countries" (*Kazoku keikaku kokusai kyōryoku zaidan and nihon kiseichū yobōkai ca. 1976: 2–3*).

While one cannot deny that the abovementioned characterization to some extent accounted for the Japanese family planning campaign in the 1950s, I also argue that Kunii's presentation of Japan's past was also partial. For instance, while the Japanese government indeed emphasized maternal health at the beginning, from early on it additionally advanced the population control argument in support of its campaign (Kubo 1997: 135). Moreover, while the government did work together with some birth control activists, in reality a schism also dominated the grassroots movement at the beginning, and under the circumstances there were limits on how effectively the government could collaborate with grassroots activists. Thus, through the process of presenting the IP, Kunii selectively highlighted certain aspects of the Japanese family planning campaign that could support his claim that the "humanistic" program belonged to Japan.

Furthermore, accompanying the selective description of Japan's past was a certain understanding of Japan's postwar socioeconomic development as shifting from the "underdeveloped" to "developing" stages. In Kunii's formulation, during the immediate postwar period that "gave birth to" the "humanistic" family planning approach Japan was confronted with hunger, poverty, and epidemics, the image congruent with the perspective of American geographer Edward A. Ackerman, who asserted that Japan then belonged to the "underdeveloped area" (Ackerman 1953: 566). Implicit in this depiction of Japan's past socioeconomic state was the coherent narrative of Japan's successful demographic transition, which was necessarily and evidently followed by economic development. This narrative held that the Japanese government, in collaboration with activists, rescued its citizens from the "underdeveloped" state through the "humanistic" family planning campaign, and that consequently the rate of population growth decreased, postwar economic reconstruction got on its way, and Japan could "finally . . . allow itself to become confident about its future" (*Kazoku keikaku kokusai kyōryoku zaidan and nihon kiseichū yobōkai ca. 1976: 3*). This narrative was compatible with the view, widespread in Japan in the 1960s, that Japanese demographic and economic states had transitioned so successfully that Japan was now a "semideveloped country" (*chūshinkoku* 中進国).

The notion of Japan as a "semideveloped country" was pivotal for the country's burgeoning interest in official development assistance during the period. As Sato

argues, it was during the 1960s that economist Kiyozo Miyata promoted the idea of Japan's uniquely advantageous "intermediary function" as a "semideveloped country," one that was arguably able to consolidate the economic roles of an underdeveloped and a developed country (J. Sato 2013: 15). Likewise, for Kunii, Japan's "semi-developed" status, which placed the country somewhere between the "developed" West and "underdeveloped" Asia, worked in Japan's favor, as it gave the country the license to assert a dual identity as a former allegedly "underdeveloped" recipient of a population control measure in the immediate postwar period *and* an emerging "developing" population controller. This specific interpretation of Japan's historical development formed a basis of his construction of the "humanistic" family planning approach.

Kunii's stance when he promoted the IP in Asia is in some ways reminiscent of that adopted by Kishi when he pondered economic development and family planning in Asia. As with Kishi, the metaphorical geography of Asia and Asian fraternity buttressed by the perceived notion of ethnocultural affinity (*Kokusai kyōryoku* 1975: 8) were pivotal to Kunii's strategic positioning of the IP. Nevertheless, the semiotics of Kunii's mapping of the US-Japan-Asia nexus was crucially different from Kishi's because of their distinctive approaches to the subject matter. For the elite Kishi, Asia was primarily an abstract concept represented by a small minority belonging to the higher echelon of a given nation state, but Kunii's assertion of humanism compelled him to sympathize with the real lives of people in the region (e.g., *Sekai to jinkō* 1976). Moreover, whereas Kishi and his bureaucratic advisers assumed that Southeast Asian people desired development integrated with the economy of industrial Japan, for Kunii it was important that local people consciously opted for the made-in-Japan "humanistic" family planning project as an alternative to a Western family planning program—that "Asia currently would like to expand the [Japanese] idea on a national scale" (*Kazoku keikaku kokusai kyōryoku zaidan and nihon kiseichū yobōkai ca.* 1976: 2–3). Thus from the outset Kunii stressed the importance of the collaboration between JOICFP, local offices/actors, and the grassroots local initiative; in his view, Japan should not impose the IP on Asia. This was a crucial context for the promotion of the IP as a "humanistic" and "Japanese" family planning initiative.

The analysis of Kunii's argument of "humanistic" family planning indicates that Kunii, like the politician Kishi, acted for his cause while looking in both directions, to Asia as recipients of family planning, and to the United States as the most powerful nation-state and number one donor of development aid, representing the "foreign" Western donors. However, while Kishi came to family planning activism through the notion of an in-between Japan—an idea that was directly informed by Cold War geopolitics—what buttressed Kunii's activism, in addition to his humanistic values, was the understanding of Japan's position on the scale of socioeconomic development, specifically a "semideveloped" Japan between the "developed" West and "underdeveloped" Asia. Furthermore, this understanding required a tactful usage of historical memory, that is, the specific interpretation of Japan's past as one of transition from an "underdeveloped" to a "developed" state due to a "humanistic" family planning campaign. This coherent narrative of Japanese history might not accurately depict what had actually happened within the campaign or politics of reproduction in postwar Japan, which were more complicated and depended more on fortuitous circumstances than the narrative acknowledged. Nevertheless, this image of Japan's past provided an authoritative way to highlight the "humanistic" quality of the "originally Japanese"

family planning initiative. The Japan displayed here might have simply been a fiction, but it was the fiction that supported Kunii’s action and eventually created a substantial reality in Japan’s negotiations for international cooperation in family planning.

4 Conclusion

By looking into the ascendancy of Japan’s effort to participate in international cooperation via family planning promotion at the particular moment when Japanese history intersected with world history in the 1960s and 1970s, this article has attempted to enrich our understanding of the entanglement between geopolitics and international family planning initiatives that characterized the mode of population governance during the period. I have shown how the “in-between” position Japan occupied in the geopolitics of Cold War Asia—the West on the one hand and Asia on the other—became a vehicle for Japan’s involvement in international cooperation in family planning in the early years and its focus on the region of Southeast Asia for that cause. Furthermore, the article analyzed Kunii’s articulation of Japan’s “humanistic” family planning and illustrated how it resulted from his engagement with world politics and identity politics centering on the politics of memory. Thus this article offers a case study on the history of population management in the middle of the twentieth century and indicates that the mode of management was diverse and informed by the specific socioeconomic, political, and historical configuration of a certain site.

Furthermore, by focusing on the specifically Japanese story, this article departs from other works in significant ways. Most crucially, it provides an alternative story of how non-Western actors had advanced family planning as development aid. The episode in which Japanese actors engaged in international cooperation in family planning by capitalizing on Japan’s arguably “semideveloped” position can complicate the history of the global-scale population governance, which has hitherto been framed largely around the dichotomous notion that the industrial West acts as population controller and the “underdeveloped” non-West is subjected to population control. At the same time, the article’s analysis of the region-specific case study offers a historical lesson for further understanding of the East Asian mode of delivering international development/humanitarian aid today (e.g., [Hirono 2013](#); [Van Der-Putten 2012](#); [Soyeun Kim 2011](#); [Zhao 2010](#); [Dittmer and Yu 2010](#); [Mohan and Tan-Mullins 2009](#); [Nyiri and Breidenbach 2008](#)).²⁵

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²⁵ Of course, we also need to keep questioning whether or not there is such a thing as a distinctive “East Asian” mode of humanitarian aid.

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