

## Crime and Security in Shanghai's French Concession, 1919-1937

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When Charles de Montigny arrived in Shanghai in 1847 and made his home in the “shed” that was to become the French Consulate, he was accompanied only by his family and a Polish translator.<sup>101</sup> He at once became the defender of Catholic missionaries and their flocks throughout China. Whenever he heard of Catholics in trouble, he would rush off, sometimes putting his life in danger, to protect them.<sup>102</sup> When explaining his seemingly reckless activities to the French Minister, he stressed that religious zeal did not guide his actions: ““Allow me to repeat, Minister, all the missionaries here are instruments of the future preponderance and success of France...It is not religious sentiment that prompts me to speak and act in their favor...but the interests of my country.””<sup>103</sup> Montigny, who established the French Concession and served as its first Consul-General, is credited with impacting the policies and character of the Concession for decades after his administration ended.

Indeed, the French authorities in Shanghai continued to be more concerned with having a foot in the colonial game than promoting any specific religiously-based morality.<sup>104</sup> The French sought to protect their expatriates, whether they were missionaries or entrepreneurs, as well as promote the secular “civilizing mission” that had more to do with liberty than with morality.<sup>105</sup> The authorities focused on maintaining the security of their borders and spreading republican values, and were less concerned with preventing traditional vices like gambling and prostitution. This guiding ideology may be why the French territory in Shanghai was known as an area mired in crime—and why the authorities did nothing to change this perception. The French identity in Shanghai was rooted in ideas of French military grandeur and this basis of national prestige, along with the republican civilizing mission, was not necessarily at odds with activities traditionally considered immoral.

Shanghai during the Republican period was a city of both glamour and vice.<sup>106</sup> It was at once the most modern metropolis in China, and the one most

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<sup>101</sup> Marie-Claire Bergère, *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 12-13.

<sup>102</sup> Bergère, 13.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>104</sup> Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1.

<sup>105</sup> Conklin, 2.

<sup>106</sup> The Republican period in China refers to when the Nationalist government was in power, i.e. 1912-1949.

overrun by gangsters and official corruption. Shanghai was seen as a place for exploits in gambling, drugs, and sex for both foreigners and Chinese. Indeed, a 1937 collection of stories written by American G.E. Miller about the city and its surroundings was entitled *Shanghai: A Paradise of Adventurers*.<sup>107</sup> There is no doubt that this reputation for lawlessness was, for some immigrants, as much a draw as the business opportunities. For Chinese migrants the lure of the foreign was part of the adventure; Shanghai had significant populations of Americans, British, French, and Russians. In many ways Shanghai lived up to its reputation, both in terms of cosmopolitanism and vice.<sup>108</sup>

Since the late 1840s Shanghai had been divided into three municipalities: the International Settlement, the French Concession, and the Chinese city. The French Concession was bordered on the south by the moat around the old Chinese city, on the north by the Yangjingbang canal, and to the west by the Huangpo River. The Opium Wars fought between the Chinese and British paved the way for the French to establish colonial territories in Shanghai as well as in Tianjin, Hankou, and on Shamian Island. The Sino-French war, fought between 1884 and 1885, solidified the presence of French influence in China and its peripheral states. The French in Shanghai enjoyed both relative political independence from the central French government and extraterritoriality in China. This endowed the consul-general, the Concession's head administrator, who changed every few years, with enormous influence over the Concession's governance.

The French Concession was the epitome of all that Shanghai represented in the Republican period. Not only did the population of the area include many different foreign nationalities and boast glamorous clubs, the Concession was well-known as the city's hub of organized crime. It at once attracted American and British businessmen with its picturesque streets, and former Chinese warlords looking for protection in the region's extraterritoriality, a *mélange* that created a volatile mix of respectability and immorality. Also noted by British residents of Shanghai was the Concession's activities and events honoring its soldiers and military. Indeed, the

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<sup>107</sup> Doug Slaymaker, "Shanghai Three Ways: The 1930s view from Tokyo, Paris, and Shanghai," in *Foreigners and Foreign Institutions in Republican China*, ed. Anne-Marie Brady and Douglas Brown (New York: Routledge 2013), 131.

<sup>108</sup> Yeh Wen-Hsin, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1843-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

identity of the Concession seemed closely tied to both its status as an entertainment center and to the historic greatness of the French military.<sup>109</sup>

Frenchtown's association with crime is paradoxical considering the high number of paramilitary police employed by the settlement, and leads one to wonder why the administrators tolerated gambling, prostitution, and opium smoking.<sup>110</sup> In this paper, I will examine the high level of crime that existed in the French Concession despite the consul-general's apparent ability to control the population with his paramilitary police force. Non-French foreigners in Shanghai saw the French Concession authorities at once as both preoccupied with security and rife with corruption, and unlike the French, perceived the prevalence of sin as a threat to the Concession's existence, and therefore to French cultural superiority and their international prestige. Despite, or perhaps because of, the colonialist agenda, which stressed military security and the spread of republican values, authorities allowed crime to run rampant. I argue that the French administrators and police force based their national pride on maintaining the physical borders of the Concession and protecting the area from outside threats rather than internal threats. This view is based on the idea that French administrators had the ability to control crime in their territory, a stance that emphasizes the power of the colonizers.

At the heart of this argument is the tension between the French "civilizing mission," the authorities' tolerance of crime, and the aggressive force upon which French rule rested.<sup>111</sup> The French mission to civilize, once dominated by Catholic missionaries, became a contested ground starting in 1870. The proponents of French republicanism struggled with the Catholics, both in France and abroad in the colonies, for control over French culture. This struggle over cultural values continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, when the republicans eclipsed their religious rivals. For the republicans, the Church, and everything associated with it, represented the old world and outdated morals that they wanted to erase. Rather than religious morality, politicians hoped to instill rationality, liberalism, egalitarianism, and individuality into their subjects at home and

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<sup>109</sup> "Non-French Residents and the Gambling Situation," *The China Weekly Review (1923-1950)*, May 30, 1931, 449, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1319904848?accountid=10629>.

<sup>110</sup> By referring to the police officers as paramilitary I mean they took on the responsibilities of police officers and the military. They were required to both police internal crime and protect the Concession's borders. Brian G. Martin, "The Pact with the Devil: The Relationship between the Green Gang and the French Concession Authorities, 1925-1935," in *Shanghai Sojourners*, ed. Frederic Wakemen, Jr., and Wen-hsin Yeh (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California 1992), 272.

<sup>111</sup> Conklin, 2.

overseas.<sup>112</sup> These values are not necessarily at odds with traditional vices such as gambling and drug use in the same way they are with Christian values. The republican civilizing mission could conceivably exist with activities traditionally deemed immoral without contradiction. Indeed, in the French Concession, vice and republican ideals existed simultaneously. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the French influence in Shanghai was primarily a secular one, and one seemingly unconcerned with, and perhaps even opposed to, Catholic standards of morality.

At the same time, the maintenance of the French territory in Shanghai was very clearly tied to military superiority. A contradiction inherent in the civilizing mission from the beginning was its simultaneous emphasis on equality and the expansionist goal to spread its “universal” principles through military force.<sup>113</sup> Thus the French *mission civilatrice* was in all cases predicated on French military superiority. The military was the backbone of French universal republicanism and French grandeur. This preoccupation with military superiority was especially pronounced after World War I, when French politicians and military officials were feeling emasculated and embarrassed by their performance in the Great War.<sup>114</sup> This concern could have been exported to the Concession in Shanghai, many of whose residents and administrators were participants in World War I. They not only wanted to protect the Concession from real threats, such as the possibility of a Nationalist takeover, but also to promote an image of France as militarily competent and masculine.<sup>115</sup> Along with more concrete motivations, there was also a cultural impetus behind military preparedness in the Concession.

### The French Colonial Project

This multifaceted nature of motives within the Shanghai territory is paralleled by the French colonial project’s various ambitions behind expansion. Alice Conklin, Sarah Fishman, and Robert Zarestky address the political and economic motivations

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<sup>112</sup> J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2006), 8; Alice L. Conklin, Sarah Fishman, and Robert Zarestky, *France and Its Empire Since 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

<sup>113</sup> Conklin, Fishman, Zarestky, 15.

<sup>114</sup> Carolyn J. Dean, *The Frail Social Body: Pornography, Homosexuality, and other Fantasies in Interwar France*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>115</sup> Bergère, 165.

for colonialism in their text *France and its Empire Since 1870*. They acknowledge a debate that still rages among historians on whether Jules Ferry's economic justification for colonial expansion was founded in reality. Some historians argue that the colonies in fact enriched the metropole economically by providing much-needed raw materials, and serving as a market for French-made goods. Other scholars of greater France contend that economic profit was merely an excuse. They examine the way colonies were actually an economic drain on metropolitan France.<sup>116</sup> The investment of money, men, and materials did not result in equal returns, and thus colonies were unprofitable for the French government. In response to this argument, historians who favor economic motivations stress that actual economic benefits mattered less than perceived economic profit. Conklin, Fishman, and Zaretsky themselves contend that both economics and politics played a role in the renewed emphasis on colonial expansion and maintenance of colonies after World War I.<sup>117</sup> They maintain that at this time colonies were in fact profitable for France—their role as a protected market was working, as 40 percent of French exports found buyers in the colonies.<sup>118</sup> The empire likewise benefitted France diplomatically by representing France's power in the European competition for global influence.

Diplomatic and economic profit are both ways historians have read the motivations behind French imperialism, yet the argument for cultural incentives is another piece of the puzzle. Conklin, Fishman, and Zaretsky take into account ideological and cultural reasons for the renewed attention paid to the colonies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They underscore the French politicians' sincere belief in the civilizing mission and their duty to bring progress to backward peoples.<sup>119</sup> French colonialism was at once a result of economic, political, and ideological motivations, all of which worked together to impel the French to expand their empire.

One historian who focuses on cultural aspects of French expansion is Robert Aldrich, who argues that a prevailing goal in late nineteenth century imperialism was to spread French cultural influence, with the intention of making “colonies little overseas Frances and perhaps, in the fullness of time, to turn Africans, Asians and islanders into French men and women of a different color.”<sup>120</sup> This objective, rooted in the idea of French cultural superiority, demonstrates that colonizers intended to

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<sup>116</sup> Conklin, Fishman, and Zaretsky, 68.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>120</sup> Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 110.

spread French ways of living and thinking. Aldrich also mentions the political motivations behind colonialism. He maintains that France saw its colonies as a way to gain power and prestige on the continent. Colonialists viewed expansion as a method to attain leverage against Germany and “recoup their losses in Europe.”<sup>121</sup> Implicit in this motivation is the nationalist outlook associated with Realpolitik. Moreover, according to Aldrich, despite the specific circumstances behind each case of expansion, French colonialism was always backed by military force. “Force...” he writes, “represented the only assurance of French conquest and continued control.”<sup>122</sup> Yet, military might was not only a necessity for imperialism, it was also part of French culture. Aldrich argues that in the early twentieth-century, French citizens “still thought of military campaigns as heroic” and “military officers as noble...”<sup>123</sup> Thus Aldrich characterizes French colonialism as an expression of French national pride laced with and dependent on lingering militarism.

France’s cultural motivation for imperialism is highlighted further by Tony Chafer and Amanda Sakur. According to Chafer and Sakur, despite the lack of consistent, state-determined colonial ideology, colonialists and other sources of popular propaganda embedded colonialism in ideas of French nationalism and national identity. In the introduction to their edited volume, *Promoting the Colonial Idea*, Chafer and Sakur argue that French national identity was unified through ideas of the glory of French empire. Their collection of papers demonstrates that “knowledge of the empire was used explicitly to foster a sense of belonging to France and a pride in its achievements.”<sup>124</sup> Moreover, French national identity in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century went through a profound change and became based on “militarism and heroic sacrifice” and equality of all citizens before the law, rather than on the uniting force of the Catholic Church.<sup>125</sup> Their argument solidifies the connection between imperialism, nationalism, and militarism about which Aldrich writes.

Chafer and Sakur essentially agree with Aldrich’s characterization of French colonialism, and I will use their arguments to show that this culture of nationalism and militarism affected the way the French Concession was administered. The

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<sup>121</sup> Aldrich, 97.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>124</sup> Tony Chafer and Amanda Sakur, eds, *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 6.

<sup>125</sup> Chafer and Sakur, 5; Dean, 4.

mission of France in China was to maintain its Concession to spread French culture, and the French were equipped to use force to protect their holdings. Because French national identity in the Concession was so tied up in militarism, the colonial authorities in the Concession focused more on external than internal threats. This outward focus allowed crime to proliferate within the Concession's borders. The collective identity of the French expatriates in the Concession was bound up in France's historic military feats, which also played a part in the creation of the colonial empire, and was less based on the upholding of morality within their territory.

### **Crime and its Role in Frenchtown**

When the French Concession is mentioned in studies on the history of Shanghai, the author invariably describes the high level of crime which characterized this section of town.<sup>126</sup> Two explanations for why the French authorities tolerated illegal activities dominate the discussion. The first is the argument that the French Concession would not be able to sustain itself economically unless it allowed for gambling and other crimes in exchange for a sizeable payoff from the Chinese gangsters that ran many of the illegal establishments. The second is that close association with Chinese gang members gave French administrators more control over the Chinese population, and thus the authorities allowed crime to flourish in service of political stability. These types of arguments are at the heart of the scholarly discussion of French colonialism, which identifies economic and political profit as two major motivations for imperialism. Of course, the French civilizing mission was also influential in the Concession, though it seemed to make the authorities more concerned with creating a place of at least nominal equality among races than with enforcing laws relating to opium and gambling. The French universal principles, laid out in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, emphasized the equality and freedom of all men, and it appears that the French in the Concession were in some ways truly working to achieve these ends.<sup>127</sup>

Another possibility is that the French cared so little about the Chinese residents of their Concession that they did not enforce laws that could have prevented many Chinese from becoming addicted to opium or losing all of their

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<sup>126</sup> For example, Michael Miller, *Shanghai on the Metro: Spies, Intrigue, and the French between the Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 241-244; Bergère, 117; Frederic E. Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 14.

<sup>127</sup> Dean, 4.

money to gambling.<sup>128</sup> It could also be that, as Ann Stoler argues, colonies provided Europeans areas that were situated safely away from the metropole to serve as outlets for their deviant behaviors.<sup>129</sup> Yet another possibility is that morals in the Concession could have been mirroring those in the metropole. The French colonialists may have simply exported their twentieth century conceptions of vice, which were different from those of the nineteenth century and which could have been different from British ideas of what constituted immoral behavior. In the case of sexual behaviors considered deviant, such as prostitution or homosexuality, the moral objections to these practices waned after World War I. Though still marginalized, deviant sexual behaviors were looked down upon because they were seen as detrimental to bodily health, not because they were immoral.<sup>130</sup> The disassociation of morality with acts previously considered delinquent may have had something to do with the French administrators' lack of concern with activities the Anglo-Americans deemed immoral. These two groups could have been operating from different ethical systems that stemmed from their home country's culture. In any case, while the French police were lax on internal laws, the borders to the concession were heavily guarded.

I hope to insert a cultural understanding of why crime proliferated in the French Concession that works alongside the arguments for political and economic motivations for allowing crime, rather than propose an alternative. I argue that the cultural emphasis on the military in the French Concession impacted how the colonial outpost was run. This may not have been the case in France's other colonies, but it highlights how certain aspects of French culture could be exported to and amplified in France's overseas territories.<sup>131</sup> In some cases religion was emphasized, in others it was French racial superiority, but in the Concession the authorities and media encouraged identity to form around French military

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<sup>128</sup> This is suggested by M.K. Han in M. K. Han, "French Colonial Policy in China as Reflected in the Shanghai French Concession," *The China Weekly Review* (Shanghai, China), Jan 23, 1932, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1324893839?accountid=10629>.

<sup>129</sup> Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>130</sup> Alain Corbin, *Woman for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 331-334; Dean, 4.

<sup>131</sup> Kevin J Callahan and Sarah A Curtis, Introduction of *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2009) 1-4.



achievements.<sup>132</sup> Within my argument, the Shanghai Concession fits well into the story of imperialism based on national pride and republican universalism, and shows that the culture backing colonialism had concrete influences on the administration of the Concession. This outlook takes for granted that the French exerted control over their colonial holdings and did not enter into existing political systems, but instead created their own.

### Power Dynamics Within the Concession

The issue of control is one that is up for debate in the Shanghai arena; historians Marie-Claire Bergère and Brian Martin both emphasize the power of the Chinese in shaping the foreign concessions. Though it is true that Shanghai was different from most colonial cities in that the colonized were given more rights and influenced the development of the city, the French Concession's extraterritoriality still gave the French administrators complete political control. This gave rise to resentment and anti-colonial sentiment among many Chinese. Even when the Nationalist government seemed to cooperate with the Western imperialists, the presence of colonial outposts on their soil was a humiliation and a threat to their power. Because policing crime and determining what was considered crime concerns controlling bodies and defining social values, the crime issue can serve as a microcosm for exploring the tensions in Shanghai and looking at who was really in control.

In *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity*, Bergère maintains that the existence of dancing halls and opium dens in the French Concession was a result of both the authorities' close relationship with the Shanghai Green Gang, as well as an economic necessity. Allying with the powerful criminal organization allowed the French to

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<sup>132</sup> Racism was, of course, a fact of all colonial missions but was especially present in French colonies in Africa. For more on this see Owen White, "Miscegenation and the Popular Imagination," *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, ed. Tony Chafer and Amanda Sakur (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001): 133-142; Alice Conklin, "Faire Naitre v. Faire du Noir: Race Regeneration in France and French West Africa, 1895- 1940," *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, ed. Tony Chafer and Amanda Sakur (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001): 143-155; Emmanulle Sibeud, "'Negrophilia', 'Negrology' or 'Africanism'? Colonial Ethnography and Racism in France around 1900," *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, ed. Tony Chafer and Amanda Sakur (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001): 156-167. For more on a colony that remained heavily influenced by Catholicism in the twentieth century see Jeremy Rich, "Marcel Lefebvre in Gabon: Revival, Missionaries, and the Colonial Roots of Catholic Traditionalism," *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France*, ed. Kevin J Callahan and Sarah A Curtis (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2009): 53-83.

maintain control over the trade unions and also served to keep Nationalist troops out of the Concession.<sup>133</sup> Equally important to the continuance of the Concession was a steady income. Bergère writes that “given that its revenues from taxation were more modest than those of the international settlement, since it was less densely populated and less active, it was obliged to increase its resources by taxing opium dens, gaming houses, and brothels, which were “consequently in its interest to encourage or at least to tolerate.”<sup>134</sup> Moreover, in 1927 when the Consul-General Paul Emile Naggiar apparently made a deal with the Green Gang to provide more police protection to the Gang-owned opium dens and gambling houses in exchange for the Gang’s help in controlling the Chinese population, these two concerns were joined.<sup>135</sup> Frenchtown administrators could profit off of the immoral establishments while ensuring domination over their colony. Bergère characterizes this relationship as one where the Chinese were actually in control. Throughout her book she reinserts Chinese agency into the story of colonialism in Shanghai. This view complicates the version told by historians of French colonialism, where the colonizers were the dominant players.

Brian G. Martin, in his article “Du Yuesheng, the French Concession, and Social Networks in Shanghai,” likewise contextualizes the French Concession within the established Chinese governance, highlighting the Chinese influence over the foreign administrations. In explaining the level of crime in the Concession, Martin acknowledges the monetary benefits the administrators received by letting immoral activities thrive, but focuses more on the political perks of being associated with and bending to the will of members of the Chinese Green Gang. According to Martin, this group of criminals influenced “the lives of nearly everyone in the city: marginalized beggars, industrial workers, office clerks, and captains of commerce and industry.”<sup>136</sup> Some known Green Gang members were even hired as members of the police force. Because of the Gang’s entrenched power the Concession authorities benefited from being on good terms with its leaders. Gang members could help the Concession administrators quell Chinese revolts and strikes, and generally control the Chinese population within the French borders. By tolerating the Gang and its

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<sup>133</sup> Berègre, 192. The Green Gang was a powerful, criminal Chinese Gang.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>136</sup> Brian G. Martin, “Du Yuesheng, the French Concession, and Social Networks in Shanghai,” in *At the Crossroads of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and State-Building in Republican Shanghai*, ed. Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008): 65.

activities, the authorities maintained in turn some power over the gangsters, who had a vested interest in supporting the Concession.<sup>137</sup> Thus tolerance of crime in the French-administered area came down to the maintenance of political power.

Martin goes further to argue that Du Yuesheng, the leader of the Green Gang, actually functioned more like a Chinese politician.<sup>138</sup> Warlordism was the prevailing political structure in China before this period and can be argued to have lasted throughout World War II. Du's role in Shanghai resembled that of how a warlord would operate—he even had connections with the Nationalist government.<sup>139</sup> Seen in this context, the French participated in the Chinese political system. Like Berègre, Martin reminds the reader that it is easy to imagine that extraterritoriality and the unequal treaties signed after the Opium wars made French dealings in China separate from the Chinese political system. In reality, he argues, despite their extraterritoriality, and the indignation of the Chinese residents at the crime around them, the French actually participated in politics on Chinese terms.

While there was certainly more space for Chinese agency in Shanghai than in other French Colonial outposts, within their Concession the French were in control. Even their allowances to the Chinese can be seen as part of their colonial strategy. Either way, it is important to interrogate the French mindset and motivation as they interacted with (or perhaps acted within) the Chinese system. Looking at how the culture informed French imperialism can help explain why French administrators in Shanghai were willing to have a close relationship with a Chinese gang and why they allowed crime to spread even while their neighbors on all sides were criticizing this decision. It would be unfair to say that the crime in the French Concession was solely a result of the tradition of Chinese warlordism, though this idea was believed by Westerners at the time.<sup>140</sup> In actuality, the prevalence of establishments deemed morally reprehensible by Shanghainese and Shanghailanders in the French section of town resulted from many factors. There were economic and control-oriented motivations for allowing the crime to flourish, but there is also an unexamined cultural basis at the heart of this issue. I hope to expound upon how the French expatriates' preoccupation with military prowess played a role in the perceived and actual moral leniency of the French Concession.

Despite the Concession's importance in completing the story of French colonialism, Frenchtown is surprisingly understudied. Indeed, French historians are

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<sup>137</sup> Martin, "Du Yuesheng," 69.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Wakeman, 8.

even said to “ignore” the subject.<sup>141</sup> This oversight of the topic of the Concession may be due to the lack of sources available from its French residents, though new traces are being discovered even now. For example, the *Journal de Shanghai*, a newspaper published from 1928 to 1940 out of the French Concession, is currently unknown to many scholars. Not only is there no mention or use of this paper in any work I have read, one scholar even asserts that the only newspaper that emerged from Frenchtown was *L’Echo de Chine*, which was under the direction of the *Missions Etrangères* in Paris and whose extreme views supposedly embarrassed the civilians and authorities of the French Concession.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, working with only one paper from a religious organization would not lend to a full picture of life in the Concession. Furthermore, the English-language newspapers mention Frenchtown surprisingly seldom, given how intertwined the International Settlement and the Concession were.<sup>143</sup> Yet these pieces on the French-controlled area still give insight into both the events taking place in the Concession and how the Chinese, English, and American residents of Shanghai saw the Concession and its French administrators. *Le Journal de Shanghai* adds to these outside observations, giving a fuller picture of life in the Concession. Thus, I will examine the French Concession both in terms of how the French perceived it, as well as through the lens of its foreign and Chinese neighbors. First, I will establish the extent of crime or ‘immoral’ activities that were said to be taking place in the Concession. I will then describe the reactions the Concession’s neighbors had to Frenchtown’s loose laws. In the following section, I look at displays of French nationalism within the Concession and their relationship to the military and the area’s supposed lawlessness. Finally, I speculate that the Concession authorities’ identities, based on maintenance of French military superiority, translated into a focus on the physical security of the Concession that led French administrators to, intentionally or unintentionally, overlook internal crime.

### Perception of Crime in the Concession

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<sup>141</sup> Nicholas R. Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire: Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920s* (Hanover: Middlebury College Press 1991), 24.

<sup>142</sup> Clifford, 67.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

In the Republican Period, the French Concession was widely touted as one of the most desirable places to live in all of Shanghai.<sup>144</sup> This section of town apparently “retained the charm of a French city” even in 1935, after several skyscrapers had been erected.<sup>145</sup> A writer for *The China Press* attributed Frenchtown’s charm to “its gardens, its quiet streets,” which provided a break from the busy excitement of the business-oriented International Settlement.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, the Concession attracted Americans, British, and wealthy Chinese to its streets, and eventually the percentage of non-French residents grew greater than that of the French citizens residing there. In 1930 there were 434,885 Chinese and 12,335 foreigners residing in the Concession.<sup>147</sup> Chinese residents included well-known intellectuals such as Mao Dun.<sup>148</sup>

The French-controlled area also attracted many residents considered less upstanding than the businessmen who migrated from the International Settlement. Russian refugees fled to the Concession looking for protection from the Bolsheviks, and the French police sheltered Korean refugees fleeing colonial rule within the borders of the settlement.<sup>149</sup> Likewise, Chinese political dissidents as well as common criminals sought refuge in the Concession’s extraterritoriality. At the time, some blamed the French authorities’ willingness to accept refugees for the area’s high rate of crime. In his 1937 work, *The Shanghai Problem*, William Johnstone pinpointed the Russian refugees as the perpetrators of much of the city’s crime. According to Johnstone, Russians, who made up the majority of the Concession’s refugee population, were “criminals or would become criminals in an effort to maintain themselves.”<sup>150</sup> He reported that police records from both the International Settlement and the French Concession show that a “large percentage of reported crimes involve members of this nationality.”<sup>151</sup> Because most of these alleged Russian refugee-criminals lived in the Concession, the burden of punishment rested in the hands of the French police. Johnstone characterized the Concession as Shanghai’s

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<sup>144</sup> “Non-French Residents and the Gambling Situation.”

<sup>145</sup> A.M. Le Pauld, “History of French Concession Reads Like Thrilling Novel,” *The China Press* (1925-1938), Jul 14, 1935. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1371747609?accountid=10629>.

<sup>146</sup> “History of French Concession Reads Like Thrilling Novel.” *The China Press* was an American publication.

<sup>147</sup> Wakeman, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Slaymaker, 132; Clifford, 64. Mao Dun (矛盾) was a novelist and left-wing critic of the Nationalist government.

<sup>149</sup> William Crane Johnstone, *The Shanghai Problem* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1901), 104.

<sup>150</sup> Johnstone, 109.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

hotbed of crime, which he attributed to inept policing and political corruption on the part of the Concession's authorities:

It is generally admitted by most careful observers in Shanghai that illegal activities of all sorts are carried on in the Concession without much interference by the police, and allegations of graft and corruption have been made far more often against the French administration than against that of the International Settlement.<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, although Shanghai in general was known as a city that had more relaxed morals than the rest of the country, to those in Shanghai, the French Concession was considered the source of this reputation. Chinese residents condemned the area's lack of moral sensibility from a neo-Confucian perspective, while non-French Westerners in Shanghai found that the activities in the French Concession offended their Judeo-Christian values. Johnstone ventures that this tendency toward corruption may have been due to the extreme power given the French Consul-General. The lawfulness of the Concession, he claimed, depended solely on the "honesty and ability" of this man.<sup>153</sup>

The Consul-General did in fact govern the Concession with virtually no interference; power was controlled almost exclusively by whoever held this post. This individual had full control over the Concession's police forces, and could veto any resolution put forward by the Concession's *Conseil Municipal*, which in practice was merely an "advisory committee."<sup>154</sup> The Consul was likewise un beholden to the authority of the metropole, a state of affairs which dates back to the first Consul-General, Charles de Montigny. Montigny established the Concession's relative independence from the French government in 1847 by emphasizing the need for quick action in Shanghai and drawbacks of waiting for government consent when making an urgent decision.<sup>155</sup> This freedom from oversight continued throughout the existence of the Concession, giving successive Consuls free reign. In this way, the Shanghai territory differed from other French colonial outposts, which were more closely watched by the state. Corruption also marked the rule of each Consul-General. Historian Brian Martin contends that the level of crime and corruption in

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>154</sup> Clifford, 24.

<sup>155</sup> Bergère, 14.

the French-controlled area was so constant over time and between Consul-Generals that it must have been institutionalized, rather than based on the desires of corrupt individuals.<sup>156</sup> Martin argues that organized crime flourished in Frenchtown due to the cooperative relationship between the gangsters and officials and draws attention to a number of gangsters involved in selling narcotics who were hired by Concession authorities as detectives.<sup>157</sup> Martin stresses the saturation of crime in this settlement, arguing that not only was crime allowed by French authorities, they even employed criminals. Thus, both then and now the French Concession is seen as a place rife with immoral activities.

### **Shanghainese and Nationalist Reactions against Crime**

How, then, did this level of criminal activity in the French Concession affect the Chinese perception of France and the Concession in particular? This period is argued to have been formative in modern China's development. William Kirby claims that foreign relations were a substantial part of China's transformation at this time. Indeed, he argues that "nothing mattered more" in the Republican Period than China's relationship with and reaction to foreign ideas, institutions, and people.<sup>158</sup> For Kirby, the significant changes were the "birth of modern state capitalism" and the growth of the Chinese bourgeoisie, both of which developed due to foreign investment.<sup>159</sup> This narrative empowers the foreigners, endowing them with the ability to change all of China with their influence.

Along with political and economic influences, contact with foreigners also had an impact on Chinese culture. The foreign-controlled areas in Shanghai provided many opportunities for Chinese to experience western ways of living. This not only meant cosmopolitanism, consumerism, and glamour, but also vice. In the eyes of Shanghainese, Western capitalism was epitomized by the crime they saw as permeating the foreign concessions. Doug Slaymaker writes that "the edge of lawlessness and depravity based on illegalities and black markets so integral to the wild nature of Shanghai, was understood [by the Chinese] to be a legacy of the

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<sup>156</sup> Martin, "The Pact with the Devil," 266.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>158</sup> William C. Kirby, "The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations At Home and Abroad in the Republican Era," *The China Quarterly*, no. 150 (1997): 433.

<sup>159</sup> Kirby, 434.

Western residents.”<sup>160</sup> Foreign settlements represented crime for the Chinese residents of Shanghai. William Johnstone and some modern historians, however, have seen the Chinese relationship to foreign-administered areas, particularly the French Concession, as one characterized by protection. Johnstone contends that “The French Concession, then, has significance for present Sino-foreign relations chiefly because it is a foreign-controlled area offering to foreigners and Chinese alike a place of refuge and security.”<sup>161</sup> Historian Nicholas Clifford similarly sees the French Concession as having provided security and stability to the Chinese residents.<sup>162</sup> Both of these interpretations may be true, and both make sense within my argument. The French Concession was at the same time crime-ridden and secure because of the focus on battling external rather than internal threats. It would be perceived by the Chinese residents as a place riddled with vice, and simultaneously as a shelter from persecution or attack by the Chinese government.

Though the outpost of the French Concession may have been a safe haven for Chinese dissident intellectuals and warlords, the Nationalists and everyday residents of Shanghai may have been more focused on the Concession’s lack of compliance than with Chinese moral sensibility. The Nationalist government had a stake in reducing crime in Shanghai to live up to the “revolutionary ideal” on which it was based, and in the name of neo-Confucian values.<sup>163</sup> Chiang Kai-shek saw crime as a potential threat, since he believed loose morals led to political radicalism.<sup>164</sup> However, though Chiang was nominally against social evils such as opium, he tolerated Du Yuesheng’s “opium empire,” and even taxed profits from the opium trade.<sup>165</sup> Chinese ratepayers in the Concession wrote a letter to the French authorities arguing that gambling would lead to the ruin of men and their families, and eventually the ruin of society as a whole, a concern which was particularly worrisome in the Confucian value system.<sup>166</sup> Further, certain members of the Chinese press were

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<sup>160</sup> Slaymaker, 132.

<sup>161</sup> Johnstone, 113.

<sup>162</sup> Clifford, xi.

<sup>163</sup> Bergère, 215.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>165</sup> R. Bin Wong, “Opium and Modern Chinese State-Making,” *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan 1839-1952* ed. Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 206.

<sup>166</sup> Eugenia Lean, *Public Passions: The Trial of Shi Jianqiao and the Rise of Popular Sympathy in Republican China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 61. “Despatch no. 1248 dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in



also concerned by the alleged rise of crime. In one newspaper published in Shanghai, a writer deplores the selling of pornography on the streets of Frenchtown as contrary to Confucian morals.<sup>167</sup> In an issue published in 1931, he urges the French authorities to crack down on this practice. One year later it seems some Chinese living in Shanghai had not witnessed the moral improvement and police involvement for which they were hoping. An article written by a Shanghai resident that criticized the Concession's tolerance of crime and warning of the possible consequences appeared in the *China Weekly Press* in 1932. Not only did the author insist that Concession authorities were willingly turning a blind eye to illegal activities, he claimed that tolerance of these crimes encouraged the growth of vice. According to Han, French administrators were "promoting such social evils and assisting in foisting these demoralizing vices upon the Chinese."<sup>168</sup> Indeed, to him the Concession had become "the dirtiest spot in the Orient."<sup>169</sup> Han supposed that corruption was the reason behind the French authorities' tolerance of crime. He explained that "the French psychology seems to be that so long as the authorities can raise enough money to run the municipality, they have little interest in the sources from which it is derived."<sup>170</sup> In his final paragraph he insists that there can be no improvement as long as extraterritoriality exists, implicitly threatening French control of the Concession.

Though both of these articles are critical of the moral leniency in the French-controlled area, it is difficult to know if this was the general opinion among Chinese residents in Shanghai. The views expressed in the second article by M.K. Han in particular should not be assumed to be representative of Chinese in Shanghai. Han's article was handpicked by employees of *The China Weekly Review*, an American publication that had printed several articles condemning the French authorities the year before. Indeed, Han's piece even had an editor's note that made sure the reader knew Han was Chinese, and highlighted and expanded upon a few of his major points. The paper's selection of this article reflects a broader trend in how non-French foreigners viewed the Concession's relationship to crime.

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Peking to Lord Cushenden at the Foreign Office in London," *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports, 1842-1943: British Government Records from the International City*, Vol. 16 (1928-1930), ed. Robert L. Jarman. (Slough: Archive Editions Ltd., 2008), 184.

<sup>167</sup> Chinese newspaper.

<sup>168</sup> M. K. Han, "French Colonial Policy in China as Reflected in the Shanghai French Concession," in G.E. Miller, *Shanghai: A Paradise of Adventurers* (New York: Orsay Publishing House 1937) 261.

<sup>169</sup> Han, 261.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

To the Anglo-Americans living in both the French area and the International Settlement, the French Concession's tolerance of crime was even more worrying. They saw the level of crime in Frenchtown as a threat to both French influence and security in China, and to their own place in Shanghai. *The China Weekly Review* published two articles in 1931 lamenting the moral degradation of the French Concession, and warning against possible consequences. The first article begins by tying the illegal activities common in Frenchtown to France's international reputation. "The French are internationally known as a frugal people," the writer begins, "but those responsible for the administration of the local French Concession seem to be extending their acquisitive instincts to an unusual extent in the gradual conversion of the French-administered area into an Oriental 'Monte Carlo.'"<sup>171</sup> The Anglo-Americans may have noticed a trend for French territories to become centers of crime, and gambling in particular— an inclination which may have become more worrying the closer it got to their spheres of influence.

The author continues to use the specter of French international prestige to condemn the new proliferation of gambling houses in the Concession. Not only have all gambling institutions that were kicked out of the International Settlement and Chinese-administered areas moved to Frenchtown, the Concession was also open to "all other kinds of vices."<sup>172</sup> This openness has given the French part of town a reputation that is known even outside of Shanghai. The writer spoke with one man who had heard of the Concession as a gambling center as far away as Tokyo, and who was invited to four different gambling establishments located in the French-controlled area on his first night in the city. The writer of the article was unsure if the French authorities were aware of the "ugly rumors" which were circulating about the gambling centers, and their link with corruption. He was sure, however, that the authorities knew about the illegal acts within their borders, because they "maintain absolute control of their Concession."<sup>173</sup> That the French authorities remain complacent despite both knowledge of the crime and ability to stop it confounds this reporter. Indeed, he speculates that "one would think the French would have some regard for their national prestige in this part of the world and would not permit their Concession, once regarded as the most desirable residence

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<sup>171</sup> "French National Policy and the Local Concession," *The China Weekly Review (1923-1950)*, May 23, 1931. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1319905390?accountid=10629>.

<sup>172</sup> "French National Policy and the Local Concession."

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

section, to degenerate into a ‘safe’ place for the location of gambling joints.”<sup>174</sup> The author saw French national prestige as rooted in morality, and on this basis notices a tension in the French colonial project in China. Instead of achieving their goal of portraying French grandeur, the administration in Shanghai was evincing French moral decay. Yet the French were establishing their national pride on a different basis. Instead of predicating their superiority on upholding Christian morals, they displayed French grandeur through military spectacles and references to French military capability.

A second article in 1931 similarly focuses on the prevalence of gambling establishments, and highlights the consequences for both the residents of the Concession and the municipal authorities. According to the author, four gambling houses had recently been opened in the residential part of town, which drew the concern of homeowners in the area. The primary concern seems to be home value prices being affected by the new additions to the neighborhoods. The author contends that opening these establishments “means a general slump in real estate values because no law-abiding citizen cares to reside in close proximity to a gambling resort that is likely to be raided or which at any time might be the scene of serious disorder of a violent character.”<sup>175</sup> Yet the author goes on to extrapolate on the negative effects that allowing these establishments will have on the French Concession. He warns that “the inevitable result of the turning of the French Concession into an Oriental ‘Monte-Carlo’ will be to hasten the passing of Frenchtown to Chinese control.”<sup>176</sup> In the author’s opinion, the very existence of the French Concession is threatened when it allows crime to proliferate.

There are multiple possibilities for what would have motivated journalists in the International Settlement to criticize the French authorities so harshly. Perhaps they were sincerely worried about the fate of their neighboring settlement. Maybe, as suggested by the second article, Anglo-Americans were concerned about the falling real estate prices, and the living conditions of the many Americans and British who resided in the French-administered area. Another possibility is that journalists feared that if the French Concession attracted the attention and the criticism of the Chinese Nationalist government, which was growing in strength, all concessions and foreign settlements would be vulnerable to being forcibly ousted.<sup>177</sup> A fourth likelihood is one that the French authorities suspected: that the International Settlement was

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> “Non-French Residents and the Gambling Situation.”

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

eager to look for reasons to take over control of the Concession.<sup>178</sup> In any case, the demise of the French Concession came not from the prevalence of crime, nor their Anglo-American neighbors or the Nationalist government, but from the Japanese invasion in World War Two.<sup>179</sup>

### Crime in the Concession as Reported by its French Residents

Modern historians as well as Chinese and foreign residents of Republican Shanghai perceived the French Concession as rife with crime and immoral activities. It is difficult to know now how well-founded this idea was. Most of the information on which historians have based their arguments comes from British, American, or Chinese sources, making all of it somewhat suspect, as these groups may have had an interest in portraying the Concession in a bad light. Historian Frederic Wakeman, for example, uses the aforementioned article by M.K. Han to argue that the French Concession “had the largest opium dens, the fanciest casinos, the biggest brothels, and the most brazen prostitutes.”<sup>180</sup> Han’s article may certainly have been an accurate reflection of the Chinese opinion and of the reality in Frenchtown, but it also may have been published by the *China Weekly Review* as a result of the nationalistic competition that was at the heart of colonialism. An article highlighting the French outpost’s moral failings while portraying the International Settlement in a relatively positive light could have been a product of rivalry between colonial powers. Han’s goal in writing the piece could also have been an effort to pit the two foreign powers against each other—a tactic long used in Chinese diplomacy to control ‘barbarians.’<sup>181</sup> With all of the possible motivations for deeming the French Concession a mire of immorality, it is hard to determine from these sources if the crime rate was indeed shockingly high. Historians using this source and others published by American newspapers may be misled if they embrace without question the opinions of the American journalists.

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<sup>178</sup> Martin, “The Pact with the Devil,” 273.

<sup>179</sup> Christine Cornet, “The Bumpy End of the French Concession and French Influence in Shanghai, 1937-1946,” in *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Shanghai under Japanese Occupation*, ed. Christian Henriot and Wen-hsin Yeh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004), 257.

<sup>180</sup> Wakeman, 14.

<sup>181</sup> Bergère, 31.

An equally unreliable, but as of yet unexamined source, are the crime reports published in the daily newspaper *Le Journal de Shanghai*. In June 1931, the crime log recorded a total of 330 arrests; omitting arrests associated with gambling and with opium smoking, the total is 156, 136 of which were Chinese offenders.<sup>182</sup> The other 20 arrests were most likely Russians, judging by the surnames listed in the column. Theft was the most common non-vice related crime, accounting for 97 of that month's arrests, with Chinese making up 90% of those arrested. The second most common warrant for arrest was aggression; 21 Chinese residents were taken in for this crime. By far the most arrests were for vice-related crimes. Seven gambling houses were busted in the month of June, and 98 gamblers were taken to the station. Fifteen opium dens were closed by the police, with 76 smokers being picked up from the establishments raided in that month. Judging from this log, it seems that there was quite a bit of crime and that the Concession police were vigilant in their pursuit of wrongdoers. However, it is certainly a possibility that many crimes went unpunished and were therefore not reported in the paper. One form of delinquency that is noticeably absent is prostitution. Prostitution was legal but regulated, and both licensed and unlicensed brothels set up shop in the Concession. According to Wakeman, in 1930, 1 in 3 women in the French section of town were prostitutes.<sup>183</sup> It could be that police were arresting prostitutes and their clients but it was not published in the *Journal*, or it could be as Wakeman suggested— that French policemen did nothing as unlicensed prostitutes walked shamelessly by.<sup>184</sup> In either case, that this (sometimes) crime is not mentioned raises suspicion about other immoral activities that may have gone unreported or unpunished.

Two years before, in 1929, the *Journal* was less consistent in its coverage of arrests within the Concession. Though there was a frequently recurring column on the epidemic of armed robbery, few other arrests were mentioned. The robberies totaled 71 for the month of July, 51 of which were armed.<sup>185</sup> Opium, which was a common warrant for arrest in June 1931, is only mentioned once. Though there was only one gambling establishment closed down, 210 gamers were arrested in that single bust.<sup>186</sup> It is uncertain whether the crimes reported are an accurate

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<sup>182</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), June 2-June 30, 1931. The number of arrests for the whole month in the Concession is roughly equal to the number of arrests reported for the International Settlement in one week. *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), June 7, 1931. All dates accessed on <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327989155/date>

<sup>183</sup> Wakeman, 109-115.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>185</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), July 2- July 31 1929.

<sup>186</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), July 23, 1929.

representation of the types and numbers of crime that existed in the Concession since the reporting seems so spotty. Information about the arrests that occurred in the International Settlement, however, is consistent and clear. A weekly report shows that an average of 271 offenders were picked up in the Settlement.<sup>187</sup> There are several possibilities for why the amount of arrests published in the *Journal* increased so substantially between 1929 and 1931; the amount of crime in the Concession could have increased, the police may have begun arresting more people, or the reporting could have become more consistent. I believe it may have been a mixture of the last two likelihoods. Perhaps after the continued Anglo-American criticisms the French wanted to curb the complaints by reporting their arrests more consistently in an attempt to prove their vigilance, or perhaps the authorities and police were in fact arresting more offenders to satisfy their British and American residents.

Looking at activities that were not considered illegal can give us a better sense of how prevalent vice was in the Concession. Greyhound racing is one case where the French Concession authorities were lenient compared to those in the International Settlement. Even after the British criminalized greyhound racing in their territory it continued to be practiced legally in Frenchtown. In 1928 the Chinese Ratepayers Association began a crusade against legal greyhound races in the foreign concessions. They protested the races in the International Settlement and the fact that another racecourse was opening in the French Concession, arguing that this type of gambling preyed on poor Chinese.<sup>188</sup> The Chinese delegate of the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce even wrote a letter to Lord Cushendun objecting to the greyhound races.<sup>189</sup> Judging from the exchange of letters between the Settlement administrators and the British Foreign Ministry, the British authorities in Shanghai took these complaints seriously. They feared that the Chinese would use the gambling as a basis for abolishing extraterritoriality, and that they as colonizers were

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<sup>187</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), July 21, 14, 7, 2. 1929.

<sup>188</sup> Despatch no. 1248 dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in Peking to Lord Cushenden at the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 184; “Telegram no. 957 dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 1928 from Mr. Newton at the British Legation in Peking to the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 150.

<sup>189</sup> “Despatch no. 1248 dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in Peking to Lord Cushenden at the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 181.

failing in their moral responsibility to provide an example for civilized living.<sup>190</sup> “Ultraconservative” newspapers like *North China Daily News* echoed this sentiment, and had a significant influence on the authorities’ decisions.<sup>191</sup> Administrators were also aware of the turn against greyhound racing at home in England, and were wary about being connected to a “discredited undertaking.”<sup>192</sup> Though some administrators had no qualms about adopting a system where the municipality benefited monetarily from the races, in May 1929 gambling on dogs in the International Settlement was restricted, and eventually banned, as part of the general campaign against gambling.<sup>193</sup> Still, racing in the Settlement was being discussed in newspapers even in 1931.<sup>194</sup> By that time the owners of race track Luna Park had begun attempting to make money in other ways. In June 1931 they advertised fairground games, boutiques, and a beauty contest to be held at the track.<sup>195</sup> Thus, the British, though they were initially a source of ‘vice’ in Shanghai, curtailed gambling in the Settlement due to Chinese indignation and the pressure of their moral burden as colonizers.

During the 1928 crusade against gambling and greyhound racing in the foreign concessions, the French were opening a new race course in the Concession that was to be heralded as the best race course in the world.<sup>196</sup> The Canidrome opened in the fall of 1928, and wasted no time in beginning its front-page advertisements in the *Journal de Shanghai*, which would last at least until 1936.<sup>197</sup> This type of legal gambling contributed to the idea that the French territory was a mire of vice. Not only were the French police inept at persecuting illegal gambling, according

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<sup>190</sup> “Telegram no. 1126 dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in Peking to the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political and Economic Reports*, 168; “Despatch no. 1248 dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in Peking to Lord Cushenden at the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 182.

<sup>191</sup> Bergère, 95; “Despatch no. 1248 dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in Peking to Lord Cushenden at the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 172.

<sup>192</sup> “Ibid., 179.

<sup>193</sup> “Despatch no. 1248 dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1928 from Sir Miles Lampson at the British Legation in Peking to Lord Cushenden at the Foreign Office in London,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 178; “Despatch no. 300 dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 1929 from the British consulate-general at Shanghai to the British Legation at Peking enclosing the Shanghai Intelligence Report for the six months ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1929,” *Shanghai Political & Economic Reports*, 509.

<sup>194</sup> H. Arnhold, “The greyhound racing issue” *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette (1870-1941)*, 1931, Jan 27, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1418946859?accountid=10629>.

<sup>195</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), June 19, 1931.

<sup>196</sup> “Canidrome Opening Meeting A Great Success; 12,000 See Daylight Greyhound Racing,” *The China Press (1925-1938)*, Nov 19, 1928, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1321529516?accountid=10629>.

<sup>197</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), July 3, 1935; Sept 14, 1928. See Figure 1.

to the Anglo-Americans, the French administration openly condoned and profited from an activity that was deemed morally reprehensible by the British and Chinese alike. Looking at legal vice in the Concession exposes the rift between British and French conceptions of morality and their duty as civilizers. Tolerance of legal vice perpetuated the perception of the French Concession as a morally lenient territory, furthering its association with and partially explaining the tolerance of illegal activities.

That the French did not outlaw greyhound races despite the Chinese and British public opinion shows a difference in British and French colonial theory and goals and their ideas on morality. The French less concerned with moralizing compared to their British counterparts. As Marie-Claire Bergère writes, “the values of the French Concession were not those of Anglo-American civilization,” and that if one judges the Concession “by the criteria of British pragmatism, liberalism, and morality, the management of the French concession may indeed seem somewhat unsatisfactory.”<sup>198</sup> The French were operating from a value system based on the Jacobin tradition of universalism, and this guiding ideology meant they strived to treat Chinese people as “French men and women of a different color” rather than as if they were a lesser race.<sup>199</sup> In an article on the 1931 French Colonial Exhibition published in the *Journal de Shanghai*, Marshal Lyautey is quoted as saying that “the point of colonial penetration is not to oust nor to assimilate the colonized, but to ‘associate’ them by equipping them for modernity.”<sup>200</sup> The author also includes a quotation from the Minister of Colonies, M. Paul Reynard, who, in a speech he gave at the opening of the Exhibition, insisted that the French colonizers “don’t speak in the name of a race, arrogant and cruel standards, impassable moat, but in the name of a humane and sweet civilization, of which the character is to be universal.”<sup>201</sup> The French civilizing mission was intended to bring liberty, equality, and rationality to subjects of the French empire.

Indeed, the French in Shanghai were at least more generous to the Chinese residents of their section than their Anglo-American neighbors. In 1914 they allowed two Chinese members to sit on the board of the Municipal Council—twelve years before the International Settlement invited Chinese to be part of their government.

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<sup>198</sup> Bergère, 117-118.

<sup>199</sup> Aldrich, 110.

<sup>200</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), May 31, 1931.

<sup>201</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), May 31, 1931.



While in 1928 the British would still not allow Chinese visitors into their parks, in the nineteenth century the French Concession began distributing free water to all of its residents and had planted trees along the public roads.<sup>202</sup> They sought to make the Concession a comfortable and beautiful home to both Europeans and (some) Chinese. Even establishments like the Canidrome can be seen as a place which equalized Chinese and Europeans. Though it may have targeted poor Chinese as spectators, greyhound racing could also be a source of profit for wealthy Chinese who had dogs in the races just like the wealthy Europeans. In the photos below which were published in the *Journal de Shanghai*, a Chinese woman standing with her dog is pictured next to two European men with their dogs.<sup>203</sup> These images present their subjects on equal terms and suggest that the racecourse was not simply a grounds for exploitation of Chinese people. As much as it was a gambling institution, the Canidrome was a cultural center which brought Shanghainese and Shanghailanders together.<sup>204</sup> In some ways the French were living up to their ideals of universal equality.

Despite these grand claims and ambitions, attempts at equality occurred under a French-imposed system, which necessarily privileged French values and was at its core racist. Their rule was not based on morality, but on an idea of universal modernism that was just as presumptuous as British moralism. An example of the assumption of French superiority lurking behind a claim to egalitarianism is the Concession's Mixed Court. The Mixed Court was composed of both Chinese and Europeans of different origin and dealt with crimes ranging from opium smuggling to car accidents. A photo of the members of the court was published in the *Journal de Shanghai* in 1931.<sup>205</sup> Though there were many Chinese members, they are almost all behind the Europeans in the photo, clearly showing which members were seen as most important. Further, it is important to remember that before European colonialism, the court system was not employed in the Chinese legal system, where conflicts were usually resolved by appealing to a magistrate who presided over hundreds of thousands of people.<sup>206</sup> Moreover, the Chinese legal system traditionally

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<sup>202</sup> Bergère, 119-120.

<sup>203</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), June 7, 1931. See Figure 2.

<sup>204</sup> Lenore, Hietkamp, *Laszlo Hudec and The Park Hotel in Shanghai* (Shawngnan Lake: Diamond River Books, 2012), 50.

<sup>205</sup> *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), June 21, 1931. See Figure 3.

<sup>206</sup> Klaus Muhlhahn, *Criminal Justice in China: A History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009),

drew more from human sentiment than from objective rule of law.<sup>207</sup> Thus, both Chinese criminals and members of the Mixed Court were absorbed into a legal system that was decidedly European. Shanghai is seen by some as a colonial city in which the colonized people had an unusually large amount of influence and agency.<sup>208</sup> Though I agree with this idea, and it is supported by the fact that Chinese residents participated in governing the Concession, it does not negate the arrogance that existed in all colonialism, and which was present in Frenchtown. The French were concerned primarily with spreading their influence throughout the world, and their imposition on the Chinese was greater than the power they gave to residents of the Concession. By the 1920s the existence of the Concession in Shanghai perturbed and embarrassed the Nationalist Government, one of whose major goals was to achieve complete sovereignty over China.

### **French National Pride and Military Prestige**

The French Concession was an expression of French nationalism in the sense that it was established in order to promote the prestige of the French nation throughout East Asia. Rather than being based on economic benefits, French presence in China was a way to spread French cultural influence. Historian Alex Hughes argues that at the outset of French colonialism in the region French officials and politicians promoted Franco-Chinese cultural ties in order to “privilege France’s special role in China.”<sup>209</sup> French politicians even saw their holding in Shanghai as the most important French outpost for spreading their cultural influence in East Asia. Historians argue that the symbolic importance of the Concession in Shanghai “went beyond its actual size and role.”<sup>210</sup>

At the time of the Concession’s existence, French writers championed the mission to inculcate French ideals in Shanghai. In a section in the 1925 *Revue de l’histoire des colonies françaises*, Joannes Tramond writes “C’est bien de l’histoire coloniale, de l’histoire de l’expansion française, car cette concession de Shang-Hai est

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<sup>207</sup> Lean, 93. This rule by sentiment was being questioned and the Chinese legal system reformed in the twentieth century. Social control through institutions and rule of law was gaining traction. Muhlhahn, 87.

<sup>208</sup> Bergère.

<sup>209</sup> Alex Hughes, *France/China: Intercultural Imaginings* (London: Legenda, 2007), 3.

<sup>210</sup> Cornet, 260.

essentiellement une terre française, un centre actif d'influence et de rayonnement français."<sup>211</sup> Here Tramond places the French Concession's importance on its ability to spread French culture. Later, he emphasizes the colonizer's prestige as pacifiers and civilizers.<sup>212</sup> In the 1929 edition of *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises*, the author of an article in the annual report stressed how successfully the French had transported their way of life to East Asia. In describing Shanghai he writes "Il est en Extrême-Asie une cité comme les plus grandes d'Europe."<sup>213</sup> Moreover, not only is the administration of the Concession French, conscription is French, but also, life is French.<sup>214</sup> In their mission to spread French culture throughout the world, the French felt they had succeeded, at least in their Shanghai holding. This idea of the importance of the Concession in promoting French national prestige made threats to the French-administered area of Shanghai all the more worrying for Concession administrators and officials in the metropole alike. Back in France, it contributed to the reluctance to abandon the Concession in 1947, even when it should have been clear that the age of European colonialism in China was over. Because of its symbolic significance, "retroceding the French Concession in Shanghai constituted a political, diplomatic, and personal stake" for politicians in France.<sup>215</sup> In Shanghai, the French Concession's role as a symbol of French power caused authorities to focus heavily on the Concession's security.

Further, it is clear that national pride in the Concession and the broader French undertaking in China was tied to military feats. In his 1899 *Histoire de la concession française de Changhai*, Albert Auguste Fauvel paints the Consul-General Servan de Bezaure's expansion of the French Concession through force as a "projet patriotique."<sup>216</sup> French historians and commentators of the time refer back to periods of military might even earlier than this as a justification of their place in Shanghai and as a platform for pride in the Concession's history. Indeed, the French touted their performance in defending Shanghai from the Taiping Rebellion in 1860. For the French, according to a reviewer of Charles Maybon's 1929 *Histoire de la concession*

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<sup>211</sup> Joannes Tramond, "Contre les Tai-pings en 1862," *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises/Société des l'histoire des colonies française*, ed. H Champion and E. Larose (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer 1925), 480. It's a matter of colonial history, this history of French expansion, because this Shanghai concession is essentially a French land, an active center of French influence and grandeur.

<sup>212</sup> Tramond, 480.

<sup>213</sup> Review of "Histoire de la concession française de Changhai," *Revue de l'histoire des colonies françaises/Société des l'histoire des colonies française*, ed. H Champion and E. Larose (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer 1929), 423-424. There is in East Asia a city like the greatest cities of Europe.

<sup>214</sup> Review of "Histoire de la concession française de Changhai," 424.

<sup>215</sup> Cornet, 264.

<sup>216</sup> A.A. Fauvel, *Histoire de la concession française de Changhai* (1899), 7. Patriotic project.

*française de Changhai*, while the British were ready to accept the Taiping rebels as the new Chinese power, “pour les Français au contraire, les Tai-Pings n’étaient guère que des bandits sans avenir.”<sup>217</sup> In Maybon’s account, unlike the Americans and British, the French stepped forward to battle the rebels and thus saved their Shanghai territory. Moreover, the French authorities created an idol out of Admiral Protet, whose death during an attack on Nanyao in 1862 became a symbol of French prestige and its civilizing mission.<sup>218</sup> Even in 1925, French authors writing about the Concession mentioned Protet and his military accomplishments, maintaining the military aspect of the Concession’s identity.

French power in the metropole was both maintained and inscribed through the military. James Sheehan argues that, especially before World War II, the European state and war were inseparable.<sup>219</sup> Heads of European countries often adorned themselves in military uniforms, and parades to welcome important guests were of a military nature. In France in particular, “military institutions...represented the state.”<sup>220</sup> This military-based national identity was expressed through streets in Paris being named after battles, the prevalence of victory monuments, and numerous tombs memorializing national heroes who lost their lives defending the country.<sup>221</sup> “War,” Sheehan contends, “was deeply inscribed on the genetic code of the European state.”<sup>222</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that this understanding of national identity was replicated in France’s overseas settlements. In fact, similar ways of honoring the connection between the military and the French national were seen in the French Concession. For instance, a statue of Admiral Protet stood in front of the Municipal Hall.<sup>223</sup> After World War I, a ceremony was held to unveil tablets honoring the French residents of Shanghai who lost their lives during the war. According to a report in *The North China Herald* on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1920, the ceremony was well-

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<sup>217</sup> Review of “Histoire de la concession française de Changhai,” 424. In contrast, for the French the Tai-pings were nothing more than bandits with no future.

<sup>218</sup> Tramond, 480.

<sup>219</sup> James Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?: The Transformation of Modern Europe*, (New York: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008), 4.

<sup>220</sup> Sheehan, 4.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>222</sup> Sheehan, 7.

<sup>223</sup> “Statue of Admiral Protet,” *Virtual Shanghai*, <http://www.virtualshanghai.net/photos/albums?ID=1927>.

attended.<sup>224</sup> Mirroring the trend in Paris, streets in the French territory were named after the city's former French residents who were killed in WWI, or those who were otherwise involved in the war.<sup>225</sup> In the March 16<sup>th</sup> 1929 edition of the *Journal de Shanghai*, one article mourns the parting of the armored cruiser Jules Michelet. The almost broken-hearted account details the warship's last day in Shanghai and remembers all of the good the Michelet had done for the nation in World War I and for French colonialism.<sup>226</sup> This article displays the deep connection between militarism, nationalism, and colonialism, which may have been especially present for an expatriate in Shanghai. Further, some French municipal authorities were invested in French nationalism in the metropole, albeit in a roundabout way. In 1926 the Secretary of the French Municipality of Shanghai and the President of the French Chamber of Commerce of Shanghai both gave money to the Alliance Nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française, an organization dedicated to increasing the population of France.<sup>227</sup> Natalité, as it is termed in French, was a strategy to increase the power of France relative to other European countries by producing more children who could later become French soldiers.<sup>228</sup> The French-administered territory in Shanghai was thus devoted to a French nationalism that was particularly military and defense-oriented. There were reminders of this national identity physically present in the Concession's public spaces, there were ceremonies celebrating military heroes, and several officials in the municipal government supported a movement that was intended to strengthen the French nation through growing its military capacity.

Moreover, Frenchtown was a highly militarized environment. Not only was there a police force and a military corps, there was also a volunteer corps that had been formed in 1862 by the foreign residents for the protection of the Concession. Originally, the Chinese government was supposed to provide troops to defend the region, but the French authorities eventually took protection of the Concession under their jurisdiction. As A.M. Le Pauld wrote in 1935 in a review of a history of

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<sup>224</sup> "The French Ceremony," *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* (1870-1941), Nov 13, 1920. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1371079043?accountid=10629>.

<sup>225</sup> Tess Johnston; Dongqiang Er, *Frenchtown Shanghai: Western Architecture in Shanghai's Old French Concession* (Old China Hand Press, 2000), 24.

<sup>226</sup> Georges Moresthe, "Le « Michelet » nous quitte," *Le Journal de Shanghai* (Shanghai, China), March 16, 1929.

<sup>227</sup> *Revue de l'Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française* (Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française 1926), 223.

<sup>228</sup> Jacques Bertillon, *La dépopulation de la France : ses conséquences, ses causes, mesures à prendre pour la combattre* (1911).

the French-controlled area, “it was necessary from the very first years of the concession for foreigners to organize for their own defense, as they had to contend with numerous enemies.”<sup>229</sup> As can be expected from the numerous policing associations, many residents of the Concession were involved in its defense. The main employers in the territory were the municipality and the police force.<sup>230</sup> Keeping in mind that the French police force did not only consist of French expatriates—it included great numbers of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russians—in 1927, of the 248 Europeans employed by the administration, 105 were police officers.<sup>231</sup> This is certainly a large percentage of the municipal employees. Moreover, most of these policemen were former soldiers.<sup>232</sup> Often, the chief of police was a former military captain, as in the case of E. Fiori, who had extensive experience in the French Protectorate in colonial Morocco.<sup>233</sup>

These are important details in examining why the French authorities would allow so much crime to flourish within their borders. One must keep in mind that police officers and soldiers do not have the same purpose in society and go through very different training procedures. Police are meant to control crime within a state, while soldiers are trained to protect the state from external threats. Perhaps because the police force was outfitted with former soldiers, their focus was less on petty crime practiced in the Concession and more on ensuring the settlement’s existence in a world which was threatening to overrun it. The attention given to the protection of the French Concession from outside forces was further encouraged by the general atmosphere of nationalism based on military conquest. The basis of French prestige in China was, for the French, based on the preservation of the physical territory.

Indeed, defenses in the French-controlled area were high. In André Malraux’s *La Condition Humaine*, his description of the entrance to the Concession paints the picture of an imposing wall of military defense: “At the end of the street the machine-gun cars, almost as gray as the puddles, the bright beaks of bayonets carried by silent shadows: the post, the boundary of the French Concession; the taxi went no farther.”<sup>234</sup> Malraux introduces the reader to the French Concession by detailing its defensive nature. In a photograph taken in 1930, only a section of the

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<sup>229</sup> “History of French Concession Reads Like a Thrilling Novel.”

<sup>230</sup> Cornet, 261.

<sup>231</sup> Clifford, 24.

<sup>232</sup> Cornet, 266; Martin, “The Pact with the Devil,” 272.

<sup>233</sup> Martin, “The Pact with the Devil,” 272.

<sup>234</sup> André Malraux, *La condition humaine* (New York : Random House, 1961), 16.

French defenses are visible, but one can still get a sense of the well-guarded boundaries.<sup>235</sup>

In fact, the French officials had many reasons, whether real or imagined, to be on guard. Several issues made security a factor for the French Concession. The first of these was the fact that the French were not a majority within the Concession.<sup>236</sup> Maintaining their influence was difficult when the population of French citizens was so low. It also concerned French authorities that, because the Règlements of 1868 and the constitutional base of the Concession were established through “force majeure,” the Règlements “could be invalidated by force.”<sup>237</sup> To maintain the existence of a French-controlled area in Shanghai, the authorities had to be constantly prepared to fight for their ‘right’ to extraterritoriality. Some historians claim that this obsession with security was also due to the relative weakness of the French forces.<sup>238</sup> Perhaps this was the case, but in 1927 the French Consul-General assured residents of the Concession that their military forces were adequate. After a slight security breach where “armed Cantonese” were discovered in a café, Consul General M. Naggiar guaranteed residents that “the forces sent by the French government were... sufficient to meet any emergency that might arise.”<sup>239</sup> Naggiar also stated that

...as many rumours were being circulated in order to weaken the morale of the foreign population it was necessary for all residents to be careful not to take them seriously. Security of life and property inside the Concession would be maintained by the French authorities, responsible to their government, by taking all necessary measures.<sup>240</sup>

Whether or not the French were prepared militarily to protect the Concession, it was certainly the most pressing issue on their mind. With the constant need to defend their borders, it is no wonder the authorities were less concerned with internal crime.

Frenchtown authorities believed that their jurisdiction was threatened by takeover from both the International Settlement, and the Chinese Nationalist

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<sup>235</sup> “A locked Iron gate in the French Concession,” *Virtual Shanghai*, <http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=92>. See Figure 4.

<sup>236</sup> Cornet, 260.

<sup>237</sup> Martin, “The Pact with the Devil,” 273; Johnstone.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>239</sup> “Defence of French Concession,” *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette (1870-1941)*, Apr 02, 1927. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1420012553?accountid=10629>.

<sup>240</sup> “Defence of French Concession.”

government.<sup>241</sup> Though it is difficult to tell whether the Concession actually faced danger from the Anglo-Americans and other non-French foreigners who administered the International Settlement, they certainly believed their neighbors had bad intentions. Albert Auguste Fauvel mentions this concern as far back as 1899. In his *Histoire de la concession française de Changhai*, he notes the “jalousie des résidents anglais et américains à l’endroit des Français de Chang-hai.”<sup>242</sup> Not only does Fauvel accuse the authorities of the International Settlement of coveting French Concession land, he further suggests that they would take over Frenchtown if given the opportunity. The French, however, “toujours refusé de se laisser absorber par leurs riches et puissants voisins.”<sup>243</sup> Thirty years later in 1929, their neighbor’s power was still a concern for French residents of Shanghai. The 1929 *Revue de l’histoire des colonies françaises* wrote that the possible fusion of the French Concession with the International Settlement, which had been suggested since 1875, would mean “un véritable suicide de notre influence en Chine.”<sup>244</sup> Indeed, French preoccupation with the survival of the Concession and French influence inhibited the development of wider sense of community membership across municipal borders.<sup>245</sup> As noted earlier, many in the International Settlement were unabashedly judgmental of the way the Concession was being run, but it is hard to determine if, like French concerns of the time suggested, Frenchtown’s Anglo-American neighbors wanted the territory for themselves.<sup>246</sup> This fear, and by extension the fear of tarnishing the colonial and military basis of French national pride, nonetheless could have played a role in distracting authorities from or minimizing the importance of the existence of illegal activities in the French area.

A more clear and present danger was that which the Chinese government posed. Unlike with most foreign settlements, the French Concession could not be intimidated by economic boycotts because it was not a center of business. As boycotts were the Chinese government’s usual way of controlling foreign areas, influencing French authorities in Shanghai was a difficult task. This state of affairs was at once beneficial to French officials, who were less affected by the “war of

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<sup>241</sup> Cornet, 261.

<sup>242</sup> Fauvel, 8. The jealousy the British and American residents have of the French area in Shanghai.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. Always refused to let themselves be absorbed by their rich and powerful neighbors.

<sup>244</sup> Review of “Histoire de la concession française de Changhai,” 426. A veritable suicide of our influence in China.

<sup>245</sup> Bergère, 96.

<sup>246</sup> Martin, “The Pact with the Devil,” 273. Martin seems to suggest that this was an imagined fear.



attrition” waged by the Nationalist government against the foreign concessions, but also made the threat of forceful intervention by the Chinese more real.<sup>247</sup> At the start of the official French presence in Shanghai, numerous attacks on the French-controlled area were carried out by Chinese “bandits and rebels who overran the country.”<sup>248</sup> This threat was still present to the residents of the Concession in February 1927, when Chinese gunboats off the coast of the area fired shells into Frenchtown. According to a journalist for *The China Press*, the French military response to the incident proved their “discipline and readiness for emergency,” and describes the forces as being “more than confident of their ability to take care of anything which may arise.”<sup>249</sup> Though the ‘attack’ ended quickly, had no known motive, and only killed one person, French residents demanded more defenses for the Concession. Indeed, they were even prepared to support a “joint scheme of defense” with the International Settlement in order to protect themselves from the Chinese.<sup>250</sup> Tension continued to rise throughout 1927, with several incidences of British troops firing on Chinese protesters fomenting Chinese aggression toward foreigners.<sup>251</sup> It makes sense that the French would feel the imminent threat of a Chinese take over—the Chinese population in the Concession was greater than all other nationalities combined, and the anti-foreign feelings were growing along with Chinese nationalism. Even the communists who found refuge in the foreign-controlled areas used this freedom to promote anti-foreign ideas. With the growing power of the Chinese Nationalist government, the need to protect the Concession from outside forces and preserve French national prestige in China must have seemed paramount.

French ideas of their nation’s prestige as well as their experience of threats to their holdings in China caused officials to focus on military power rather than moral uprightness. Though both residents of the International Settlement and the Chinese native city pinpointed moral leniency as a possible contributor to the degradation of France’s international reputation and a probable threat to the Concession’s existence, French authorities did not share this view. Rather, because they placed their national pride on military ability and their history of conquest, the crime existing within their

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<sup>247</sup> Bergère, 168.

<sup>248</sup> “History of French Concession Reads Like Thrilling Novel.”

<sup>249</sup> “Shells Drop into French Concession and into Nantao from Chinese Craft; Motives for Firing Remain Obscure,” *The China Press (1925-1938)*, Feb 23, 1927.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1321499489?accountid=10629>.

<sup>250</sup> “French Concession Residents Demand More Defenses,” *The China Press (1925-1938)*, Mar 27, 1927.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1321213352?accountid=10629>.

<sup>251</sup> Bergère, 187-192.

borders did not, to the French, seem to signal a decline in their standing. Perhaps the activities denoted as crime by Anglo-American and Chinese observers were not even considered crimes according to French standards. Moreover, while French residents did experience forceful threats to the Concession, they were never explicitly tied to anti-crime motivations. The response of the French authorities to real or imagined aggression from their neighbors, whatever the motivation of the aggression, was to focus even more on security. Their military's preparedness was at once a practical defense of their territory in China and a symbol of the power of the French state. As long as the authorities felt secure in the ability of their police force to protect them from outside threats, the internal tolerance of vice posed no problem. For the French in Shanghai, nationalism existed alongside moral leniency without contradictions.



Figure 1.

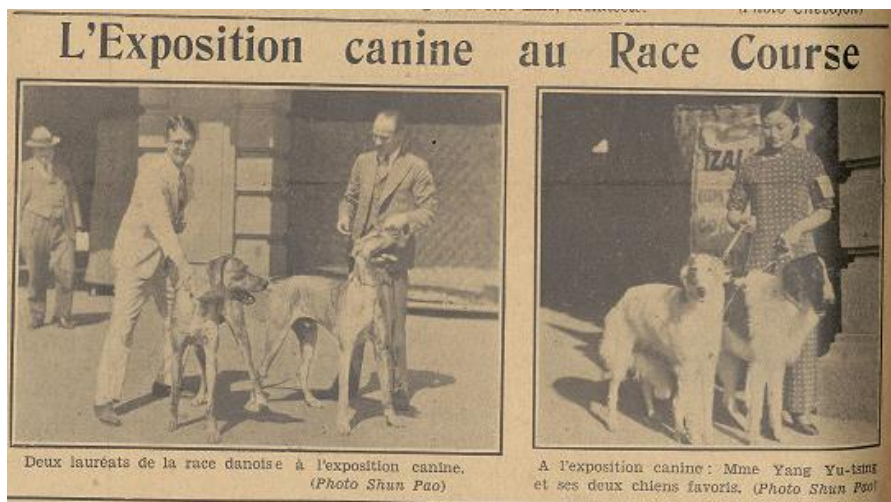


Figure 2.



Figure 3.



*Ouvrages de défenses aux limites de la Concession*

Figure 4.

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