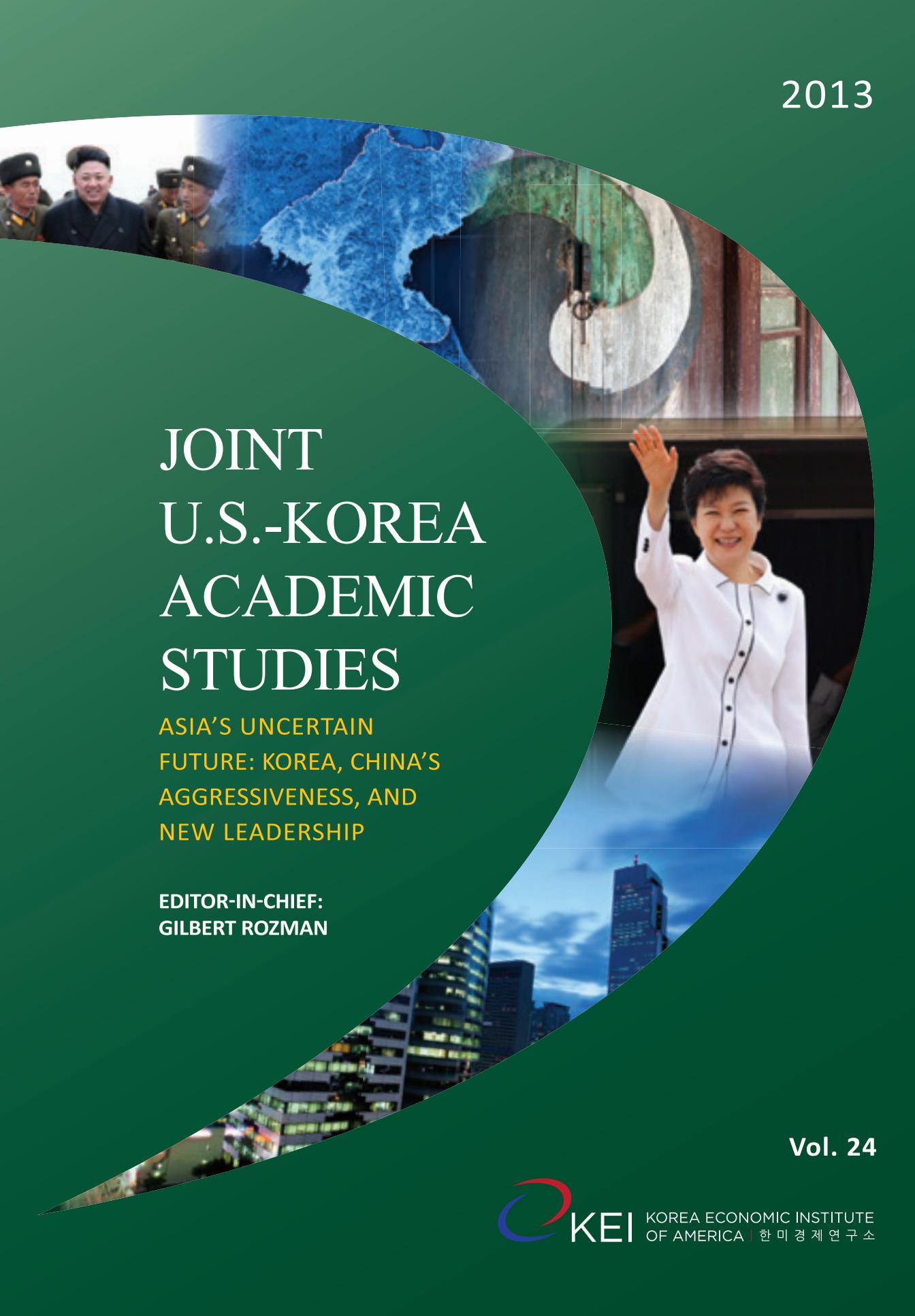


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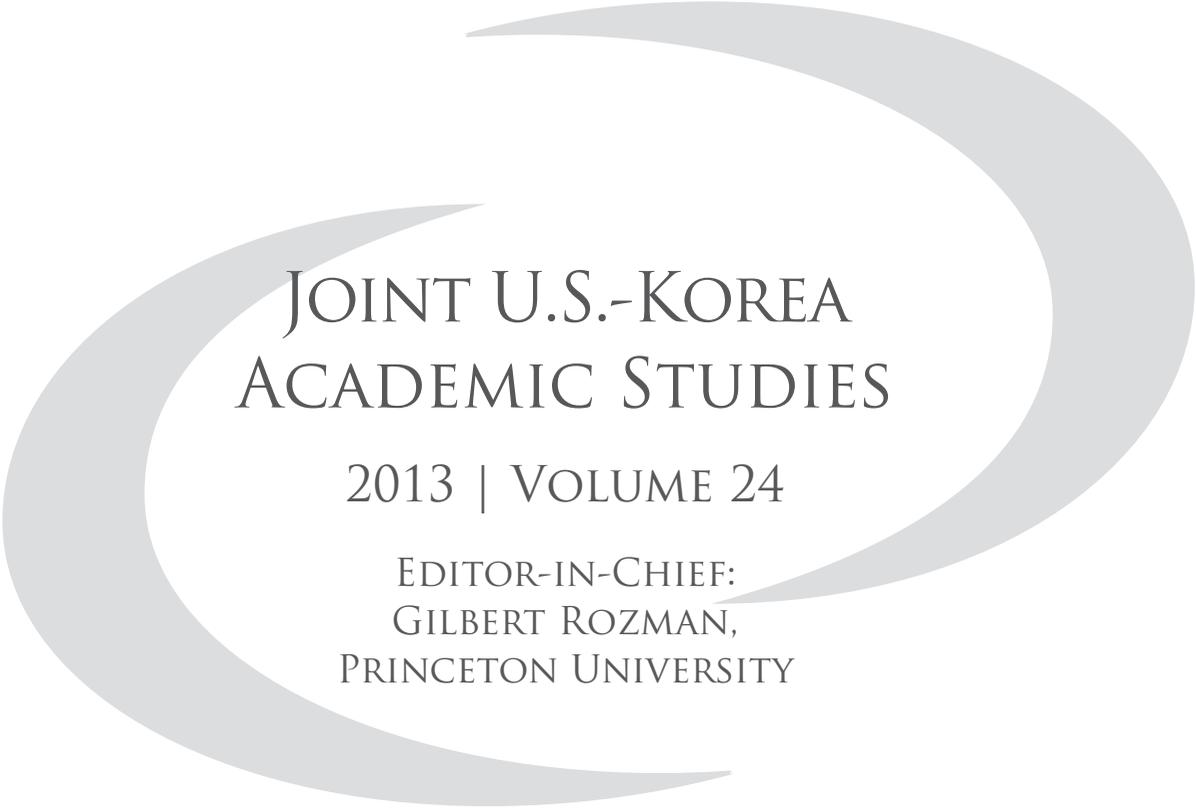


# JOINT U.S.-KOREA ACADEMIC STUDIES

ASIA'S UNCERTAIN  
FUTURE: KOREA, CHINA'S  
AGGRESSIVENESS, AND  
NEW LEADERSHIP

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:  
GILBERT ROZMAN

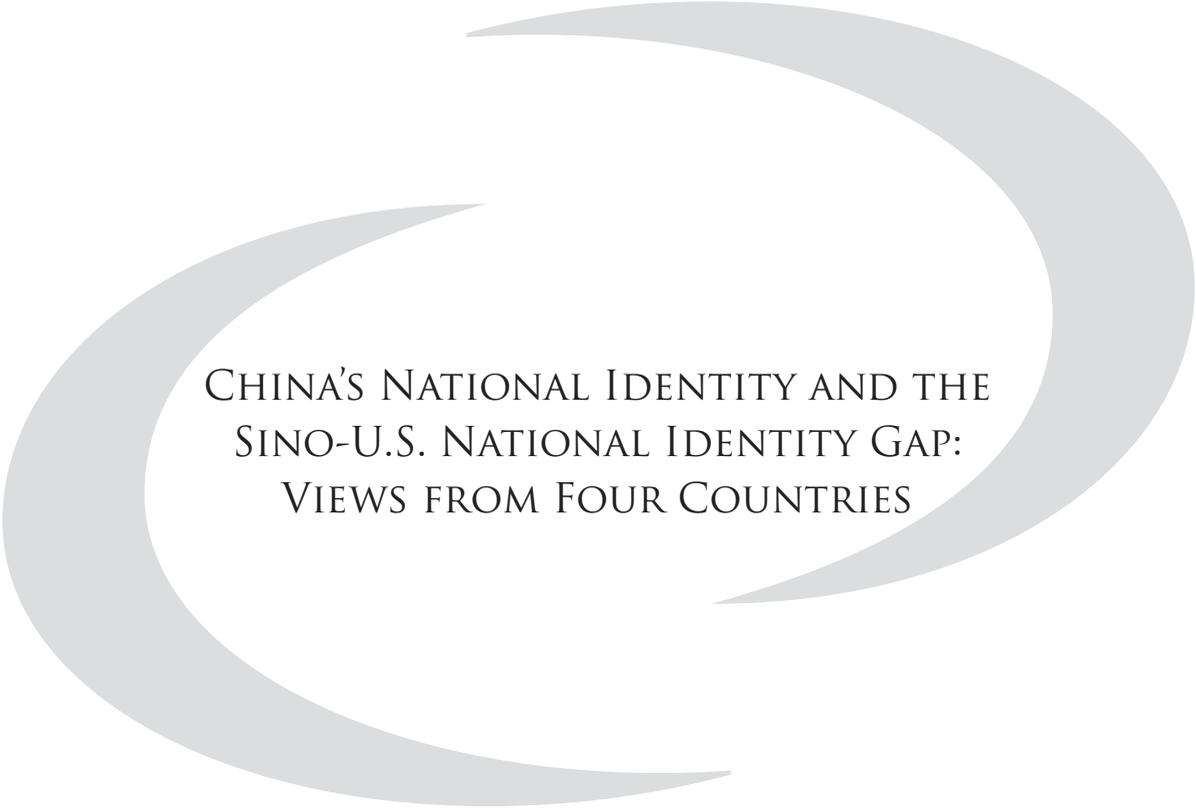
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CHINA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE  
SINO-U.S. NATIONAL IDENTITY GAP:  
VIEWS FROM FOUR COUNTRIES

## INTRODUCTION

The countries bordering China are in the forefront in facing the challenge of a widening divide between China and the United States. Others, including those in Parts I and III, treat this divide as a question of security or economic organization. In the following four chapters we focus instead on the increasing national identity gap between the two powers, starting with responses to Chinese identity as it is being reconstructed and proceeding to reactions to the way its gap with the United States is seen. Before the views from three neighbors are reviewed, one chapter covers the debate inside China on identity themes that separate it from the West, notably the United States. As tensions over identity-laced topics intensify, these chapters break new ground in developing a triangular perspective useful in an era when great and middle powers are repositioning themselves strategically, while at the same time searching for a national identity response to what is perceived as growing cultural bipolarity.

A common thread in Part II is attention to a bilateral national identity gap. By this, we mean a substantial and sensitive divide between two countries that rises to the level of significantly influencing the national identity of one or both. When a gap is wide, it becomes difficult to discuss the identity of one country without crediting its animosity to the other as a determining factor. Symbols of identity rise to the fore such as territorial disputes, historical grievances, cultural affronts, signs of lack of respect, and suspect relations with third countries. Pragmatic relations are difficult.

National identity gaps are pronounced in Northeast Asia. China and Russia stir anti-Americanism in a manner reminiscent of communist diatribes against U.S. imperialism, grounding the critique in civilizational contrasts. If Americans strive to narrow the gap, doing what proved constructive in the years when Chinese welcomed the image of a “responsible stakeholder” and Russians embraced the “reset,” they now are rebuffed. Ambassadors Michael McFaul and Gary Locke arrived eager to bridge the gap before they were vilified as “enemies.” Similarly, when Abe Shinzo and Park Geun-hye sent emissaries to Beijing to start their time in office rebooting bilateral relations, they were met with suspicion amidst a dangerous territorial confrontation with Japan and a sharp divide with South Korea over how to deal with both North Korea and the U.S. alliance. The divides between nations appear unbridgeable when depicted not as two states striving to find common ground and seeking compromise in order to pursue national interests in the least conflicting manner possible, but as antagonistic civilizations with existential differences that require capitulation now.

The chapters in Part II do not apply a single framework for studying national identity gaps. See-Won Byun examines South Korea’s gap with China across different aspects of identity, including historical and cultural identity, human rights and political identity, territorial issues, North Korea and Korean unification, and economic identity. Ming Wan surveys a range of Japanese-driven identity orientations. I apply a six-dimensional framework for analysis of national identity: ideological, temporal, sectoral, vertical, horizontal, and intensity. William Callahan assesses dynamic tensions among socialism, nationalism, statism, democracy, and indigenous values in interpreting differences in Chinese thinking without evaluating national identity gaps as such. No effort is made to standardize approaches, but the chapters are all examples of stress on national identity differences continuing to intensify while shaping bilateral ties.

The identity themes in the four chapters largely overlap: Byun's discussion of historical identity; Wan's of Japan's focus on Chinese views of its past; Callahan's of Chinese attention to a "radically different and unique historical experience;" and my characterization of the temporal dimension through views of three distinct periods showing Russia's preference for China's history over that of the United States. For all four authors, history is a centerpiece in evaluating changing narratives on what is distinctive about China and how to respond to intensifying Sino-U.S. competition. On the cultural theme, Byun describes expanded South Korean "debates on the ownership of Confucian values, tradition, and other representations of national heritage;" Callahan refers to an "essentialized understanding of Chinese civilization;" Wan is careful to note that the "Japanese sense of affinity results from a sense of similarities with the Americans or a sense of finding the United States trustworthy even if it is different culturally;" and I highlight cultural national identity as a theme in sectoral identity.

Above all, these chapters share concern with perceptions of whether there is an unbridgeable identity gap between China and the United States or space exists to exploit this divide. Callahan discusses Chinese exceptionalism that draws a sharp contrast, with no prospect of narrowing the gap. I also see Putin steering Russia to the same conclusion, leaving no room for finding middle ground through an identity balanced between China and the United States. Byun acknowledges Seoul's "uneasy position" between its main economic partner and ally and suggests that Park seeks to narrow the identity gap with China, but she notes asymmetric interdependence with China and themes such as human rights and political identity that demonstrate a much wider identity gap with that country. For Wan, Japan is no longer worried that a widening Sino-U.S. gap is bad for it, but Americanization is losing its appeal at the same time as the identity gap with China is widening much more sharply.

In the deteriorating atmosphere of late 2012 and early 2013, leaders called for renewed pride in nation, as if that were the principal problem in foreign affairs. In his policy speech to the Diet on January 28, Abe asserted, "The greatest crisis facing Japan lies in the Japanese people having lost confidence. It is certainly true that the Japanese economy is in a serious state... The most important thing is to restore pride and confidence in yourself, is it not?"<sup>1</sup> Abe's remedy for what ails his country is pride not only in the present but also in the history of the war period. It is defiance of foreign and domestic critics that will lead to a strong Japan, he contends.

On February 19, Putin took a similar tack, arguing for a single secondary school textbook "free of internal contradictions and ambiguities. This should be a mandatory requirement for all teaching materials... built around a single concept, with the logical continuity of Russian history, the relationship between the different stages in history, and respect for all the pages of our past."<sup>2</sup> Xi Jinping was no less emphatic about the relevance of history, focusing more directly on socialism and linking China to Soviet history. In his late December Southern Tour speech that was leaked in late January, he stated, "Why did the Soviet Union disintegrate? Why did the Soviet Communist Party collapse? An important reason was that their ideals and beliefs had been shaken. In the end, 'the ruler's flag over the city tower' changed overnight. It's a profound lesson for us! To dismiss the history of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Communist Party, to dismiss Lenin and Stalin, and to dismiss everything else is to engage in historic nihilism, and it confuses our thoughts and undermines the Party's organizations on all levels."<sup>3</sup> Tensions in foreign relations are exacerbated by leadership eager to reconstruct history.

While U.S. policy is now torn between seeking China's assistance in dealing with a dangerous North Korea and warning China of the consequences of crossing red lines in cybersecurity attacks, the Obama administration strives to narrow the national identity gaps that threaten to destabilize the region. In the late February summit with Abe, there was no sign of demonizing China or even of warning it about its threatening territorial posture. Managing foreign policy hot spots is difficult enough without national identity gaps standing in the way of the most essential pragmatic steps forward. Yet, new leaders, especially Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong-un, and Abe Shinzo, are more likely to widen them than to disabuse their domestic base of their urgency and signal to the outside world that regional stability based on trust is more important than national pride.

## ENDNOTES

1. [www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/96-abe/statement/28syosin-e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/96-abe/statement/28syosin-e.html), accessed Feb. 20, 2013.
2. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-calls-for-universal-history-textbooks/475835.html#ixzz2LTURmYj9>, accessed Feb. 20, 2013.
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# The Debate Inside China

William A. Callahan

In his recent work Gilbert Rozman explains the growing tensions between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and United States in terms of the symbolic politics of a widening "identity gap." This identity gap is important, he argues, because it pushes both countries towards more fundamentalist views of themselves and each other, which in turn fosters ideas of an "inevitable" zero-sum geopolitical conflict.

This neo-Cold War clash thus goes beyond the material measures of economic growth and military power to be a question of values: the China model versus the Western model (or the American model). While American values—often summarized as the "American dream" of freedom, equality and prosperity<sup>1</sup>—are well-known and much-debated, the content of Chinese values has been in flux over the past century, and especially since Deng Xiaoping inaugurated the reform and opening policy in 1978.

This chapter will assess China's national identity by examining debates about values current in the PRC. The rise of China is of global interest primarily because of its economic growth over the past three decades. Reflecting on their country's recent economic success, China's policymakers and opinion-makers are now asking "what comes next?" How can the PRC convert its growing economic power into enduring political and cultural influence in Asia and around the globe?

Its economic ideas that look to both the authoritarian state and the free market are gaining prominence among those who proffer policy advice in international institutions such as the World Bank as well as among those who craft policies in many developing countries. In 2009-2010, the PRC actually lent more money to developing countries than the World Bank.<sup>2</sup> This renewed sense of Chinese self-confidence, which is understood in the context of impending East-West conflict, has generated important Chinese-language discussions of the China model, the China dream and Chinese exceptionalism.

The China model is more than an economic program, where the Beijing Consensus of state capitalism challenges the neoliberal Washington Consensus. For many, it actually describes a holistic system of politics, economics, society and culture that is seen as both unique and superior to liberal democracy and free-market capitalism. The China model thus is not simply about economic growth; it inspires a China dream that celebrates what many—including President Xi Jinping—call "the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" as a global power.

Rather than look to texts that discuss political and moral values directly, this chapter explores Chinese values indirectly through an examination of the work of three of China's top economic and political-economic theorists: Justin Yifu Lin, Hu Angang and Pan Wei. Their work is important firstly because it reflects the tone of the mainstream values debate in China (which is increasingly essentialized and exceptionalist, fostering a zero-sum framing of China's conflict with the U.S. and East Asian countries),<sup>3</sup> and secondly because it informs state policy (in China and beyond).

To grasp the impact of this debate, we need to understand how economic debates of state planning versus the free market quickly become moral debates of universal values versus Chinese exceptionalism, and the Western model versus the China model. In this way we can explore how China's economic debates inform broader issues of the U.S.-China identity gap and China's role in East Asia.

This chapter will argue two points. First, identity and values in China are moving beyond internal identity debates about “nationalism,” which were primarily concerned with the CCP’s regime survival, to debates characterized by a “statism” that promotes China as a regional and global power. Previously, I argued that to understand China’s national security we need to appreciate its nationalist insecurities, in particular a specific reading of China’s modern history as the “Century of National Humiliation.” The dynamic tension here is between the pride inspired by the accomplishments of China’s 5,000 years of civilization, and its humiliation at the hands of Western and Japanese imperialist incursions since 1839. This pride/humiliation dynamic generated a passive, defensive and reactive foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

In 2008 two events—the success of the Beijing Olympics and the beginning of the global financial crisis in New York—encouraged Beijing to “seize the strategic opportunity” to pursue a more offensive foreign policy. The sense is that since now Beijing is strong (and the West is weak), China will soon return to its “natural place” at the center of the world. According to this popular view, China no longer needs to “bide its time and conceal its capabilities”; it is entitled to strike back to right historical wrongs, including reclaiming territories that neighbors “stole” when China was poor and weak.

Since 2009, Beijing has revived long-dormant territorial disputes with South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines and India. In 2010, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi added insult to injury when he explained Beijing’s new Sinocentric approach to his Southeast Asian counterparts: “China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that’s just a fact.” A *Global Times* editorial fleshed this out when it warned “small countries”—South Korea and the Philippines—to stop challenging China in the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea: “If these countries don’t want to change their ways with China, they will need to prepare for the sounds of cannons.”<sup>5</sup> Here the goal of “national rejuvenation” is to make China the number one power first in the Asian region, and then in the world. The chapter will explore this new dynamic of hubris/humiliation, where Chinese public intellectuals stress “statism” more than nationalism.

Although nationalism and statism often overlap in China, it is important to understand their differences. In his critique of current trends in Chinese thought “Does China Need a Leviathan?” Xu Jilin argues that there has been a significant shift from nationalism to statism (in the sense of Thomas Hobbes’s Leviathan that has complete control over people). This can explain what Xu calls the “collective right turn” of many of China’s intellectuals over the past decade.<sup>6</sup> People who were liberals in the 1980s and nationalists in the 1990s are now statist. Their China dream involves tight state control of politics, economy, and society to promote the key values of hierarchy, stability and unity—which are different from nationalist themes that look to cultural values of civilization, and from socialist themes that value equality over hierarchy.

In this vein, Zhang Weiwei argues that Chinese people have an overwhelming collective fear of chaos.<sup>7</sup> Hence, the debate in China is not about finding the correct balance of freedom and security (which we saw in American debates about the “War on Terror”), but about a stark choice between total Order and total Chaos. In Chan Kooncheng’s science fiction novel, *The Golden Era: China 2013* (translated into English as *The Fat Years*), a character explains that when offered the Hobbesian choice between anarchy’s “war of all against all” and the order of absolute dictatorship, the Chinese people will always pick the Leviathan.<sup>8</sup> In this

new statist era, China is more than simply a nation-state: it is a party-state, a civilization-state, a military-state, and an empire-state. Chan's novelistic description of ideological debates in China thus confirms Xu's critical discussion of trends among China's top thinkers where Hobbes's *Leviathan* is also more prominent than Confucius. This is what I mean by statism—which comes from Chinese and Western sources—as a distinct trend that differs from cultural nationalism that looks primarily to Chinese tradition.

Values discourse typically evokes essentialized fundamentalist themes—e.g. the purity of China's exceptional values, which must be protected from the pollution of Western values. But the second conclusion of this essay is that “national” values are intimately intertwined with extra-national sources in a global conversation. The China dream is a response to the American dream (which, in turn, was a response to European values, and so on). Indeed, discussion of China's distinct economic development model actually originated in the West with Joshua Cooper Ramo's “The Beijing Consensus” (2004) think tank report that challenged the then-dominant Washington Consensus.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, public intellectuals like those considered in this essay characteristically have had an international experience that includes studying, living, and working in the United States. For some, it led them to formulate more complex views of China's relation to the world; for others, it hardened their belief in a zero-sum notion of “China versus the West.” For both groups, living abroad was an important experience that shaped their views. Thus, this essay examines how the China dream is interwoven with the American dream, although sometimes in negative “Occidental” ways.

By examining how China's new statism grows out of its (often negative) interaction with the West, we can see how essentialized zero-sum identity gaps can foster predictions that zero-sum geopolitical conflict is “inevitable.” The solution is to critique such essentialized views of identity and knowledge, and foster a more nuanced appreciation of the overlapping identities and shared values of people in China, East Asia and the United States.

## JUSTIN YIFU LIN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY<sup>10</sup>

As the first Chinese to rise to the leadership of an international financial organization—in 2012 he completed a five-year term as vice president and chief economist of the World Bank—Lin is hugely influential in China and abroad. Before he went to the World Bank, Lin was famous, according to Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, for bringing “market economics into China.” Then at the World Bank Lin became the “global ambassador” for the Chinese model of economics.<sup>11</sup> Lin thus is a key figure who works at the center of both the Beijing Consensus and the Washington Consensus. To a large extent, then, Lin reflects Beijing's official view of economic development strategy.

Starting with his co-authored book *China's Miracle* (1994), Lin has argued that a country's development strategy needs to follow its comparative advantage and endowment structure.<sup>12</sup> Hence, developing countries that have abundant unskilled labor and scarce capital need to attract foreign investment to develop labor-intensive light industries that make consumer goods for trade on the global market. Using the profits from this global trade to develop human capital (i.e., educate workers) and physical capital (i.e., build infrastructure), the country will be able to shift from labor-intensive industry to capital-intensive industry, thus making the transition from a developing to a developed economy that has an equitable distribution of wealth. In so

doing, countries can move from an agricultural to an industrial economy and from a centrally planned economy to a free-market economy.

Lin argues that ideas determine developmental success. To explain his mix of industrial policy and free markets, he locates his advice in the historical context of the two “bad ideas” that dominated postwar social thought: import-substitution industrialization and the Washington Consensus. Import-substitution industrialization was adopted by many new postcolonial states in the 1950s and 1960s as a means to develop heavy industry, which was seen as the key to modernity, security and prosperity. This “leap-forward strategy” that relied on the nationalization of strategic industries, subsidies for heavy industry, increased taxation, and protectionist trade policies did not lead to sustainable economic growth, Lin argues, because capital-intensive development defied the countries’ comparative advantage of abundant cheap labor. Since the government could not keep subsidizing heavy industry, economic growth stagnated, unemployment rose, and income distribution polarized.

The Washington Consensus, which was promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, was a direct response to the failure of the import substitution strategy. It instructed developing countries to privatize and liberalize their national economies. But the IMF’s “shock therapy” actually led to declining economic growth and rising unemployment in many countries. Lin thus concludes that such “shock without therapy” produced “economic chaos.”<sup>13</sup>

Lin’s economic theory is innovative because it employs elements from both failed economic models to argue for the importance of both government intervention and free markets. He looks to examples from East Asia, the only region to successfully graduate from developing to developed economies. While it is common to argue that Confucian civilization is the key to the East Asian economic model, Lin explains the model through economic theory, although at times with a cultural twist.

Rather than submitting to shock therapy and rapid transition, East Asian countries shifted from centrally planned economies to market economies through a hybrid approach that gradually opened their economies to foreign competition. Lin thus subscribes to the standard view of “Reform China”: Its economic success over the past three decades likewise comes from Deng Xiaoping’s pragmatic and experimental approach of gradually opening the Chinese economy.

Since 2008, Lin’s most important impact has been on the international stage. When World Bank president Robert Zoellick hired Lin in 2008, he was encouraging China to be a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system—the policy Zoellick inaugurated in 2005 when he was deputy secretary of state in the administration of President George W. Bush. Yet, from the very beginning Lin and the Chinese leadership planned to use the World Bank to promote Chinese ideas to a global audience. By showing the utility of government intervention and industrial policy, Lin set a new research agenda at the Bank, which successfully challenged the Washington Consensus’s market fundamentalism.

Lin’s development model combines state planning and the free market to argue for the economic convergence of the developing world catching up to the developed world. Rather than contrasting “Western” and “Chinese” models, he combines features from the import-substitution and the export-oriented regimes. In this way, Lin goes in a slightly different

direction from the trend mentioned in the introduction: (1) rather than engage in a shift from Chinese “nationalism” to a globally-focused “statism,” he is primarily concerned with issues of economic development around the world; (2) his activities in China and the U.S. show a curious engagement with both the Beijing Consensus and the Washington Consensus.

## HU ANGANG’S WORLD OF GREAT HARMONY

Hu Angang teaches at Tsinghua University’s School of Public Administration and Management and runs its China Studies Center. Over the past decade, he has been fine-tuning the China model as a key government adviser and public intellectual. Three of his recent books attest to his influence: *2020 China: Building a Comprehensive Well-Off Society* was originally commissioned by the party to make policy recommendations for Hu Jintao’s “Report to the 17th Party Congress” (2007); *China: Going Toward 2015* was commissioned by the National Development and Reform Commission as a policy study for the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015); Hu’s latest academic book, *2030 China: Towards a Common Prosperity* (2011), uses the data from these official projects to think about China’s long-term future.<sup>14</sup>

On the last page of *China in 2020: A New Type of Superpower* (2011), Hu states that Chinese need to “rethink” the “China Dream” beyond pure economics. Since China’s success in the 21st century will be measured by its contributions to the world, Hu argues that “China’s modern rejuvenation” will be shown through its “contributions to human development, science and technology, the green movement, and culture.”<sup>15</sup> This progressive view of China’s future role in the world is indicative of Hu’s role as a social critic. As a public intellectual he is famous for pushing the government to address the problems of rural poverty and environmental degradation in order to make China’s economic development inclusive and sustainable. It is significant, therefore, when Hu tells the world that the PRC will be a different kind of world leader, “predict[ing] that China will be a mature, responsible, and attractive superpower.”<sup>16</sup>

But a closer look at Hu’s work shows that tension exists between the qualitative human development goals and the quantitative goal of surpassing the United States. Simply put, both Hu’s reports for the government and his academic work stress the quantitative target of catching up to and surpassing the United States. Like Lin, Hu is optimistic about China’s prospects, forecasting that by 2020 the PRC will surpass the United States to be the world’s top economic power.<sup>17</sup>

Lin argues that China will prosper by following its comparative advantage at every stage; catching up to the United States is an added benefit of this general process. Hu’s argument is quite similar: he likewise praises Deng Xiaoping’s pragmatic policy that gradually reformed China’s political economy through a process of trial and error. The key, once again, is to develop China’s infrastructure and human resources. Hu argues that the PRC is shifting from an export-oriented economy to one in which the domestic consumption of China’s growing middle class will drive development.<sup>18</sup> While Lin sees government facilitating the market, Hu was an early critic of market fundamentalism. Following this state-centric view, Hu thinks that China’s state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are the key to its continued success.

Hu deviates from most economists’ views, however, when he declares that we need to acknowledge the importance of the Maoist period (1949-1976) in China’s economic

development. He challenges the popular notion that views the Cultural Revolution as “ten lost years,” explaining that this “ten-year upheaval . . . made reform and opening possible. It provided the circumstances necessary for the last thirty years of progress towards increased unity, stability and prosperity.” Hu credits Mao for creating “the strategic concept of catching up and then surpassing the U.S.,” declaring that “it now seems that Mao’s grand strategy for China is on the verge of being realized.”<sup>19</sup>

Yet, if we follow Lin’s analysis, Mao’s political campaigns to develop heavy industry actually retarded China’s economic growth. In other words, Mao’s grand political goal of beating the United States could be achieved only by discarding Mao’s economic policies. In asides and footnotes, Hu acknowledges the problems with Mao’s “leap-forward” economic theory—which he recently called the “Moscow Consensus”<sup>20</sup> (as opposed to the Washington or the Beijing Consensus). Yet he still quotes Mao’s aspirational statements throughout his work. In the end Mao’s thought is useful, Hu argues, simply because it is Chinese.<sup>21</sup>

Hu’s arguments go beyond economic issues to target the United States not just as an economic or a political competitor, but also as a moral problem. In *2030 China*, Hu states that Washington Consensus advice to “completely privatize the economy and democratize politics” is not just mistaken (as Lin argues), but is the “evil road.”<sup>22</sup> Americans, he tells us, are selfish because their culture is “exceedingly individualistic.” Chinese are “more tolerant” because their culture is guided by “the principles of harmony, peace, and cooperation.” China thus will be a “mature, responsible, and attractive superpower,” Hu explains, because it is *different* from the United States.<sup>23</sup> This essential difference, for Hu, is an unbridgeable identity gap.

Consequently, China’s different style of economic power will transform the way the world works economically, politically, and culturally: “China can promote the reform of global governance systems, break the monopoly of the United States, and assert a greater influence in the world. This can also serve to break the western culture’s long-standing monopoly over modernity and bring more diversified cultures and values to the world stage.”<sup>24</sup> Hu thus forecasts not simply a great convergence of developed and developing economies, but a “great reversal,” one in which the global South has more wealth and power than developed countries in the North.

To promote what he calls the “China Road,” Hu argues that the PRC’s public intellectuals need to develop the “discursive power” of the “Chinese voice” and the “Chinese perspective.”<sup>25</sup> Although he occasionally references China’s classical culture, the Chinese perspective for Hu is guided by “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Rather than quote Confucian aphorisms, Hu cites Deng Xiaoping’s “well-off living standard,” Jiang Zemin’s “well-off society,” and Hu Jintao’s “harmonious society” and “peaceful development” as “modern Chinese innovations that bear strong Chinese and socialist characteristics.”<sup>26</sup>

To understand how Hu is developing a political-economic China model, it’s helpful to compare his views with those of Justin Yifu Lin. While Lin analyzes China as a “developing country,” Hu is shifting from a general view of “China in the world” to a more specific view of China as a unique case, which other countries can follow if they choose. While Lin looks to Deng’s economic reform and to its opening to the West, Hu cheers Mao’s challenge to the West. While Lin explores how the rise of China will usher in a multipolar world, Hu concludes that, by

2030, China will guide a Sinocentric world order to establish the “World of Great Harmony” (*datong shijie*), which is not only “China’s dream,” but also the “world’s dream.”<sup>27</sup>

Thus, Hu is moving from general arguments about global developmental economics to a specific argument about the PRC’s unique “China road.” His arguments develop the two points raised in the introduction: (1) a shift from “nationalism” to a “statism” that sees regional and global power as its main arena, and (2) his China dream is interwoven with the American dream, albeit in a negative way as a response to “Western values” in what he sees as an essentialized East/West conflict.

## PAN WEI’S CHINA MODEL

Although Justin Yifu Lin and Hu Angang offer sophisticated explanations of China’s hybrid strategy of economic development, to many the China model is still simply shorthand for “authoritarian state + free market capitalism.”

However, Pan Wei, the director of Peking University’s Center for China and Global Affairs, is not satisfied with this description. In the long introduction to his popular edited volume, *The China Model (Zhongguo moshi, 2009)*, Pan argues that Western social science concepts such as “authoritarianism” and “the free market” cannot explain China’s unique experience. China’s experience thus “challenges the ‘market/state planning dichotomy’ of Western economics, the ‘democracy/autocracy dichotomy’ of Western political science, and the ‘state/society dichotomy’ of Western sociology.”<sup>28</sup>

These concepts are not “universal,” he argues, because they grew out of Europe’s (and then America’s) particular historical and cultural experience. Since China has a uniquely different historical experience, Pan says that it can be judged only by its own set of concepts. Pan here is doing more than describing the Chinese experience. Through his books and speeches in China and abroad, Pan is building his unique China model to challenge the very idea of “universal values” such as democracy and human rights. Yet his arguments do not entail a critique of universalism itself; his essentialized understanding of Chinese civilization has its own historical and theoretical problems.

Pan explains the China model in terms of three “indigenous” Chinese submodels—public/private (*guomin*) economics, people-based (*minben*) politics, and organic (*sheji*) society—that are contrasted with “Western” approaches to order and governance. Mainstream Western philosophy generally recognizes the diversity of interests in modern society, and it sees order in terms of balancing competing interests through “checks and balances.” Chinese philosophy, Pan tells us, starts from the assumption of unity, and it sees order as a process of integrating divisions into an organic whole, ultimately into the “World of Great Harmony” (*datong shijie*). While Western economics sees a struggle between free markets and state intervention, China’s public/private economic model harmonizes both sectors. While Western politics looks to legalistic concepts of competing rights, China’s people-based political order is based on mutual responsibility. While Western sociology sees a battle between the state and civil society, China’s economic development and political stability are based on organic society’s integration of officials and the people.

Public/private economics, people-based politics, and organic society are all new concepts; but Pan looks to China's two traditions—ancient Chinese culture and modern socialist ideology—to argue that they are an integral part of Chinese civilization. He quotes many passages from classical Chinese philosophy to show how the “China model is the 21st century's new edition of the Chinese system.” Pan also looks to socialism to describe his public/private economy, which he concludes is the same as what CCP “officials call the ‘socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics.’” Like Hu Angang, Pan reclaims the Maoist period (1949-1976) as part of the China model's “60 years of achievement” because “our country's state-owned sector was built in [the PRC's] first 30 years.” The economic, political, and social submodels all rely on a strong CCP, which Pan describes as “an advanced, neutral, united ruling group.”<sup>29</sup>

In this formulation, Chinese society is presented as a conflict-free organic whole that must be defended from Western attack. According to Pan, Chinese critics who advocate deeper political reform really want “to demolish the Forbidden City in order to build the White House” in China, so “foreign forces can control China's military, politics, economy and society.” China thus is at a “crossroads”: “In the next 30 years, which direction will the Chinese nation take? Will it preserve China's rejuvenation? Or will it have superstitious faith in the Western ‘liberal democracy’ system, and go down the road of decline and enslavement?” Chinese people, he tells us, should celebrate the China model simply because it is not “foreign” or “imported.”<sup>30</sup> The irony here is that Pan does not question the Western roots of the ideologies of nationalism, socialism and communism, which he fully supports.

To put Pan's China model in context, it is helpful to think of it in terms of the conceptual distinctions mentioned above. Although Pan stresses harmony and balance as Chinese values, his model very clearly advocates government intervention in place of the free market. It sees Chinese political-economic-cultural trends diverging from Western “hegemony,” and he pits the China model against what he calls the Western model to promote Chinese exceptionalism against universal values. Like Hu Angang, Pan argues that the China model is different from the East Asian development model that Lin supports. Even more than for Hu, the West is for Pan a source of conspiracies to keep China down, including “booby traps” like liberal democracy. While Hu insists that China needs to enhance its “discursive power” so the world can hear the “Chinese voice” and appreciate the “Chinese perspective,”<sup>31</sup> Pan argues that Chinese scholars need “to be confident about their own native civilization to promote the formation of ‘Chinese discursive power’ and the rise of the ‘Chinese school.’”<sup>32</sup>

One of the main goals of China model discourse is to affirm and support Beijing's current system of governance that is dominated by the CCP. The China model involves tight state control of politics, economy, and society to promote the key values of hierarchy, stability and unity. Pan's expression of “Chinese exceptionalism” justifies the status quo of authoritarian rule because China's uniqueness shields it from criticisms that look to values that Pan would dismiss as “foreign.” In this way, Pan exemplifies the trends outlined in the introduction: (1) his nativism demonstrates the shift from “nationalism” to “statism,” and (2) his China dream is interwoven with the American dream in ways that are even more negative than Hu Angang's. His identity gap is wholly unbridgeable.

## FROM DEVELOPMENTAL ECONOMICS TO WEALTH AND POWER

While this essay's analysis has focused on people who are crafting an alternative to the West, there are certainly critics of the China model within the PRC.<sup>33</sup> However, among the China model's supporters and detractors the key issues remain the same: What is the proper relation between the government and the market, the China model and the Western model, and Chinese exceptionalism and universal values? Justin Yifu Lin's explanations of the China miracle generally look to the market, Western economics, and universal values—his goal is to move from developing to developed economy and from state planning to a full market economy.

Hu and Pan, however, see China's goal as a combination of government intervention and markets. They also are much more interested in political, cultural, and social explanations of China's success. Their explanations describe a shift not just from developing to developed economy, but also shift from seeing such transitions in terms of economics, first to political-economics and then to the search for China's unique road to wealth and power.

Lin is critical of Mao's early heavy industrial strategy, which he calls the "leap-forward strategy" after the failed Great Leap Forward mass movement. He argues China's success started with the economic reforms of 1978. The other two public intellectuals each date China's emergence as a great power to 1949 in order to reclaim the experience of the PRC's first thirty years. Rather than criticizing Mao's leap-forward strategy, they see it as the secret of China's success.

Although these three public intellectuals differ about the past, there is a consensus about China's long-term objective: Great Harmony (*datong*). Hu and Pan specifically mention "Great Harmony World" as their goal for China and the globe. This utopian ideal, which comes from China's two millennia old Book of Rites (*Liji*), describes a happy, conflict-free, organic society. Lin, who brought a calligraphic scroll of the Great Harmony passage with him to Washington, D.C., explains that "it advocates a world in which everyone trusts each other, cares for others and not only for himself. . . . This was my vision for the World Bank. . . . We try to work on poverty reduction and promote sustainable growth."<sup>34</sup>

While promoting Great Harmony, Lin, Hu, and Pan all agree that democracy is the problem rather than the solution. Pan is particularly defensive, seeing democracy as a conspiracy, a trick, a booby trap that the West wants to use to enslave China. At times, China model discourse seems to boil down to Occidentalism: For China to be good, it needs to understand all Western things as "evil" (and all evil things as "Western").

## CONCLUSION: OCCIDENTALISM AND CHINESE EXCEPTIONALISM

The idea that Chinese civilization is not just uniquely unique but "uniquely superior"—and uniquely threatened—is where the China dream becomes Chinese exceptionalism (*Zhongguo teshulun*). While American exceptionalism grows out of the idea that the United States is the world's first new nation, Chinese exceptionalism looks to 5,000 years of uniquely continuous civilization to see China as the world's first ancient civilization.<sup>35</sup>

While American exceptionalists see the United States as a beacon of freedom and democracy, Chinese exceptionalists see their country as a peaceful and harmonious alternative to Pax Americana. Although historians have provided a nuanced analysis of China's turbulent imperial history,<sup>36</sup> many strategists and public intellectuals still take for granted the exceptionalist argument that China's civilization is "inherently peaceful." But Chinese exceptionalism actually involves more than just trumpeting the country's "peaceful civilization."

Just as in the United States, Chinese exceptionalists assume that their country is exceptionally *good*. Kang Xiaoguang, a famous political-economist who combines expertise in rural development and Confucian values, explains this in his seminal essay "Chinese exceptionalism": "Chinese people themselves think that their race-nation is the most superior in the world. Even when they are in dire straits, they always feel that they should be the number one in the world."<sup>37</sup>

Although his ultimate goal is a World of Great Harmony (*shijie datong*) based on China's "inherently peaceful" civilization, Kang primarily sees Chinese exceptionalism as a negative factor—defining not what China is but what it is not. The short answer is: China is exceptional simply because it is *not* Western or democratic. Since China's experience is different from that of the West, he explains, "Western experience cannot dictate the future of China, and China's future will not simply repeat the past experience of others." Here Kang joins those who question the economic determinism of the Washington Consensus that tells us that liberal markets inevitably lead to liberal democracy.

But he goes further: because China is uniquely unique, the experiences of the Third World, post-socialist states in eastern Europe and Russia, and the "Confucian cultural circle" of East Asian countries (including Korea and Japan), are also irrelevant to China's development path. A major theme of Chinese exceptionalism, then, is not just promoting China's road as an alternative to mainstream development theory. To make sense of China as an alternative, Kang needs to go beyond criticizing economic theory to figure his model as the "opposite of Western individualism and a rejection of Western culture."

Here Kang joins others who can paint a rosy picture of Chinese values only after they have "Occidentalized" the West through negative stereotypes. "Orientalism," according to Edward Said, was not simply a description of "the East" produced by Europe's imperial bureaucrats. Orientalism mixed culture and politics to become European imperialism's "corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."<sup>38</sup>

Occidentalism works the same way as Orientalism, except in reverse: China asserts authority over itself and the West by first rejecting the West, and then searching for essential Chinese values in a negative quest. Recall that Hu Angang points to America's "excessive individualism" to show the value of Chinese harmony; to promote what he calls the "China road," he has to denounce the Washington Consensus as the "evil road."

While most public intellectuals frame the rise of China in terms of China versus the West/America, Zhang Weiwei's discussion of the China model places it in a regional context as well. In *The China Shock* (*Zhongguo zhenhan*, 2011), Zhang certainly starts from

arguments similar to those of Pan Wei: the world is faced with two options, the China model or the Western model. Zhang also romanticizes Chinese culture as harmonious and peaceful, while the West is presented as violently confrontational. But at the end of his book, Zhang tests the China model by comparing it with countries outside “the West”: India, Eastern Europe and East Asia. Rather than examining such countries on their own terms, he slots them into the China model/Western model framework. As his section titles indicate—“The Democracy Predicament: My View of India,” and “The Democracy Predicament: My View of East Asia”—his goal is not merely to criticize these countries as rivals, but to Occidentalize them as part of a general battle against liberal capitalism and liberal democracy.

Zhang spends a fair bit of space, for example, denouncing India; he thus can conclude that rather than being proud of being the “world’s largest democracy,” Indians should be concerned about hosting “Asia’s largest slum” in Mumbai. South Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, Thai, Mongolian and Filipino problems—which in fact are quite diverse—are likewise all traced to a single source: choosing to follow what Zhang calls the “flawed Western democratic system.”<sup>39</sup>

Zhang’s solution is for these various countries to jettison democracy, and return to the warm embrace of Chinese civilization, whose values, he explains, are shared by all East Asian countries.<sup>40</sup> East Asian society (which he describes as a single entity), is based on harmony and the family. Hence if East Asians foolishly “copy” Western ideas and institutions, then they will fall prey to what Zhang describes as the “five democratic diseases”: social division, weak state power, short-termism, politicization of issues, and populism.<sup>41</sup>

In Zhang’s paternalistic schema, it is problematic for non-western countries to be “low quality” copies of liberal democracy, while it is natural for East Asians to be derivative of Chinese civilization and Confucian values. Like other Chinese exceptionalists, he does not acknowledge that the PRC copied European Marxist ideas and Soviet Russian institutions. Zhang likewise shows little appreciation of the fact that Koreans often argue that their country is even more Confucian than China.

Zhang’s *China Shock* is important for two reasons. Firstly, Zhang is part of the new breed of public intellectuals mentioned above who have traveled widely, speak to Chinese and foreign audiences, and have elite connections: Zhang was Deng Xiaoping’s translator in the 1980s. Secondly, the book (and related newspaper articles) has been hugely popular: it sold over one million copies, was required reading for Shanghai party cadres in 2011, and was on Xi Jinping’s summer reading list in 2012.<sup>42</sup> In this way, it is indicative of 1) the widening identity gap between China and the U.S. because it locates Chinese experiences in a China versus the West framework, and 2) the widening identity gap between China and many of its East Asian neighbors since it Occidentalizes many of the region’s countries in the service of pathologizing liberal values as a Western disease.

As we have seen in this essay, many public intellectuals are much clearer about what they do not like—the West and the United States—than they are about China’s alternative to it. Their China dream is closely linked to the American dream, albeit in a negative way that also neglects consideration of experiences from Asia or Europe (let alone from non-territorial sources). Their impact thus may be more negative—to delegitimize the current Western-influenced world

order—than positive in the sense of promoting a coherent post-American world order. This is because China's Occidentalism is not a conclusion drawn from rigorous analysis. Rather, it is the starting point of Chinese exceptionalism: Public intellectuals first decide that they do not like “the West,” and only then go in search of proper Chinese values (which then are presented as China's timeless essential moral code).

The East/West logic of this Occidentalism, in which Chinese authors construct an evil and failing West as the opposite of a virtuous and successful China, inflames Chinese readers' righteous rage and sense of global injustice. While it is laudable to question the economic determinism of the Washington Consensus, it is unfortunate that many Chinese authors replace it with a cultural determinism of “inevitables” and “undeniables” that tell us what Chinese people can—and, more importantly, *cannot*—do. Rather than questioning the rigid essentialism of universal and essentialized identity constructs, many Chinese intellectuals are simply replacing one set of essential values with another, in an effort to justify China's expansionist notion of geopolitical power in East Asia.

## ENDNOTES

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# The View from Japan

Ming Wan

How do the Japanese view the Sino-U.S. national identity gap? Their views are naturally informed by their own national identities and their national identity gaps with China and the United States, while also viewing the Sino-U.S. relationship through the lens of Japan's perceived national interests. They long regarded Japan as a natural bridge between the two countries, briefly feared that the two would have found an affinity at Japan's expense, and recently have found consolation in the notion that irreconcilable differences are driving China and the United States far apart. This progression is traced below before this paper concentrates on the recent Sino-U.S. gap, noting Japan's overlap with its ally, but also observing Japan's loss of interest in learning from the United States.

After the end of the Second World War, the Japanese imagined their country to be a natural bridge between China and the United States, a clear reflection of their national identity as a country both in Asia and the West. Yes, Japanese also took pride as an Asian country that modernized first and, by the 1970s, as the leader in bringing development to Asian countries, giving it a solid basis to think from both perspectives. But in assuming it is entitled to be a bridge between China and the United States, Japan necessarily regards its national identity gap with either China or the United States as much narrower than that between China and the United States. Thus, the Japanese often suggested, explicitly or subtly, that they could help the Americans understand China because they connect with fellow Asians in a deeper and more nuanced fashion than the latter. The Japanese also often lectured the Chinese, not always subtly, about the modern international rules, which they thought they understood better than late-modernizing, non-Japanese Asians.

Apart from that primary identity, there was also growing concern among some Japanese elites since around the 1990s that the Chinese and Americans might be similar to each other in personality traits, communications styles, and a habit for strategic thinking, leaving Japan as the odd man out. This identity anxiety coincided with a fear of "Japan passing" from the United States. But it went deeper to the Japanese insecurity about their place in the world or, more exactly, about Japan as a border culture caught between two universal civilizations that differ in substance but connect in universality.

Japan's relationship with China has worsened sharply since the Chinese fishing boat collision incident in September 2010. The relationship between the United States and China also became more tense around the same time. Not surprisingly, the Japanese closely follow the relationship between China and the United States, the two major "others" for Japan. Much of the Japanese analysis in this regard is based on geopolitical calculations,<sup>1</sup> but national identity has been an important part of the Japanese thought process. There is now a strong Japanese wish to see irreconcilable differences between China and the United States, focusing on political values and political regimes, the status quo power versus the challenger, and international rules and responsibilities.

Underlying that dominant trend in the Japanese view of China as a rising threat and of an enlarging Sino-U.S. national identity gap, there is also a less visible, basically unconscious, undercurrent of Japan adapting to the Chinese system (not as a conscious model to learn from), combining political control and market competition, decisive decision making and social mobility, which is drawn from long intertwined Japan-China exchanges entrenched in Japanese traditions. While Japan has moved closer to the United States strategically, it has ceased to

learn consciously from the United States. Japan's subconscious adaption to the Chinese system does not indicate China's growing influence in world affairs. In the short run at least, it results from competition with China and will lead to greater tensions with Beijing.

It is challenging methodologically to pinpoint the Japanese views of the Sino-U.S. national identity gap. The Japanese do not normally frame their analysis from the angle of national identity gaps. It is harder still to find the Japanese analysis of the Sino-U.S. national identity gap. Even if we find "perfect quotes" of some Japanese using that framework, it does not necessarily mean that mainstream Japanese see things that way. There is not much secondary academic analysis in Japan analyzing this issue. But this chapter builds on my previous research on the national identities in Sino-Japanese relations, particularly as a participant in several related research projects led by Gilbert Rozman, which has produced some of the best theoretical and empirical research in this research area. Furthermore, based on observation and research conducted as a visiting professor in Japan from August 2010 to August 2012, I discerned that national identities matter even more now than before in Japan. More than casual observation, I anchor my analysis in empirical research, drawing from reading newspapers and weeklies, viewing television programs, analyzing Japanese books and opinion polls, and partaking of conversations and interviews. The Internet is, arguably, the most fertile ground for an identity-based assessment of growing Japanese tensions with China. While I do think that the extreme views often found there are partly shared and largely tolerated by mainstream thinkers, this chapter does not focus on them. The aim is a more mainstream perspective.

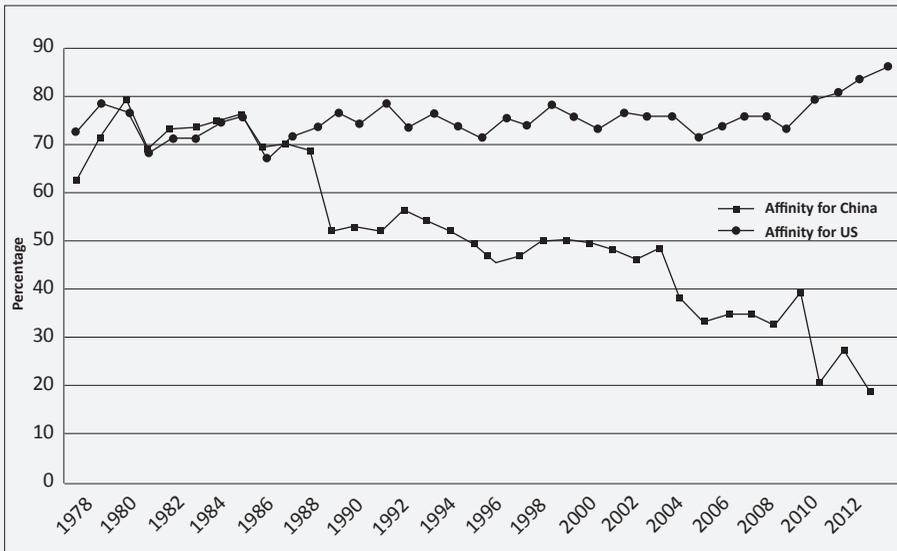
This chapter follows in chronological order: 1) the Japanese view of the Sino-U.S. national identity gaps through the 2000s;<sup>2</sup> 2) diverse current Japanese views of the Sino-U.S. national identity gap; and 3) a deeper look at Japanese national identity and its historical trajectory, showing tension with conscious thinking about relations with the United States vis-à-vis China. A fourth section presents the conclusions from this analysis.

## THE JAPANESE VIEW OF THE SINO-U.S. IDENTITY GAP THROUGH THE 2000S

To gauge the Japanese views of the Sino-U.S. national identity gap, one wishes for tracking polls with a question such as: "Do you think China and the United States are similar or different and why?" One can also include control questions to ask about views of the degree of similarity of the Japanese to the Chinese or the Americans. No such data exist, as far as I know. However, we can make some inferences from existing polls. Since 1978, the prime minister's office has asked the public about its sense of affinity with some countries viewed as important for Japan. Figure 1 shows that the Japanese now feel much closer to the United States than to China, with 84.5 percent feeling close to the former and 18.0 percent to the latter in 2012.

One way to interpret the trends depicted is that the wider "sensitive difference" perceived with the Chinese indicates a growing national identity gap. Sensitive difference is not substantive difference. The Japanese assessment of China was simply too rosy in the late 1970s when that country had just emerged from the disastrous Cultural Revolution. It is actually striking that the Japanese felt the same way about China and the United States in the 1980s, leaving other countries in the dust. The Japanese perception of the sensitive difference with the Chinese adjusted to the substantive difference in the 1990s, but it is, arguably, overshooting in the

**Figure 1. Japanese Affinity for China Versus the United States (1978-2012)**



negative direction at present. It is not clear whether the Japanese affinity results from a sense of similarity with the Americans or a sense of finding the United States trustworthy even if it is different culturally. But we readily observe how conservatives (dominating in the Japanese system) and progressive forces (weakening in their appeal) both have something to like about the United States and plenty of things to dislike about China, national security for the former and human rights and democracy for the latter.

The prime minister’s office polls do not ask the Japanese about their view of the Sino-U.S. national identity gap. National identities are deeper than simply a sense of like or dislike. One may dislike one’s twin brother too. The Japanese national identities are complex, conflicting with each other and evolving due to the internal logic of these identities and to changes in the external environment.<sup>3</sup> To see through the fog, I discuss two prominent identity-driven orientations, namely Japan as a bridge between China and the United States and Japan as an outlier from both China and the United States.

For much of the postwar era, the Japanese felt strongly that Japan could serve as a bridge between China and the United States. This orientation was convenient in both international relations and domestic politics. Who does not want to be a bridge? Using network analysis in vogue at present, we can see why one wants to be a bridge or a hub, which gives a competitive advantage over those not situated as favorably. A bridge was a good compromise in Japan’s contentious domestic context, with everyone seeing some merits in such an orientation. With the United States, the Japanese often suggested that they could help the Americans understand China, which resulted from a national identity that knew fellow Asians better. Such sentiment was ever present in the Japanese analysis of American policies in Asia. Sometimes, it came up in intergovernmental talks with U.S. officials. Citing just one example, at a bilateral trade and economic cooperation talk held in Kyoto in July 1966, Fujiyama Aiichiro, the director general of the Economic Planning Agency, criticized America’s Vietnam policy, reasoning that political

instability results from thinking only about democratic ideals and suggesting that Asian history is different from that of the United States and Europe. U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk responded sarcastically that he could not understand why only Asians can understand Asians.<sup>4</sup>

The Americans rightly assumed that they could understand China on their own. In fact, the experience of the Second World War and what happened before shows that the Japanese understanding of China was seriously deficient while many Americans, at least, had a better grasp. The same may be true today. The Americans have extensive direct exchange with the Chinese leaders. There are also deep people-to-people exchanges. As an immigrant country, the United States has an expanding Asian American community that contributes to American understanding. When it comes to China, the United States has educated excellent China experts with language proficiency and extensive experience on the ground. And a large community of China-born scholars in the United States also contributes to the English language knowledge pool about China.

Another challenge for Japan to serve as a bridge was that Japan was not located in a “neutral” location in East Asian international relations. Japan was a close ally of the United States, the superpower that has military bases in Japan, and was used as a crucial location for supporting the American war efforts in Korea and Vietnam. Thus, there was much illusion in thinking of Japan as serving as a bridge. In foreign policy practice, other Asian countries and the United States did not use Japan as a bridge. The United States and China maintained some contact in Warsaw, and Rumania and Pakistan served as the messengers to 1972. Vietnam negotiated with the United States in Paris, not Tokyo. That Japan sustained a myth about its special role should not be seen as unusual, but it serves as a vital clue about how national identity has shaped Japan’s foreign policy orientation.

Imagining Japan serving as a bridge is a well-intentioned ideal for connecting the other two countries in a positive fashion. This national identity-driven orientation matters in diplomatic practice as well. While Japan’s opinion of China began to decline sharply after June 4, 1989, its self-consciousness about becoming a bridge between China and the United States reached a peak in the early 1990s.<sup>5</sup> Whether China was violating human rights was not a serious concern for many Japanese as long as China was viewed as on good terms with their country. In this period, awareness of a widening Sino-U.S. identity gap amid troubled relations also emboldened Japanese to foresee a rare opportunity.

With difficulties in their relationship with China and realization of the degree of economic problems the country faced, the Japanese felt increasingly insecure, which was reflected in a new assessment of the relationship between China and the United States. In the 1990s, there was overwhelming concern expressed in public or private conversations that the United States now viewed China as more important than Japan, thus bypassing Tokyo. Japan, in stages, became far more concerned about making sure the United States was on its side than about bridging the gap between China and the United States.

One Japanese concern that came up often, particularly in private conversations, was the observation that the Chinese are more similar to the Westerners in some key personality traits such as direct, forceful expression of opinions and a natural habit for thinking strategically. The Japanese were also concerned that the Chinese government was manipulating the Americans to

marginalize Japan. The fact that Chinese President Jiang Zemin paid tribute to the United States at Pearl Harbor during his state visit in October 1997 convinced many Japanese of the Chinese plot, which partly explained the difficulties Jiang would face during his later visit to Japan. Yet, as the visit showed, China bears much of the responsibility for shifting away from reassuring Japan to the sort of posture Jiang displayed in his 1998 visit, which served to reduce Japanese trust.

The Japanese sense of insecurity partly resulted from a period of intense American criticism of Japan as different from the Western democracies. That experience helps to explain why Japanese views of some Sino-U.S. disputes were not unsympathetic to China as late as the 2000s. For example, Japanese analysts often saw the U.S. critique of unfair Chinese trading practices as rejection of “*ishitsusei*” [heterogeneity], similar to American arguments against Japan in earlier years. Unlike the United States, Japan had mostly enjoyed trade surpluses with China if one views Japan’s exports to Hong Kong as largely transit trade to China. Japan’s trade surpluses against the United States decreased through its investment in China and the formation of East Asian production networks.

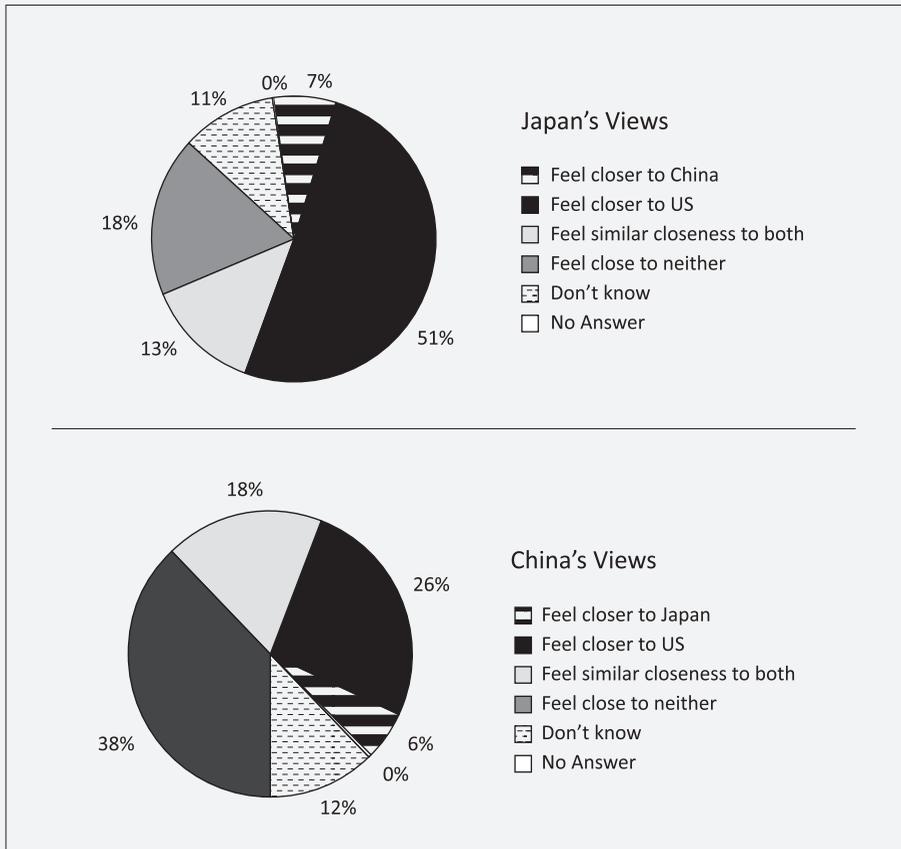
## CURRENT JAPANESE VIEWS OF THE SINO-U.S. IDENTITY GAP

Sino-Japanese relations experienced a sharp decline in late 2010, crucially in the aftermath of the September fishing boat collision, reflected in the opinion polls in Figure 1.<sup>6</sup> With another round of heightened tension after the Noda government purchased three disputed Senkaku islands (Diaoyudao for China or Tiaoyutai for Taiwan) from a Japanese landowner in early September 2012, Japanese views of China worsened still. Increasingly aware of the Chinese discourse on Japan with a widening identity gap, the Japanese public feels more and more alienated from China. By contrast, views of the United States improved further with America’s quick and massive disaster relief efforts in Operation Tomodachi. Figure 2 shows that contrast more clearly.

The Genron polls, which started only in 2005, offer a more direct comparison of Japanese views toward China versus the United States than the prime minister’s office polls used in Figure 1. They asked how close Japanese and Chinese feel toward the other country versus the United States for the first time in 2012, revealing that the Japanese overwhelmingly feel closer to the United States (51 percent) than to China (7 percent). By contrast, the Chinese polled also feel closer to the United States (26 percent) than to Japan (6 percent), but a larger share likes neither (38 percent). The United States is in a favorable position since both the Japanese and Chinese like it better than their neighbor.

The Genron polls do not ask the Japanese about their assessment of how close the Chinese and Americans feel toward each other relative to Japan. But they contain some interesting information to help us understand the Japanese view of the Sino-U.S. national identity gap. In particular, the polls ask why the polled feel close or not close to China. Not surprisingly, a main reason for the Japanese not to like China relates to the territorial dispute, which a majority of Japanese acknowledge exists, in contrast to the government position. The Japanese are also concerned about China competing for natural resources in a self-centered fashion and about China’s rising military power. These geopolitical and geoeconomic calculations are not divorced from national identity tension. In particular, as Japan’s recent territorial tension with all its neighbors shows, how one understands the

**Figure 2. Genron Polls**



Source: Genron, accessed on August 8, 2012, <http://www.genron-npo.net/world/genre/cat119/2012-a.html>

past has much to do with geopolitics in East Asia. The Genron polls show that 44 percent of the polled in 2012 view Chinese criticism of Japan's past as a key reason for not liking China while only 4.9 percent cite the past war itself as the reason. By contrast, the Chinese polled overwhelmingly (78.6 percent) cite Japan's past aggression as the main reason for not liking Japan. Thus, the Chinese view the dispute over Diaoyudao as a continuation of Japan's past aggression against China while the Japanese view China as showing interest in the Senkakus only with the news of rich oil deposits in the region in the 1970s. More directly, a significant portion of the polled cite more explicit identity reasons for disliking China, with 48.3 percent seeing China as not following the international rules and 26.5 percent citing China's different political system. To add to the identity gap with the political system at issue, 67.9 percent of the Japanese view China as a socialist, communist country. On the flip side, only 15.6 percent of the Chinese view Japan as a democratic country, while 46.2 percent assess it as militaristic.

Building on this relevant statistical information, I examine how the Japanese view the actual events and trends between China and the United States based on analysis of

Japanese television programs, newspapers, and magazines as well as talks with scholars and officials. There have been some major events in East Asian international relations such as the American “pivot” in the Pacific, high-profile American official visits to the region, and military exercises. A Sino-U.S. rivalry in the Pacific is intensifying, while the two countries continue to search for strategic cooperation over a broad range of issues.

The Japanese media analyses reflect Japan’s specific interests, mostly from either a geopolitical or geoeconomic angle. Similar to American coverage, *Asahi shimbun* focused on the Chinese yuan exchange issue when covering the meeting between Obama and Wen Jiabao in New York on September 23, 2010.<sup>7</sup> Unlike past coverage, there is less concern about Japan passing based on the assessment that the United States needs Japan more as it has declined relative to China and faces China’s growing challenge.

Japanese no longer worry much about Sino-U.S. tension being negative for Japan. Rather, they seem to prefer greater tension, consciously or unconsciously aiming to shape Sino-U.S. interaction, as in letting their own disputes with China drive the Sino-U.S. bilateral relationship, forcing the United States to take Japan’s side. The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), for example, urged the United States not to “assume a neutral stance regarding territorial rights” to the Senkakus.<sup>8</sup> The Japanese had a high regard for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, particularly for her pro-active policy toward Asia. The Japanese media closely covered her attendance at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on July 12, 2012. The Japanese shared concerns with some ASEAN countries and appeared to be disappointed that, on this occasion, Clinton was restrained. *Asahi* was disappointed, as were many in the United States, that there was no direct confrontation and ASEAN could not agree on a declaration on China due to internal division and China’s influence.<sup>9</sup>

As Sino-Japanese disputes have gone multilateral, public exchanges to win support for one’s supposedly reasonable positions have intensified, while making the other side look bad. The Chinese government ran ads in mainstream Western media first. The Japanese also beefed up their campaigns after privately sounding the alarm to American officials and analysts about a rising China well before the fishing boat incident. It was in Japan’s interest to make sure that the United States regarded China with ample suspicion, and well-placed Japanese strove to reshape the American view of China.

With bilateral tension so much more intense and so much more open, there is a greater push to make the Americans aware of their differences from the Chinese. As an extreme example of some Japanese appealing directly to the Americans and seeking to frame U.S.-China relations in good versus evil terms, Okawa Ryuho, the founder of the Happy Science Group, purchased a one-page ad in *The Washington Post* to urge Obama and the United States to stand together with the Japanese and fight against “China’s desire for expansion and world domination.” He reasoned that god-loving America and Japan are natural allies against atheist China and North Korea.<sup>10</sup> However distorted this assessment, given the much larger number of Christians in China than in Japan and the shared Buddhist tradition in these two states,<sup>11</sup> national identity involves imagination that may have a weak factual basis. The imagination of the Japanese nation as continuously militaristic by many Chinese, as revealed in the above Genron polls, is a prime example.

If we look deeper, we find a complex Japanese identity of seeing the United States as maintaining the international rules while China is challenging them. However true this is, it is also a matter of national identity when a typical Japanese analyst talks about China not respecting the existing international rules but finds it difficult to define these rules or give concrete examples of violations, taking for granted that China is doing so.

The Japanese now focus more on differences in political regimes. A functioning democracy, Japan spawns a genuine value gap with China.<sup>12</sup> In particular, the Chinese government's anger over Liu Xiaobo's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 also received much Japanese media attention. Similarly, blind Chinese activist Chen Guangcheng's dramatic escape from house arrest to the U.S. embassy in Beijing in April 2012 was covered in great detail in the Japanese media.

Since Japanese do not think they bear any responsibility for worsening relations, one way to explain them is to argue that an authoritarian regime in China is the problem. There is no question that lack of democracy has created huge problems for Chinese domestic politics and foreign policy, including its relations with Japan, but national identity distorts the discourse. For example, Vietnam, similar to China in political regime, is portrayed positively in the Japanese media because it is viewed as a natural ally against China. It is striking that Japanese media largely portrayed Abe's visit in January 2013 to Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia as showcasing his value diplomacy with countries that share the values of freedom and democracy to check communist China.<sup>13</sup>

Some Japanese also imagine a Japanese system more democratic and open than it actually is. Similar events are narrated differently. As an example, *Asahi shimbun* noted on July 30, 2012 that Japan's ongoing anti-nuclear demonstrations were orderly in contrast to the Taisho period in Japan's past and to the Chinese demonstrations against the Japanese firm Oji's waste processing plan, highlighting the difference between a mature democracy and a non-democratic China.<sup>14</sup> However, while *Asahi shimbun* put the latest anti-nuclear demonstration on the front page, it had earlier put a major anti-nuclear demonstration on the back page while making rising eel prices a feature story.<sup>15</sup> There was an even more violent anti-Japanese firm demonstration in India, with two Japanese nationals injured and one Indian employee killed, but the Japanese media chose not to highlight that story, unlike its extensive coverage of a Chinese demonstration against a Japanese firm in China. China is the other and India is not. Rivalry rather than democracy is driving Japanese thinking.

## TWISTS IN JAPANESE NATIONAL IDENTITY

While Japan's opinion of China has sunk ever lower and its affinity with the United States remains high, one should also note that Japanese identities are complex and evolve in a way not necessarily consistent with expressed views. This is evident in two twists in identity related to the United States and China. First, Japan has turned away from Americanization since around the mid 2000s due to a growing inward-looking tendency. Second, some reforming Japanese politicians seek, unconsciously, to adapt elements of the Chinese system as if they are more in keeping with Japan's aims.

Growing tension with China and closer security cooperation with the United States do not necessarily mean a narrower national identity gap with the United States. Politicians with such strong right wing views as Ishihara Shintaro are politically active and influential when they would remain on the fringe in other advanced democracies. Ishihara was a highly popular mayor of Japan's capital city from 1999. He stepped down at the end of October 2012 to form a new national political party, which then merged with the Japan Restoration Party founded by a conservative populist politician Hashimoto Toru, the mayor of the City of Osaka. Ishihara now leads the Japan Restoration Party, which emerged as a close third in the Lower House elections held on December 16, 2012. Provocateurs, who stir up disputes and force issues on the national government that exacerbate disputes with other countries, have had a notorious history in recent decades.

The Japanese ultranationalists continue to fight the Second World War by whitewashing history. They were initially more angry at the United States than any other country. It long has made them feel humiliated and agitated. Ishihara, who in 1989 co-authored the famous book *Japan that Can Say No*, views Japan as a "mistress" of the United States, the cause of an extreme sense of national shame.<sup>16</sup> Over time, though, Japanese nationalists have turned their anger against North Korea and China while quietly complaining about the United States with much less frequency. In the interview cited above, Ishihara mainly attacked China while observing that "our master is now on the decline—he is old and losing his physical strength."

The Japanese ultranationalists have now warmed up to the United States mainly due to their strong dislike of China. They have an exaggerated sense of national survival, now largely framed as coming from the China threat. Ishihara announced his plan to purchase the Senkakus while visiting the United States in April 2012. To make that connection even more explicit, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government purchased an ad in the *Wall Street Journal* on July 27, 2012 to appeal directly for American support for its plan to purchase the Senkakus. The ad warned darkly that "failure to support the Asian nations confronting China would result in the United States losing the entire Pacific Ocean."<sup>17</sup> Ishihara and those who share his worldview want the United States to back up Japan hundred percent over narrowly defined issues such as territorial disputes.

By picking history fights, Japanese conservatives enlarge the national identity gap with the United States. Due to the controversy over a comfort woman memorial in New Jersey in which Japanese diplomats reportedly protested to local officials, the movement is now spreading to the rest of the country. Glendale, California marked Korean Comfort Women Day in early August 2012.<sup>18</sup> American public opinion as reflected in mainstream media outlets generally views Japan as turning conservative and has reservations about its new prime minister. For example, the Abe cabinet launched on December 26, 2012 was assessed by *The Economist* as one of "radical nationalists."<sup>19</sup> Its editors opined that while the United States should support Japan when China is aggressive, that support "should not extend to rewriting history or provoking China (let alone South Korea)."<sup>20</sup>

As a more tolerant democracy, the United States has been more successful in handling national identity gaps. Thus, the developments discussed above will do little to dampen security cooperation, but they do show the limits of nationalist manipulation of messages in the United States. Moreover, if Japan worsens relations with neighboring countries due to

its leaders' revisionist views of history, that would complicate American national interests in the region. As Glen Fukushima noted, while Abe is a strong pro-American leader and intends to strengthen the alliance, "his revisionist views of history and controversial views of Asia could lead him to speak and act in ways that exacerbate tensions with neighboring countries, especially China and South Korea."<sup>21</sup>

More broadly, the Japanese, particularly the young, are becoming more inward-looking, which reflects a greater degree of psychological distancing with the outside world. It is noted both inside and outside Japan that Japanese young people are becoming less inclined to go abroad to study, compared to other Asian countries, particularly South Korea and China. There are no incentives for them to go abroad when competition for jobs at home is becoming so time consuming and network-dependent. But there is also an underlying identity shift. Many find it more comfortable staying at home than dealing with difficult foreign customs. This shift has an impact on the Japanese sense of identity and will become even more pronounced when the currently young take center stage.

On the elite level, there is much confusion about Japanese national identities. As Rozman noted, for Japanese, "the post-Cold War era offered tantalizing glimpses of breakthroughs in national identity, but these were increasingly submerged in bitter disappointments ... The search for new clarity about identity has led to dead ends, as those who favor revisionism centered on the war (*sensoron*) have won a following but no prospect of political consensus and those who favor the idealism of the East Asian community have found a region in turmoil under China's unwelcome quest for leadership."<sup>22</sup> Some Japanese still search for a unique Japanese identity that does not derive from anti-American or anti-Chinese feelings,<sup>23</sup> but growing nationalism is more based on fear than hope, particularly about a rising China.

Japan is not unique in facing identity confusion, particularly with globalization and modern communication technologies. But the Japanese sense of anxiety is arguably among the strongest in the world for the simple fact that it is the second or third largest economy in the world but feels culturally separate.<sup>24</sup> Japan is still torn between the East and the West. By contrast, the Chinese often simply assume that they are the East and have fewer qualms in competing or integrating with the West at the same time. South Koreans arguably are more emphatic of their identity uniqueness than the Japanese at present, but they are also charging outward to the West and East, carving out a large economic and cultural space in Asia and the world.

Mainstream Japanese politics have become increasingly conservative, as defined in the Japanese context. Some bravely seek a synthesis. As an example, the then-ruling DPJ came up with a draft of its party program, revealed to the leadership on August 7, 2012. It emphasized that "with the imperial system as foundation," Japan should further polish its unique features that have resulted from integration and development of cultures of "ancient and modern, the East and the West" [*kokon tōzai*].<sup>25</sup> But as the DPJ is formed of different ideological stocks, there was immediate dissent expressed against such a conservative view of history.<sup>26</sup> The December 2012 Lower House elections revealed a clear trend of parties moving to the right. Abe Shinzo, the party chief of the LDP, pushed a strong conservative agenda during the election campaign, mindful of an even more

conservative Japan Restoration Party. The three conservative parties won 405 seats in the 480-seat Lower House, with some other parties being conservative as well.

However difficult it is to draw a straight line between an expressed view and a policy outcome, we observe a continuous emphasis on Japan having unique features that are different from both the East and the West and on the centrality of those features to the way Japan must act. That partly explains a degree of uncompromising, fundamentalist thinking, particularly when it comes to Japan's disputes with other countries.

Japan is not looking at the United States or the West for inspiration right now except in the security arena.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, some of the earlier "Americanizing efforts" by reformers such as Koizumi Junichiro have been blamed for enlarging the wealth gap and threatening social stability in the country. The electoral reform and creation of a two-party system modeled after the United States and Great Britain is also viewed as only creating political paralysis. Japanese thinking in this regard partly reflects blaming others for reforms that were not carried out, but national identity plays a crucial role in these reflections that perceive Americanization as threatening Japan's unique qualities. Some remain critical of the United States as greedy capitalist in contrast to a harmonious Japan.

The Japanese who advocate reform to deal with Japan's supposed national crisis look up to the Meiji heroes. The American Occupation that has left a strong institutional legacy is something they would rather forget. It is striking how difficult it is to find any museums dedicated to the American Occupation in a country where everything seems to be memorialized. Moreover, as some Japanese thinkers note, the Meiji Restoration also represented partially a move towards the Chinese system.<sup>28</sup> Following the China study school founded by Naito Konan (1866-1934), they argued that Song China was the first true modernizing country with a secular state, a merit-based selection system for officials, and a competitive market economy. In their view, Tokugawa Japan took a different path than China, but Japan came to represent the Chinese system more through the Meiji Restoration, which is better translated as "rejuvenation" in English. They point out that rising political stars such as Hashimoto Toru represent an unconscious attempt to complete the transformation of the Japanese state begun in the Meiji era. While the "sinicization" argument is still a marginal academic view in a country that strongly dislikes China at present, it illustrates the possibilities in imagining national identity made possible because of the long Sino-Japanese interaction.

Watching Hashimoto almost daily on Japanese television suggested that while he is one of a few Japanese leaders capable of arousing the public, he also has the potential to be a Chinese style strong leader, which may be reason to be on guard. The seemingly invincible Hashimoto began to stumble in late 2012. The December 2012 Lower House election restored power to the LDP that had not really changed. Opinion polls now show the LDP as the most popular party, far ahead of Hashimoto's Japan Restoration Party. Abe's vision of "beautiful Japan" is winning the day. At the same time, one should watch an undercurrent of Japanese adapting to the Chinese system, which does not mean integration into the Chinese sphere of influence. In fact, those who are subconsciously adapting to the Chinese system are more likely to clash with the Chinese state.

## CONCLUSION

With growing concerns about a rising China's attitude toward Japan, the Japanese have an increasingly lower sense of affinity with China and a higher level of affinity with the United States. The United States has an almost insurmountable advantage over China at this point. Among other reasons, as a far more tolerant democracy, it has given the Japanese a significant space for national identity discussions. Even in historical memory, the United States respects the Japanese, with the American ambassador's attendance at the atomic bombing memorials in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a case in point. The United States does not confront the Japanese historical narrative even though the United States has its own convictions about the "Good War." The American government also does not take on Japanese nationalists or fight history diplomatically. By contrast, China's national identity-based legitimation and how it handles the history issue on the diplomatic level clash head on with the Japanese national identity process.

The Japanese are viewing Sino-U.S. relations from a multi-level complex of national interests and identities. There is now a greater mismatch between the distribution of interests, superficial affinity, and deeper national identity anxieties. Japan has a strong symmetry of strategic interests with the United States and wants the United States to side more strongly with it to manage a rising China. It welcomes and thinks it sees an enlarging national identity gap between China and the United States. At the same time, Japan continues to have a strong economic interest to leverage a rising China's rapidly expanding market, and it is unconsciously adapting to the Chinese system rather than copying the American system at present. Rather than choosing sides in this perceived clash of national identities between China and the United States, it is widening the gap with the United States on matters at the core of its identity even if that seems inconsistent with closer security ties and may be overlooked as the gap with China widens further.

## ENDNOTES

1. See for example Noboru Yamaguchi, "A Japanese Perspective on U.S. Rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific Region," *Asia Policy*, No. 15 (January 2013), pp. 7-12.
2. For my analysis of Japanese views of the national identity gap with China, see Ming Wan, "National Identities and Sino-Japanese Relations," in Gilbert Rozman, ed., *National Identities and Bilateral Relations: Widening Gaps in East Asia and Chinese Demonization of the United States* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 65-93.
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5. Ming Wan, *Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Relations: Defining and Defending National Interests* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 87-91.
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12. See an Asahi editor’s view, *Asahi shimbun*, October 16, 2010, p. 17.
13. See *Sankei shimbun*, January 15, 2013, accessed on January 14, 2013, <<http://sankei.jp.msn.com/politics/news/130115/plc13011503090005-n1.htm>>; “Yachi advised Abe to visit S.E. Asia,” *The Daily Yomiuri*, January 15, 2013, accessed on January 14, 2013.
14. *Asahi shimbun*, July 30, 2012, p. 1.
15. *Asahi shimbun*, July 17, 2012.
16. He said so in a news conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club. Hiroshi Matsubara, “Tokyo Governor Ishihara Calls out his Enemies at FCCJ,” *The Asahi shimbun*, May 29, 2012, accessed on August 31, 2012, [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/AJ201205290082](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/AJ201205290082).
17. “Ad in Wall Street Journal Seeks U.S. Support for Senkaku Purchase Plan,” *The Japan Times*, July 29, 2012, p. 1.
18. “California City Proclaims Korean Comfort Women Day,” *The Japan Times*, August 4, 2012, p. 3.
19. Fourteen in the 19-member cabinet belong to the “League for Going to Worship Together at Yasukuni.” Thirteen are members of a nationalist think tank that rejects “apology diplomacy” and wants to return to “traditional values.” Nine cabinet members participate in an association that wants to emphasize patriotism in textbooks and denies most war atrocities. Abe and some other cabinet members also want to revise the constitution imposed by the United States. “Japan’s New Cabinet: Back to the Future,” *The Economist*, January 5, 2013, p. 29.
20. “Japanese Foreign Policy: Down-turn Abe,” *The Economist*, January 5, 2013, p. 8.
21. Glen S. Fukushima, “Japan’s Role in America’s Asia Pivot,” *The Washington Post*, December 21, 2012, A27.
22. Rozman, “Japanese National Identity,” p. 24.
23. Togo, “Japanese National Identity,” pp. 165-66.
24. See best sellers such as Uchida Tatsuru, *Nihon henkyoron* (Tokyo: Shichosha, 2009).
25. *Asahi shimbun*, August 8, 2012, p. 4.
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27. Abe is now seeking to create a National Security Council modeled after the U.S. institution.
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# The View from South Korea

See-Won Byun

The Korean Peninsula remains at the center of national identity debates in Northeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> Sino-South Korean debates surfaced saliently in 2010 during a period of rising regional concerns over Chinese “assertiveness.”<sup>2</sup> These debates also revealed the centrality of the United States in Sino-ROK identity politics,<sup>3</sup> especially after the global financial crisis, which according to some Chinese scholars marked the end of post-Cold War U.S. unipolarity.<sup>4</sup> Perceptions of a potential widening of U.S.-China differences have prompted new efforts to enhance South Korea’s diplomatic capacities as a middle power, reflecting a dynamic interaction between Sino-ROK identity debates and views of the Sino-U.S. identity gap.

Two factors reinforce the intensity of South Korean identity perceptions in relation to China. First, China’s rise is a primary factor conditioning South Korean visions of Korea’s strategic future.<sup>5</sup> In the Sino-ROK context, China’s rise reinforces South Korean sensitivities to a history of hierarchical relations.<sup>6</sup> In the U.S.-China context, the structural impact of China’s rise arouses South Korea’s vulnerabilities to great-power rivalries on the peninsula. The growing asymmetry in Korea’s contemporary relationship with a rising China challenges South Korea’s identity as an advanced economy and democracy seeking to play a global leadership role.

A second factor amplifying the Sino-ROK identity debate is North Korea, viewed as a “little brother” by both South Koreans and Chinese. The North Korea question relates fundamentally to the national identity of a reunified Korea, and underlies the persistent historical and territorial disputes characterizing the Sino-South Korean relationship.<sup>7</sup> In ROK domestic politics, North Korea policy remains the dividing point between conservatives and progressives, which extends to divisive views toward China and the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Uncertainty over China’s rise and North Korea’s future exacerbates South Korea’s key dilemma of reconciling conflicting identities as a U.S. military ally and economic partner of China.<sup>9</sup> The question of “China or the United States?” dominated South Korean strategic thinking from the beginning of the Lee Myung-bak administration in 2008.<sup>10</sup> South Korea’s orientation between its security alliance with the United States and economic partnership with China more broadly influences its position between the U.S. alliance system in Asia and a China-centered regional economic order.<sup>11</sup>

Park Geun-hye’s election in 2012 raised hopes for improving Sino-South Korean relations after a period of strain under Lee, whose hard-line DPRK policy and emphasis on the U.S.-ROK alliance drew harsh criticism among Chinese as a source of regional tension. Although Park’s election extends Seoul’s conservative rule for another five years, her decision to send her first team of special envoys to China in January 2013 suggested an effort to narrow the differences with Beijing that have emerged after twenty years of normalization.

This chapter assesses South Korean identity debates on China and their implications for the United States, with a focus on trends since 2010 and prospects under the new leaderships. It addresses three main issues. First, I discuss the status of the Sino-ROK relationship at the end of the Lee administration in the context of the evolution of South Korean views of China since normalization in 1992. Second, I examine South Korea’s identity gap with China across different aspects of identity, including historical and cultural identity, human rights and political identity, territorial issues, North Korea and

Korean unification, and economic identity. Third, I consider the role of the United States in Sino-ROK identity debates. To conclude, I identify factors likely to frame the identity debate under the new leaderships.

## SINO-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF NORMALIZATION

Foreign policy issues under South Korea's previous conservative administrations—including Roh Tae-woo (1988-1993)'s engagement with Russia and China and Kim Young-sam (1993-1998)'s management of the first North Korean nuclear crisis—received relatively little public attention, playing an increasingly important role in South Korean identity politics over the course of democratic consolidation.<sup>12</sup> Under progressive rule, South Korea's alliance relationship with the United States emerged as a major issue in national identity debates at the end of the Kim Dae-jung administration (1998-2003).<sup>13</sup> South Korean identity was shaped by nationalist discourse under Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008), producing anti-American sentiment that constrained the alliance.<sup>14</sup>

Lee Myung-bak's inauguration in 2008 ended ten years of progressive rule and refocused Seoul's diplomatic priority of sunshine toward North Korea. Although Lee and Hu Jintao upgraded the China-ROK relationship to a "strategic cooperative partnership," Lee's reconsolidation of the U.S.-ROK alliance was a persistent strain on this partnership. Frictions over DPRK aggression overlapped with a series of Chinese disputes with other regional players in 2009-2010, a period of marked deterioration in China's overall diplomatic relations.<sup>15</sup> Subdued commemorations of the 20th anniversary of Sino-ROK normalization in 2012 reflected mutual recognition of the latent irritants in the bilateral partnership. Despite anticipation of reconciling differences in the post-Kim Jong-il era, Lee's two summits with Hu Jintao in 2012 were held against the pressures of public protests in South Korea, where the media described a "far from amicable" mood under China's "darkening shadow."<sup>16</sup>

A joint report by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and Korea Economic Institute at the end of 2012 showed that just over half of South Koreans viewed China as a partner (53.5 percent) rather than a rival (46.5 percent), with an overwhelming 94 percent expressing support for the U.S.-ROK alliance.<sup>17</sup> One compilation of South Korean public opinion data from 1997 to 2012 suggests a decline in favorable attitudes toward China and an increase in favorable attitudes toward the United States since 2005.<sup>18</sup> According to the East Asia Institute, favorable Chinese attitudes toward South Korea also declined from 73 percent in 2006 to 53 percent in 2011, suggesting a widening of public discord between China and South Korea.<sup>19</sup> South Korean public animosity toward China raised concerns in Beijing in 2010, when Wen Jiabao in talks with Lee pointed to a "misunderstanding about China after the Cheonan incident."<sup>20</sup> The Chinese foreign ministry criticized South Korean "radical behavior" in response to protests against China in 2011,<sup>21</sup> while the *Global Times* released a survey on South Korea's "aggressive public opinion."<sup>22</sup> North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013 poses an early challenge to coordinating DPRK policies and restoring public attitudes under the new leaderships.

## THE SINO-SOUTH KOREAN IDENTITY GAP

While the twenty-year Sino-ROK relationship is the newest in Northeast Asia, the identity gap stems from Korea's historical relationship with China as a dependent peripheral state from the 13th to 19th centuries. China's place in South Korean identity continues to evolve. While South Korea's ideological gaps with China in the 1980s were embodied in discourses on "Communist China" or "Red China," over the course of China's economic growth and opening, South Koreans have focused increasingly on the nature of Chinese intentions as a rising power.<sup>23</sup>

Two images of China in the post-Cold War era emerged in South Korean debates in 2010.<sup>24</sup> The first view sees China as an "aggressive" power seeking to expand military, political, and economic influence on the peninsula. From this perspective, Chinese behavior on the peninsula in the Lee era demonstrated "Chinese confidence resulting from its rise."<sup>25</sup> In the second view, as a global economic power China is likely to rise as a "responsible great power." China's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, cooperating on the war on terror after 9/11, and mediating the Six-Party Talks from 2003 contributed to positive views of China as an economic opportunity and responsible stakeholder. Responses to its behavior on the peninsula since 2009, however, suggest a reassessment of Chinese intentions. South Korea's dual image of China continues to shape assessments of the Sino-ROK identity gap, which has widened across various dimensions of identity during this period.

### Historical and Cultural Identity

Differences over the Sino-Korean historical relationship have a deep impact on South Korean identity in relation to China, reflecting tensions between Korea's historical position as a tributary state and contemporary role on the global stage. The Koguryo history war of 2003-2004 altered South Korean public perceptions of China after a decade of normalization.<sup>26</sup> In 2010, concerns over distortions of history resurfaced with China's commemorations of the sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War, which reinforced Sino-ROK ideological gaps as Cold War enemies and elevated China's "lips and teeth" alliance with the North. China's rewriting of history continues to raise suspicions over its long-term intentions on the peninsula, provoking South Korea's sensitivities as a subject of great power competition in Northeast Asia.

South Korea's 2004 verbal agreement with China on Koguryo history does not preclude continued politicization of the issue.<sup>27</sup> South Korean analysts have tied China's "nationalization" of history to contemporary sociopolitical needs in the context of China's domestic pluralization, implying a continuously changing Chinese identity and volatile Sino-ROK relationship.<sup>28</sup> In summer 2012, claims by China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage extending the eastern end of the Great Wall to Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces drew renewed accusations that Beijing was intruding on Koguryo history for the sake of "national unity."<sup>29</sup> After the conclusion of China's ten-year compilation of Qing dynasty history in 2012, the South Korean conservative media attacked its reframing of history as a tool of "historical imperialism."<sup>30</sup> From this perspective, China's state-led history projects are designed to "preempt" long-term territorial settlements in the event of Korean unification or North Korean collapse. As one scholar argued at the end of China's

“Northeast Project” in 2007, Sino-ROK history disputes are not about ancient history but current Chinese “hegemonic” threats to regional peace.<sup>31</sup> In 2009, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ claims on other Korean kingdoms drove similar suspicions over China’s revisionist intentions on the peninsula.<sup>32</sup>

During 60th anniversary commemorations of China’s entry into the Korean War in October 2010, Xi Jinping’s references to the war as “a great victory” against “imperialist invaders”<sup>33</sup> ignited another clash over historical interpretations. The ROK Foreign Ministry suggested China’s representation of “an indisputable and historical fact that has been internationally recognized” undermined its global role as a “responsible member of the international community.”<sup>34</sup> Xi’s comments countered the “frank” Chinese assessments of the Korean War that became prevalent after Sino-ROK normalization<sup>35</sup> and raised early concerns over the strategic orientation of Chinese foreign policy amid political uncertainty in Pyongyang.

Disputes over history in Internet forums indicate evolving national identity debates in both China and South Korea.<sup>36</sup> South Korean grievances over Chinese attempts to “steal” history have expanded into broader debates on the ownership of Confucian values, tradition, and other representations of national heritage.<sup>37</sup> Beijing’s designation of “Arirang” as part of China’s ethnic Korean culture fueled another wave of public outrage in 2011 attacking the move as a threat to the South Korean cultural ministry’s own “brand image” campaign.<sup>38</sup> These debates also surrounded the clashes between Chinese students and South Korean demonstrators during the 2008 Beijing Olympics torch relay in Seoul, which reminded many South Koreans of their own national pride as Olympic hosts twenty years earlier. Like the South Korean case, the Beijing Olympics symbolized China’s global emergence and discarded a history of “humiliation” by foreign invaders. But some Koreans saw the protesting Chinese students as a “shadow of themselves that they’d like to leave behind,” arguing that, unlike the South Korean experience, China’s hosting of the games does not raise hopes for a democratic transition.<sup>39</sup>

## Human Rights and Political Identity

One area of contention that highlights Sino-South Korean gaps in political norms and values despite close economic ties is human rights. China’s handling of DPRK refugees as “illegal economic migrants” emerged as a point of diplomatic dispute during North Korea’s famine and humanitarian crisis in the 1990s, when China resisted intervention by international agencies based on the claim that the issue was a North Korean internal affair.<sup>40</sup> Beijing pursued a two-track approach after a series of high-profile North Korean defections at foreign diplomatic missions in China in the early 2000s, cracking down on defectors in cases of limited foreign contact and adhering to international legal standards otherwise. ROK government appeals to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees have drawn attention to the direct contradictions between Beijing’s international obligations and bilateral repatriation agreement with Pyongyang.<sup>41</sup>

While the DPRK refugee issue subsided in the mid-2000s, it reemerged in two instances in 2012. First, reports of Beijing’s planned repatriation of refugees in February led to U.S. and South Korean protests against China’s “inhumane” behavior and public calls by Lee Myung-bak urging China to follow “international norms.”<sup>42</sup> As Seoul threatened to raise the issue at the UN Human Rights Council after the breakdown of bilateral consultations, the PRC

foreign ministry spokesperson criticized the South Korean media's tendency to "emotionally play up and politicize the issue."<sup>43</sup> South Korea has in the past pursued "quiet diplomacy" to avoid confronting China over human rights, but activists have pushed Seoul to press harder for Chinese cooperation since Kim Jong-il's death, accusing Beijing of supporting Kim Jong-un's repressive assertion of control as new leader.<sup>44</sup>

The second clash over human rights occurred in July 2012 with China's release of four South Korean activists who were detained for assisting DPRK defectors and endangering China's "national security." The activists were released shortly after PRC State Councilor and Public Security Minister Meng Jianzhu's meetings with Lee Myung-bak and other officials in Seoul, the first official visit to South Korea by a Chinese public security minister since normalization.<sup>45</sup> Political tensions, however, only worsened with claims by prominent rights activist Kim Young-hwan that he had been tortured while under Chinese custody.<sup>46</sup> Kim's case demonstrated Beijing's cautious behavior in managing high-profile and internationally-publicized cases related to DPRK refugees given the potential legal challenges and costs to China's global image. It also raised domestic debates in South Korea, where lawmakers attacked the foreign ministry's failure to undertake sufficient diplomatic actions against China.<sup>47</sup> Sino-ROK human rights issues show that norms and values remain an important source of friction that reinforce South Korean impressions of a rising China as a growing challenger to international standards of behavior.

### **Disputes over Territory and Exclusive Economic Zones**

Regional power shifts have raised the danger of territorial competition with China over the past decade.<sup>48</sup> China's territorial disputes in Asia in 2010 and reaction to U.S.-ROK military exercises sharpened South Korean images of what was widely perceived as growing "assertiveness" in Chinese behavior. Sino-ROK disputes over EEZs and Ieodo/Suyanjiao (Socotra Rock) present potential security challenges.<sup>49</sup> As seen in contestations over history and culture, territorial sovereignty issues importantly feed into South Korean views of what is Korean or Chinese.

Although both China and South Korea recognize that the Ieodo issue is not a territorial one, Chinese surveillance activities in 2011 drew renewed political attention to the issue since it first emerged in 2006. In response to claims on Ieodo by China's State Oceanic Administration in March 2012, Lee Myung-bak publicly asserted that Ieodo falls "naturally" in South Korea's jurisdiction.<sup>50</sup> The Society of Ieodo Research has argued that Ieodo is "of great strategic interest considering China's strengthening naval power," citing Beijing's "hardened rhetoric" against U.S.-ROK military drills in surrounding waters.<sup>51</sup> In addition to its strategic implications, the significance of Ieodo in Korean legend has justified its protection for South Koreans.

The Ieodo issue relates to EEZ disputes in the Yellow Sea and East China Sea, a more persistent source of strain that has produced frequent clashes over illegal fishing, including fatal incidents in 2008 and 2010-2012. Seoul and Beijing have failed to reach agreement on the demarcation of EEZs in waters surrounding Ieodo after sixteen rounds of talks since 1996.<sup>52</sup> Recent clashes in the Yellow Sea have incited public protests and domestic debates in South Korea reinforcing unfavorable views of China. The death of a ROK Coast Guard in December 2011 provoked warnings in the South Korean media that violations of maritime sovereignty undermine China's "national interests and image."<sup>53</sup> Domestic criticism has focused more pointedly on the Lee administration's management of these issues, revealing

South Korea's political polarization on China policy. While lawmakers have pressed for tougher measures after Seoul "bowed to Beijing's diplomatic pressure" in a similar fatal incident in 2008,<sup>54</sup> others have opposed risking the political fallout seen in Sino-Japanese disputes over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.<sup>55</sup>

One issue reflecting South Korea's growing vulnerabilities to Chinese territorial ambitions is the 1909 Gando Treaty, which transferred Japan's territorial rights over what is now the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture to China. While the National Assembly in 2004 attempted to nullify the treaty, concerns about China's potential response thwarted subsequent efforts. A South Korean editorial in 2009 stressed the long-term significance of islands near the China-Korea border, including the Wiwha and Hwanggeumphyong islands that China and North Korea designated as special joint economic zones in 2010, arguing that "we must never again witness the handing over of our land to China."<sup>56</sup>

### North Korea and Korean Unification

China's approach to North Korea and the unification question is a key factor that has shaped perceptions of a rising China as a long-term strategic challenge. Responses to North Korea's 2009 nuclear test and Cheonan and Yeonpyeong attacks in 2010 revealed fundamental gaps in policy preferences.<sup>57</sup> Chinese restraint at the UN Security Council and promotion of friendship with Pyongyang drove a sharp deterioration in South Korean views of China. Beijing's engagement of North Korea during this period prompted a comprehensive reassessment of the Sino-ROK strategic partnership that cuts across all dimensions of identity.

The expansion in China-DPRK leadership exchanges in 2010 far beyond China-ROK levels reversed Beijing's traditional policy of equidistance and provoked a deep sense of betrayal among South Koreans.<sup>58</sup> Unification Minister Hyun In-taek urged China to play a "responsible role" when Hu Jintao hosted Kim Jong-il in Beijing in May 2010 three days after meeting Lee Myung-bak in Shanghai.<sup>59</sup> While TV broadcaster SBS criticized Beijing's "double standard" in dealing with the two Koreas,<sup>60</sup> other commentators in the media cautioned that the China-ROK partnership "must not be burned in fiery emotion and rhetoric."<sup>61</sup> China's political contacts with the Kim Jong-un leadership since 2012 have affirmed a continued pursuit of friendship in line with the consolidation of the Kim regime.

China's economic ties with a sanctioned North Korea have heightened South Korean perceptions of China's rising relative influence over Pyongyang. China-DPRK trade in 2011 surpassed \$5 billion, more than three times the inter-Korean level.<sup>62</sup> The launching of the China-DPRK Rason Economic and Trade Zone and Hwanggeumphyong and Wiwha Islands Economic Zone in June 2011 drew much attention in South Korea, as did Beijing's reception of Kim Jong-un's uncle and patron Jang Song-thaek in August 2012 for the joint promotion of the zones. To show "who is running North Korea," the South Korean media released a picture of PRC Ambassador Liu Hongcai accompanying Kim Jong-un and his key supporters at a Pyongyang amusement park in July 2012.<sup>63</sup> Such images have revived the 2004 debates on China's intentions to turn North Korea into its "fourth northeast province."<sup>64</sup> China's official support of peaceful unification remains questioned. An East Asia Institute survey in 2010 showed that 30 percent of respondents identified China as the biggest obstacle to unification after North Korea.<sup>65</sup> South Korean conservatives in 2011 pointed to a "misconception" of China as "mediator between the two Koreas," criticizing

Beijing's "simultaneous diplomacy" as an attempt to "use closer ties with North Korea as a bargaining chip."<sup>66</sup> Unification gained increased attention in domestic political debates in 2010 and reflected ambivalence about China's engagement with the North. The Blue House refuted the *Financial Times*' October 2010 interview remarks by Lee urging North Korea to "emulate China's economic model," while denying Seoul's reported concerns about a "belligerent" Pyongyang falling under Beijing's political influence.<sup>67</sup> The consolidation of China and North Korea's fifty-year friendship has underscored the weaknesses of South Korea's political and security ties with China relative to both the Sino-DPRK alliance and the economic side of the Sino-ROK partnership.

### **Asymmetric Interdependence and Economic Identity**

China's reform and opening since 1978 has presented a major opportunity for South Korea's export-led growth as an Asian power, contributing to a favorable image of China as an economic partner. Despite divergent political systems and security priorities, trade was a driving force for diplomatic normalization in 1992 and remains an important foundation for mutually beneficial cooperation. While South Korea is China's sixth biggest trade partner, China replaced the United States as South Korea's top trade partner in 2002. Bilateral trade reached \$220 billion in 2011, exceeding South Korea's combined trade with the United States and Japan.<sup>68</sup> Since the 2008 global recession, South Korean assessments of the rapidly expanding economic partnership with China have focused on the growing asymmetry of interdependence and broader strategic implications.

Cooperation with China on the 2010 Shanghai World Expo and 2012 Yeosu Expo demonstrated South Korean efforts to strengthen the economic and cultural relationship. The popularity of the "Korean Wave" in China appeared to wane in the mid-2000s with the impact of history and trade disputes. ROK authorities worked hard to promote South Korea's high-tech industry and popular culture at the Shanghai Expo, where Seoul displayed the second biggest national pavilion after China's. Yet the expansion in cultural exchanges has also raised the intensity of public disputes, as seen in protests during the 2008 Beijing Olympics torch relay in Seoul, the first direct experience of Chinese nationalism for many South Koreans.

The rapid growth in trade and investment has implied an increase in South Korean economic vulnerabilities to China. Trade wars over garlic and kimchi in 2000 and 2005 shifted South Korean attention to the risks of competition with China, while public views of Chinese products deteriorated further with scandals over tainted Chinese imports in 2008.<sup>69</sup> China's rising economic power has also prompted efforts to enhance South Korean competitiveness in "soft power" through corporate networks and NGOs.<sup>70</sup>

The structural transformation of the bilateral relationship that has accompanied China's shift to high-end industries indicates a growing asymmetry in economic interdependence.<sup>71</sup> Concerns about China's rise as a global economic power appeared in a 2009 Ministry of Strategy and Finance report that cautioned against intensified competition with China in export markets and energy diplomacy.<sup>72</sup> A Federation of Korean Industries survey in 2010 indicated that South Korea may lose its technology advantages over China within four years in key sectors accounting for over 60 percent of all South Korean exports.<sup>73</sup> Such trends were evident in 2010, when China replaced South Korea as the world's top shipbuilding country and biggest market for South Korea's own Hyundai Motors. In July 2012, a Samsung

Securities report warned that China's industrial restructuring over the next decade would enhance Chinese competitiveness against Korean firms rather than present opportunities.<sup>74</sup>

As discussed in Part III of this volume, talks for a China-ROK free trade agreement (FTA) present new opportunities and challenges for bilateral and regional integration. Despite the potential benefits from the FTA, ROK Deputy Trade Minister Choi Seok-young pointed to "significant differences in opinion" after the first round of talks in 2012.<sup>75</sup> FTA talks through the summer of 2012 incited protests by South Korean farmers voicing concerns over the economic costs and health threats of Chinese agricultural imports. The Korea Institute for International Economic Policy estimates that the annual loss for South Korea's farming industry is almost four times higher than the estimated losses from the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) FTA, which came into force two months before the formal launching of China-ROK trade talks. Prolonged negotiations for the KORUS FTA were a key factor in initial reluctance in pursuing FTA talks with China, reflecting reservations toward closer integration into a China-based regional economic order.

## THE UNITED STATES IN THE SINO-SOUTH KOREAN IDENTITY DEBATE

Underlying South Korea's identity gap with China is an acute awareness of its uneasy position between China as its key economic partner and the United States as its military ally.<sup>76</sup> While U.S.-China identity conflicts became more salient with the increase in regional tensions from 2009, South Korea's reliance on China and the United States for growth and security makes a stable U.S.-China relationship a top priority. Regional reverberations of the 2010 Cheonan incident prompted calls for Seoul to play a "diplomatic mediator" role to minimize the likelihood of a U.S.-China confrontation in the region.<sup>77</sup> To address a heightened dilemma of maintaining favorable relations with both powers, South Korean experts have argued for shifting Seoul's diplomatic strategy of "hedging" to a focus on strengthening South Korea's global capacities as a "middle" and "normative" power.<sup>78</sup> This diplomatic reorientation in response to a potential widening of differences between the United States and China underscores the dynamic interaction between Sino-South Korean identity debates and views of the Sino-U.S. identity gap.

Evolving discourse on history shapes South Korean identity as a subject of great power rivalry between China and the United States, shadowing the image of "Global Korea" that Lee Myung-bak actively promoted after his inauguration. Sino-ROK historical contestations also reveal competing views of the peninsula's future that present important implications for U.S. strategic interests in the region.<sup>79</sup> These issues were raised in a December 2012 U.S. Congressional report on China's role in Korean unification, the drafting of which reportedly led the ROK Foreign Ministry to dispatch experts from the Northeast Asia History Foundation to Washington to consult on China and South Korea's interpretations of Koguryo and Balhae history.<sup>80</sup> Reactions in the South Korean media suggest continued politicization and volatility of the history issue.<sup>81</sup> Debates on the Korean War similarly morph into questions on U.S. and Chinese interests in the peninsula's strategic future. While Chinese military leaders have firmly opposed "Cold War thinking" on the peninsula in response to the strengthening of the U.S.-ROK alliance, Chinese commemorations of the Korean War's 60th anniversary in 2010 renewed these very ideological gaps.

The Sino-ROK political identity gap sharpens the divide between South Korea's economic partnership with China and alliance with the United States. While differences in political systems and values have not undermined the pursuit of mutual economic interests, disputes over human rights reinforce the gap between China's authoritarian regime and South Korean identity as a democracy. Joint responses of U.S. and South Korean civil society organizations to China's handling of North Korean refugees demonstrate the shared values underlying the U.S.-ROK relationship while drawing attention to China's violation of international norms. At the height of public frustrations over the Cheonan issue in 2010, South Korean commentators contrasted the "double standard" in Chinese behavior against the "deep roots of reciprocity and friendship" in U.S.-ROK relations.<sup>82</sup> Xi Jinping's assertions in 2010 in support of the new DPRK leadership's goal of "peaceful national unification" appeared to challenge the 2009 U.S.-ROK joint vision statement on "peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy."<sup>83</sup>

While territorial clashes have heightened perceptions of the traditional security threat posed by a rising China, the DPRK issue is the most important factor that constitutes South Korean identity as a U.S. military ally. U.S.-ROK military exercises against DPRK provocations in 2010 raised voices in Beijing that revealed gaps in regional strategic priorities and undermined views of China as a "responsible stakeholder" and mediator of the Six-Party Talks. China's economic ties with North Korea and challenge to the implementation of UN sanctions have further posed questions about its international image. At the same time, South Korea has also sought to avoid taking sides in a U.S.-China dispute. During ROK Defense Minister Kim Kwang-jin's visit to China in July 2011, People's Liberation Army chief Chen Bingde's public criticisms of U.S. "superpower" behavior raised South Korean anxieties over being caught in a rivalry. The foreign ministry's subsequent affirmations of its neutral position on the South China Sea reflected South Korea's ongoing struggle to balance "alliance solidarity" with the United States and pragmatic cooperation with China.<sup>84</sup>

Controversy over South Korea's Jeju naval base since construction began in 2011 has revealed the salience of China and the U.S. alliance as key divisive questions in ROK domestic politics. While critics suspect the base will primarily serve U.S. regional defense interests and aggravate China, others see the facility as an important development for countering China's rising military presence and protecting ROK maritime interests in the region.<sup>85</sup> In an August 2011 news editorial, the president of South Korea's Society of Ieodo Research criticized Chinese "imperialistic" behavior in EEZ clashes with Vietnam and argued: "Asia's mistrust of China and fear of Beijing is based on its territorial ambition... China's ambition should be counterbalanced by the United States as a Pacific partner to Asia-Pacific nations."<sup>86</sup> In response to China's aircraft carrier trials that same month, a Korea National Defense University professor similarly indicated that "Korea can secure military deterrence by reinforcing joint deterrence capacity with the United States."<sup>87</sup>

In contrast to the Sino-ROK security relationship, trade and investment ties with China have helped solidify South Korea's economic identity as an advanced player in the international economy. However, concerns over an increasingly asymmetric relationship with China have increased with China's rise as the world's second biggest economy in 2010 after the United States. Regional trade patterns over the past two decades clearly indicate South

Korea's growing dependence on China, with a shift in relative trade dependence from the United States to China after 2003-2004.<sup>88</sup> Some analysts see U.S. promotion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) FTA as a key driver of China's current pursuit of economic integration with South Korea and Japan.<sup>89</sup> The China-ROK FTA further supports trilateral FTA efforts with Japan under the CJK framework, which embodies the functional interests that weigh in on South Korean identity perceptions as an Asian power. Such initiatives are decisive factors in South Korea's orientation between China-centered economic regionalism and the U.S.-led alliance system in Asia, and perceptions of national identity in relation to China and the United States.

## CONCLUSION: IDENTITY POLITICS UNDER NEW LEADERSHIPS

South Korean debates across various dimensions of national identity reflect competing forces of alignment between China and the United States. Four main factors of Chinese behavior shape South Korean views of national identity. First, China's rise remains the background condition against which South Korea assesses its regional and global position. Chinese claims of historical and territorial sovereignty and cultural "ownership" have fed suspicions about China's long-term intentions on the peninsula as a rising challenger to the United States. China's relationship with North Korea is a second factor that shapes views of China as a strategic challenge, including in post-unification scenarios. Given continued DPRK aggression and stalled inter-Korean relations, China's engagement of the DPRK leadership undermines Seoul's relative influence over Pyongyang in coordination with the United States. Third, commercial ties remain a primary foundation of the Sino-ROK relationship that broadly shapes assessments of identity amid the structural transformation of regional relations. While the prospect of China's growing competitiveness presents new concerns over asymmetric interdependence, economic integration with China through new multilateral initiatives raises questions about South Korea's position within the traditional network of U.S. alliances. Fourth, domestic political reform in China is another variable that influences South Korean views of the potential for narrowing the normative gaps with China relative to the United States.

Park Geun-hye's early prioritization of the China-ROK partnership and North Korea policy in an effort to stabilize regional relations will shape the direction of the identity debate. While economic cooperation with China supports Park's policy priority of revamping South Korea's export-dependent economy, the growing asymmetry of interdependence is likely to intensify unease toward China's leverage in the relationship. Bilateral political disputes with Japan under returning LDP Prime Minister Abe Shinzo further challenge the prospects for economic integration.

While assessments of Chinese foreign policy suggest a continued assertive orientation under the Xi leadership,<sup>90</sup> renewed DPRK provocations under Kim Jong-un will require close coordination between China and U.S. regional allies. Park raised hopes for reconciling differences with China since her election campaign differentiating her approach to North Korea from Lee's hard-line policy. In her November 2012 *Wall Street Journal* article, she also stressed the importance of a strong U.S.-China partnership for South Korean strategic interests. Park's emphasis on favorable relations with China and potential engagement with North Korea presents possibilities for narrowing the identity gap with China. This, however,

remains contingent on Xi Jinping's approach to North Korea and the U.S.-ROK alliance, the two key points of contention shaping South Korean identity perceptions in relation to China and the United States.

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# **The View from Russia**

Gilbert Rozman

Watching China's surge in assertiveness in 2009-13, Russians face a choice among three types of responses. They can delight in the deterioration in Sino-U.S. relations, as many believe the United States gloated in the 1960s-70s at the troubled Sino-Soviet split, and in the steeper recent downturn in Sino-Japanese relations too, seen as serving Japan right for its hard-line policy to Russia. Alternatively, they can strategize about opportunities for Russia's dream of multipolarity in Asia, opening space for its more active diplomacy separate from China while targeting Japan and South Korea as well as states in Southeast Asia. Finally, they can grow nervous that Russia also will become the target of this assertiveness. One sees signs of all three responses. To ascertain which is ascendant in a country where the debate on China is truncated by government discouragement of criticisms, it is important to delve more deeply into Russia's national identity gaps with China and the United States.

National identity is a popular concept in writings on Russia, but the notion of a national identity gap requires further explanation. Not only do nations construct an identity to satisfy their quest for uniqueness and pride in the world of nations, they interpret their identity in relation to one or more other nations deemed most significant in their history, international relations, and quest for superiority. Doing so, they perceive a gap between their own national identity and the identity they attribute to the other nation. Russia's assumed gap with China exists in the shadow of its more obtrusive U.S. gap. These national identity gaps are closely interrelated.

Two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russians have abandoned the idealism associated with Atlanticism, reconciled to not reaching clear answers as to what the "Russian idea" means, and found a measure of solace in Vladimir Putin's synthesis of national identity even as it continues to evolve. After anti-Americanism intensified during Boris Yeltsin's second term as president and demagogues stoked fear of China over specific charges of illegal migration and territorial expansionism, Putin has taken control over images of these two countries, which have been in the forefront of Soviet and Russian perceptions of national identity gaps from the 1950s. The shadow of Cold War demonization of the United States and the Sino-Soviet split demonization of China's "barracks communism" and "Han chauvinism" has receded, although the legacy of a communist great power national identity remains in Russia. Under Putin, national identity has coalesced, resulting in zero-sum imagery of rivals.

The end of idealism did not mean a surge of realism. Identity stood in Russia's way. Instead of weighing national interests in framing foreign policy decisions, the way that these decisions would impact the desired Russian national identity came first.

Meetings with Russians can give the impression of a schizophrenic national identity. On the one hand, some well-educated Russians strongly affirm an identity as part of the West, minimizing differences with the United States and the EU as just narrow concerns over specific national interests, while insisting that Russia faces China as a contrasting civilization with which it strives for common interests with scant prospect of reducing the identity gap. On the other hand, informed Russians who claim to be in closer touch with a broader mass of citizens as well as the bulk of officials charge that states in the West are consumed by a sharp identity gap with Russia, which Russia has reciprocated, while some gap with China may exist but is in no danger of widening and poses no problem for relations, which are the

best ever. This paper notes a consensus close to the latter extreme. In light of recent Russian identity, demonizing the United States, not China, is urged by Putin and is prevalent.

Below I utilize the six-dimensional framework of national identity that I first introduced in comparisons of China, Japan, and South Korea.<sup>1</sup> Separate attention is given to: ideological, temporal, sectoral, vertical, and horizontal identity as well as to the intensity of national identity. Also, I draw from a second book centered on the impact of national identities on bilateral relations, which discusses identity gaps.<sup>2</sup>

On each dimension of national identity, Russians compare their country to the world's remaining superpower, the United States, and the single rising superpower, China. If they no longer subscribe to communist ideology, it does not mean that they have no ideological aspect in their recent national identity discourse. In accusing the United States of still being driven by Cold War ideology while refraining from talk of China's socialist ideology being a factor separating it from Russia, Russians skew the *ideological dimension*, even apart from Putin's own construction of an amalgam of ideology with elements of socialism, anti-imperialism, and Russocentrism. On the *temporal dimension*, Russians juxtapose their country to the United States and China in premodern times and the transitional era to 1945, finding much greater fault with the United States as part of the West, with which Russia had a rivalry and, at times, an adversarial relationship. For the Cold War era, the Sino-Soviet dispute appears all but forgotten amid revived hostility to past U.S. behavior. Moreover, in the post-Cold War decades China is seen as virtuous compared to the villainous character of U.S. policies toward Russia. Spared the vilification aimed in the other direction, China is left as a country distant from Russia's historical identity but not in opposition to it. Whether Russia is seeking recognition or proving that it cannot be disrespected, the focus is overwhelmingly on the United States, sparing China similar close attention.

On the *sectoral dimension*, joining economic, cultural, and political identity, the obsession in Russia with the United States as threatening its national identity in all three respects, leads to largely overlooking China's identity differences. Yet these remain in the background, raised in direct contacts amid warnings that Russia is at economic risk and that cultural ties remain the most problematic. As for the *vertical dimension*, concern about the United States is so pervasive that China's communist legacy draws scant attention. The U.S. threat to Russia's internal order is targeted, not China's, despite the latter's perceived challenge to territorial integrity during the Sino-Soviet split and its "quiet expansionism." Most obtrusively, Russians insist that they agree with China on international relations, while clashing with the United States on all aspects of the *horizontal dimension*. In Central Asia and North Korea, any danger from China is muted. A zero-sum outlook largely prevails under Putin.

Below much is made of differences on the *intensity dimension* between Russia's obsession with the United States, which showed no signs of receding as Putin returned to power demonizing this target, and its forbearance toward China, differing sharply from the ideological schism that left irreconcilable differences to the 1980s. As long as the gap with China is minimized, affecting all six dimensions, at the same time as the gap with the United States stays vast, policy change is unlikely.

## IDENTITY GAPS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA IN 1992-2013

China and the Soviet Union each had to jettison parts of its national identity in the 1980s. China's leaders fell back on two pillars of the existing identity as they abandoned others. They reaffirmed the vertical dimension—one-party rule and censorship to prevent serious discrediting of the leaders associated with it, past and present—and the horizontal dimension, centering on rivalries in global politics and security. Above all, the leadership insisted on bolstering the cultural divide on the horizontal dimension, as they gradually reconstructed the sectoral dimension of national identity. Russian leaders faced a more daunting challenge. Following Brezhnev's stagnation, unlike Mao's Cultural Revolution anarchy, they faced a vertical dimension that was entrenched, supported by a more far-reaching social contract, and inextricably linked to Soviet superpower status deemed to be a success in the horizontal dimension. The divergent histories of socialism in the two countries put Russia's national identity transformation at a disadvantage. So too did the contrast between Russia's historical ambivalence toward the West and vulnerability when opening its doors, and China's traditional separation from the West and superior prospects of borrowing or integrating economically while retrieving identity from the dynastic era.

While it appeared that Atlanticism had become Russia's value orientation briefly in 1992, it was quickly challenged by Eurasianism and the "Russian idea" in ways that left the sectoral dimension with little clarity. Cultural identity was in disarray, economic identity was shattered, and political identity was struggling for a foothold. Meanwhile, ideology was forsaken, history was in tatters with attacks on the Soviet era without clarity on what Russia's pre-Soviet past signifies. Democratic centralism was denounced while democracy still offered no answer on how to rein in the bureaucracy even as state-favored oligarchs won control of assets in ways not regarded as legitimate, as did managers with insider privatization. Thus, the vertical dimension was chaotic. Leaning to the West was bringing no satisfaction for horizontal identity, as Russia's voice lost any impact just as NATO was expanding. China largely remained on the sidelines, of modest interest for identity except as the obvious alternative to all of the negative outcomes inside Russia.<sup>3</sup> Influential realists, who were less concerned about identity, also pressed China's case.

By 1994 Russians were convinced that they needed a stronger state despite the fact that state interests had decimated market and political reforms.<sup>4</sup> Susceptible to the argument that the West destroyed the Soviet Union and was intent on weakening Russia, perhaps even splitting it, they were still agreeing to learn from the West and also to rely on its assistance, but they favored balancing the Western states despite the absence of another partner with deep pockets to support Russia's economic transition. China looked appealing for its "economic miracle," political stability, social order, and international clout while standing against the United States.<sup>5</sup> It was, above all, a convenient contrast. In the way the Cold War ended, many were unconvinced that the Soviet Union with much of its model intact could not have survived, seeing in China what might have been.

Multipolarity was the primary theme as the horizontal dimension saw the greatest Sino-Russian overlap from 1996 to roughly 2004. As anti-Americanism intensified under Yeltsin and then was managed by Putin in his first years without being seriously reduced, China was

better appreciated in its own right, silencing the demagogues. Completing the demarcation of the border, including the three islands excluded earlier, Russia forged an atmosphere of a relatively trusted partnership.<sup>6</sup> If in the early Yeltsin period, treatment of China appeared to be a consequence of the changing identity gap with the United States, in the late Yeltsin and, notably, the early Putin years it was the object of a search for a more intensive Russian identity centered on renewed influence in Asia, pride in Russian history in opposition to the history of the West, and revival of a strong state in contrast to the democratic model of the West. The outlines of an assertive Russia with its own strong identity were taking shape, although inconsistency still left many of the details vague.

If the vertical dimension lost its allure in viewing the United States, the horizontal dimension opened a wide rift. Fear of Russia's marginalization, especially along its new borders, led to reconsideration of Russia's ties to states whose relations with the United States were troubled. North Korea and Iran are nearby and have Soviet bonds that add an identity element to perceptions of how to treat them. Problems linked to these countries are cast as infringing on the residual identity of the Soviet Union, which as a superpower rightfully made key decisions about the outside world, echoed now in claims to influence both and others that had opted out of the Western-centered order. After the "near abroad" surfaced as an identity slogan in the 1990s, the scope of neighborhood identity widened under Primakov and even more under Putin, as past partners, including Syria, were seen through a lens of opposing blocs. The horizontal dimension drew Russia toward them as well as to China, whose foreign policy appeared similar in a triangular, U.S. perspective.

More than multipolarity, a civilizational prism brought China and Russia much closer. "Color" revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan dramatized the common threat from universal values. Talk of Russia as a separate civilization intensified.<sup>7</sup> The contrast was drawn especially with the United States, while the fact that China was trumpeting its own civilizational gap with the West did not escape notice. Beyond the horizontal gap, there now loomed a civilizational gap on the sectoral dimension, which accompanied a sharp divide over political and economic national identity. As revenue rolled into Russia from energy and natural resource exports, it did not have to follow advice from the international financial community and welcomed a state-dominated autonomous economy, beyond external pressure, and rising as an "energy superpower," capitalizing on China's insatiable thirst for imports. Looking to Asia in light of the global financial crisis of 2008 that hit the West much harder and the subsequent EU financial crisis, Russia sought to broaden its regional ties. Yet, due to one-sided dependence on China, claims to identity as an independent pole in the Asia-Pacific region rang hollow. Medvedev's "reset" with the United States grew stale, and his meeting with Kim Jong-il to the chagrin of the South Koreans and visit to Kunashiri Island arousing the ire of the Japanese were more in line with China's agenda. Putin needed to clarify the Asian vector. Under the illusion that these moves represent an independent Russian policy in Asia, the deepening polarization in the region was overlooked in acquiescence to China's rise.

The identity gap with the United States was revealed in the 2005 claim to "sovereign democracy" and anger toward Bush's foreign policy, then the 2008 war against Georgia, and, after the "reset," the 2012 Putin snub of Obama's overtures. In contrast, complementarity with China grew as China guzzled Russian energy and resources, and U.S. unilateralism

raised consciousness of shared strategic interests. Growing Russian anxieties, Chinese arrogance, and regional arenas that expose clashing interests threaten to widen the identity Sino-Russian gap. Yet, Sino-Russian trade grew in 2012 by more than 11 percent to \$88 billion, and cooperation on missile defense and new arms deals appears to be raising the level of strategic ties.<sup>8</sup>

When Russia hosted the fifth working group established through the Joint Agreement in 2007 it had an opportunity to shape the agenda for forging a regional security architecture. This five-nation format, with North Korea seen as joining later, saw other states taking a wait-and-see approach,<sup>9</sup> although U.S. officials were ready to seize the moment if Russia's lead and the responses of others were hopeful. In the Russian Foreign Ministry, however, the usual lethargy prevailed, when the academic and media circles proved incapable of generating a meaningful debate. Whenever the will of the leader is in doubt and the state of national identity leaves no clarity on how to manage China's rise in Asia, the process of strategic thinking is broken.

Russian military and security services have kept alive the notion of a fortress state. Nearly two decades after China and Russia agreed to pull their armed forces well back from the border, Russia refused to open these closed areas, keeping travel time between the two states hours longer. Thus, it should not be surprising that instead of the Vladivostok APEC summit showcasing a strategy for revitalizing Russia's Far East, it exposed the rampant corruption and sorry state of the area except for a kind of Potemkin village for world leaders. Despite announcing a new development plan and a new superagency, Russia has failed to create an atmosphere of momentum in the area.<sup>10</sup> Concern about China's growing shadow over the area is secondary to the national identity concerns that have preoccupied Russia's leaders.

In November 2012 the U.S. Congress passed the Magnitsky bill at the same time as it removed the Jackson-Vanik law and ended barriers to trade with a Russia entering the WTO. Angry Russian leaders vowed to retaliate harshly for this move to interfere in Russia's internal affairs. A law prohibiting further adoption of Russian orphans by Americans symbolized Russian anger. Igor Zevelev found that Putin in 2012 had intensified anti-Americanism, while giving China essentially a pass as if national identity only mattered in dealing with the United States. This asymmetry has detrimental effects on Russia finding a suitable balance as China's power keeps rising. Zevelev warns of a dangerous pattern instead of realistic, flexible policies.<sup>11</sup> Obsession with the U.S. national identity gap is so overwhelming that there is little space for balanced strategic thinking to access emerging Russian national interests.

In early 2013 Sino-Russian relations drew closer as longstanding limitations in arms exports and joint arms development, especially in aircraft, were dropped by Russian leaders. Statements from both sides indicated expanded strategic cooperation as well as a joint response to U.S. missile defense plans in Asia. At a time of worsening ties between each country and the United States, security and identity were drawing them to each other, just as economic interests were also strengthening the bilateral relationship. In April 2013, U.S. national security advisor Tom Donilon went to Moscow with the goal of overcoming recent tensions, including solidifying cooperation in the face of belligerence by North Korea, but Putin seemed uninterested in recovering from the nadir in relations.

## THE IDEOLOGICAL, TEMPORAL, SECTORAL, AND VERTICAL DIMENSIONS

Ideology brought disaster to Sino-Soviet relations and is supposed to be absent in Sino-Russian relations. After all, China's leaders insist on the continuation of Marxism supplemented with Mao Zedong thought and Russia's leaders refrain from reviving ideas venerated for three-quarters of a century. Yet, as ideology has acquired new meaning in the two countries, the pretense of no overlap has been hard to sustain. It manifests itself as a critique of the supposed U.S. ideological threat to both Russia and China as well as to other states that turn to them for protection. There is considerable consensus too in the way the two states perceive recent U.S. policies as an extension of imperialism and its legacy in Cold War anti-communism. Finally, as sinocentrism and Russocentrism rise to the forefront as ideological concerns, U.S. hostility looms as an ideological challenge.

Authoritarianism has been on the defensive since Stalin and Mao exposed it as capable of unfathomable brutality and the postwar world produced democracies keen on respecting economic co-prosperity and cultural diversity. To protect their regimes, China and Russia must conceal and distort their histories, sully and demonize states that may be seen as models or discredit states most guilty of violating human rights norms, and hold aloft and inculcate a vision of the world bereft of idealism. This acquires an ideological cast through charges that the United States is driven by an outdated Cold War ideology, which contrasts with the way the narratives in each state treat the other as acting only on the basis of realism.

Soviets long viewed Mao as a threat to their communist identity, while Mao found Khrushchev's de-Stalinization a threat to his notion of communist identity, and three decades later Gorbachev's shift in ideology aroused similar vehemence in Mao's successors. Under Hu Jintao the critique of the history of communist rule and the massive crimes of Mao and other leaders was considered a threat to the national identity. It no longer comes from Moscow. Defense of the communist movement and many of its policies, such as the Korean War, distances China from the United States. Under Putin there is less defensiveness and censorship of specialized publications, but the view prevails that the West interprets Soviet history, as well as the history of Russia, in such a way that it undercuts Russian national identity.<sup>12</sup> Looking back, the two communist giants that for two decades vilified each other's history keep their eyes glued to the perceived temporal gap with the United States, not to each other. This does not mean, however, that there is no longer a residue of blaming each other for the Sino-Soviet split. Self-criticism does not extend to the point of a shared view.

China's leadership consciously reconstructs national identity, drawing on the lessons of the failure of the Soviet Union and regular reassessments of the state of Chinese public opinion. Compared to the three-decade Soviet transition in identity prior to Gorbachev's "new thinking," China has been more consistent and nimble in making adjustments. Yet, the basic dilemma the Soviet Union failed to solve remains. How can socialism's priority be reconciled with traditional and universal values as reflected in each of the dimensions of national identity? When Putin in 2012 took a harder line against universal values, exposing Medvedev's appeals to them as never worth being taken seriously since Putin really wielded power, the West lost favor.

Russia is preparing for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics in the shadow not only of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and 2012 London Summer Olympics, but also of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. While the Vancouver games mostly showcased Indian local culture and the London games, following the celebration of Queen Elizabeth's 60th anniversary on the throne, had a narrowly British flavor with some touches of pride in nurturing democracy that spread to the world, Beijing was a showcase for what Anne-Marie Brady calls a major propaganda effort, which she equates to a Mao-style campaign.<sup>13</sup> While it served as a distraction from political or social problems, it also helped to construct a national image combining remarkable historical cultural prowess and extraordinary economic success. Russia has much less to showcase and is hard-pressed to impress the world on any of the dimensions of national identity. Putin's expansion of coercion to stop demonstrations may cast a shadow that leaves people in much of the world more concerned than impressed.

Putin's obsession with the West, especially the United States, leaves him at a loss to conceptualize the challenge from the East, most of all China, to Russia's identity. He reacted viscerally to Bush's rejection of his terms for cooperation and indifferently to Obama's "reset" as if it meant little. To Putin U.S. unilateralism, support for "color" revolutions, and global reach with scant regard for spheres of interest are anathema. They are interpreted as a mortal threat to Russian civilization, reducing Russia into a vassal state with little benefit from its vast size, venerable traditions, United Nations Security Council veto, and strategic arsenal.<sup>14</sup> In accord with previous Russian leaders who were insistent on forging a strong Russia capable of resisting pressures from the West, not the least of which is the allure of Western civilization, Putin casts himself as the savior.

Under the shadow of communist identity, Chinese and Russian boosters of a new identity embrace the idea of a clash of civilizations. Responding to the "Arab Spring" in 2011-13, leaders play on the notion that Western promotion of democracy is not aimed at enfranchising people but at destroying their way of life and civilization. Linking security to identity, they make it clear that "civilization" is most in need of protection. Chinese have drawn lessons for identity from the collapse of the Soviet Union and widened the gap focused on civilization. After all, they saw Soviet leaders betraying the communist legacy of their country and attributed it to cultural confusion centered on views of traditional culture as part of the West and a revival of humanism encouraged by the leadership of the country. The current Russian leadership draws similar lessons, faulting Gorbachev and Yeltsin as weakening identity and naively dropping barriers to Western culture.<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, an obsession spread that western "cultural imperialism" poses a big threat. These memories stand in the way of any new convergence with U.S. identity.

Putin built up Russia's vertical identity in 2000-07 in opposition to what he perceived to be the compromised identity foisted on Russia through the influence of the West in the 1990s. While in the Medvedev interregnum stress on this gap with the West diminished, Putin responded to signs of increased opposition from the fall of 2011 by assertively widening the gap further. He targeted NGOs newly obliged to register as foreign lobbies if they received any outside assistance. Instead of meeting the demands of demonstrators that democracy was being compromised, Putin took a hard line in making new demonstrations more difficult. This preoccupation with resistance to democracy drew Russia closer to China, not to the United States.

Identity gaps rest on dichotomies of convenient symbols. Chinese respond to the threat of “individualism” as interpreted in the West with claims of harmony, now reinterpreted to rationalize unchecked communist party rule. They counter appeals to universal values with the long glorified notion of “sovereignty.” Distinguishing the reality of economic globalization from a perceived danger of cultural globalization,<sup>16</sup> Chinese spokespersons venerate national culture as its opposite. Absolute contrasts serve to inculcate a world of polarities, signifying widening national identity gaps.

One focus of Russia’s vertical identity as it pertains to East Asia is the Russian Far East. Following Putin’s campaign proposal, the Far East Development Ministry was established in May 2012. It reaches into Eastern Siberia, encompassing as much as 46 percent of the Russian Federation. Vast sums are required to solidify its links to European Russia and the rest of Siberia, involving transportation infrastructure as well as energy pipelines. With concern about China never far from view, efforts center on east-west corridors and a north-south corridor hugging the southern coast of the Russian Far East with a terminus in or around Vladivostok and some possibility of extension through the Korean peninsula. In this respect, the vertical identity of Russia comes in lieu of integration with China through additional north-south corridors. Yet, reluctance to acknowledge this divide has reduced the sense of an identity gap with China in contrast to the demagogic rhetoric during the 1990s. Two decades of fantasizing about the Russian Far East leaves vague whether it is a fortress or a bridge, a link to a multilateral region or an appendage in China’s rise.

## THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION

China and Russia both were shaken by alarm that the strategic triangle was becoming heavily unbalanced against their country. During the early 1980s the Soviet leadership feared growing collusion between a resurgent China and a still powerful United States. A decade later it was the Chinese leadership that worried about close ties between a post-communist Russia and a triumphant United States.

The danger was not merely an unfavorable balance of power. It was also irresistible pressure on national identity, coming from momentum for Western modernization and values and disparagement of communism after its most serious defection. With the Sino-Russian agreement in the mid-90s, this danger no longer seemed realistic. Two decades later a more confident Chinese leadership and a more disgruntled one in Russia were on the offensive, especially in Asia opposing alleged U.S. intentions.

During the 1990s, talk of multipolarity echoed the Soviet demand for status, while anger over Western dismissal of Russian corruption and distorted state-society relations revived sentiments about anti-communism interfering with respect. U.S. overconfidence in its unipolar leadership and its allegedly unprecedented hegemonic ambitions, backed by efforts to impose a singled civilization on humanity, were Russia’s negative images.<sup>17</sup>

In rejecting what is wrongly perceived as unilateralism without credit to Obama’s shift toward multilateralism and sincerity in the “reset,” Putin is making it difficult to achieve multipolarity. This approach discards the possibility of finding common ground with the EU and ignores the growing impact of China limiting Russia’s strategic options. It views China through the

U.S. prism and the artificial storyline of a country hiding its agenda as it shows a façade of respect for Russia. Decisions to showcase only a positive image of Sino-Russian relations put an increasing burden on Russia's capacity to rebalance foreign relations as China rises. They rest on a skewed view of the strategic triangle, left when ideology stopped being a problem with China while identity bedeviled U.S. relations.

Russia takes a cautious attitude toward challenging China, but there are increased signs of stirrings to limit growing dependence. This takes the form of pursuing alternative outlets with identity implications. The Eurasian Union is Putin's prime initiative, serving as an undeclared snub of the Shanghai spirit of the SCO, which is troubled by a lack of Central Asian leadership (unlike ASEAN's role in regionalism) and a wide gulf between China's desire to forge an FTA and to strengthen various functions and the obstructionist role of Russia eager to retain as much of its Soviet legacy as possible. With the Eurasian Union facing China's intensified bilateralism to bypass the SCO impasse, prospects for the SCO were growing dimmer. Expanding by adding observer states and then granting them full membership better suited Russia's goal of diluting China's position in Central Asia.<sup>18</sup> Playing off the two great powers, states in Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan, increasingly relied on economic ties with China and reaffirmed cultural and strategic ties to Russia. This obscured Russia's fear of marginalization, China's sense of entitlement, and the expected divisive spillover from the U.S. pullback from Afghanistan set for 2014.

Russia does not have a big stake in North Korea, but it also does not show much concern about the North's belligerence and missile tests. Primarily, the North is an outlet for geopolitical maneuvering sprinkled with a ray of hope for economic integration tied to the Russian Far East.<sup>19</sup> Despite differences with China over its future, agreement on the need to support North Korea versus South Korea and the United States prevails for now. North Korea was the object of intense diplomacy in 2000-03. Reliant on progress in multilateral diplomacy, Russia found that it could not escape from China's shadow just to remain relevant. The summit in 2011 of Medvedev and Kim Jong-il was an unsuccessful long shot at regaining Russia's voice. Urging resumption of the Six-Party Talks after the North Korea launched a long-range missile in December 2012, Russia kept hope alive.<sup>20</sup> The troubled atmosphere in early 2013 was unwelcome, causing instability and standing in the path of multipolarity, but deference to China's approach was not challenged.

In 2012, Russian leaders seemed intent on shifting South Korean relations onto a new track, avoiding lengthy discussion on North Korea while concentrating on economic ties linked to development of the Russian Far East. The impact would refocus Russia's shaky, geopolitical identity in the moribund Six-Party Talks to an identity as an economic partner in what could be seen as regionalism focused on multilateral energy cooperation.

India was another possibility, as leaders such as Primakov in 1997 conceived of a troika of China, Russia, and India. With the U.S. role in Afghanistan winding down, the Indo-Russian connection would draw new attention. Yet, talk of India balancing China is a mirage. Growing ties between the United States and India have somewhat marginalized Russia. India has little impact on Russian national identity. Most importantly, China now looms so large for Russia that India has no further chance of serving as a counterweight. Putin's visit to India at the end of 2012 focused on arms sales and trade, not on identity.

Vietnam has drawn on old ties to involve Russia in its dispute with China over the South China Sea, both by supplying advanced arms and by engaging in exploration and development of energy resources. This country and others in Southeast Asia cast doubt on Sino-Russian accord, but the Sino-U.S. disagreement in the region is more serious.

Another option with symbolic value sufficient to separate Russia from China is a breakthrough with Japan. Indications that Putin coveted a deal with Japan that promised a boost for Russia's Asian identity peaked at the Irkutsk summit of March 2001,<sup>21</sup> and they revived with his judo analogy for reenergizing relations on March 1, 2012. This caught Japanese attention, as did Putin's warm treatment of Prime Minister Noda, giving Japan favored status at the Vladivostok APEC summit in September.<sup>22</sup> While Noda fell from power before he could visit Russia in response to Putin's invitation, Abe came to power at year's end with favorable credentials for Russia in contrast to palpable wariness by Chinese and Koreans. As Sino-Japanese relations grew more confrontational, further moves to improve Russo-Japanese relations would leave no doubt of Russia's distinctive place in Asian great power maneuvering while offering an opening for its Asian identity.

Only Japan, the world's third economy and recognized counterweight to China in Asia, offers Russia broader identity in the Asia-Pacific region than as a state deferential to China with little voice of its own. An investment and trade agreement for deliveries of natural gas would be a boon after warnings that the shale gas revolution is marginalizing Russia. If this were combined with a long elusive peace treaty and territorial agreement, trumpeted on both sides as a breakthrough, the message to the world would be not only that two great powers had begun a new era together but also that Russia's Asian identity had shifted in an important way. Having built up expectations for a new posture in Asia before the 2012 APEC summit Putin has much to gain from it, as does Abe Shinzo. In *Beautiful Asia*, Abe wrote movingly about the goal of his father, former foreign minister Abe Shintaro, for a breakthrough with Gorbachev in the territorial dispute before death denied him the post of prime minister.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as prime minister in December 2006 when Foreign Minister Aso Taro floated a trial balloon of dividing the land area of the disputed islands in half, the boldest offer aired to 2013, Abe must have consented, even if he kept his fingerprints off this hot potato. Finally, near retirement in 2007, Abe aired a development plan for the Russian Far East, making a positive impression. He reenters the fray encouraged by Putin, who met former prime minister Mori Yoshiro on February 21, 2013, reaffirming the Irkutsk agreement that Mori and Putin had reached and planning for Abe to visit Moscow in the spring.<sup>24</sup> Hosting Xi Jinping in March in his visit abroad as president does not mean support for China in its dispute with Japan.

Putin could present the return of the two small islands without loss of the other islands as a crowning achievement, since Khrushchev, Yeltsin, and others sought it but never could get Japan to agree. Whatever the arrangement for the other two islands, the fact that they need not be returned would signal not a gloating Russia, but a country that achieves success through pragmatic diplomacy and is treated with the respect due a major player in Asia. Accompanying such an agreement would be a narrowing identity gap over history, reflecting anew on the past periods of friendship between the two states rather than the prolonged mutual antipathy, and a reduced horizontal dimension gap too.

The identity gap argument for Russian overtures to Japan, however, pales before the priority of widening the gap with the United States and keeping the gap with China so narrow that it does not obscure the focus on Russia's obsessive negative target. Counting for little in Russian discussions about foreign policy strategy and national identity in the Brezhnev era and again in the Putin era, Japan is not likely to become a genuine target if it does not take the initiative or Putin does not reconsider his recent favoritism for China.

## THE INTENSITY DIMENSION AND OVERALL IDENTITY GAP

As the class conflict approach to history and international relations faded, Russia as well as China found a civilizational approach for reconstructing identity. By the end of the 1980s it was gaining ground, as Gorbachev endorsed the notion of global civilization, while showing little interest in regional or Eastern civilization before losing control of the debate on Russian civilization. For his reform goals, a universal civilization worked well, prioritizing "democratization." Yet Russians failed to explore the civilizational theme in depth; changes in directives came precipitously and able scholars shifted to joint ventures or emigrated. In contrast, Chinese fascination with Western civilization was suppressed as interest grew in Eastern civilization, fueled by the success in neighboring countries. As Russian interest in the West atrophied, China looked more appealing. Dmitri Trenin said in February 2013 that due to Russian domestic concerns, "There has been a qualitative change in relations between Moscow and the West over the past 12-18 months. The Russian leadership has stopped pretending that it follows the West in the sphere of proclaimed values...in the spheres of democracy, human rights, national sovereignty, the role of the state, the position of religion and the church, and the nature of the family."<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Sino-Russian relations kept being praised, overshadowing concern.

Russia's educated population is focusing more on deepening problems at home. Discrediting the West and crediting China as a partner steeped in success serves Putin's purpose. If in the 1960s in the Soviet Union and the 1980s in China, intellectuals were given the green light in debunking official myths and going beyond quiet resistance to heroic appeals for a new form of socialism, in the Soviet 1970s and China's 1990s they had to retreat.<sup>26</sup> Yet, they found outlets to keep hope alive: fiction, poetry, theater, and science fiction, and Western culture in the first example, and far more opportunities in China through study abroad and the information revolution. For Russians the drift toward universal values was countered by the rise of Russophilism with its focus on a strong state as well as religion and empire, all bathed in cultural identity. In the case of China, Sinocentrism was approved, linked to socialism even if that was downplayed. The weight of these forces in the early 2010s exceeds that of universal values, and may strengthen in times of trouble, but, as problems mount, there is reason to expect greater contestation.

## CONCLUSION

In the midst of close scrutiny of Obama's "pivot" to Asia, Putin's rebalancing from west to east deserves attention too. In both cases, the change is a response to China's rise, although Russia appears more intent on capitalizing on it rather than strengthening ties to China's neighbors. The two geographical shifts diverge in how they hedge against the potential of

Chinese regional dominance. Contrasts prevail, despite evidence that national interests in the face of China are actually converging.

Sino-Russian relations appear to be close with trade targeted to reach \$100 billion in 2015, plans set to increase energy flows substantially, and geopolitical cooperation of greater consequence than at any time since the 1950s. Yet, agreeing to tradeoffs in trade and in support of strategic priorities barely conceals tensions over the course of economic relations and security in every sub-region of Asia bordering China. Russia's pursuit of India, Vietnam, and Japan stands in sharp contrast to China's relations. Economic ties have had relatively little spillover into interest groups prioritizing this relationship. The small number of large, state-dominated firms most active in China faced prolonged price disputes and anger over technology transfers. Russians complain of little investment in the Russian Far East and the one-sided nature of Russian exports of natural resources. Chinese herald ties as if they are really close, and Russians stifle resentment at growing Chinese arrogance. Distrust is rampant, as Russians fear domination. Yet, the identity gaps of each country with the United States cushion against any widening divide.

In the late 1980s there was talk about affinities between Russians and Americans and Chinese and Americans. As Russians emerged from the stagnation of the Brezhnev era and Chinese awakened to the materialism and "cultural fever" of the Deng era, both populations were thought to be romanticizing the good life and freedoms of the West, led by the United States. In turn, the slowly dissipating antipathy of the Sino-Soviet dispute was considered to be a legacy with no prospect of being overturned. Normalization might occur in bilateral relations, but the distrust accumulated over three decades appeared to be beyond the reach of newly pragmatic leaders. Soon, Russians were much more hostile to the United States. If there is still little warmth between them and Chinese and no sense of cultural affinity, this is far better than the wide identity gap with the United States. Three factors should be noted: 1) the identity gap with the United States is far more intense and multidimensional than the gap with China; 2) there is a conspiracy of silence in covering the gap with China, reflecting fear of China's reaction as well as lessons learned from the split; 3) the issues at stake in Sino-Russian relations are deemed explosive to manage.

Observers remained wedded to earlier thinking. A common view was that Sino-U.S. relations were deteriorating due to the U.S. refusal to accept China's rise. Dmitry Mikheyev takes this stance. "The unspoken assumption that there are superior and inferior 'races,' religions, cultures, and civilizations justifies the dominance of the 'superior' over the 'inferior.' In contrast, Confucianism seeks an 'all-inclusive societal harmony.' To quote former Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, the traditional culture of China 'stresses love and humanity, community, harmony among different viewpoints, and sharing the world in common.'" Sergey Roy focuses instead on extreme U.S. thinking about Russia. "They endeavor to 'contain' this menace by pouring money into the construction of BMD, by moving, or threatening to move, NATO forces ever closer to Russia's borders, by virulent Russophobic propaganda, by support for orange-colored revolutionists within Russia." Others argue that a weakened U.S. power must accept a U.S.-China-Russia triangle as a realistic response to the shifting global balance or explore whether Russia could be a mediator as Sino-U.S. tensions intensify. In this exchange, all on the Russian side focus on the U.S.-Russian identity gap

or Sino-U.S gap, not on the Sino-Russian gap.<sup>27</sup> The domestic challenge to Putin's return to power aroused his ire against the United States and the West, leading to more national identity intensity.

In contrast to Mao's outrage against the Soviet Union in the 1960s-70s, why is Russia so blasé about its growing dependence on China? It may reflect Russian weakness, fear of the economic cost of China's retaliation, and memory of the heavy price exacted by the Sino-Soviet split. Yet, Mao's China had greater reason to hold its tongue. What matters more, I suggest, is that Putin fears the danger of narrowing the identity gap with the United States, while Mao had no such concern until 1971, and, even in his final years, considered this to be under control. With no priority for ideological identity, Putin lacks the basis for managing identity gaps too. In an age of globalization, vulnerability to the West is great, while the gap with China is ignored.

With its identity still relatively unsettled, Russia is more subject to the whims of a single leader. This was true around 2004 when Putin repositioned Russia in opposition to the United States and partnership with China. It became apparent again in 2012 when Putin acquired imperial airs, showing little patience with structured consultations and decision-making. He grew more arbitrary in charting Russia's course, couched in identity terms. If a wider debate might shift the balance, it now depends on Putin's personal will.

A sharp Russian break with China is problematic. Putin has exaggerated Russia's strength as an energy superpower in a world thirsting for oil and gas and as a great power capable of shaping the behavior of other states or making them pay a price for defiance. In this view, Japan appears much weaker than Russia as a force in Northeast Asia and does not serve as a real counterweight to China. Also, reforms to meet the standards of globalization, thereby establishing a favorable environment for investment, have not been taken seriously, as indicated in the delay in entering the WTO and the lost opportunity of the Vladivostok APEC. By rethinking the worrisome trajectory of Chinese national identity with its powerful impact on the region and the deleterious impact of Russian identity in its suspicion of states with potential to help Russia, Putin could broaden regional trust, but this remains unlikely even as Russia's energy clout is slipping and its distrust with China over the shape of Asian regionalism is growing. As long as national identity trumps national interests, skewing how they are seen, Russia will look to China. Indeed, as Putin and Xi Jinping raise the profile of identity further, keeping the focus on the United States as the "other," the Sino-Russian identity gap may further diminish.

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