Methodological Duality and Conceptual Plurality of Culture in International Relations:
Towards Collaboration of Cultural Policy Research and International Relations [1]

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Introduction

This paper surveys how scholars and practitioners of international relations regard and utilize culture and cultural policy, and addresses key methodological issues employed to promote interdisciplinary collaboration between International Relations（IR）and Cultural Policy Research（CPR）. These methodological issues are related to the way we deal with, or conceptualize, culture in international relations. Some of the issues have already been discussed among CPR specialists, while others have not yet been considered in depth. Addressing these issues will assist scholars of the two disciplines to develop research methodologies that should contribute towards a fruitful coexistence and collaboration of people from diverse cultures.

In academia as well as in actual practice, there is a growing interest in cultural policy as a tool for managing international and intercultural relations. Researchers and practitioners pay more attention to the international dimension of cultural policy, and to its use in diversity management. When Charles Landry's idea of the *creative city*（Landry 2000/2008）became popular and was applied to the cultural policies of cities around the world, policymakers strived to attract a *creative class*, primarily of long-term residents, who are able to contribute to the creative city, not only from within but also from *outside* respective countries. Creative cities also draw foreign visitors in general, such as tourists, businesspersons, conference participants, etc. Landry himself then shifted his interest to diversity or intercultural management in public policy. Together with Phil Wood, he proposed the idea of *intercultural city*（Wood & Landry 2008）, which was well received especially in Europe, where countries have accepted immigrants from various backgrounds. International and intercultural relations have also become a focus of discussion among experts in cultural policy. For example, the German Society for Cultural Policy（Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft）published special issues on *Interkultur*（2008）, *external cultural policy*（2012）, and *diversity*（2013）in their journal, *Kulturpolitische Mitteilungen*.

In the field of international relations, too, culture and cultural relations have increasingly

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drawn the attention of researchers and practitioners. In the following sections, I provide an over-view of the development of interest in culture within the IR discipline during the last two de-cades (Section 1). Next, I examine methodological and conceptual issues that affect treatment of culture in international relations – and also, cultural policy in general – both academically and practically (Sections 2 and 3). I then address the current, rather problematic, situation of the practice of international cultural policy, citing the case of contemporary Japan, which I contend has been caused partly by ignorance of, or indifference to, the aforementioned issues; some aca-demic efforts to bridge this gap will consequently be introduced (Section 4). Finally, I make some suggestions for a possible future collaboration between IR and CPR.

There are a great many terms used for describing cultural policy in international relations. In their comprehensive review, Topić and Sciortino examined different concepts — such as cul-tural diplomacy, cultural communication, cultural relations, public diplomacy, nation branding, etc. — noting that the definitions of respective concepts are quite diverse, not only among individual researchers but also among countries (Topić & Sciortino 2012). In this paper, I will use these various concepts interchangeably, placing them loosely under the overarching category of *inter-national (or external) cultural policy* and *management of (international) cultural relations.*

1. Culture in the Discipline of International Relations (IR)

Within IR, interest in culture has grown since the end of the Cold War, especially after the events of 9/11. During the Cold War period, mainstream IR scholars (Realists) were overwhelm-ingly positivistic in their methodology, and therefore, rather indifferent to the cultural differences of agents or actors in international relations. This simplistic view was further strengthened by the fact that Realists regarded states as primary actors of international relations. With regard to policy fields, the major interest of Realists was national security in a narrow sense; cultural rela-tions did not constitute a major research theme in IR despite the fact that *culture* had actually become an integral (if not core) field of diplomacy in many advanced countries. Since the end of the Cold War, however, people in both academia and the wider society have come to regard in-ternational relations as a more complex set of relations between states and various non-state ac-tors.

Some IR scholars have begun to see international relations as primarily intercultural or in-ter-civilizational relations. They analyze different *cultures* that shape or construct international conflicts (Huntington 1993, 1996), world society (Boli & Thomas 1999), diplomatic or strategic relations (Katzenstein 1996; Johnston 1998), etc. Others dared to reconsider the whole IR disci-pline from a cultural standpoint (Lapid & Kratochwil 1996; Jacqin-Brudal et al. 1998). Those who

belong to the English School of IR and whose arguments received much attention after the end of the Cold War, also focused on culture as a tie that binds members of the international community together（Buzan 2010）, while scholars of globalization regarded culture as an important ― but only one ― dimension of social transformation（Held & McGrew 1999; Steger 2003/2013, 2012）.

Among these scholarly achievements, Samuel P. Huntington's *clash of civilizations* argument drew particularly broad attention, not only in academia but also in the practice of international relations. The publication of his first article（Huntington 1993）coincided with actual conflicts that occurred along the "fault lines" of religion and ethnicity, such as the civil war in former Yugoslavia and genocide in Rwanda. Accordingly, the United Nations designated the year 1995 as the *Year of Tolerance*, and then 2001 as the *Year of Dialogue among Civilizations*（Aboulmagd 2001）. UNESCO designated the year 2000 as the *International Year of Culture of Peace*, and launched in 2001 the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. The World Commission on Culture and Development, which was established by UNESCO in 1992 within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development（1988-1997）, stressed in its 1995 report the plurality of cultures and the need to respect the cultural rights of minorities. The report also proposed to broaden "the very notion of cultural policy" in order to "hold multi-ethnic societies together, by making much better use of the realities and opportunities of pluralism."（UNESCO 1996: 232）.

The events of September 11th, 2001, provoked further interest in international cultural relations. It was quite shocking that the terrorists were seemingly ordinary individuals living in immigrant communities in the West. After 9/11, not only did threats of so-called homegrown terrorism escalate, but also those of violence by right-wing extremists, such as the 2011 massacre in Norway. In many Western countries, there emerged a new wave of securitization of immigrants – and accordingly, overall negative attitudes to the concept of *the multicultural society*. Some scholars began to analyze the inter-relationship of immigration, multiculturalization, and human security（Rudolph 2006; Lazaridis 2011）.

9/11 also made many people aware of the fact that "［t］he ordinary individual is increasingly visible in the practice of diplomacy"（Melissen 2005: 23）, and consequently, of the importance of so-called *soft power*. This trend invigorated research into, and practice of, public and cultural diplomacy（Nye 2004; Melissen 2005; Cowan & Cull 2008; Watanabe & McConnell 2008; Gienow-Hecht & Donfried 2010）. The concept of soft power was actually not new – it had been proposed and accepted in the IR discipline since the 1990s（Nye 1990）. After 9/11, however, public and cultural diplomacy came to be regarded as an essential means to the survival of a state in international society. Emerging non-Western countries, such as China, Korea, Turkey, etc., began to develop their own international cultural policies.

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In the meantime, management of international cultural relations became a favorite theme of diplomatic historians, particularly in the context of re-examining and re-evaluating the Cold War. Numerous studies were conducted, not only by academics but also by practitioners (Gienow-Hecht 1999; Berghahn 2002; Scott-Smith 2002; Richmond 2003; Gienow-Hecht & Schumacher 2004; Scott-Smith & Krabbendam 2004). Some scholars such as Akira Iriye (1997/2000 and 2002) stressed the special implications of cultural relations in international history, regarding that cultural relations connect people across borders and construct the basis of a global community.

International cultural relations, and the management of such relations, have thus become a theme that attracts the interest of researchers and policymakers all over the world. This development is remarkable in the sense that culture was for the first time seriously considered in broad IR scholarship. The new concern about ordinary individuals promoted analysis of international relations as complex interactions of various actors with different cultural backgrounds, and opened a new dimension of the IR discipline.

There is now an expectation for a policy research that bridges gaps between cultures by connecting people across borders. At the same time, this trend opens a possible collaboration between IR and cultural policy research. In the next two sections, I point out two issues concerning the treatment of culture in international relations — the first is methodological, the second is conceptual — to be identified if we truly want to conduct a fruitful research on international cultural policy.

2. Methodological Duality of Culture in International Relations

The development of interest in culture in international relations, as outlined above, is actually based on two different methodological approaches, or ways to address culture — i.e., *culture as a framework for international relations* and *culture as an object in international relations.* The two approaches are separate from, but mutually connected with, each other.

(1) Culture as a framework for international relations

The *culture-as-framework* approach is based on the premise that all actors or agents of international relations are culturally constructed. For example, nation-states can be understood as cultural constructs if one regards nations as *imagined communities* (Anderson 1983/2006), whose members feel connected with each other by common cultures — whether they be language, religion, history, etc (Smith 2003). Here, culture is something that binds people together and forms the basis of their identity. International relations are thus regarded as intercultural relations, i.e., mutual interaction between cultures.

Huntington's *clash of civilizations* argument (Huntington 1993, 1996) is a typical example of

culture-as-framework approach. He states that in the post-Cold War era " [t]he great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural," and that "the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations"（Huntington 1993: 22）. Here, Huntington regards contemporary international relations as relations among cultures, since he defines civilization as "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity"（Huntington 1993: 24）.

　　Huntington was criticized in many ways, and various counter-arguments were posed against his thesis. The most serious defect in his argument is that Huntington presupposes civilization as the sole, one-dimensional unit of culture, and therefore, falls into a kind of cultural essentialism. As Sen（2006）points out, human identity is actually plural and multidimensional, and its features change according to the different contexts of social life. One can simultaneously be German, European, Berliner, female, mother, heterosexual, vegetarian, ecologist, theatergoer and university-graduate; all these various identities, constructed within diverse cultural frameworks, nonetheless belong to one and the same person. Although this person is German by nationality, she also belongs to the same cultural community as a Japanese male theater freak, or a mother in rural Iran.

　　Practitioners of cultural diplomacy, like Huntington, also tend to be essentialists when dealing with cultural relations. Since diplomats and bureaucrats represent their nation, they tend to suppose nation-state as the foremost, if not single, framework of culture. However, nation-states today are becoming more and more multicultural in their substance, while individuals across national borders are connected through various cultural groupings other than that of the nation state.

　　In the management of cultural relations, it is essential to pay attention to this multicultural constitution of nations, and the multidimensional construction of human identities. People who are divided into different cultures（e.g. national cultures）in one dimension actually belong to the same cultural community in others（e.g. ethnicity, gender, generation, etc）. If we were to accept that all human beings are thus connected with each other in one way or another, we would find ourselves one step closer to intercultural coexistence, collaboration and conviviality.

　　"Culture-as-framework" is a convenient methodology when addressing individuals or groups of people with different backgrounds. Those who are in charge of managing diversity within community, promoting immigrant cultural activities, etc., can profit from this approach, especially if they appreciate and utilize the multidimensional character of cultural relations.

（2）Culture as object in international relations

　　The *culture-as-object* approach is based on the idea that cultures are concrete objects or ele-

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ments in human life, such as art, science, language, lifestyle, etc. This way of thinking is common-place in both the research and practice of cultural policy, since the central concern of cultural policy is management, utilization and governance of the arts and other creative products. According to Mulcahy, cultural policy deals not only with "the sum of a government's activities 'with respect to the arts (…), the humanities, and the heritage'" (Schuster 2003:1, in Mulcahy 2006: 320), but also with broader fields such as libraries and museums, community celebrations, folklore activities, television and radio, education, and cultural industries (Mulcahy 2006: 321). In these fields of administration, culture is mostly regarded as something substantial, be it labeled asset, capital, resource or heritage.

Culture-as-object approach spread quickly among scholars and practitioners of international relations since Joseph S. Nye first proposed the concept of soft power (Nye 1990, 2002, 2004, 2011). According to Nye, soft power is power to " [get] others to want the outcomes that you want" (Nye 2004: 5), which rests on three resources: culture, political values, and foreign policy. He defines culture as a set of values and practices that create meaning for a society, manifested in various forms such as high culture (literature, art, education) and popular culture (mass entertainment) (Nye 2004: 11).

If one follows Nye's logic, the pursuit of soft power is a kind of cultural resources management. Many countries have actually (re-)invigorated cultural and public diplomacy since the 1990s, based on soft power arguments either explicitly or implicitly — although Nye himself is rather cautious about the ability of governments to control cultural resources. These policies aim at maximum utilization of cultural resources or assets of a nation. Researchers and policy advisors support such policies by developing key ideas such as *brand state* or *nation branding* (Van Ham 2001; Anholt 2007).

In the case of Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) reorganized its structure in 2004 (and again in 2010) in order to conduct cultural and public diplomacy more strategically. In the mid-2000s, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister respectively summoned advisory committees for cultural diplomacy and public relations (*kaigai hasshin*, translation: "overseas transmission"). The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) also launched an active policy to promote Japanese content industry in the early 2000s, which later developed into the so-called *Cool Japan* policy. The Japanese government's shift towards a more active cultural asset management was seemingly prompted by an essay of American journalist Douglas McGray, who described Japanese popular culture as major resource of Japan's *Gross National Cool*, which he defined as "a kind of 'soft power'" (McGray 2002). Nye (2004) citing McGray's essay argued that Japan has more potential soft power resources than any other Asian country (Nye 2004: 85-86).

The concept of soft power is now widespread. Nye's culture-as-power-resource approach can easily be applicable to various fields of cultural resources management, and thus has become an influential way of thinking in cultural policy in general. However, when we apply Nye's argument to actual cultural policymaking, we must bear in mind that his ideas are meant for advice regarding the foreign policy of the United States. The ultimate objective of Nye's discussion is maximization of national interest, not the well-being of individuals or the harmonious coexistence of different cultures. Nye also regards nations or countries as frameworks of power, though in reality, cultural resources are rather produced and owned by various non-state actors in different fields of society. Nye himself is conscious about this latter fact, and insists repeatedly on the difficulty for government to manage culture, especially popular culture, as a soft power resource（Nye 2002: 11; Nye 2004: 52; Nye 2011: 83）.

With this methodological duality of culture in international relations in mind, I now propose two points of which scholars and practitioners of international relations and cultural policy should be aware.

（a）**Distinguishing between the two approaches**. Culture-as-framework approach and culture-as-object approach are mutually connected. Culture as framework defines the group of people who produce and inherit culture as object; culture as object is a manifestation of achievements of a group of people within a certain cultural framework. It is important, though, to distinguish one from the other. As will be discussed later, the two approaches are based on different conceptualizations of culture, and if one confuses these different concepts in actual policymaking, it can harm the effectiveness and coherency of policy. In planning and administrating cultural policy, whether within or without national borders, one has to be clear about which approach to culture one should adopt, and what one aims to achieve with the approach. Most scholars and practitioners of international relations, however, do not（yet）seem to be conscious of such methodological differentiation.

（b）**Paying attention to the multidimensionality of culture**. As discussed above, in both approaches, culture is inherently multidimensional. That is, culture, both as framework and as object, belongs to many various groups of people at different levels of society. In research and practice of international relations today, however, there is a strong tendency to regard nation or civilization（the West, Islam, etc.）as the predominant framework of culture. In IR discipline, Huntington's *clash of civilizations* thesis was especially guilty in this respect, since it promoted a one-dimensional us-and-them thinking along the "fault lines of civilizations." In contrast, within CPR, there is likely to be a greater awareness of both the plural and contentious nature of cultural ownership. There is a tradition of cultural democracy in CPR, which entitles every individual

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or group of people the rights to develop his, her, or their own culture (Mulcahy 2006: 323-325).
The study and practice of international cultural relations has much to learn from this tradition.

3. Conceptual Plurality of Culture in International Relations

In addition to methodological duality of culture, one should also pay attention to its conceptual plurality. Today, there are at least three forms of conceptualizing culture in international relations. In its genealogy, culture was conceptualized in two different ways among Western intellectuals in the modern age. I shall call them *the humanist* and *the anthropological* concepts of culture, inspired by Reeves (2004:02). A third concept, originating from German-speaking academia, has evolved rather unintentionally in our daily lives. Still, this usage has a strong, though unconscious, impact on society, especially in government administration. I shall call this third type *the pragmatist* concept of culture.

(i) Humanist concept of culture

The humanist concept of culture refers to the intellectual achievements of human beings. It implies that culture is something good and valuable — a traditional way of thinking in the West. The humanist concept originated in the 18th century and takes its name from the Latin word *colere*, meaning to till or to cultivate; Herder used the concept of culture to express human refinement and education. Especially in German-speaking realms, the concept was championed by nationalism movements in the 19th century, as an expression of intellectual achievements of the nation.

In the latter stages of European nationalism, imperialist countries such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy, began to conduct external cultural policy or cultural diplomacy in an intentional and organized way (Mitchell 1986: 21-34). External cultural policies, in its first phase, thus took the form of disseminating high culture of the nation, such as literature, arts, and education. At the same time, cultural heritages of humanity such as archaeological finds were collected and researched by imperialist powers through academic activities abroad (Düwell 2015: 58-63). The humanist tradition had a strong impact on the conceptualization of culture in Japan, where the German concept of *Kultur* was imported in the course of constructing a modern nation (Kawamura 2015: 377).

Within the two approaches to culture in international relations introduced in the previous section, the humanist concept of culture has a close affinity to the culture-as-object approach. The humanist concept manifests the core of cultural policy, which is commonly understood as the arts, humanities and heritage.

(ii) Anthropological concept of culture

The anthropological concept of culture describes a way of life of a human group. The key concept of cultural anthropology, it is relativistic and neutral in nature. In this way, the anthropological concept of culture contrasts with the humanist concept, which is rather elitist and value-laden. This anthropological concept of culture is the one which is most widely understood, and often takes adjectival forms as in, *cultural identity*, *cultural difference*, *intercultural dialogue*, etc. It is also used with prefixes or combined with other words to form compounds and phrases, such as *culinary culture*, *political culture*, *culture of peace*, etc.

The anthropological concept of culture manifests itself in the diversity and particularity of various human groups. This type of conceptualization inevitably entails a kind of cultural determinism, and is sometimes criticized as promoting an essentialist way of thinking (Clifford 1988). At the same time, the neutral and egalitarian nature of the anthropological concept has gained popularity both in academia and among the general public, especially in the wave of democratization and decolonization in the latter half of the last century.

The anthropological concept of culture is closely related to the culture-as-framework approach to international relations. Policies that concern managing cultural relations, such as intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding between cultures, etc., are based on the anthropological concept. Sometimes, however, the anthropological concept of culture is also used for describing concrete contents, or objects, of cultural policy. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, there was an expansion (*Erweiterung*) of the content of culture in official external cultural programs in the early 1970s. The Foreign Office stated in its principles that "relations with foreign countries in academic and artistic fields, spread of German language and support of German schools abroad" were not enough in the new phase of international relations, and that foreign cultural policy should deal more with "cultural and civilizational contemporary problems" (Auswärtiges Amt 1970: I. 2). Here, "contemporary problems" refers to a wide variety of emerging issues in human life that were commonly felt across national borders, such as urbanization, ecological crises, understanding of history, social and economic development, etc.

(iii) Pragmatist concept of culture

The content of the pragmatist concept of culture is not as clear as the previous two concepts. It describes a certain field or domain of human activities, which is distinguished from the fulfillment of materialistic needs or the exercise of physical power. Here, culture, together with politics and economics, often represents one of the three sub-fields that comprise social life or government administration.

Today, this usage of the concept can be found in daily discourse; it is particularly common-

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place in the practice of international relations. National governments often describe culture as the third pillar of their diplomatic relations together with (1) politics or security (both in the narrower senses of the words) and (2) economy. For example, the German Federal Foreign Office states on its official website that "[a]long with political and economic relations, cultural relations (⋯) forms the third pillar of German foreign policy" (German Federal Foreign Office, "Cultural relations and education policy: Aims and tasks"). The website of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is remarkably similar; "culture, alongside politics and economy, is an important field within the diplomacy of Japan" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Public Diplomacy: Cultural Exchange").

The roots of the pragmatist concept of culture seem to rest in the discourse of German-speaking academia. According to Wefelmeyer, the definition of culture as "an independent part of a three-fold social order" goes back to the early 20th century, when Jakob Burckhardt spoke of three historically influential powers (*Potenzen*), subdivided into state, religion, and culture. Such a trilateral understanding of society has since then repeatedly appeared in the scholarship. For example, Jürgen Habermas (1973) spoke of society that consists of three subsystems: socio-cultural, political-administrative, and economic. Daniel Bell (1976) made a similar differentiation (Wefelmeyer 2003: 23-24). In globalizations studies, culture often comprises of one of the three dimensions of the globalizing process together with economics and politics (Held 2000/2004).

In its actual usage, especially within our ordinary discourse, the content of the pragmatist concept of culture is rather vague and volatile. Frequently, culture is described as *something else*, distinguished from the material/power-related part of the society — or, *et cetera or the rest*, which remains after one has dealt with the substantial, important parts of the administration. Certeau rightly pointed out that culture "is the symptom of the existence of a backwater into which flow all the problems that a society, unable to assimilate or otherwise, leaves aside. (⋯) It is characterized as a non-place in which everything goes, in which 'anything' can circulate" (Certeau 1974/1997: 107).

This ambiguity is especially commonplace in foreign policy administration. The content of *culture* in cultural diplomacy is often left unclear, and policymakers tend to appropriate external cultural budgets for various miscellaneous activities. For example, the Foreign Office in the former West Germany once funded German hospitals and accommodation for German seamen abroad from the cultural budget. The bureaucrats of the Federal Government gave subsidies for those facilities under the category of culture, since they did not fit neatly into other categories such as political or trade relations.

The vagueness and volatility of the cultural field in international relations leads to a lack of consistency in external cultural policy in many different ways. Firstly, resources for culture are the first to be cut when governments seek budget curtailment. Secondly, policy principles and programme contents are subject to change by different administrations or personnel. Thirdly, because cultural allocations cover a wide range of potential spending, it often becomes a target of exploitation by politicians and public agencies for self-serving "pork" projects and purchases （Glade 2009: 250-252）. Finally, inter-ministerial competition ruins any chance of comprehensive cultural policymaking. The aforementioned "enlargement" of culture in West German foreign policy, for example, resulted in battles between ministries of the federal Government, since the ministries in charge of education, media, economic cooperation, etc. did not agree on the content of culture to be administered by the Foreign Office （Kawamura 2013）.

In CPR, the conceptual plurality of culture ─ at least the differentiation of the first two usages ─ is almost common sense. Major texts on cultural policy begin with the distinction between the humanist and anthropological concepts of cultures （McGuigan 1996: 5-6; Miller & Yúdice 2002: 1）. Very little academic literature and policy discussion of international relations, in contrast, takes notice of such a distinction.

The third, pragmatist, concept of culture has been widely dismissed in academic circles. The ignorance is not surprising, since the pragmatist concept is today a part of our ordinary discourse. For those who are committed to research and practice of cultural policy, however, it is essential to be aware of the slipperiness of the concept. In the process of cultural policymaking, whether internal or external, there is always a danger that culture can become a plastic word （Poerksen 1988/2004）, or an empty container to which different actors can add various meanings.

4. Current Situation of Culture in the Discourse of International Relations: Problems and Possibilities

What can we conclude from this argument so far? Without doubt, the way we research and practice culture in international relations leaves a lot to be desired. Firstly, few people are conscious of any differentiation between culture-as-framework and culture-as-object. Secondly, there is a tendency to regard nation or "civilization" （the West, Islam, etc.） as the primary grouping of culture and to ignore the multidimensionality of cultures and identities. Thirdly, most people are indifferent to the plurality of the concept of culture, especially its slipperiness with regard to the policy process.

These three problems together have resulted in a current situation that, in my view, hinders the pursuit of fruitful cultural relations. In recent discourse concerning international relations,

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whether academic or policy-oriented, culture is regarded first and foremost as a resource of national power, and is utilized for the maximization of the national interest. A lack of conceptualization of culture both contributes to and increases confusion and incoherency in policymaking.

The chaos of Japanese cultural diplomacy in the last decade is emblematic of this troubled situation. Postwar Japan, learning from the experience of war and invasion during the first half of the 20th century, was long cautious about promoting its culture overseas, especially in Asia (Otmazgin 2012). Since the creation of the Japan Foundation (JF) in 1972, Japan pursued more active and mutually beneficial cultural relations, at least with the United States and ASEAN member countries. In the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, respectively, the government launched initiatives to pursue a broader cultural policy. These initiatives aimed at establishing a symbiotic relationship with neighboring Asian countries by connecting various societal actors across borders. (Aoki-Okabe, Kawamura and Makita 2010: 227-228).

During the Koizumi administration (2001-2006), this line of cultural diplomacy was criticized for being too vague and unfocused. At that time, *Nye's soft power* concept and McGray's *Japanese Cool* argument were widely accepted. In 2003, the JF was restructured into an "independent administrative institution" which actually operates under stricter government control. The programs of the Foundation were reorganized into three pillars (arts and cultural exchange, Japanese language and education overseas, Japanese studies and intellectual exchange — the meaning of exchange here was rather close to promotion of Japanese culture). A year later, MOFA integrated its culture and information sections, and created the Public Diplomacy Department, in order to pursue cultural diplomacy more strategically. Then, in 2005, an advisory council to the Prime Minister published a comprehensive proposal; it suggested a threefold cultural diplomacy consisting of dissemination, reception, and harmonization, for the creation of "peaceful nation through cultural exchange" (Advisory Council 2005). The council's report did not give a definition of culture. Rather, it simply focused heavily on culture as object — from the high culture of the kabuki theatre to pop culture — as national power resources.

Japanese cultural diplomacy since then has been far from coherent. After Prime Minister Koizumi left office in 2006, Japan had seven prime ministers within a period of six years. Each administration had its own focus (or, non-focus) on cultural relations. Under Prime Minister Aso (2008-2009), famous for being a *manga*-maniac, MOFA appointed *Doraemon* (a famous Japanese cartoon character) as ambassador for *anime*-culture, and created a special position for three young female fashion leaders to promote Japanese pop culture abroad (so-called *kawaii* ambassador). During the Democratic Party administration (2010-2012), which ardently pursued budget cuts, many cultural programs were scrutinized and criticized as inefficient. In 2010, MOFA was

again reorganized and this time cultural affairs came under the auspices of the Press Secretary. An advisory council was set up at MOFA in 2012 which issued a report that proposed reinforcement and structural reform of public and cultural diplomacy（Advisory Council 2012）, but again the council did not give a concrete definition of culture or discuss the appropriate usage of the term.

Throughout this turbulence, Japanese cultural diplomacy focused more and more on the external promotion of Japan's national image in a narrower sense, utilizing cultural resources which can easily be "sold" at global markets such as popular culture, culinary culture, craftsmanship, etc. Programs that did not contribute directly to this aim were terminated.

Confusion in the JF Asia Center is symbolic of such turbulence. The Center was created in 1995 for the betterment of Japan's relations with both its near neighbors and the wider Asian region. Its setup was a part of the Peace and Friendship Exchange Program, proposed by the Socialist Prime Minister Murayama. The Center aimed at connecting people across Asia from various social fields with long-term objectives, launching many ambitious cultural programs such as theater coproduction, exchange of young leaders and civil society actors, representation of Asian arts and films in Japan, etc. The Center was dissolved, however, in 2004, one year after the restructure of the JF and the same year as the creation of Public Diplomacy Department at MOFA. It was obvious that the broad, long-term nature of the Center's activities did not fit in with the new strategy of public diplomacy pursuing national interest in a narrower sense. Interestingly, almost ten years later, the Asia Center was suddenly resurrected in April 2014, thanks to an initiative by Prime Minister Abe. The task of the new Center was quite different from, and more limited than, that of the previous one; this time, it was exclusively meant to build friendship with ASEAN countries by promoting Japanese language and culture — an obvious counteraction to the aggressive moves of China in the region. Cultural relations with Japan's immediate neighbors, China and Korea, were curiously left aside from the activities of the new Asia Center.

The author believes that this confusion, incoherence and imbalance in Japan's cultural diplomacy was — at least in part — caused and promoted by the lack of methodology and conceptualization in the treatment of culture in international relations. Without a clear understanding of the way to deal with culture, or of the concept of culture, in international relations, the content of international cultural policy was subject to the preferences and needs of individual politicians or bureaucrats, and hence became political tools for respective administrations. Scholars who specialize in international cultural relations are also responsible for this troubled situation. It is high time that we seriously consider the issues of methods and concepts of culture in international relations.

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Recent achievements in the field of public diplomacy research（Nye 2004; Melissen 2005; Cowan & Cull 2008; Watanabe & McConnell 2008）are certainly useful in this respect, but they do not address all the issues. Research into public diplomacy, including those on *new public diplomacy* with more attention on people-to-people relationships, aim at the maximization of the national interest as perceived by the government, based on a state-centric view of international relations.

Apart from such strategic research for national governments, broader research into international cultural relations is necessary, which presupposes（1）international relations as complex interactions of various actors, and（2）a long-term transformation of the nation-state system itself. Efforts in this direction are being made by some scholars — many of whom, curiously, come from a background of historical research in this area. Two such academic initiatives are as follows:

The first is the conference Culture and International Relations（CIH）organized by Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, a diplomatic historian who is currently Professor of History at the Free University of Berlin. The conferences, convened five times since 1999, have become a forum for discussion on broad issues of international cultural relations from a historical perspective（Gienow-Hecht and Schumacher 2004; Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010）. Among the past three conferences the author attended, much of the discussion in the first two, Frankfurt am Main 2005 and Cologne 2009, was oriented towards a variety of cultures connecting people across national and ideological borders; for example, the role of non-state actors in promoting people-to-people relationship, the binding power of arts and music, etc（ZENAF & ICD 2005; Fischer 2010）. Most papers presented were on case studies of particular policies, activities or incidents, but there were also substantive discussions on conceptual and methodological issues.

In the latest conference in Berlin（April 2014）, many papers including the keynote speech focused on nation branding and the use of culture to promote the national image（John-F.-Kennedy Institut 2014）. In the concluding discussion, there were some criticisms of the concept of *branding*, especially when combined with national framework, for two reasons. First, there is an element of violence underpinning the notion of nation branding, since it is "the authority" that determines the content of a particular brand. And, second, we cannot grasp the complex dynamics of international cultural relations with only the notion of nation branding. The participants agreed that they should continue to take various approaches in future research, and also that it is time to reflect on the meaning of "what we have done."

The other movement concerns efforts by some Japanese IR scholars towards a new research field, international cultural relations（*kokusai bunka kankei*, or *kokusai bunka ron*, hereafter ICR）. The initiator is Kenichiro Hirano, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo and for-

mer Director General of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Record. He is the first IR scholar in Japan to apply an anthropological method to International Relations（Hirano 2000）. The twenty-four authors in the recent publication（Hirano et al. 2013）specialize in various subfields of IR; most of them adopt a historical approach in their research.

Many of the contributors, including Hirano himself, intend to broaden the scope and depth of IR research, by applying the concept of culture. Culture is defined anthropologically as "a system of designs for living"（Hirano et al. 2013: iii）, but used both as framework and as object in the research. Pragmatic use of culture is carefully avoided. Although there is no rigid, integrated research program agreed to by all the contributors, there is one central concept in their research: *acculturation*. Acculturation is defined as contact and transformation of cultures（Hirano 2000: 53）, and understood as relations between different cultural entities （culture-as-framework） caused by movement and reception of cultural elements （culture-as-object）. Case studies range from the circulation of Western ideas in modern Asia, the reception of Japanese tea culture in colonial Korea, to diversity management in the European Union, and the activities of the Ford Foundation in Japan during the Cold War.

The research of ICR is still embryonic. Yet at the same time, ICR has already been criticized for being too broad in its scope and too complicated in its methodology. These criticisms stem partly from the difficulty of adopting culture as a key research concept. Scholars promoting ICR are well aware of this difficulty, but still they affirm that cultural relations and its management will become a central subject of future research and practice in international relations. Some ICR scholars define international cultural policy in a broader sense, so there is a possibility of collaboration between ICR and CPR in the future.

Conclusion: Towards Collaboration between International Relations and Cultural Policy Research

The arguments presented in this paper show that culture is a convenient term for understanding and managing today's complex international relations, but that the concept is actually quite difficult to pin down. Future IR studies should be more aware of, and examine further, the methodological and conceptual issues addressed in this essay, and thus contribute to consistent and fruitful international cultural policy.

Collaboration between IR （including ICR） and CPR would be beneficial, both for the awareness and examination of such issues. Some issues such as multiplicity of cultural ownership, and distinction between humanist and anthropologist concepts of culture, are already well defined in CPR; for IR scholars, it is convenient to refer to those definitions. Culture-as-framework approach,

on the other hand, is widely adopted in IR, though it is prone to the danger of essentialism; CPR can learn from those experiences, including its pitfalls.

The author believes that the two disciplines can thus profit from each other. In doing so, we will be able to pave the way to research into international cultural policy that is more sensitive to relational aspects in society, where people with different backgrounds necessarily live together.

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Note

1 This essay is a revised version of the paper I presented at the 8th International Conference on Cultural Policy Research（ICCPR 2014）, Hildesheim, September 10, 2014.

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