

# Governance and the Politics of Exchange in Militarized Jinmen, 1949–1992<sup>\*</sup>

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When the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT), dominated by Chiang Kai-shek, lost the civil war to the Chinese Communist Party and retreated to Taiwan in 1949, the island of Jinmen was assigned the role of shielding Taiwan from Communist attacks. The commander of the Jinmen Defense Headquarters (JDH), Hu Lian, received locally produced sorghum liquor as a gift. He was surprised by its quality and the aroma of the liquor pleased him. In 1952 JDH established a sorghum distillery. The military authorities in the 1950s began trading rice for sorghum—required in large quantities to make this type of liquor—in order to encourage the farmers to shift production. Rice and sorghum functioned more like gifts than commodities between the military and Jinmen’s farmers. The practice of gift exchange between the military and the dominated civilians helped naturalize the militarization of Jinmen’s society.

Keywords: sorghum, rice, gift economy, governance, Jinmen

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<sup>\*</sup> I am grateful to Robert Weller and two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

## Introduction: Gifts and Commodities<sup>1</sup>

The Cold War was a global conflict governed by bi-polar politics. As a global struggle, it was necessarily expressed differently in different regions (Kwon 2008: 4; Szonyi 2008). The eruption of the Korean War drove Taiwan into the fold of the United States' containment policy developed to cope with the spread of Communism in Asia. The Cold War in the Taiwan Strait evolved out of the Chinese Civil War between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT). When the KMT government lost mainland China to the Chinese communists and retreated to Taiwan in 1949, Jinmen Island was assigned the role of shielding Taiwan from communist attacks (Chi 2000; Szonyi 2008).

The influx of troops into Jinmen increased the consumption of alcohol there. Local wineries thrived as a result of soldiers' patronage (Yang and Lin 2001). But the locally produced sweet potato spirits and alcohol imported from Taiwan at that time were not strong spirits. Liquor of high alcohol content was not common in Jinmen and Taiwan. The local products did not appeal to the many military personnel who hailed from northern China, where stronger liquor was preferred. In 1950 Hu Lian, first commander of the Jinmen Defense Headquarters (JDH), received local sorghum liquor as a gift from a fellow high-ranking officer (Yang 1996). Hu was surprised to learn that local wineries had only recently begun to produce the spirit. Not only did the aroma please him, but he found that the quality of the liquor was excellent. This encounter with locally made sorghum liquor led to the decision to establish a sorghum distillery in Jinmen.

Large amounts of sorghum are required to produce sorghum liquor. In the 1950s, to secure such a supply, the military began exchanging rice for sorghum to encourage Jinmen's farmers to grow more. By 1978 the authorities had shifted to direct cash payments. How should we understand the exchange of sorghum and rice as gifts and the later commodification of this exchange in the context of a militarized economy? Starting with the exchange of grains, I will consider how the sorghum program contributed to Nationalist state's political legitimacy and governmentality in Jinmen.

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<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork was conducted between January and July 2008, and additional fieldwork was conducted between June and July 2015.

## Becoming a War Zone in the Cold War

When Chiang Kai-shek's government retreated to Taiwan, the Nationalist troops managed to hold the islands of Jinmen and Mazu, which were seen as stepping-stones for the intended recovery of mainland China. The Jinmen garrison repelled an invading Communist force in 1949 in first battle the Nationalists had won since the peak of the Chinese Civil War (Chi 2000). The outbreak of the Korean War the following year pushed Washington to incorporate Taiwan in its containment strategy for global Cold War geopolitics. In 1951 the U.S. sent the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to protect Taiwan (Stolper 1985). Despite these actions, Beijing bombed the Jinmen Islands on September 3, 1954, an event which is known as the first Taiwan Strait crisis. Four years later, a second Taiwan Strait crisis started on August 23, 1958, during which the People's Republic of China (PRC) shelled Jinmen for forty-four days. After these crises had been resolved, both sides continued to engage in psychological warfare by firing propaganda bombs across the Strait on alternate days.

The 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis put Washington under tremendous pressure from its allies, and domestic public opinion urged Washington to settle, in U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' words, the "agonizing offshore islands issue" at the negotiating table (Stolper 1985:130). Dulles persuaded Chiang to announce publicly that the KMT would emphasize Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles instead of using force to recover the mainland (*ibid.*). This announcement was made to Cold War allies and was naturally concealed from the public in Taiwan. The Nationalist belief in the recovery of mainland China continued to permeate local society.

As a battlefield in Cold War geopolitics, Jinmen became a symbol of the Nationalist government's determination to recover mainland China. Local society operated under military rule between 1949 and 1992. In the course of its militarization, social space in Jinmen was turned into a battlefield, a fully military environment, as the islands became riddled with tunnels and fields and spiked with anti-parachute stakes and pillboxes. Slogans conveying anti-communist messages were seen on the walls of public buildings and private homes alike.

This phenomenal military infrastructure was not the sole component of Jinmen's militarization. Militarization is a process through which war and the preparations for war are perceived as normal (Mann 1987). Enloe (2000) points out that a society's or individuals' normalization of military needs and militaristic presumptions involves cultural, institutional, economic, and ideological transformations. In terms of political control, the Nationalist military first imposed its authority by taking over the civilian county government, a process that began well before 1949. By 1953 the military bureau had been officially abolished and the county administration restored, but that was only on paper. In 1956 the Nationalist

government declared an “Experimental War Zone Administration in Jinmen and Mazu” (Jinmen Mazu diqu zhandi zhengwu shiyan banfa) to legitimize ongoing military rule. According to this scheme, authority sat with the Council for War Zone Administration in Jinmen (CWZAJ, Jinmen zhandi zhengwu weiyuanhui), composed of high-ranking military officers in the JDH (Jinmen xian wenxian weiyuanhui 1991: 540-542). The commander of the JDH concurrently chaired the council. In other words, the military ruled Jinmen as an agent of the state.

The series of battles had led people in Jinmen to accept the fact that their homeland had become a war zone. Jinmen was comprised of isolated off-shore islands. As a military outpost, mobility in and out of the area was restricted. It is striking that when the government evacuated local civilians to Taiwan in response to the ferocious shelling from China in 1958, fewer than 7,000 people responded to the state’s call (Jinmen xian wenxian weiyuanhui 1991: 368). Yang Ting-piao (2004: 48) has different figures than those found in official accounts. He estimated more than 10,000, about 25 percent of the population, immigrated to Taiwan. In the following two years, many of those who went to Taiwan returned because they could not find employment. Back home, they had land to grow sorghum in exchange for the rice that fed their families. As will be illustrated below, the rice-for-sorghum program would turn out to be a key mechanism by which the Nationalists were able to gain traction in local society and acculturate the people of Jinmen to military rule.

## Barter—Rice for Sorghum

Development of a liquor industry was not actually part of Commander Hu Lian’s blueprint for transforming Jinmen into a fortress against the communists. He intended to limit Jinmen’s reliance on Taiwan for logistical support (Szonyi 2008), so the production of sorghum liquor was one of the measures he introduced to reach the goal of covering military expenditures locally. Sorghum, the major ingredient for making the liquor, could be readily grown locally, and so the production of sorghum liquor could continue in case of a war blockade. Hu’s ultimate goal was to make the Jinmen Islands as self-sufficient as possible. He believed that a sorghum liquor enterprise would bring in handsome revenue for the military authorities, i.e., CWZAJ (Hu 1976: 18-19). The distillery, first called the Jiulongjiang Distillery, changed its name to Jinmen Distillery in 1956.<sup>2</sup> It was the first military-owned enterprise in

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<sup>2</sup> When martial law was abolished in 1992, the JDH transferred Jinmen Distillery to the Jinmen county government. It is now called Kinmen Kaoliang Liquor, Inc. and operates under county government supervision.

Taiwan during the Cold War era and remains an active operation owned by the county government.

Sorghum is not indigenous to Jinmen. During their occupation of the islands (1937-1945), the Japanese had shipped in soy beans and some sorghum mixed in with the soy beans accidentally made its way to Lieyu. It is likely that the people of Lieyu were the first to begin to grow sorghum, and it became a complementary part of their diet (Hsu 1971: 103).<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lin Jinshu, a senior resident of Lieyu, remembers the taste of the grain; when he was a boy his family often cooked it as cereal. But he recalled feeling hungry again quickly because sorghum is not as starchy as rice. Sorghum remained primarily part of domestic diets and was not really a traded item prior to 1949.

Since sorghum was grown mainly for subsistence prior to 1949, output was low. But it quickly grew as a cash crop when the JDH decided to set up a liquor industry on the island. The military authorities began by devising a policy that would encourage local farmers. In the 1950s, rice was a desirable staple that many families could not afford to eat daily. Similar to the situation in Taiwan, the people of Jinmen usually ate sweet potatoes as their staple food. It is intriguing that in the military's planned economy, the exchange value of rice was meticulously regulated in favor of the less valued sorghum. The market price of rice per kilo was two or three times as much as that of sorghum in the 1950s (Szonyi 2008: 129). The rice-for-sorghum program greatly benefitted farmers and drove them into sorghum production. Growing the grain put them in a production and exchange system mediated by the military authorities. Why did the military choose a barter mode of exchange to increase the annual output of sorghum? Were sorghum and rice, within this barter system and in the context of a state-mediated militarized economy, gifts or did they function as commodities?

Karl Polanyi (1968) outlined three modes of exchange: reciprocity, redistribution, and market principle. Marcel Mauss' gift theory emphasizes a form of reciprocity. Mauss (1967) considers gifts and commodities to be distinctly different. Gift giving creates a social bond and a moral obligation to reciprocate on the part of the recipient. The obligation that one must give in return—Maurice Godelier (1996: 15) calls it the enigma of the gift—characterizes the fundamental distinction between gift and commodity. Commodities are impersonalized and the circulation process is free of cultural and social constraints, especially in a capitalist society. Appadurai (1986: 11-13) has pointed out that this contrast between gifts and commodities is based in

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<sup>3</sup> Lieyu is a township on an offshore islet of Jinmen County, located to the west of Jinmen proper.

the Western romanticization of gifts and oversimplifies the context of commodity circulation. Appadurai treats gift exchange as a form of commodity circulation and defines commodities “as things in a certain situation.” Bayly’s research on the use of cloth in India clearly demonstrates how the production, exchange, and consumption of cloth constitute a fabric politics. Drawing on Hart, Bayly states, “[C]ommodities invested with the ‘spirit’ of gift exchange, products that ‘seem to embody the social milieu from which they came,’ are progressively divested of value to become impersonal things whose value is allocated only through the market.” (Bayly1986: 285) The transition from gift to commodity in Bayly’s fabric politics case is grounded in the market economy. And market economy exchange, one of the modes Polanyi identifies, is exactly what the military could not fully control but tried to keep at bay. Free market economy in the end undermined the military’s supremacy and domination. I juxtapose sorghum and rice in the exchange system to examine the process of their shift from gifts to commodities in the market. That transition hinged on the farmers’ demands for monetary exchange. The “spirit” of the gift that made farmers willing to exchange sorghum as a return gift was based in the military’s determination to keep Jinmen as logistically self-sufficient as possible, to lower its engagement in the larger market economy in Taiwan. Thus rice was offered to farmers in terms of a gift exchange.

In an interview, Ye Huacheng, who made the liquor that inspired Hu to plan the distillery, stated he had suggested that Hu offer to exchange the valued staple rice for sorghum (Chi and Lin 2009: 67). Hu (6791: 14) in his book stated that he adopted some civilian’s suggestion without mentioning any names. In fact, it might have been neither, since rice was being used in several state-mediated barter programs aimed at guaranteeing sufficient provisions for the military forces and government personnel, both of which earned extremely low salaries. Rice was used to subsidize the cost of living and support government projects. A rice-for-fertilizer program affected families farming across Taiwan. Farmers were forced to exchange one kilo of rice for one kilo of fertilizer. Fertilizer had a much lower market value than rice between 1950 and 1972. Liu (2001: 147-148) pointed out that the 53 percent of the rice expropriated between 1951 and 1965 went to support the military. Scholars have demonstrated that this exchange was a means to transfer surpluses from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector.<sup>4</sup> The rice-for-fertilizer program was an asymmetrical exchange and a clear exploitation of Taiwan’s farmers. However, beginning in 1953 the military authorities on Jinmen turned that on its head and made the rice-for-

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<sup>4</sup> There are an array of articles dealing with economic development and surplus transfer between different sectors in Taiwan. Wu (2007) has a thorough review of related articles in his thesis.

sorghum exchange favorable to Jinmen's farmers. When Commander Hu stated that he was adopting the advice of civilians, he may have just been trying to show that the military was approachable and interested in the opinions of locals.

Hu must have been aware of the barter program in Taiwan because his garrison's rice supply was highly subsidized by the state. Barter was the military's solution to the problem of poor financial support from the government in the 1950s.<sup>5</sup> It made rational economic sense to the military. As the gift giver, following Mauss' gift exchange theory, the military authorities were in charge and superior to the gift recipients. At the same time, control of the flow of goods is one characteristic of militarized economies and it played a crucial role in military discipline and surveillance.<sup>6</sup>

The barter policy set one *jin* (local measure for 500 grams) of sorghum for an equivalent weight in brown rice. In 1951 only 34,550 kilos of sorghum were produced in Jinmen. The following year saw an increase of the annual output to 133,850 kilos when Jiulongjiang Distillery was officially established, but even that output was far from enough for the mass production of liquor. In 1953 annual output of sorghum increased six-fold, and the output overall increased year on year (Chi and Lin 2009: 44). Table 1 shows the overall growth of the annual output from 1949 to 1991. Chart 1 expresses the average yield of sorghum per hectare over four decades. The average yield overall shows an upward propensity. The rice exchanged was the long-grain *Indica* rice, not the short-grain *Japanica* rice introduced to Taiwan during Japanese rule. *Indica* rice was widely cultivated in South China and served as traditional rice with which people in Jinmen were familiar.

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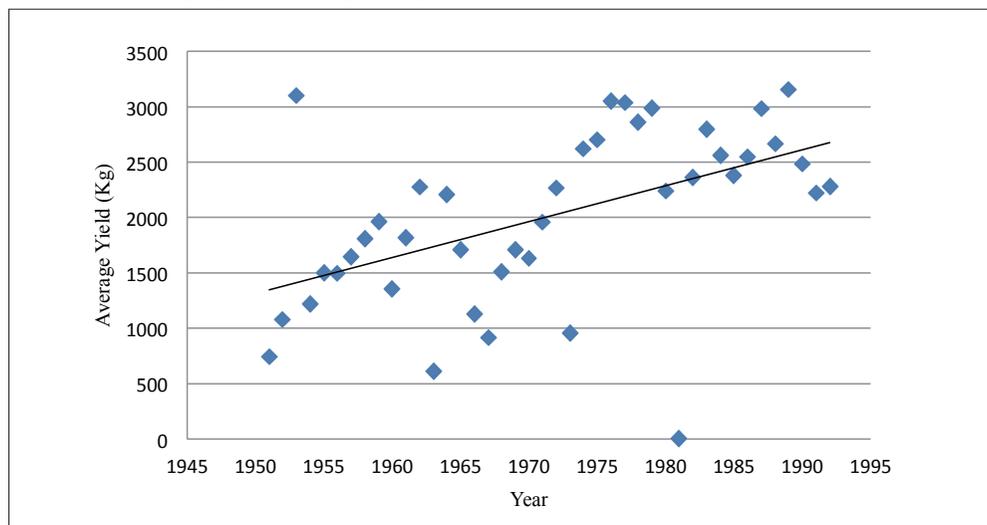
<sup>5</sup> The military authorities also regulated sorghum in exchange for fertilizer since 1956 (Yang 2004: 168). That exchange was not really an asymmetrical exchange on the receiver side. I therefore do not incorporate fertilizer into this account.

<sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the impact of militarization on Jinmen society, see Chi (2000), Chiang (2009), and Szonyi (2008).

**Table 1** Sorghum production from 1951 to 1991

| Year | Area<br>(Hectares) | Output<br>(Kilograms) | Average yield<br>(Kilogram/Hectare) |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1951 | 46.62              | 34,550                | 741.05                              |
| 1952 | 123.93             | 133,850               | 1080.06                             |
| 1953 | 257.46             | 799,066               | 3103.63                             |
| 1954 | 245.12             | 298,339               | 1217.10                             |
| 1955 | 438.00             | 657,000               | 1499.99                             |
| 1956 | 511.40             | 764,017               | 1493.97                             |
| 1957 | 462.33             | 761,000               | 1646.00                             |
| 1958 | 518.80             | 937,543               | 1807.14                             |
| 1959 | 387.86             | 761,527               | 1963.39                             |
| 1960 | 368.27             | 499,540               | 1356.47                             |
| 1961 | 475.33             | 864,000               | 1817.67                             |
| 1962 | 580.70             | 1,320,202             | 2273.48                             |
| 1963 | 664.77             | 406,835               | 611.99                              |
| 1964 | 921.25             | 2,030,387             | 2203.94                             |
| 1965 | 1215.42            | 2,077,190             | 1709.04                             |
| 1966 | 1770.68            | 1,994,883             | 1126.62                             |
| 1967 | 1963.57            | 1,797,684             | 915.52                              |
| 1968 | 1098.45            | 1,656,876             | 1508.37                             |
| 1969 | 1045.79            | 1,785,578             | 1707.40                             |
| 1970 | 1296.73            | 2,113,093             | 1629.55                             |
| 1971 | 1365.88            | 2,671,209             | 1955.67                             |
| 1972 | 1363.00            | 3,085,013             | 2263.40                             |
| 1973 | 1637.93            | 1,563,647             | 954.65                              |
| 1974 | 1056.00            | 2,763,488             | 2616.94                             |
| 1975 | 907.71             | 2,450,910             | 2700.12                             |
| 1976 | 988.69             | 3,014,496             | 3048.98                             |
| 1977 | 1688.00            | 5,123,304             | 3035.13                             |
| 1978 | 1784.73            | 5,103,296             | 2859.42                             |
| 1979 | 1732.07            | 5,166,727             | 2982.98                             |
| 1980 | 2168.53            | 4,849,366             | 2236.24                             |
| 1981 | 2351.87            | 6,431.39              | 2.73                                |
| 1982 | 2604.67            | 6,149,313             | 2360.88                             |
| 1983 | 2014.56            | 5,629,886             | 2794.60                             |
| 1984 | 2270.03            | 5,807,629             | 2558.40                             |
| 1985 | 2238.00            | 5,317,993             | 2376.23                             |
| 1986 | 2374.00            | 6,038,557             | 2543.62                             |
| 1987 | 2525.00            | 7,529,078             | 2981.81                             |
| 1988 | 2602.00            | 6,929,680             | 2663.21                             |
| 1989 | 2750.00            | 8,683,505             | 3157.64                             |
| 1990 | 2695.00            | 6,683,183             | 2479.85                             |
| 1991 | 2987.00            | 6,627,223             | 2218.69                             |
| 1992 | 2258.00            | 5,145,796             | 2278.92                             |

Sources : Jinmen County Government Accounting and Statistics Bureau, 1986: 58, 154-15 ; 1995: 44, 92-93; 2008: 32; Hsu, 1959: 631-632.

**Chart 1** Average yield of sorghum per hectare from 1951 to 1992

Sources : Jinmen County Government Accounting and Statistics Bureau, 1986: 58, 154-15; 1995: 44, 92-93; 2008: 32; Hsu, 1959: 631-632.

Farmers made up 30 to 40 percent of the population over fifteen years old between 1950s and 1981 (Yang 2004: 53; Jinmen County Accounting and Statistics Bureau 2009: 40). Even though growing sorghum is not as labor intensive as rice farming, a farmer could not do all the labor himself. All family members, regardless of gender, shared the farming chores, especially during harvest. In 2008 I interviewed people in their fifties and above who vividly remembered the harshness of the work of harvesting and dehusking sorghum. Yang Tianhou and Lin Likuan (2001) also described the labor all members of the family put into raising this crop. The rice-for-sorghum policy created the collective mobilization and control of the population in pursuit of the shared goal of improving the local economy and covering the military's expenses. Sorghum production even involved the infantry. Soldiers worked as farm hands during harvest at the command of Commander Hu. Later, farm work became a routine assignment for soldiers. Farmers filed requests and the military usually tried to fulfill them. This bonus to farmers became tradition in sorghum production history. Military assistance was a means to the end of producing the expected output. The provision of free farm hands helped sustain amicable relations between civilians and the authorities, easing tensions caused by the military's expropriating and occupying some civilian lands and property for infrastructure development in the 1950s and 1960s. The sorghum program was the key to engaging civilians in the de facto regime of governance.

Rice, an important logistical item, was monopolized by the military in Jinmen. The state allocated a portion of rice to JDH to feed its personnel.<sup>7</sup> In 1950 JDH set up an organization, the Kinmen Defense Committee Resource Supply Depot (Jinmen fangwei silingbu zhengwu weiyuanhui wuzi gongyingchu) to regulate the import and export of resource supplies to and from Taiwan.<sup>8</sup> Several items were controlled by the Depot's monopoly. Rice for local civilian consumption was one of them. Regulations on rice were associated with JDH's concern with preparedness for war and it carefully insulated the local market from market influences in Taiwan. The military required a six months' surplus of rice supply to cope with any war blockade. As with the military, it was imperative that civilian rice inventories always have an additional six months' supply. Local merchants could not import rice directly from merchants in Taiwan; instead, they had to buy from the military depot. At first, rice sales were slow because the people were just too poor, but by choosing rice as the basis for bartering with local residents, the JDH solved the problem of excessive inventory and simultaneously satisfied people's desire for a bowl of steaming rice on their family tables.

Rice inventories were usually maintained for as long as one year. The rice exchanged by the military was sometimes mixed with old rice from the military inventory. In other words, the rice that farmers received in exchange for sorghum was actually leftover from previous years' inventory and was sometimes stale (Yang 2004: 35-40). The regulation limiting rice importation was abolished in 1990 as a result of civilians' refusal to purchase stale old rice (Xu 2002). Aged sorghum liquor is an expensive commodity. In contrast, the stale rice was not only worth less but could even be harmful to people's health. The use of old rice from the military depot influenced local civilians' diet and tastes. They have grown accustomed to the long-grain rice with a firmer bite and dry fluffy texture in contrast to people in Taiwan who typically consume Japonica rice and favor a soft and rather sticky texture.

The rice-for-sorghum barter policy not only secured a sufficient supply of sorghum, but also reduced the cost of production on the grounds that Jinmen Distillery did not have to pay for the rice. That cost was born by the supply depot, which handled all rice imports. Rice for civilian consumption was imported

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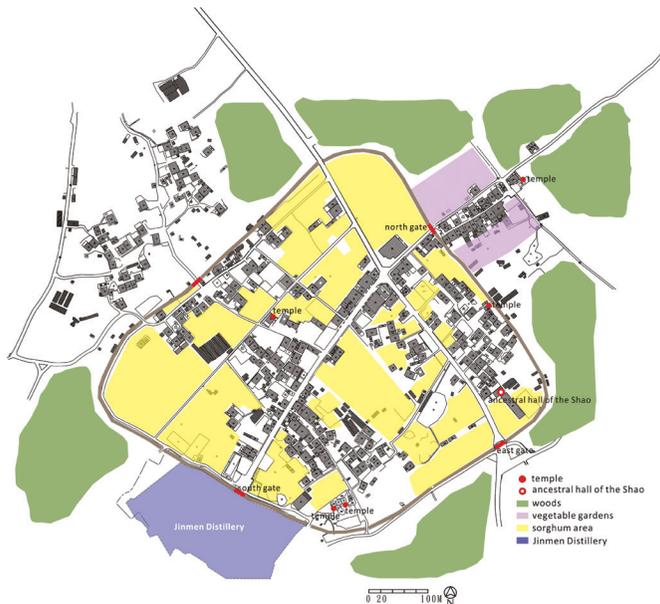
<sup>7</sup> I speculate that the source of allocated military rice is from the rice-fertilizer barter program.

<sup>8</sup> The JDH originally named the organization that regulated resources and supplies from Taiwan the "Canton Military Depot" (Yuehua guanbing hezuo zongshe). The institute then changed its name several times as its assigned functions changed. The last official name, "Kinmen Defense Committee Resource Supply Depot," (Jinmen wuzi gongyingchu) was adopted in 1964 and lasted until 1992 (Xu 2002: 49).

separately from the state-subsidized military rice imports. From the military authorities' point of view, barter solved the military's urgent problem of what to do with the inventory for civilian consumption. On the receivers' side, rice, a luxury good, was seen as an extravagant gift from the state, because the military authorities never provided humanitarian food relief to civilians during the major battles on Cold War Jinmen.

In the village of Jinmencheng most farmland swiftly changed to sorghum fields. Figure 1 shows sorghum growing over swaths of land in Jinmencheng, where the distillery is located. The barter program changed the local landscape.

The rice that was being bartered thus cemented social relations between authorities and the subordinate population. People defined value in rice and rice gave value to social relations. Civilians construed the military as a kind and compassion shepherd caring for the herd. In fact, the dominant military was the better endowed giver who determined what was to be bartered and enjoyed a strict hierarchical relation vis a vis the dominated receivers. This gift from the power class mobilized the farmers into the production of sorghum voluntarily, in a return gifting gesture, and naturally incorporated them into the military economic system. But it also constituted an instance of symbolic violence, a subtly euphemized mode of domination that prevents domination from being recognized as such (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990).



**Figure 1** Sorghum field in Jinmencheng village prior to 1985.

Source: Adopted from Chiang 2006: 35.

In 1964 sorghum production reached a peak of over two thousand tons, with each farmer producing an average of 218 kilograms. This level of production meant that an equivalent amount of rice was given to farmers in return. But such volumes of rice created a serious problem with regard to storage and consumption. Farmers sent petitions to the local county government, then under the military authorities' supervision. Farmers who had once welcomed the barter program changed their minds. They began to consider the barter program a mode of trade used in primitive societies; they now preferred money, which they saw as the medium of normal market exchange. In response, the military authorities paternalistically expressed regret that the farmers did not understand the barter program was meant to better people's diet and guarantee sufficient rice consumption (Yang 2004: 54).

The military was still keen on keeping the market economy at bay and retaining control over exchange, but made a small concession. The authorities permitted each farmer to sell 20 percent of his total production to the distillery at the price of one kilogram of sorghum for 5.5 dollars (the market price of *Indica* rice in 1964). In other words, farmers' income from sorghum was composed of 80 percent rice and 20 percent cash.

The demand for cash expanded as Jinmen increasingly relied on imported goods from Taiwan. People needed cash to pay the family expenses. Since the demand for cash for market economy consumption only became more intense, the policy was again modified in 1971. The military raised the ratio of rice and cash to 1-to-1–50 percent cash and 50 percent rice. In 1976 the exchange policy was further relaxed, allowing farmers to decide the ratio of cash to rice. By 1978 the barter policy shifted entirely to cash transactions. To accommodate this change the military practiced a purchase-at-a-fixed-price (reserve price) policy. The yardstick for the fixed price was the price of rice, i.e., the price of a kilogram of sorghum was equivalent to a kilogram of rice (Yang 2004). The price that could be got for a kilogram of sorghum in Jinmen was much higher than the market price in Taiwan. For example, in 1978 the reserve price for sorghum was 13 dollars in Jinmen, while the market price in Taiwan was 8.5 dollars (*ibid*: 76). The social life of sorghum had entered a new phase, becoming a commodity as the gift exchange was undermined by market forces. However, this market was not strictly determined by supply and demand.

Highly subsidized prices for sorghum seemed to guarantee a handsome income to families that had large landholdings on which to cultivate it. But that was not how the situation played out. The sorghum-for-cash program revealed the reality that farming incomes remained much lower than those for people in salaried jobs, largely because individual land holdings were so small. This was the situation in Jinmencheng. In the early 1980s, the sorghum field landscape had greatly

diminished.<sup>9</sup> (Today, sorghum fields lie on the outskirts of villages and towns.) Farmers quit growing sorghum partly because they were old and partly because their land was not sufficient to sustain a livelihood. In addition, small family farms could not adopt the mechanization that would reduce labor costs and increase yields. In consequence, even the higher-than-market price for sorghum did not prove a great boon to farmers subsisting on small holdings. Nevertheless, sorghum output increased as a result of a land readjustment scheme of the late 1980s and innovations in sorghum strains, soil management, and fertilizers. Today sorghum farming is mechanized and farmers are entrepreneurs. Sorghum production on Jinmen has entered the capitalist mode of agricultural production.

By the late 1970s, Jinmen's sorghum liquor had earned a reputation in Taiwan, and the Jinmen Distillery established a second production line in the 1990s to meet market demand. A number of other changes followed in due course. The amount of locally grown sorghum could not fulfill production needs, so the distillery began importing sorghum from Taiwan and abroad. Between 1978 and 1992 the military authorities insisted on using the reserve price measure in the interest of sustaining the standing patron-client relationship with locals.<sup>10</sup> But by 1991, one year before the end of military rule, Jinmen's farm population was at a record low, with not quite half as many farmers as in 1956 (see Table 2). Whereas the rice-fertilizer exchange resulted in low farming incomes and sent rural people to work in the new factories, where they could earn better wages (Wu 2007), in Jinmen, the rice-for-sorghum barter for many years generated a very different economy, a gift economy that produced and reproduced the military authorities' legitimacy.

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<sup>9</sup> Sorghum fields disappeared inside the village, but continued outside the village. Farmland on the outskirts of Jinmencheng was made up of large holdings. A retired farmer, Mr. Shao, who rented farmland outside Jinmencheng, told me he could produce 3 to 4 metric tons a year in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Reserve price policy increased his income, but it was still less than a worker's annual income at the Jinmen Distillery. He retired around 1993 or 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Jinmen county government continues this policy.

**Table 2** Agricultural Population

| Year | Working-Age Population <sup>11</sup> | Agricultural Population | Percentage of Agricultural Population |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1956 | 29687                                | 9436                    | 31.78                                 |
| 1961 | 18117                                | 8455                    | 30.07                                 |
| 1966 | 34048                                | 8597                    | 25.25                                 |
| 1971 | 37758                                | 6748                    | 17.87                                 |
| 1976 | 32871                                | 6745                    | 20.52                                 |
| 1981 | 30255                                | 5395                    | 17.83                                 |
| 1986 | 31100                                | 5168                    | 16.62                                 |
| 1991 | 29760                                | 4959                    | 11.45                                 |

Source: Yang 2004: 105.

## Conclusion

Sorghum and rice exchanged in the context of a militarized economy gradually went from the status of gifts to impersonal things whose value is determined through the market. The expectation of a war situation and political domination allowed the military authorities to keep Jinmen outside market processes to a considerable degree over a number of decades. The drive for self-sufficiency led them to prefer the rice-for-sorghum exchange over importing sorghum from Taiwan and abroad. Since the farmers saw rice, whose market value was much higher than that of sorghum, as a sort of gift, the obligation to reciprocate mobilized them and their families to cultivate sorghum and molded the population into useful and docile civilians of the nation.

Foucault (1977) argues that the body has become the target of the operation of power relations in modern society. In the course of militarization, micro mechanisms of discipline were imposed through the inspections and drills of required militia service and household hygiene contests. In addition, the military authorities tracked people's movements and supervised the timing of curfews. These disciplinary techniques aimed to create political allegiance all the way down to the level of the individual (Chi 2000). The sorghum program constitutes another regime of governance, whose disciplinary techniques effectively normalized the body becoming economically useful and politically docile. The exercise of disciplinary techniques hinged on a gift economy, in this case in the form of a barter, to generate

<sup>11</sup> Before 1971, "working population" refers to people above 12 years old. After 1971, only people above 15 years old were in the pool (Yang 2008: 105).

social relations that bonded civilians to the authoritarian state. That gift economy produced a long-term relationship and laid a foundation for social control and political legitimacy.

After the second Taiwan Strait crisis, the military situation gradually calmed, especially through the 1970s. Both sides of the Taiwan Strait shifted to psychological warfare, shelling the opposite shore with propaganda bombs from 1958 until the end of 1978.<sup>12</sup> Jinmen, although an isolated outpost, was embedded in the larger society of Taiwan. But from the 1970s the military was no longer able to stave off the effects of the market. This is particularly clear from the JDH's failure to stop smuggling. The JDH exercised tight surveillance over fishermen's entry and exit along Jinmen's beaches, but even so, Jinmen fishermen were keen on trading commodities made in Taiwan with fishermen from Fujian in exchange for an abundance of fish in the late 1970s (Li 2005: 241).

The market economy eventually undermined the gift economy the military had created. Once farmers demanded that cash be used to purchase sorghum, rice gradually lost the shine that came with gift status. Mechanized farming and land readjustment led farmers to embrace the spirit of capitalism. The commoditization of sorghum and rice reflected changing social relations between the giver and receiver. As the trajectory of gift exchange was diverted from its planned course towards the commodity economy, the militarized domination of Jinmen hit the limits of its political control even before the lifting of martial law in 1992. After 1992 the civilian county government was reinstated and the JDH reduced to a local unit of the Ministry of National Defense; it is now known as the Jinmen Defense Command (Jinmen fangwei zhihuibu) and no longer has any power over local affairs.

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<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that PRC ceased shelling after January 1, 1979, the JDH continued shelling until January 25 amid the establishment of diplomatic relationship between China and the United States (Chiang 2005).

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# 軍事化金門的治理與交換政治學 (1949-1992)

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1949年國民政府因國共內戰失利撤退台灣。國軍陸續進駐金門，金門一夕間成為捍衛台海安全基地與反共堡壘。金門防衛司令部司令胡璉將軍收到一瓶金門當地製作的高粱酒，他驚訝在南方小島居然喝到清香且喉韻十足的高粱烈酒。1952年金防部成立高粱酒廠。1950年代推出高粱換米政策，鼓勵農民種植高粱，以滿足生產高粱酒所需原料。在軍方與農民之間，米與高粱是禮物，而非商品。禮物經濟連結一套軍事化治理體系形成象徵暴力，亦即細緻委婉的統治模式，使被統治者不意識到強勢的統治手段。禮物經濟串連軍方與民眾的社會關係，使得後者視軍事化為日常生活的常態。

關鍵詞：高粱，米，禮物經濟，治理，金門

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