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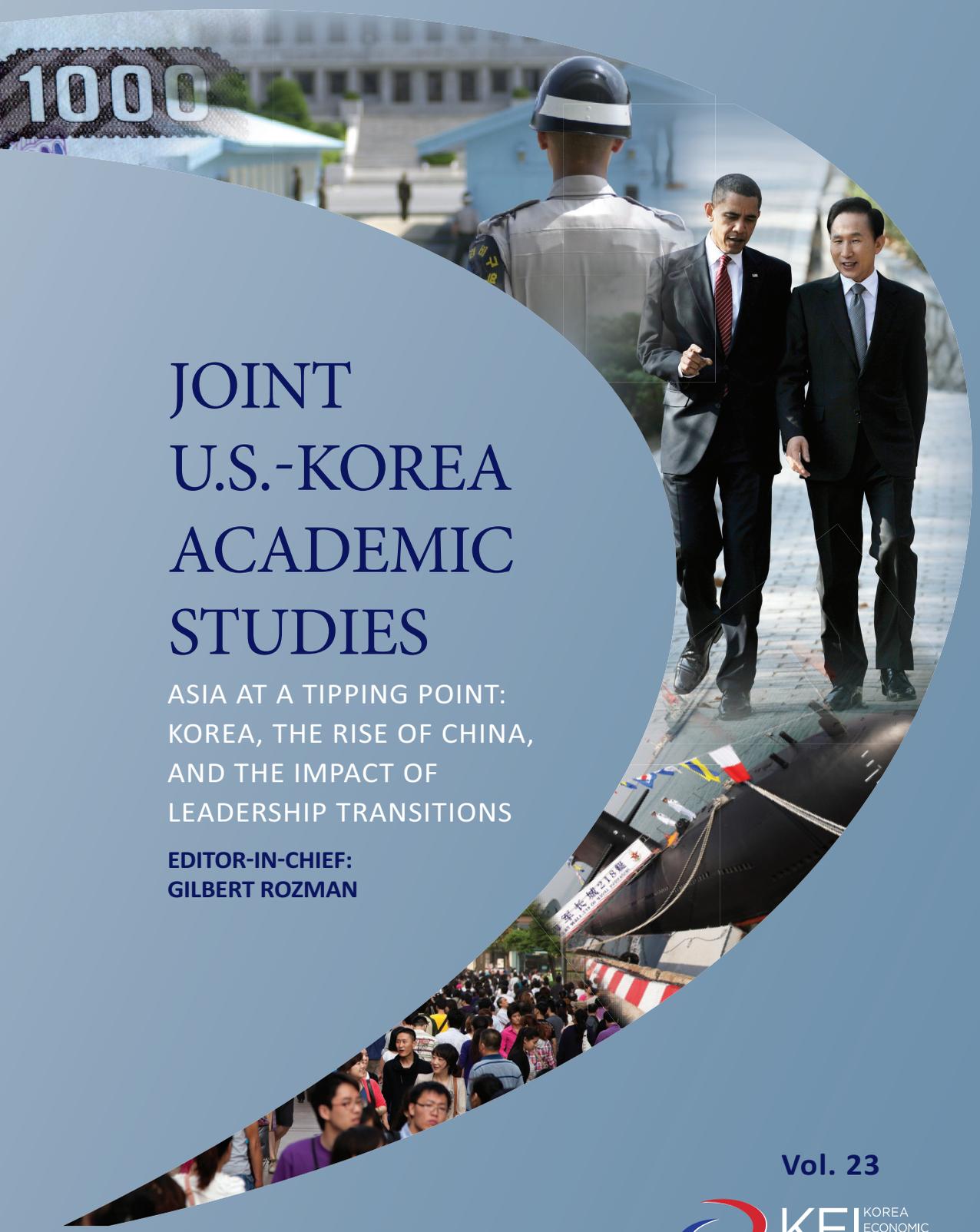
ASIA AT A TIPPING POINT:
KOREA, THE RISE OF CHINA,
AND THE IMPACT OF
LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

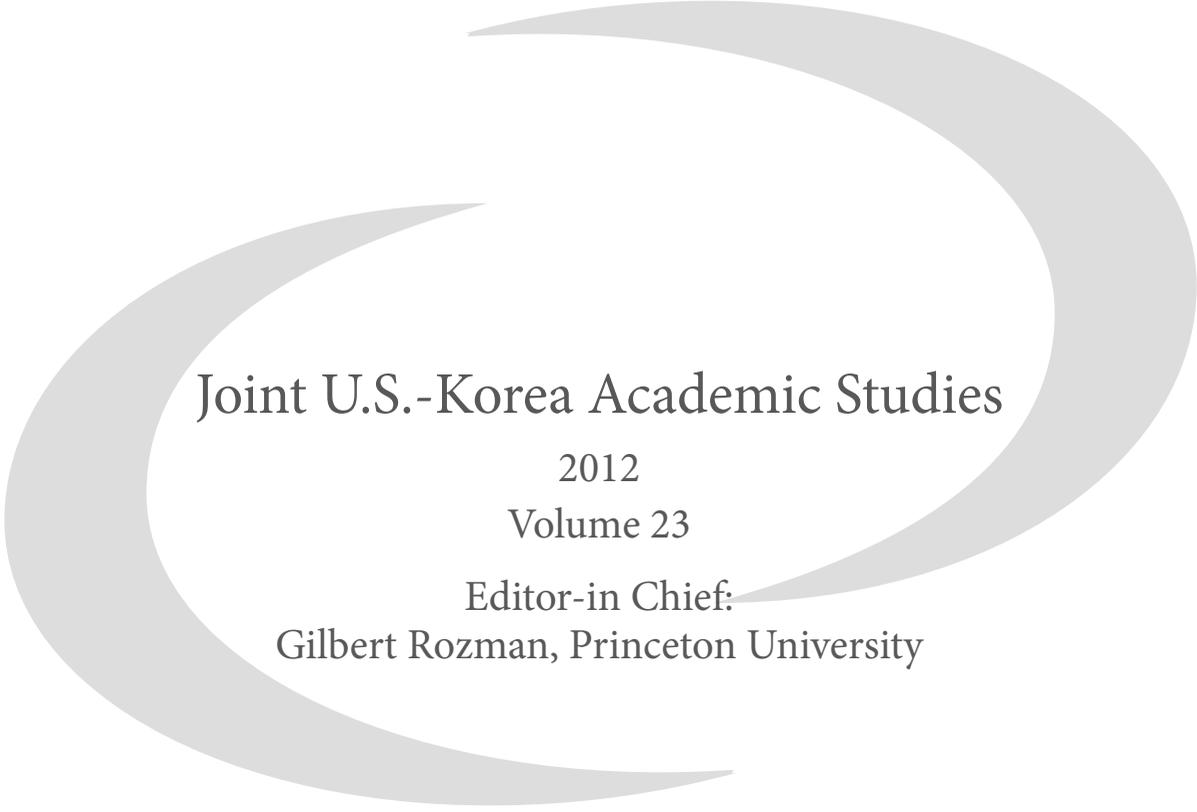
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Regional Community Formation:
National Identity, Migration,
and the Rise of China

INTRODUCTION

One of the requirements for an East Asian Community, the agreed objective of regionalism, is the formation of social networks that forge trust and a sense of common purpose and identity. China, Japan, and South Korea would appear to have a favorable foundation for such networks. Economic integration keeps booming. The number of tourists traveling between these countries keeps growing. Confucianism provides a common cultural foundation. An annual summit highlights trilateralism as a framework for regionalism. Yet, national identity gaps, distrust over security, and ethnic enclave tensions are interfering with community ties. They are linked to clashing conceptions of China's centrality and of how its rise impacts regionalism.

The three chapters in Part 3 put China at the center, while stressing various sociological themes of regional community formation. They point to the paradoxical conclusion that the more economic ties have grown and interaction between China and South Korea increased, the greater the distrust. While historical memory continues to pose the primary problem of trust in Japanese-South Korean relations, it is only one of many factors unsettling Sino-South Korean relations at the level of individual perceptions and social networks. Despite expectations that Japan would have the most difficulty in building trusting relations, the downward spiral in Sino-South Korean mutual perceptions since 2004 is most acute.

A recent Chinese book, which carefully examines South Korean images of China from a wide range of sources—the media, textbooks, surveys, focus groups, and interviews with experts—argues that there are measures China can take to improve its public perception.¹ Although the book offers diverse explanations for a lack of objectivity by South Koreans, its primary advice is how to portray China in a more positive way. First, it points to the need to boost economic development so that South Koreans do not continue to underestimate China's world rank and focus on the disadvantages rather than the opportunities in economic relations. Yet, the principal problems, it reports, are images of spiraling inequality, deepening environmental damage, and declining complementarity between economies as China becomes more competitive. To meet such concerns China must do more than outgrow an image problem. It must address social problems linked to politics and anxieties about economic unfairness, not subjects that Chinese authors are normally at liberty to analyze with candor.

The second piece of advice to China is to provide more positive signals about Sino-South Korean relations. Indeed, the survey found that China is less trusted than the United States, Japan, and even Russia. The authors do not explain what signals are required, but they list in order what focus groups said about the reasons for the perceived problems in relations. First is the Sino-North Korean alliance, as seen in the answers of 82% of the respondents that China does not support reunification. Second is divergence over history, especially the ancient Koguryo state, which raises sovereignty concerns and doubts about China's intentions in regard to North Korea. Third is the contrast in social systems, indicated by Koreans

who draw attention to China's socialist system. Again, Chinese authors, however much they favor efforts at raising China's soft power (in contrast to other Chinese who became vocal in 2010 in insisting that China should be more assertive in brandishing its economic power and other hard power), are not free to challenge the major decisions on such issues.

A third problem, covered at length although no advice is expressed, is the cultural gap, as seen in the adjectives selected by South Koreans to describe the Chinese and their anger toward supposed South Korean claims to have improved upon Confucianism and to have invented cultural festivals that Chinese regard as their own. These adjectives range from dirty to arrogant, implying that the Chinese are insensitive to the feelings of others and devious or calculating. No mention is made of how arrogantly China's leaders have treated South Korean leaders or how little effort China has made to recognize the diversity of Confucianism. In the book's introduction, long-time institute director and supporter of regionalism Zhang Yunling warns that China cannot simply stress the positive and expect to raise its image. It must have the self-confidence to look squarely at how others perceive it and recognize that it can be viewed as scary—a monster swallowing the world. This forthright analysis offers valuable insight into what the dark side of China's image is and how it might best respond.

The three chapters in Part 3 explore the forces that have led to distrustful images and relations between South Korea and its two neighbors. All raise issues of national identity. In Gilbert Rozman's chapter, he concentrates on two dimensions—vertical and sectoral—of a six-dimensional framework for the study of national identity, and introduce the concept of national identity gaps for comparisons of the two bilateral relations in the region. In the following chapter, Leif-Eric Easley introduces the concept of security trust, relating it to national identity differences. Then Sharon Yoon focuses attention on the impact of interactions between South Koreans living and working in Beijing and the Chinese Korean community. These three perspectives highlight the trust deficit felt on both sides,, and expand our understanding of what alternatively has been labeled the constructivist, identity, or cognitive approach to how two nations choose cooperation or conflict in dealing with each other. Sino-South Korean ties, even at the level of Korean sojourners in Beijing and Korean Chinese seen through the lens of China's image, are troubled by the pervasive impact of national identities.

In two of the chapters, distrust between the South Koreans and Japanese serves as a basis for comparing relations between the South Koreans and Chinese. From the perspective of historical memory, the gap with Japan appeared to be much wider, although as the range of historical issues of concern has expanded, this has been less so of late. However, seen through the lens of claims about what is distinctive about one's society—the vertical dimension—and about the cultural, political, and economic identities that comprise its sectoral dimension, the identity gap with China is wider and has been widening rapidly in recent years. In addition, security distrust provides another lens through which a widening gap is visible.

These frameworks to assess dyadic relations do not conceal lingering problems in Japanese-South Korean mutual images. Comparisons expose similarities as well as differences. Combining these two dyads through these new frameworks for studying images of another nation reorients our thinking toward international relations.

Whereas the Easley chapter differentiates aspects of identity perceptions and analyzes perceptions of national identity differences, there is considerable overlap with my chapter's treatment of national identity dimensions and gaps. Both focus on bilateral relations through perceptions of identity and how they have changed in recent years. Both chapters conclude that there has been a reversal in the scale of the national identity gaps in the two East Asian bilateral relations in the period from the mid-2000s through 2010. They also argue that this outcome is likely to endure; the forces driving the national identities of China and South Korea further apart and drawing those of Japan and South Korea closer together appear sustainable. The fact that these findings are specific with regard to the timing and degree of transformation in differences, which can be evaluated from published sources and interviews, demonstrates the utility of these approaches.

Yoon uses a micro-interactional approach to study how cognitive schema of Korean ethno-national identity are embedded in national identity gaps. Showing how such gaps critically shape the narratives of ethnic identity in the everyday lives of individuals living and working in the Korean enclave in Beijing, she observes a process of dual marginalization. The culturally hybrid identities of the Korean Chinese do not fit into the existing schemata of the South Koreans and Han Chinese and as a result, they are marginalized as outsiders from both communities. This limits their roles as cultural intermediaries between the South Korean immigrants and Han Chinese in the enclave. In this analysis one sees how national identity gaps reverberate in interpersonal relations, making it difficult even for people viewed as co-ethnics to find mutual understanding.

The three chapters in Part 3 demonstrate a deep sense of mistrust whether the gap is centered on perceptions of differences in the way society is structured and culture has evolved, international relations are conducted with an emphasis on security, or personal relations are forged within communities in day-to-day contact. National identity gaps are having a powerful impact on the way East Asian nations relate to each other and social networks are inhibited from contributing to a regional community. No matter how fast China, Japan, and South Korea become more closely integrated economically, if China does not find a different way to increase trust and narrow national identity gaps, then the prognosis for genuine regionalism and even for a positive atmosphere for security is not favorable. Although the United States has been excluded from most of the discussion in these chapters, China's identity gap with it sets the background for stunted regionalism.

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South Korean National Identity Gaps with China and Japan

GILBERT ROZMAN

Read the Chinese Internet and mainstream publications, and you will find virulent charges against South Korean attitudes toward China.¹ Peruse even a small sample of a vast outpouring of Japanese popular books on South Korea or previous copies of *Sankei shimbun*, and you cannot miss the hyperbolic accusations against South Korean attitudes toward Japan.² Both nations' sources often attribute to the South Korean public obsessive emotional reactions to historical memories and cultural issues.³ At the same time, Korean sources find the Chinese Internet replete with intense emotionalism toward South Korea and charge Japanese with skewed perceptions of history and of Korean culture.⁴ The culture wars are not receding in East Asia despite the widened divide over security issues, such as North Korea's nuclear threat, and the uncertain state of economic growth at a time when China's development model has begun to teeter a little and the world's financial picture remains cloudy. How do we explain the current preoccupation with the national identity divide in both Sino-South Korean and Japanese-South Korean relations?

In 2002 the progressive candidate Roh Moo-hyun was elected president on a wave of anti-Americanism. From 2004, South Korean-Chinese relations began a downward spiral over different perceptions of the nature of the ancient Koguryo state. In 2005 Roh's anger with Japan led him to question the entire course of normalization over forty years. Echoes of each of these outbursts were heard periodically in later years, for instance, in 2008 when China's pre-Olympics "sacred torch parade" through Seoul rekindled distrust on both sides and as Japan's claim to sovereignty over the tiny Dokdo/Takeshima Island aroused South Koreans anew. Descriptive accounts abound of such emotions in East Asia. The challenge is to systematize analysis of these divisions and how they keep impacting international relations. Centering on South Korea's ties with its neighbors, this chapter highlights sociological factors that keep undergirding international relations in East Asia.

The concept of national identity has gained increasing popularity since the end of the Cold War, applied to the countries of East Asia by social scientists of many orientations and diverse disciplines. Few would doubt its salience in the bilateral disputes that keep inflaming emotions in this region. Yet, there is scant attention on analyzing the interrelationship of the national identities of two countries based on comparisons of pairs of identities and examination of the interplay within each pair. Here I take South Korea as the common denominator, assessing the recent character of Sino-South Korean and Japanese-South Korean national identity gaps.⁵ Keeping the focus on the vertical dimension of identity, which refers to self-images of what makes the inner-workings of a country distinctive, I highlight domestic factors that impact international relations. Also, I draw attention to cultural national identity and its linkages with economic and political national identity, which are lumped together as the sectoral dimension. The identity gaps between South Korea and its two neighbors remain wide, putting these relationships at risk, as seen in recurrent tensions couched unmistakably in identity terms, notably in the mass media.

In this analysis national identity is defined as beliefs about what makes one's state unique in the past, present, and future. A national identity gap is considered to be a divide separating two states, where at least one considers the other salient to its national identity. Whereas most discussions of identity gaps in East Asia center on the temporal dimension, which refers to views of history, the approach here is based on differentiating as many as six dimensions. The horizontal dimension refers to views of the outside, including the international community, regionalism, and relations with the United States. Second to the temporal dimension, this is the most widespread in writings on East Asian bilateral relations. Another dimension is ideological, which has figured less importantly in recent years even if it seems to be gaining some traction in China again. Together the gaps observed for these three dimensions plus the vertical and sectoral dimensions of special interest here, combine into what I call the intensity dimension. Separately, I have estimated that the intensity of the national identity gaps between China and Japan and between China and South Korea have grown much wider in recent years, while that between Japan and South Korea began to narrow, but haltingly.⁶ Focusing on two identity dimensions, this chapter views the two divergent identity gaps involving South Korea, largely setting aside the Sino-Japanese national identity gap.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY STUDIES IN EAST ASIA

Sociology has long highlighted collective identities and the impact of the state on them. Whether one is prioritizing social class identity, racial and ethnic identities, or civil society, there is a pattern of assessing how a state's identity reinforces or restricts expression of intermediate identities that can serve to limit the state's authority and reach. Interest in East Asian collective identities proceeds in the shadow of recognition of the dominance of inflated state identities. This is the case for China, Japan, and South Korea. Communist rule in China boosts state identity further, while democracies are characteristically tolerant of collective identities.

National identity factors appeared to be eclipsed in post-Cold War East Asia except when aroused by Japanese leaders, such as in visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. For at least a decade after normalization of Sino-South Korean relations, both sides avoided mention of ideological, historical, political, and cultural divisions that could prove sensitive to the other state. When the Koguryo issue flared in 2004, they agreed to dampen its impact, as if it were some aberrant problem that did not reflect an actual national identity gap. In 1998 and again in 2008, new rapport between Japanese and South Korean leaders likewise promised to overcome bilateral strains. It focused on the future rather than the past, and on shared national interests best tackled together, such as economic and security problems. Even in the aftermath of tensions over the Yasukuni visits, Chinese and Japanese leaders vowed to refocus relations, as leaders pointed to cultural overlap rather than divisions.⁷ Yet, powerful political forces were unwilling to narrow national identity gaps, and deep domestic cleavages ensured that they would resurface with even greater force at a later time.

South Korea is sandwiched between two states, which, one after the other, became obsessed with the superiority of their way of organizing society against the background of deep misgivings about some lagging characteristics. Japan's spike in national identity occurred in the second half of the 1980s. Trailing by about twenty-five years, China's spike is still pronounced in 2012 after receiving a jolt upward during the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Chinese and Japanese arrogance is manifested in ideological leanings inimical to closer relations with South Korea, historical memories that clash sharply with those of Koreans, and interpretations of cultural, economic, and political identity that distance their states from South Korea rather than leading toward convergence.⁸ Above all, the identity spike in each country reflected rising confidence in the state's role in society at the expense of many other collective identities. This vertical dimension put trust with South Korea in jeopardy in unexpected ways. To appreciate the dynamics of bilateral relations it is essential to add South Korean national identity to the picture, treating both relationships.

Sociologists were among many observers who sought the key to Japan's unique identity in the 1970s through 1990s. Nakane Chie, S. N. Eisenstadt, and Seymour Martin Lipset are among this group.⁹ In the case of China's exceptionalism, Martin King Whyte, Thomas Gold, and Jonathan Unger, number among the sociologists who have searched for the crux of differences, and Ezra Vogel took an interest in both states.¹⁰ For South Korea, the numbers remain smaller, but the sociologist Gi-wook Shin has energetically been filling the vacuum.¹¹ In each of these cases, political scientists, anthropologists, and historians are also prominent in the long list of those writing about national identity from what may be regarded as a sociological perspective, but few have turned their attention to international relations. Shin is a rare exception in scrutinizing the South Korean-U.S. relationship as a reflection of identities.¹²

In East Asia popular writings are much enamored of the subject of mutual images and distrust. The Japanese-South Korean divide has aroused interest for decades.¹³ While there is no dearth of public opinion data mapping the evolution of perceptions and many have discussed the political context, systematic examination of national identities rarely occurs. The most common perspective is found in books by rightwing Japanese explaining South Koreans' thinking that damages relations.¹⁴ The Chinese-South Korean divide recently has also drawn attention.¹⁵ Newspapers again take the lead as scholarly articles cover the political background too. Identity is often mentioned, but without systematic assessment of how it operates, especially in light of the resurgence of this sharp post Cold War divide.

The field of national identity extends across disciplines. Social psychology draws attention to self-identity, contrasting group orientation and the salience of "face" in East Asia with individualism in the United States.¹⁶ Constructivist theory in the study of international relations stresses subjectivity, whereby perceptions shape policy choices, as when East Asians look through the lens of alleged victimization.¹⁷ Historical writings on memory reveal an identity component, which is recognized as playing an enduring role in East Asian countries steeped in historical legitimation.¹⁸ In sociology all of these perspectives are present,

complementing attentiveness to the way collective identities overlap or conflict. In the study of East Asian societies identities focused on the nation are often seen as so important that they are treated along side each of the various collective identities in the search for explanations.

In succession, social scientists have grasped for the essence of the multiple identities in Japan, South Korea, and China. In the 1980s they became obsessed with state-society relations: vertical society, paternalistic firms shaped by administrative guidance, loss of individualism to some sense of a homogeneous people together as a “new middle mass,” weakness of civil society due to acceptance of “Japan, Inc.,” and Japan-U.S. comparisons suggesting reasons for Japan’s high level of conformity but low deviance.¹⁹ *Nihonjinron* (the theory of Japaneseness) heralded uniqueness,²⁰ as writings on Japan’s modernization pointed to why convergence with the West has been relatively limited. In contradictory trends over the following two decades after self-confidence in uniqueness was shaken by Japan’s rapid economic and political descent while bluster about revisionism came more into the open with support from top LDP leaders, social scientists recognized the salience of national identity, cataloguing its diversity.²¹ In power, the DPJ reemphasized Asianism and, briefly, forthrightly challenged the U.S. alliance as the foundation of international identity without clarifying confusion over Japan’s identity, which continues today.²²

The debate over South Korean national identity has more narrowly centered on the predominance of Koreanness associated with ethnic homogeneity and also bloodlines, and the rise of a civic identity combining democratic and universal values.²³ Given significant adjustments in recent years, there has also been close attention shown to the effect of election results that bring strong-willed presidents to office,²⁴ two conservatives and two progressives over the past two decades. The impact of national identity on relations with Japan has long been appreciated and the power of anti-Americanism as a form of national identity came to the fore in the early 2000s,²⁵ but these themes have not been placed within a broad framework of national identity gaps and how they may be at the root of international tensions.

Lately Chinese national identity has attracted the most attention, because of both fascination with China’s development model (the “Beijing Consensus”) and uncertainty over its approach to international relations (“harmonious world”).²⁶ There has been much discussion of rising arrogance,²⁷ fed by both the Internet and government policies often interpreted in an extreme manner within China. Chinese views of Japan and the United States are often perceived as responses to particular issues rather than part of national identity construction, which involves multiple dimensions and is coordinated in its effect. The framework of national identity gaps can serve to assess how Chinese identity systematically impacts foreign relations.

By showcasing the vertical dimension of identity and cultural national identity, I seek to build on the research centered on sociological themes. Japanese, South Koreans, and Chinese face cleavages associated with one-sided macro-level identities with little room for intermediate level identities. Japanese and South

Koreans' withdrawal of support from their elected leaders reveals high levels of dissatisfaction not only with the way a particular leader governed, but with the structure of state-society relations. Discontent in China with the party-state's unresponsiveness to social needs has apparently been rising sharply. As reflected in internal identity, these problems reverberate in identity gaps of widening intensity, which can be traced back to ways of thinking from premodern times and to the transformation of the hierarchy of nations during the transition to modernity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO NATIONAL IDENTITY GAPS IN EAST ASIA

Wars between China and Japan and between either of these two countries and Korea were rare over the half millennium prior to the 1890s. Economic relations were of minor importance, especially in the final premodern centuries. Relations were perceived through a long-term cultural framework. China considered itself the center of civilization. Korea saw itself as the cultural link that had transferred from China and its own past the civilization on which Japan had evolved. By the eighteenth century when Koreans were questioning whether they had surpassed China as a Confucian civilization, Japanese were distancing themselves from China and Korea by emphasizing their indigenous cultural roots. Claims to superiority were being challenged, even as they were deeply felt in an environment where civilizational identity was primary. China took little regard of these trends, and the arrival of the West refocused discussions of civilizational superiority. Yet, as the shadow of the West receded, hierarchical assumptions within East Asia resurfaced.

Japan's thirty-five-year annexation of Korea and fourteen-year invasion of China cast doubt on the longstanding cultural hierarchy of East Asia. Its shift from tolerance of rising ethnic national identity (*minjok*) to cultural genocide against Koreans aroused a strong backlash of Korean cultural humiliation, fueling pride.²⁸ Later South Korean leaders reinforced this pride, as they vied for legitimacy in the face of clashing North Korean claims and failed support for democratic norms. Even after democratization, the weight of cultural identity and Koreanness well exceeded that of civic identity. In the case of China, Japan left a trail of resentment, which Chinese leaders tapped with some caution until the 1990s. For political reasons, they also hesitated until around 2005 to capitalize on cultural wounds opened by South Korea's alliance with the United States and superiority complex owing to its greater modernization and democratization. Yet, arousing a strong sense of cultural national identity, Chinese sources eventually demonized both Japan and South Korea in a sweeping manner.

For one thousand years until the mid-nineteenth century China considered Japan inconsequential, better than the barbarians due to sincere efforts to borrow Confucian culture but not fully civilized, given its samurai culture and peripheral status. In turn, the Japanese had recognized China as the center of civilization, but increasingly cast doubt on that as they began to search back in their own past for alternative roots and questioned whether China under the Manchus remained true to its own heritage. With the earlier modernization of Japan under the impact of the West, this assertive claim to now having surpassed China left

confusion as to Japan's rightful role in Asia. Grasping for an international identity even as it uncomfortably acknowledged being behind the Western powers, Japan sought an Asian identity as regional leader—although this role came with conflicting expectations. After winning the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Japan's newly risen self-confidence came with growing resentment against purported denial of the fruits of its victories. In this unsettled mindset, many twisted their internationalist identity to stress an unfair and cutthroat global order in which U.S. idealism and later the League of Nations counted for little.²⁹ Simultaneously, Japanese debated the meaning of Asianism centered on their country's relations with China. Not able in the postwar era to reach any consensus on the nature of Sino-Japanese relations to 1945, Japanese were still struggling to define and combine internationalism and Asianism as factors in their own national identity during the post-Cold War era.³⁰

As long as Japanese perceived China to be trailing, the debate about how to deal with it continued to center on the virtues in teaching and assisting it and the benefits of representing it and asserting regional leadership. Yet, insistence in China on a national identity in opposition to Japan's self-image caused complications. After the May Fourth Movement responded to Japan's WWI demands for territorial and other concessions that impinged on sovereignty, anti-imperialist claims by the Chinese Communist Party in the struggle against Japan's aggression left a legacy of demonizing Japan, controlled for a time but exacerbated by the absence of a genuine apology even after normalization in 1972. With the Cold War putting limits on the global order and China deemed economically backward to the early 1990s, Japanese could be patient about their own uncertainty over Asianism and China's criticisms over history. A different situation arose from the mid-90s.³¹ How could Japan make clear its superiority over a rapidly rising China? Would it be able to clarify Asianism and internationalism (now linked to globalization) in ways that bolstered a national identity limiting China's challenge? Views of South Korea faced similar uncertainty.

Public opinion polls repeatedly show that Japan's image in China as well as in South Korea contrasts with its image in Southeast Asia and much of the rest of the world. Elsewhere it is seen largely through an economic prism as a great power that for decades has manufactured high-quality exports of desired consumer durables, while in China more than anywhere else it appears as a country unable to come to grips with its past transgressions or to emphasize improved relations with Asia.³² After particularly negative images in 2005, Japanese finally recognized some improvement in 2007 as cherry trees became a more widely noted symbol in Chinese polls while the Nanjing massacre and Yasukuni Shrine slipped somewhat; yet with the approaching seventieth anniversary of the massacre and many movies about to be released, commentators were not confident. Indeed, *Sankei shimbun* reported that China's aim was to portray Japan as not virtuous so it could achieve regional hegemony, while striving to weaken U.S.-Japan relations.³³

In 1992 Chinese discussions of Japan were preoccupied with the challenge of predicting Japan's rise as a great power. Before the turnabout of Japan's stagnation and China's rise became clear, the post Cold War, post Soviet Union collapse steered

China's leaders to promote assessments of Japan's chances of emerging as the leader of Asia and a more equal partner of the United States. On August 14 the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Japan Institute organized a roundtable on Japan's moves to become a great power. It concluded that the United States could not long maintain its spot as the lone superpower, the competition would intensify with the other two advanced capitalist poles of the European Union and Japan, and Japan would press to establish its own regional sphere. This means a competition in Asia to which China would have to respond. Participants concluded, however, that stability would prevail, economic growth and regional integration would stay on the upswing, and Japan's economic leadership would not be converted into political leadership due to its historical legacy. One reason given was that Russia still retained great potential influence, and Japan would have to improve ties with it in order to assert leadership. Another was that Japan would still need to rely on the United States, which has more overall power. Despite limits, it was argued that Japan would strive to assert its voice as a political and military power, while seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council. At the same time, it would foster ties with China in order to build a base in Asia as one of the three world centers of capitalism, while it was also gaining leadership in Southeast Asia. Yet, such ties would not stand in the way of aspirations for a military great power position and a rightward drift in political thought. In these circumstances, participants called for China to harden its thinking toward Japan and develop a strategy to counter it, making use of Japan-U.S. contradictions. China can develop good relations, owing to Japan's need for it, toughening, at the same time, resistance to Japan's great power aspirations, widening an identity gap.³⁴

Japanese revisionists capitalized on frustrations over Japan's sinking standing in the 1990s after the "bubble economy" collapsed, seeking pride in a more positive image of long-criticized historical conduct. Chinese hardliners redirected frustrations over the Communist Party's ignoble record, including the Tiananmen massacre, by reopening the wounds left from 1945. In this context, South Korean presidents who began their tenure with high hopes for improving relations with Japan found Korean public opinion leaning toward demonization of Japan and opposition parties poised to pounce on any weakness.

The nature of cultural and vertical national identity in South Korea is a factor in the wide identity gaps with two neighboring states. *Minjok* is extremely tenacious. It was the driving force in rising national identity in response to Japanese colonialism and, later, cultural genocide. There was no other outlet for the colonized Koreans. As democracy was suppressed by dictators, it filled the vacuum, benefiting when dictators sought to use it to bolster their authority and to counter claims to legitimacy by North Korea. In the post-Cold War era, democratically elected leaders also turned to "Koreanness" as grounds for increasing their popularity and a defense against rapid opening of the country to globalization. After progressives gained power, no less emphasis was placed on such appeals. The Sunshine policy raised reunification hopes that stimulated *minjok* identity and, when hopes were dashed, accompanied a rise in frustration that the South had been marginalized in dealing with a breakdown in the talks and the North's belligerence. Over a century of *minjok* and identity limitations in the post-Cold War era, one sees signs that failure to resolve what is perceived as

severe social injustice leaves people grasping for an authentic presentation of their collective will. Despite continued economic growth and measures of inequality not inferior to those in many developed states, South Korea faces symbols of injustice of great emotional impact, which shape the electoral environment.

Three themes stand out as sources of frustration about social injustice. First, there is perceived unfairness in social mobility centered on unequal access to English language training and education to bypass the bottleneck of entrance to the top-ranked universities, which are the gateway to the most preferred jobs in large corporations and government. Second, there is an unusually high level of corruption for an advanced, democratic state, which is associated with favoritism based on common background, including regionalism. Third, there is a strong sense of uneven modernization and globalization, as select firms rank in the top echelon of international competition, while most small and middle-sized firms are vulnerable to greater competition without protection from a welfare safety net.

Manifestations of these extreme forms of social injustice include desperate moves to gain an advantage in education, such as an extraordinary number of *kirogi* (wild geese), who have sacrificed family life to education abroad. Separated family members abound in this scramble to gain a mobility edge leading to Korean or foreign universities. Voting in near unison on the basis of regional identities inside South Korea is another unusual feature of an advanced, democratic state. This relates to concern that the person elected as president will favor one region, the southeast or the southwest. Also, charges of injustice are widespread in regard to manipulation of housing prices, relatives of presidents using influence in return for payments, and some industries favored at the expense of others.

The meaning of Koreanness may have become fuzzier recently, but that does not mean it no longer applies. At the top of the social ladder are Korean Koreans and Korean Americans. Next are Korean Japanese. At the bottom are Korean Chinese or non-Koreans married to rural Koreans or others who in desperation went outside to find a spouse. In the absence of multiculturalism, heterogeneity takes a back seat to homogeneity.

THE JAPANESE-SOUTH KOREAN NATIONAL IDENTITY GAP

Attention keeps fixating on South Korean grievances against Japan centered on the history of annexation, colonialism, and cultural genocide from 1910 to 1945. There is much more to the national identity gap than these memories. Japanese and South Koreans discriminated against residents deemed from the other country. Public opinion on both sides had a low opinion of the other side. Rising economic ties from the 1960s were not matched by either cultural or political ties. Each of the dimensions of national identity sheds light on this anomalous situation for two states that are culturally closer than others in East Asia and share the United States as an ally and a series of foreign policy views. In particular, the distinctive nature of the vertical dimension identity gap was exacerbated by Japan's spike and

South Korean democratization in the 1980s. Instead of the post-Cold War leading to a rapid narrowing of the gap, it fluctuated over two decades accompanied by an intermittently narrowing tendency. This has been interpreted in various ways, but a sociological perspective on national identity places the gap in a different framework.

The vertical dimension in Japan is a major source of the national identity gap with South Korea. In the 1980s the potential was greatest for economic integration of the two states to be accompanied by dense social networks and shared values that could draw them closer. Yet, Japanese notions of homogeneity, discrimination against the Korean minority identified with South Korea as well as those seen as tied to North Korea, and other factors of vertical identity stood in the way. Indeed, even as “internationalism” drew attention as one of the most popular slogans, the weakness of international NGOs in Japan and of substantive progress toward this goal proved unfavorable for openness to South Koreans. Disparaging views of U.S. diversity and “multiculturalism” in general also had this negative effect. Aspiring to leadership in East Asia converting economic power into soft power and trust, the Japanese failed to understand that even as South Koreans surreptitiously evaded control on cultural imports to enjoy anime, television dramas, and other Japanese products, clannishness in Japan diminished any appeal that their country might achieve. With democratization in South Korea came intensified pursuit of modern values—internationalism in a truer sense, a women’s movement, study abroad, etc., for which Japan seemed to be a backwater. Japan’s internal image lost its remaining allure.

Democratization transformed South Korea’s vertical dimension in a manner not favorable to narrowing the gap with Japan. After all, the normalization of 1965 as well as subsequent breakthroughs to improve political ties had been viewed as the dictatorship’s moves against the will of the people. The rising clout of social movements and NGOs gave those suspicious of Japan a greater say in the political arena. Presidents on the right and the left pulled back from early initiatives to improve relations with Japan linked to national interests. Roh Moo-hyun’s frontal assault on the South Korean political order, symbolized by efforts to expose those who had collaborated with the Japanese occupiers, made a direct link between lingering injustice and improper handling of history with new implications for views of Japan. Conservatives rejected this, but even as they emphasized common national interests, claims to have shared values with Japan fell on deaf ears.

Behind Japan’s failure to close the gap was a social system steeped in *uchi-soto* and groupism rather than broad principles. Anti-communism was counterbalanced on the right by revisionism, neutralizing the affinity that could have gone to the one neighbor that might have partnered with Japan against communist threats. The quest for Asianism that many in Japan sought for half a century after it regained its independence naturally should have started with South Korea, but even normalization of diplomatic relations was delayed to 1965 and not followed even when Japan was most intent on regionalism in the 1990s. If Japan had really seen itself as part of the West, as it long claimed, or concentrated on shared values with the United States in striving to build an international community, then South Korea would have been viewed differently.

One part of the problem in Japanese-South Korean relations is the weakness of networks linking the two. As South Korea modernized rapidly, Japan's large corporations played a major role, but their inward-looking, paternalist environment was not conducive to network building. Similarly, South Korean *chaebol* were focused on state support at home not on networking abroad. University communities also have been inward-looking. South Korean universities were slow even to permit Japanese-language courses or majors centered on Japan. Japanese universities and think tanks did not prioritize Korean studies. Cultural elites have tended to favor progressive causes, compounded by Japanese scorn for a dictatorship until the late 1980s and South Korean restrictions on Japanese cultural imports until the 1998 opening in stages. The internationalization of culture and academia in the West is a sharp contrast with the realities in both of these protectionist countries.

The KORUS FTA and the TPP both challenge the vertical dimension of national identity. They are perceived as the latest manifestation of U.S.-led efforts since at least the 1980s to undermine the uniqueness of a system understood as a means to maintain a distinctive civilization. In both Japan and South Korea a linkage was made between the political national identity, economic national identity, and cultural national identity. The state's role in the economy was construed as vital to protecting the nation's culture. As the occupying power in 1945 in both Japan and South Korea, the United States brought an emphasis on democratic values, free markets, and cultural openness to the West. All of these objectives posed challenges to vested interests and established ways of thinking, and even two-thirds of a century later there continues to be a national identity backlash.

Japanese traditionally view villages and enterprises as communities (*kyodotai*, paternalism, etc.). U.S. efforts to break down barriers to outsiders, who are in pursuit of universal principles rather than hierarchical communities, appear threatening. Trade talks, financial globalization, and now the TPP are seen by many as mechanisms to undermine what makes Japan unique. In fact, vested interests on the government dole manipulate symbols of Japan's exceptionalism to protect their benefits. Yet, the state bureaucracies and the political system have been skewed to serve these interests. The result is tunnel vision, symbolic distractions, educational myopia without grounding in principles, and even paranoia toward the outside world. In-bred careerism within strong hierarchical organizations leaves many hesitant to show creativity, feeling powerless or apathetic.

One key to the wide Japanese-South Korean identity gap is the powerful hold of a narrow version of cultural national identity in each state. *Minjok* emerged in opposition to Japan, focused attention on Koreanness for which Japan's treatment of Zainichi Koreans was long the main transgression, and stood in the way of a civic identity open to shared values. Similarly, *Nihonjinron* treated the Zainichi as the main threat to purity in Japan, and it interfered with civic identity. Cultural opening from 1998 did not mean openness.

THE CHINESE-SOUTH KOREAN NATIONAL IDENTITY GAP

China and South Korea achieved the appearance of a minimal identity gap in the 1990s. China gave no hint that North Korea continued to be of identity significance. Ties to South Korea, beginning with normalization, seemed to be rooted in a rejection of any appeal to national identity, as South Korea's *nordpolitik* abandoned anti-communism and China's friendly neighborly relations abandoned communist ideology. History drew these countries together, each castigating Japan for its historical memories as they even joined in presenting their shared outlook in 1995. As late as 2003, they were both eager backers of regionalism, cooperating in the context of ASEAN+3. As Roh Moo-hyun took office distancing himself from the United States and Hu Jintao assumed China's presidency in an atmosphere of intensifying pursuit of regionalism, it appeared likely that the identity gap would further narrow. Unexpectedly, the gap widened abruptly over the next years.

A South Korean writer in a Chinese journal in 2010 drew lessons from bilateral relations since normalization, including from the current conflicts between the public in the two countries that have aroused anti-Chinese and anti-South Korean emotions. On the Chinese side, the writer notes that older persons think of North Korea (*Chaoxian*) when they are asked about South Korea (*Hanguo*), while younger persons are influenced by the "Korean wave" (*Hanryu*). Positive impressions of this cultural influx reportedly mix with images of South Koreans as patriotic and extremely devoted to traditional culture. Saying that Chinese of late have expressed old hegemonic illusions, the author argues that some responsibility is on their shoulders. Yet, the bulk of attention centers on the reasons for anti-Chinese feelings among South Koreans: a national superiority complex born through rapid economic growth; insufficient knowledge of China, assuming that its backwardness endures and warrants an arrogant attitude; and an effort to boost national pride displacing China's centrality in the history of East Asian culture and politics. Insisting that one side alone cannot resolve these cultural tensions, the author appeals to politicians, academics, and the public at large to strive to overcome them. Yet, this message, however bold in the context of Chinese censorship, falls short of explaining the national identity contexts.³⁵

Much is written in China on extreme nationalism in South Korea and the resulting superiority complex. This is seen as having deep historical reasons and as increasingly threatening Sino-South Korean relations. It is especially manifest in views of history.³⁶ Yet, China's recent glorification of premodern Sinocentrism is the driving force there.³⁷

Chinese sources do little to conceal that a major part of the problem of distrust is Lee Myung-bak's foreign policy. Strengthening U.S. relations, developing a "mature" relationship with Japan, and arousing dissatisfaction in North Korea, Lee is abandoning close cooperation with China in favor of a subordinate role with the United States. Prior to assuming the presidency, Lee openly charged that China is distorting history and supported the renaming of Seoul in characters from "*Hancheng*" to "*Shouer*," earning him a record of arousing Chinese nationalist

emotions. Having drawn these conclusions, one article advises that both sides should respect each other's concerns with a sincere attitude cognizant of the big picture and long-term strategy for relations in the region.³⁸

Another Chinese source warns that South Korean thinking is not strategic. Mixing Roh Moo-hyun's overreaching in trying to make his country the "balancer," as if this was the same as striving to give it leading regional influence, and Lee's erroneous policies toward the United States and North Korea, it stresses the limits of South Korean power in a sensitive region where competition is increasingly intensifying.³⁹ Moreover, it warns of the delusion of a new age in Japanese-South Korean relations given the grassroots split over history and territory. This is the real national identity issue that Lee is forgetting as he ignores the importance of Sino-South Korean relations for unification of the peninsula.

Chinese sources assume a stark dichotomy between reconciliation with North Korea that allows it to exist while dropping pressure on it and Cold War, anti-communist mentality aimed at regime change. Nothing that North Korea says or does is considered in this stark choice, which Lee Myung-bak is failing. By not accepting China's strategy for resuming the Six-Party Talks, Lee is proving fidelity to "universal values" with ramifications also for his outlook on China. North Korea is a surrogate for China's vertical dimension of national identity, and refusal to succumb to its aggression means disrespect to China.⁴⁰ This is not spelled out in so many words, but it is the essence of numerous arguments.

A key to the Sino-South Korean gap is the assertiveness about culture in China since 2008. In June 2010 Li Changchun called for unifying the cultural heritage, and in October 2011 the plenary session of the Communist Party Central Committee pressed for a new plan on cultural security. This focus on cultural conflict sets the background for a narrower approach to South Korea, whose distinct culture is questioned most seriously. To the extent that the unity of ethnic groups, patriotism, and the threat of universal values are foremost in Chinese thinking about culture, gaps are prone to widen with other states.

PUBLIC OPINION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY GAPS

A joint survey of China, Japan, and South Korea in October 2011 provides timely information on mutual images with comparisons to survey results from a year earlier. The most striking finding for the Japanese-South Korean relationship is that twice as many in Korea (64%) consider relations to be bad and nearly four times as many (77%) say that they do not trust Japan. Optimism does not prevail, but neither does pessimism: 35% of Japanese and 30% of Koreans expect relations to improve, while 5% of Japanese and 14% of Koreans see them getting worse. Historical memory and the territorial dispute are foremost in Korean minds. Interest in a bilateral trade agreement is far less in Korea than in Japan. Interest in the other country's culture is far lower in Korea than in Japan. These differences suggest a narrower, more intense national identity focus on the Korean side without any appreciable narrowing of the gap that has existed with Japan.

Sino-South Korea relations are considered good by 51% of Chinese and 55% of South Koreans. Whereas 54% of Chinese indicate that they can trust the South as many as 77% of South Koreans answered that they cannot trust China. This figure is as high as the figure for not trusting Japan.⁴¹ Given levels of distrust of China equal to those of Japanese and levels of liking the United States higher than in Japan, it may not come as a surprise that Koreans even more than Japanese think that South-Korean-Japanese defense cooperation should be strengthened.⁴² This anomaly is one sign that the identity gap can be reduced further if efforts are made to downplay the main symbols of bilateral distrust.

A pair of Chinese books delves further into the mutual images of South Koreans and Chinese. Drawing on original survey research, they find strong awareness of narrow nationalist emotions on the other side. Especially in the book on Korean perceptions, they find that rival interpretations of culture are at the core of deep mistrust.⁴³ International relations matter, but cultural divisions with history in the forefront and symbols redolent with historical meaning often lay the groundwork for suspicions that spill over.

CONCLUSION

What drives national identity gaps? One explanation is that democratization and universal values draw some countries closer and open gaps with others. Yet, South Korea did not narrow its gap with Japan as a result of democratization in the second half of the 1980s nor did China's June 1989 brutal repression of those demanding universal values slow South Korea's pursuit of normalization. A second explanation is that modernization and economic integration narrow national identity gaps. As South Korea's "economic miracle" reached its peak in the 1980s, the gap with highly modernized Japan, which was the principal economic partner in the region, should have narrowed. Similarly, as China's "economic miracle" accelerated in the 1990s and 2000s with ever closer ties to Japan and South Korea, the gaps should have narrowed, but they did not. A related explanation is that acceptance of a shared goal for establishing regionalism, such as occurred with joint membership in ASEAN+3 and a decade later with the formation of the trilateral forum of these three countries, should have propelled identity gap narrowing. On the contrary, national identity gaps in 2012 are much wider than they were in recent decades with the exception of the Japan-South Korea gap, which keeps fluctuating with no breakthrough.

On both the left and the right there is nervousness about succumbing to U.S. aims at convergence, losing not only balance that would come with an East Asian community but also critical pillars that hold up their own national community. They have mostly lost confidence in their own political national identity, disturbed by paralysis in Japan and by one president after another losing popularity in South Korea. Youth are alienated. People are insecure. The solution is sought in rediscovering some national essence that has been lost, by finding some fusion of politics and culture that centers on state identity.

The Sino-Japanese gap is the most prominent national identity gap in East Asia. It has a prominent historical component, but it spreads across all dimensions. On vertical or cultural identity, this gap is much greater than those between Japan and South Korea and even China and South Korea. Moments of political reconciliation since the 1990s have failed to stop this gap from widening, and there is little reason to expect narrowing ahead.

With both the Sino-U.S. gap and Sino-Japanese gaps widening, South Korea faces the challenge of clarifying its own national identity and how that relates to China. Much will depend on North Korea and Sino-North Korean relations. The impact of economic integration with China, well beyond the levels for Japan and the United States, will be a factor. Yet, as China tightens control over “cultural entertainment” that popularized the “Korean wave” and reinforces the authoritarian nature of its system, South Korean public opinion is likely to continue the pattern of recent years in perceiving a wider identity gap.

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**Diverging Trajectories of Trust
in Northeast Asia:
South Korea's Security Relations
with Japan and China**

LEIF-ERIC EASLEY

Most studies of contemporary Northeast Asian security focus on the U.S. interaction with China, Japan or South Korea and are concerned with aspects of national power.¹ The present chapter takes a more intra-regional and sociological approach, examining trends in mutual trust within Beijing and Tokyo's security relations with Seoul.² Focusing on ROK-China and ROK-Japan relations has advantages in addition to covering new ground.³ These relationships present interesting points of comparison as they address similar security environments in different ways.

In the universe of bilateral relations, Seoul-Beijing and Seoul-Tokyo ties could be understood as middling cases for mutual trust (in contrast to the high trust relations of the U.S.-ROK and U.S.-Japan alliances, the low level of mutual trust between Japan and China, and the near zero trust that South Korea and the United States have with North Korea).⁴ However, while mutual trust in ROK-China and ROK-Japan relations might be categorized as "moderate," the willingness of these governments to rely on each other on matters of national security exhibits different trajectories in recent years. Trust between Seoul and Beijing has decreased, whereas some increase in mutual trust is apparent between Seoul and Tokyo. That variation is somewhat puzzling given the widely observed post-Cold War trends of closer ROK-China relations and often strained ROK-Japan relations.⁵

The space of a chapter is not sufficient for tracing year-on-year variation in mutual trust in two bilateral relationships since the end of the Cold War. The present goal is to account for different levels of trust in ROK-China and ROK-Japan relations in 2006 and 2010. Without time to watch the entire movie of bilateral relations, these two snapshots are examined as crisis points during which levels of trust were tested and, hence, readily observable. The 2010 Cheonan and Yeonpyeong incidents shone a spotlight on the extent to which policymakers believe other governments can be counted on for security cooperation. A diplomatic crisis in 2005-2006 also tested governments' willingness to work together on security matters. However, unlike the 2010 military action, the mid-decade crisis involved historical controversies such as that surrounding Yasukuni Shrine.⁶

Conflicting nationalisms, wrapped up with contested history and territory, are often discussed in relation to distrust in Northeast Asia.⁷ Analyses of military cooperation and conflict tend to identify trust as important (and a lack of trust as problematic), but do not operationalize or measure trust and explain its variation. Meanwhile, there is growing interest in ideational approaches for understanding the international relations of East Asia, calling for more cross-national studies and systematic analysis of competing causal factors. Two new volumes cover identity issues in unprecedented depth from various regional perspectives.⁸ Korean scholars, long focused on historical and territorial disputes,⁹ are investigating other factors of distrust, including racial prejudice.¹⁰ Public opinion research in Northeast Asia is becoming increasingly sophisticated with the availability of more reliable cross-national and cross-temporal polls.¹¹

The present chapter, concerned as it is with the mutual trust between governments, focuses on the perceptions of foreign policy elites (rather than media images or public opinion). Explaining the level of trust within ROK-China and ROK-Japan

security relations in 2010 should be a difficult test for an identity explanation since the historical controversies so prevalent in 2005 were largely overtaken by hard security issues such as China's rapid military rise, North Korea's 2006 and 2009 nuclear tests, in addition to missile tests, and finally the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong incidents of 2010. What is more, the 2000s witnessed impressive military modernization by China and expansion in East Asian trade, allowing for variation in three different competing explanations based on power balance, economic interdependence, and public opinion related to historical antagonisms.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, changing levels of mutual trust in ROK-China and ROK-Japan relations are assessed, in particular by interrogating the military doctrines of the three countries in 2006 and 2010. Then, competing explanations drawn from international relations theory are tested and shown inadequate for explaining variations in ROK-China and ROK-Japan mutual trust. Next, a new explanation for changes in mutual trust is presented, considering the sociology of inter-state comparisons: in particular, how elite perceptions of the other country's national identity change over time. Identity perceptions are made up of beliefs about national values (how good are the other country's internal governance, economic development, and social norms?) and international roles (how positive are the other country's contributions to external peace, prosperity, and stability?). By understanding how perceptions of identity difference change over time, it is possible to explain variation in how governments are willing to depend on each other for national security. The chapter concludes with implications for foreign policy and regional security, and suggestions for future research.

CHANGING LEVELS OF MUTUAL TRUST

Explaining variation in the level of trust between national governments is of interest because trust is a determining factor for meaningful and sustained security cooperation.¹² On the one hand, trust lowers transaction costs and helps actors manage risk by obviating the need for costly enforcement mechanisms. Trust may also serve as a shock absorber, providing stability for a relationship and making it more robust for weathering crises.¹³ With trust, two governments may be able to encapsulate and deal with a problem without it derailing other aspects of the relationship.

On the other hand, a lack of trust involves seeing the behavior of the other according to worst-case assumptions, leading to unrealized cooperation, and worse, to security dilemma dynamics, hedging behavior and arms races. With low trust, problems of miscommunication and miscalculation are more frequent and serious, making precipitation and escalation of a crisis more likely. Trust may thus tip the balance between war and peace, isolation vs. engagement, or regional division vs. integration. Distrust among powers in Asia is arguably the main obstacle to building a regional security architecture, and this lack of mutual confidence appears to be wrapped up with issues of national identity.¹⁴

Trust can be approached in many ways depending on the research question at hand.¹⁵ For the purposes of this research on bilateral security relations, mutual trust is operationalized as the shared willingness of two states to assume the risks of reliance on matters of national security, based on expectations that both sides will fulfill their obligations. Data on willingness for security reliance draws primarily on official doctrine regarding the provision of military capabilities and defense mechanisms and its application in various contingencies.

Data on expectations about the bilateral security relationship can be drawn from policymaker assessments concerning whether security commitments will be met and the probability of military conflict. To accurately trace variation in mutual trust over time, one would code the entire range of willingness and expectations indicators and perform content analysis on all available treaties and amendments, bilateral agreements, joint statements, minutes from security consultation meetings, government reports, national security strategies, budgetary allocations, internal government memos, policy reviews, intelligence assessments, and policymaker pronouncements. It would also be helpful to review developments for cooperation and conflict in bilateral security relations.¹⁶

In the interest of space, this chapter assesses change in mutual trust by comparing the defense white papers of each country in 2006 and 2010. Defense white papers should be a reliable source of policymakers' willingness and expectations to rely on other governments on matters of national security for several reasons. First, they are fairly comprehensive about a nation's security environment, what military capabilities a nation maintains and plans to develop and for what contingencies, and how a nation assesses the capability and intentions of other states. Second, they are not the product solely of a nation's defense establishment. Whereas some documents may only represent a particular view within part of the government (the administration, the legislature, the diplomatic bureaucracy, the military or intelligence services), defense white papers tend to be circulated for approval by the various departments that deal with national security and foreign policy. Finally, defense white papers tend to be regularly updated, and hence should be responsive to developments in bilateral relations.

MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND CHINA

The leaderships in Seoul and Beijing continuously stress the importance of their bilateral cooperation in diplomatic meetings.¹⁷ However, some decrease is observable in the level of willing reliance and shared expectations for the security relationship by comparing the defense white papers of 2006 and 2010. There is a certain asymmetry when viewing the white papers of the ROK and PRC side-by-side, as the South Korean documents devote more space to China than the Chinese documents devote to Korea. This is not a measurement problem for trust, however, because the present exercise is not about contrasting the Korean and Chinese documents. At issue is change in mutual trust, so the task at hand involves comparing the documents of both sides in 2006 and 2010.

The 2006 Chinese defense white paper reports that, "China has set up bilateral consultation mechanisms on the law of the sea with the Republic of Korea."¹⁸ It, thus,

expresses willingness to work with Seoul on maritime security and safety. Toward this end, the document cites mutual naval visits, and shares the expectation that Beijing and Seoul will expand cooperation on non-traditional security issues, including via police exchanges focused on combating transnational crime.

Meanwhile, the ROK defense white paper notes China's impressive economic growth and more active diplomacy. It devotes an entire section to profiling China's military and reviewing ROK-China relations, while also expressing concern about possible U.S.-China strategic competition. However, the document stresses that South Korea's military relations with China are "steadily developing" and are very important for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue and for stability and peace in Northeast Asia.¹⁹ Beyond expecting continued defense-related communication between Seoul and Beijing, the South Korean white paper outlines willingness for regular and institutionalized exchanges, working and high-level defense meetings, and mutual visits of navy vessels and aircraft with China.

In sum, the mutual willingness and shared expectations of the South Korean and Chinese governments to rely on each other on matters of national security were at a moderate level in 2006. Moderate levels of mutual trust are characterized by defense exchanges and information sharing as well as reassurances that the relationship will be peaceful, with expectations for expanded cooperation in the future.

The mutual trust picture looked quite different for Seoul and Beijing in 2010. The 2010 Chinese defense white paper mentioned signing a new "Frontier Defense Cooperation Agreement" with North Korea, but did not feature defense exchanges with the ROK. In Chapter 10 on "Arms Control and Disarmament," it does not stress cooperation with Seoul but instead expresses willingness to serve as an honest broker between North and South Korea, such that China responsibly stands on the side of peace and stability:

China advocates resolving the nuclear issue in the Korean Peninsula peacefully through dialogues and consultations, endeavoring to balance common concerns through holding six-party talks in order to realize the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and maintain peace stability of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. China, always considering the whole situation in the long run, painstakingly urges related countries to have more contacts and dialogues in order to create conditions for resuming six-party talks as early as possible.²⁰

This language does not show any willingness for a security partnership with South Korea. And while the South Korean defense white paper of 2010 touts defense exchanges as part of a ROK-China "strategic cooperative partnership," it devotes much more attention to modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Beijing's support of North Korea.²¹ The level of mutual trust may not have declined to a low level (which would entail little to no willingness for any security cooperation, even defense exchanges). However, comparing the two sets of defense white papers, the evidence suggests that the trajectory of mutual trust between Seoul and Beijing was negative between 2006 and 2010.

MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN

In contrast, the level of mutual trust between Seoul and Tokyo, assessed via the defense white papers of 2006 and 2010, showed improvement. Interestingly, the level of mutual trust in ROK-Japan relations appears to have crossed that of ROK-China relations as Seoul's mutual trust with Tokyo was less than that with Beijing in 2006, with the situation reversed by 2010. It must be said, however, that ROK-Japan relations were improving from a low baseline, given bilateral strains at mid-decade.²²

The Japanese defense white paper of 2006 focuses on North Korea's nuclear and missile threats to Japan, and on U.S.-ROK cooperation, with virtually no mention of Japan-ROK cooperation, except for several allusions to "frank talks" and a sentence stating that it is important for Japan and the ROK "to establish a basis for cooperation and to coordinate more effectively."²³ As is pro forma for Japanese defense white papers, the report mentions a territorial dispute with South Korea (asserting that "Takehima is an integral part of Japanese territory") and notes official protests by each side over the other's oceanographic surveys in waters claimed as an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

For its part, the ROK defense white paper of 2006 speculated that developments in Japan's defense posture and active strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance may elicit a competitive response from China and Russia. The document stated that Japan's positions on historical issues, territory, and EEZs are "detrimental to the improvement of peace in Northeast Asia." That is fairly strong language indicative of trust problems, but the level of mutual trust could still be described as on the low end of moderate, as the Korean document stresses that Japan and South Korea are important neighbors between whom bilateral defense exchanges should be increased.²⁴

By 2010, the trust indicators of willingness and expectations for the ROK-Japan bilateral security relationship appear noticeably improved. The 2010 Japanese defense white paper shows detailed concern for South Korea's national security and states that South Korea is one of the countries that has maintained "the closest relations with Japan in economic, cultural and other areas" and that South Korea is "extremely vital to Japan from a geopolitical perspective."²⁵ It goes on to say that Japan and the ROK share "fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and capitalist economies" and "share many strategic interests as allies of the United States."²⁶ The report claims that the two countries "collaborate closely" on security issues, have successes in promoting "mutual understanding and trust," and are expanding defense exchanges and areas of functional cooperation including maritime security. There is then an entire section devoted to Japan's efforts to support the ROK after the sinking of the Cheonan.²⁷

Impressively, the 2010 South Korean defense white paper indirectly refers to Japan as a military ally: "Solidifying security ties with major Asia-Pacific alliances, the ROK, Japan, Australia, and the United States have been trying to establish a more effective multilateral security system within the region based on alliances."²⁸ The report goes on to devote an entire section to "Exchange and Cooperation with Japan" focused on working together to "resolve the North Korean nuclear issue

and to ensure regional security and peace.”²⁹ The document explicitly mentions ROK-Japan-U.S. trilateral cooperation, Korea-Japan maritime search and rescue exercises, and even expanding combined training of military forces.

The level of mutual trust between Seoul and Tokyo would still be coded as “moderate” (certainly not yet at the level of full-fledged military allies), but a positive trajectory for trust is apparent in comparisons of the 2006 and 2010 defense documents. Mutual trust can only be as high as the least common denominator of a dyad’s willingness and expectation for security cooperation, and it is worth noting that South Koreans demonstrated slightly less willingness than Japanese. Japanese strategists, who used to be resistant to a role for the U.S.-Japan alliance and Japanese security policy beyond Japan, are now speaking of providing “public goods” relevant to regional security in cooperation with South Korea.³⁰ The next generation of strategic thinkers in Japan even write about Japan-ROK contingency planning for securing North Korean nuclear weapons.³¹ While there is increasing realization among policymakers in both Tokyo and Seoul that Japan and South Korea’s futures are intertwined,³² Japanese recognition of South Korea’s security role and willingness to engage in defense reliance with Seoul appears slightly greater than that in Seoul. Hence, the level of mutual trust, while improved relative to 2006, is still not as high as it could be.

COMPETING EXPLANATIONS FOR MUTUAL TRUST AND SECURITY RELATIONS

How can we explain these different trajectories for mutual trust between 2006 and 2010—decreasing in ROK-China relations and increasing in ROK-Japan relations? This section considers three competing explanations drawn from international relations theory. As existing explanations are unable to account for the above variation, a new explanation based on perceptions of identity is elaborated in the subsequent section. That explanation suggests that when power balance, economic interdependence, and public opinion over historical antagonisms affect mutual trust, they do so via perceptions of identity.

A balance of power explanation would expect that – given three states A, B and C – if the power of C is significantly increasing, states A and B will feel threatened and trust C less and less. The rise of State C will drive states A and B together, helping trust to increase between A and B. Over the past two decades, China’s material power has been growing substantially relative to that of Japan and South Korea.³³ A power balance explanation would thus predict that Seoul and Beijing should have decreasing mutual confidence and Seoul and Tokyo should have more, as South Korea and Japan cooperate to balance China.³⁴

Defense white papers in 2006 and 2010 indicate such trajectories for trust. No doubt changes in material capabilities matter, but the problem for a balance of power explanation is timing. China has been rising for some time, so why did ROK-China trust not go down and ROK-Japan trust not increase earlier, and why do we not observe active balancing behavior as realists would expect?³⁵ One realist

defense is that South Korea and Japan do not collectively balance China because each has the United States as an ally. But this is not a convincing explanation because Washington actively encourages trust and cooperation between South Korea and Japan, and leaders in both states remain concerned about the capacity and commitment of the United States in Asia.³⁶ Another realist defense is the infamous “time lag” explanation, but if a balance of power explanation cannot predict (e.g. it has to wait forever to be proven correct) the timing of change, then it is not the most useful explanation.

Another explanation predicts that if the relative economic interdependence of states B and C is going up while that between A and B is going down, then mutual trust between B and C should increase as that of A and B decreases. Related to China’s economic rise, ROK-China economic interdependence has been increasing, but ROK-Japan interdependence, while still high, is becoming relatively less so.³⁷ An interdependence explanation would, thus, predict that ROK-China trust should be going up and ROK-Japan trust going down. However, the trajectories in mutual trust observed above are in fact the opposite.

Interdependence theorists might offer their own “time lag” defense by arguing there is a disconnect between economic and political actors, i.e., politicians may get caught up with issues of ideology or diplomacy, but eventually their thinking will conform to those of domestic political interest groups good at making money. The problem with this argument is that it is possible to make money (hot economics) despite low trust between governments (cold politics).³⁸ Meanwhile, there is no guarantee that political leaders will take their cues from the business lobby. Trade relations are in many ways substitutable, whereas hard security issues often cannot be pushed aside by profit potential. Interdependence theorists might counter that with greater interaction, there are bound to be some trade and social frictions, and geopolitical crises may occasionally present overpowering shocks. Observations of trends in mutual trust support such contentions, but then we are left wanting a theory that incorporates such frictions and shocks that an interdependence explanation considers exogenous.

A third explanation attributes the lack of trust between states to negative public opinion associated with incomplete historical reconciliation. Historical memories are very powerful in the popular consciousness as they are derived from past wars and different development paths that people use to understand the varying fortunes of states in the international system. If two countries, B and C, have similar historical grievances against country A, historical flare-ups can be expected to lower the level of trust with A, and possibly result in solidarity between B and C. South Korea and China both hold historical grievances against Japan, and public opinion polls regularly show negative opinions of Japan in both countries.³⁹

A public opinion explanation would, thus, predict increasing ROK-China trust and decreasing trust between South Korea and Japan. Yet, despite historical flare-ups over the wartime sexually exploited “comfort women,” Yasukuni Shrine, and history textbooks with conflicting territorial claims, the level of trust between

Seoul and Tokyo was observed to improve between 2006 and 2010. This is not to say that historical antagonisms do not matter – they almost certainly do – but the trust exhibited by governments in bilateral security relations may not closely track public opinion. Public opinion can, of course, affect elite perceptions, but policymakers are just as likely to use historical issues for instrumental purposes or otherwise attempt to shape public opinion.

The transmission belt for effects on and from public opinion tends to be the media. Media coverage can be important in influencing the identity perceptions discussed below, but identity perceptions are “sticky” or less volatile than the headlines. As far as using the intensity of historical antagonisms to explain variation in mutual trust, the level of trust between governments appears not to be driven by public opinion. I argue below that policymakers’ assessments about another country’s reliability on matters of security depend on deeply-held beliefs about the other’s national identity, specifically concerning national values and international roles.

PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY EXPLAIN TRAJECTORIES OF TRUST

Trends in power, economic interdependence, and public opinion are all relevant to mutual trust, but none of these variables offers sufficient explanation for the different trajectories of trust in ROK-China and ROK-Japan relations. To the extent that these factors affect the level of mutual trust, their causal force is mediated through changes in elite perceptions of national identity, according to the explanation below. In other words, change in identity perceptions is a necessary and sufficient condition for change in mutual trust. The greater difference elites perceive between two countries’ national identities, the less trust; while the less difference elites perceive between the two national identities, the more trust relevant for security cooperation we expect to observe.

This section asks in what ways the decision-making elite in one state differentiates the national identity of another state in areas germane to foreign policy. Policymakers in States A and B compare national identities in terms of international roles and national values and perceive identity difference as a result. This perceived identity difference is the distance between how policymakers see the international role and national values of their country versus those of another. It exists because of a sociological process in which policy elites engage, where in-group/out-group comparisons are made for purposes of in-group pride, positive distinctiveness, legitimacy, and sense of self-purpose in an uncertain international environment.⁴⁰

How elites in each country see the national identity of relevant other states is wrapped up with views of the other country’s international role.⁴¹ The other major dimension considered in perceived identity difference involves what elites in one nation think about the domestic political values of the other country (concerning human rights, type of governance/institutions, cultural sophistication, etc.). Perceived identity difference is measured by identifying the main differences raised by national leaders and policymakers in their domestic debates about the

other country.⁴² Observations of policymakers drawing contrasts between the international roles and national values of their country and those of the other are drawn from: public statements to domestic audiences, including opinions expressed in op-eds, press briefings and media interviews (in English, Japanese, Chinese and Korean), and private statements by policymakers in interviews with the author or revealed indirectly and corroborated by multiple interviews.

PERCEIVED IDENTITY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND CHINA⁴³

Perceptions of identity difference by policy elites in Seoul and Beijing were not negligible in 2006. On the one hand, the perceived gap between the international roles and national values of the two were greater than the low perceptions of difference between the United States and Britain or even between the United States and Japan. On the other hand, ROK-China mutual perceptions were clearly better (closer) than the high perceptions of difference between the United States and North Korea or the United States and Pakistan. On a relative scale, perceived identity difference between Seoul and Beijing was within a moderate range and had benefited from a rapidly expanding relationship since their normalization in 1992.

Interviews with Chinese policymakers in 2006 about how their perceptions of South Korea had evolved since normalization revealed two prominent themes. Regarding South Korea's international role, Seoul was no longer seen as a pawn of the United States, but was increasingly respected as a pragmatic international actor in its own right. Regarding national values, South Korea was seen as a success story for its "Asian values." Confucian hierarchy, emphasis on education, and strong meritocratic leadership were seen by Chinese to have achieved rapid economic development in South Korea.

Views of South Korean elites about China were also moderately positive in 2006, especially compared to Cold War perceptions, when South Korean elites perceived China's international role as negative (an enemy during the Korean War, prolonging division of the peninsula). South Korean perceptions of Chinese national values were also negative, as anti-communism was itself an ideology in Seoul. In the early 2000s, however, those views gave way to at least moderately positive identity perceptions. Perceptions of China's international role became dominated by South Korean hopes that Beijing would be constructive in Seoul's efforts to engage, transform, and, ultimately, reunify with North Korea. Also, Chinese national values were no longer broadly derided as communist, backward, or underdeveloped. Instead, China's rich historical traditions were increasingly recognized by South Korean policymakers. While ROK-China reconciliation remained incomplete, Seoul's historical tensions with Beijing were considered to be of lower intensity than those with Tokyo.⁴⁴ There was even broad recognition among Korean elites that living with Chinese nationalism is somewhat inevitable as Beijing faces challenges unifying such a large and diverse polity.⁴⁵

Perceived identity difference was thus on the low end of moderate, in terms of how policymakers in Seoul and Beijing saw each other's national values and international

roles. The positive gains for identity perceptions drove increasing mutual trust after the end of the Cold War. But ROK-China perceptions of identity difference widened, comparing views on international roles and national values in 2010 to those of 2006.⁴⁶

In 2010, author interviews with Chinese policymakers revealed what might be described as annoyance with South Korea's international role. It was seen as demanding disproportionate recognition from and showing inadequate deference to its much larger neighbor. Analysts considered the peninsula potentially volatile – and not just because of Pyongyang – such that the situation must be controlled and stability maintained.⁴⁷ In the view of some, South Korea's problem is that it “blindly follows Washington's policy” and expects too much of China given its limited influence on North Korea.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, South Korean national values were also viewed more negatively. Some Chinese interviewees lamented that South Korea had lost its moral focus on economic growth and had instead become polarized over issues of inequality and redistribution.⁴⁹ Some Chinese observers criticized South Korean politics as nationalistic and emotional, while others claimed that Koreans tend to excessively talk up Chinese nationalism.⁵⁰ Yet, some Chinese nationalists, long proponents of resisting Americanization, also started to argue that China needs cultural security from *hallyu*, the pop-culture wave from South Korea.⁵¹

South Korean perceptions of Chinese identity also markedly worsened by 2010. China's Northeastern History Project was very controversial in Korea and raised negative perceptions of Beijing.⁵² What is more, the offense that officials (not just the public) expressed toward China aggravated negative perceptions that Chinese held about South Korea.⁵³

South Korean hopes for China's positive international role were dashed during this period. As recently as 2006, many saw the road to Pyongyang as going through Beijing, but China's betrayal of expectations for evenhanded diplomacy between North and South Korea, and its perceived insensitive handling of the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong incidents changed those perceptions. In 2010, South Koreans saw less benevolence and more brazen self-interest in China's international role. Perceptions of identity difference also widened with more negative views about Chinese national values. Beijing's heavy-handed response to internal political-economic challenges after the 2008-09 global financial crisis drew the attention of South Koreans to the lack of democracy and human rights in China.⁵⁴ Beijing's policy on North Korean refugees, with occasional repatriation of people to suffer harsh punishment by Pyongyang, also widened the perceived gap on human rights with China.⁵⁵

These changes in perceived identity difference predict a negative trajectory for mutual trust between Seoul and Beijing. By comparing the two countries' defense white papers in 2006 and 2010, precisely such a reduction in trust was observed. A more lengthy analysis would process-trace (with a detailed narrative, year-by-year) how policymakers' increasing perception of difference between South Korean and Chinese international roles and values drove down mutual willingness and shared expectations for security cooperation in the bilateral relationship. The causal chain linking identity perceptions to trust beliefs is summarized below.

	International Role	National Values
Beijing's view of South Korea	Over-reaching for a country of its size, failing to show appropriate deference	From shared focus on economic development to divergent democracy
Seoul's view of China	From hopes for a benevolent international role to brazen self-interest	From single-minded economic development to calculated repression

Lower willingness in Beijing to rely on Seoul for cooperative management of regional security was based on Chinese perceptions of South Korea as impetuous and not showing due deference to Chinese interests for stability on the Korean peninsula. The Lee Myung-bak administration projected a different international role for the ROK (a “Global Korea” that demands reciprocity in dealings with the North), an identity that Chinese policymakers saw as putting principle over pragmatism (i.e., stability) in a way that could not be trusted. Meanwhile, lower Chinese expectations for the bilateral security relationship followed from a Chinese perception of value divergence with South Korea. From a Chinese point of view, Seoul transgressed away from an East Asian development model prioritizing economics over politics. As a result, South Korean identity politics were seen as injecting uncertainty into diplomacy, lowering Chinese expectations of future security ties.

Similarly, more negative perceptions of Chinese identity among South Korean policymakers pushed down ROK-China mutual trust. Lower willingness in Seoul to rely on Beijing for dealing with North Korea was based on South Korean perceptions of China's international role becoming dominated by parochial interests. Such negative perceptions built up over time, after China's failure to bring North Korea back to the Six-Party Talks, its weak response to North Korea's second nuclear test in 2009, its unhelpful stance after the Cheonan sinking, and its diplomatic shielding of Pyongyang after the Yeonpyeong shelling. On the dimension of national values, South Koreans questioned whether an undemocratic China could be a trustworthy partner, as suspicions rose over its economic involvement in North Korea and resentment grew over its support of the regime in Pyongyang.

The decline in mutual trust between Seoul and Beijing from 2006 to 2010 is, thus, explained by prior and proportional change in perceived identity difference. The next section investigates whether changing identity perceptions between Seoul and Tokyo can explain the modest increase in mutual trust between South Korea and Japan.

PERCEIVED IDENTITY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN⁵⁶

Perceptions of identity difference between policy elites in Seoul and Tokyo were within a moderate range in 2006. Japan and the ROK experienced comparable paths of rapid economic development, were on the same side of the Cold War, and continue to share the United States as their main ally. However, relations between Seoul and Tokyo did not exhibit the sustained improvement that ROK-China relations demonstrated after the Cold War. Some South Korean policy elites had a complex regarding Japan because of its colonial past, and many policy elites in Tokyo were slow to recognize Seoul on equal footing. For these reasons, an outsider might have seen more similarities between South Korean and Japanese national identities in 2006 than Koreans and Japanese chose to see in themselves.

Interviews with Japanese policymakers about their perceptions of South Korea in 2006 revealed they were somewhat apathetic toward Korean democracy. While Japanese were not fond of the dictatorial leaders of Korea's past, they were dismayed by the waves of anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea's liberated civil society. Some policymakers viewed South Korea as well behind Japan in terms of development, and preoccupied with history as a way to deflect attention from Korean failings. Japanese strategists did not speak much of a constructive international role for South Korea; in their view, Seoul was almost completely focused on the peninsula and actions that might affect its relations with North Korea.

Likewise, South Korean policymakers' perceptions about Japan were somewhat ambivalent in 2006. Modern Korean nationalism developed in opposition to Japanese imperialism and retains a focus on a perceived lack of Japanese atonement for past misdeeds.⁵⁷ The issue of distorted Japanese textbooks (even if such texts are not widely used in Japan) influences perceptions of Japanese identity.⁵⁸ Views of Japanese national values were also darkened by stories about the poor treatment of Zainichi Koreans in Japan, attributed to the Japanese obsession with ethnic purity. Despite Japan's strongly positive economic development in the post-war era, many elites saw its international role through the lens of historical imperialism, viewing Japanese international trade and financial coordination, investment and aid as softer tools of Japanese expansionism. By 2006, such concerns began to wane as Japan's economic growth had leveled off for years, but policymakers in Seoul still did not welcome an international role for Japan's Self-Defense Forces.

Compared to the ROK-China case, perceptions of identity difference between Seoul and Tokyo were on the more negative end of the moderate range. Improvement in ROK-Japan identity perceptions between 2006 and 2010 followed positive developments in how policymakers on both sides perceived each other's international roles and national values.

Author interviews with Japanese policymakers in 2009-2010 revealed notable improvement in views of South Korea's place on the global stage. Seoul was seen as an important international economic player, not just because of the leading market

share of several South Korean companies, but also because of Seoul's productive involvement in various policy fora including the G-20. Japanese strategists now recognized South Korea's "robust involvement in the international arena" involving security issues beyond the peninsula.⁵⁹ Rather than consider South Korea "catching-up," Japanese policymakers began to talk about how Japan should not be left behind, in view of positive developments for Korean trade such as the KORUS FTA, and deeper security cooperation in the U.S.-ROK alliance. South Korean national values were also viewed more positively in Tokyo. The flow of people and cultural products between Japan and South Korea had grown substantially in the 2000s, and Japanese admired the popularity of *hallyu* and the technological competitiveness of South Korean companies. Frustrated with deadlock in their own political system, some Japanese policymakers spoke of South Korea's dynamic democracy in a more positive light.

South Korean perceptions of Japanese identity also showed improvement by 2010. Resentment over Japan's past actions were mitigated by Japanese efforts to show respect for historical sensitivities.⁶⁰ Growing Korean confidence was also a large part of this change. Japan's economic stagnation and political deadlock made clear that Japan is not invincible,⁶¹ just as confidence was increasing in Seoul about South Korea's place in the world.⁶² From a position of greater national confidence, South Korean policymakers were more likely to see Japanese politics (and identity) as coping with internal challenges rather than being hijacked by right-wing revisionists.⁶³ Officials increasingly saw Japan's regional security role as positive and important, so much so that some policymakers expressed concern when relations between Tokyo and Washington appeared strained over basing issues in 2009-2010, because they believe the U.S.-Japan alliance helps stabilize East Asia.

Changes in leadership in Tokyo and Seoul had much to do with these improving perceptions.⁶⁴ Members of the Lee Myung-bak administration came to office in 2008 with more positive views of Japanese identity, and post-Koizumi Japanese cabinets and policymakers actively sought to close perception gaps between Tokyo and Seoul. The ROK-Japan case thus provides evidence for how the configuration and decisions of leaders can affect long-held perceptions about identity with implications for the level of mutual trust.⁶⁵

These changes in perceived identity difference between Seoul and Tokyo predict an increase in mutual trust, which was indeed observed by comparing the two countries' defense white papers in 2006 and 2010. The perception among Japanese policymakers that South Korea is increasingly a capable and contributing global player increased Japanese willingness to rely on and cooperate with Seoul on matters of regional security, particularly dealing with North Korea and engaging China. The growing recognition among policymakers in Seoul that Japan is a constructive contributor to international peace and stability (rather than a revisionist power) increased South Korean willingness to incorporate Japan as a partner into the ROK national security strategy.

Meanwhile, expectations both in Seoul and Tokyo about the future of bilateral relations were buttressed by converging perceptions about national values. Each side showed increasing appreciation for the other's democratic governance

Table 2. Improvement in ROK-Japan Perceived Identity Difference, 2006-2010

	International Role	National Values
Tokyo's view of South Korea	Increasingly outward-looking, capable and willing to contribute	Shared universal values (less particular/Confucian) and more dynamic than Japan
Seoul's view of Japan	From stealth expansionist to supportive of international peace and stability	From driven by right-wing revisionists to coping with internal challenges

and cultural strengths. Converging perceptions of South Korean and Japanese international roles and values, thus, made possible greater mutual willingness and shared expectations for security cooperation in the bilateral relationship. South Korean concerns about historical issues (and hence Japanese identity) lingered, however, explaining why it may be somewhat less enthusiastic than Tokyo for further expanding security cooperation based on mutual trust. Nonetheless, ROK-Japan mutual trust improved from 2006 to 2010, a modest yet still significant increase accounted for by lower perceptions of identity difference.

CONCLUSION

Trust is not an all or nothing phenomena – it is not miraculously realized or lost. Instead, trust between national governments concerning their bilateral security relationship varies with developments in domestic and international politics. The timing, direction, and magnitude of change in mutual trust confound existing explanations based on power balance, economic interdependence, and public sentiment over historical grievances. A more sociological explanation, focused on identity perceptions, is needed. The present research used changing perceptions of identity difference to account for decreasing ROK-China trust and increasing ROK-Japan trust between 2006 and 2010. The above findings about mutual trust in Northeast Asia offer a number of foreign policy implications, as well as several cautions about changing circumstances.

The observed and explained trajectories of ROK-China and ROK-Japan mutual trust as of 2010 suggest that trilateral security cooperation among China, Japan and South Korea will be difficult to advance. Despite various drivers of community building in Northeast Asia,⁶⁶ it is hard to expect much political and security integration in the region while trust remains at such modest levels. However, it will be important to chart progress made by ROK-Japan-China trilateral summits and working meetings.

Considering the potential upsides of ROK-Japan identity perceptions (shared political values, similar goals contributing to the international community), the outlook for trust between Seoul and Tokyo is relatively favorable. Compared to Beijing, Tokyo is more likeminded with Seoul in dealing with North Korea after the death of Kim Jong-il. Japan can also be expected to engage in less “ROK passing.” Considering the potential downsides of ROK-China identity perceptions (human

rights, democracy, different role expectations dealing with North Korea), the outlook for trust is not favorable. The greater extent to which positive international roles and national values are contrasted with those of China, that is, the greater extent to which China is a negative relevant other, the less trust we can expect the South Korean or Japanese governments to have with Beijing.

Two cautionary notes about changing circumstances are in order. Although South Korea and Japan have accomplished modest improvement in mutual trust, that trust remains fragile. There are several regular irritating events (Japanese Education Ministry textbook approvals, Defense Ministry white papers mentioning the Dokdo/Takeshima island dispute, Shimane Prefecture celebrating “Takeshima Day,” and so on) as well as occasional revisionist comments by Japanese politicians about history. Developments that aggravate perceptions of identity difference send the trajectory of mutual trust downward, especially if nationalist politicians seize on an issue for electoral advantage and then rile up nationalists in the other country, setting up an identity-trust spiral. The Lee Myung-bak administration and the DPJ leadership have been mindful to avoid such spirals, but future leaders might have different priorities.⁶⁷

The present study also points to several avenues for future research. While this chapter focuses on trust between foreign policy decision makers of different countries, society-to-society relations are not insignificant for state-to-state relations. Even if political elites manage to close perceived identity differences and build trust, public opinion may not follow as positive a trajectory. This could be in part because the biases of the public may lag those of the elite, but it could also be due to public distrust of the elite in their own country.⁶⁸ An important question for future research is, thus, how public and elite perceptions of another country co-vary, depending on state-society relations within the nation doing the perceiving.

Another task for a future study would be to compare ROK-Japan and ROK-China mutual trust over a longer period of variation to see if and how the two are correlated. Mutual trust within these two bilateral security relationships are clearly not directly correlated, but they exhibited some inverse correlation, at least from 2006 to 2010. While there is no reason to believe that ROK-Japan trust and ROK-China trust are zero-sum, their respective identity perceptions are likely sensitive to changing orientations vis-a-vis North Korea and the United States. This is a complicated geometry that deserves further analysis from an identity perspective.

Based on the present research, while diplomatic rhetoric about building trust is prevalent in East Asia, much of it is cheap talk. Defense white papers are better gauges of trust than political speeches, and real trust is built with meaningful changes to perceptions of national identity. This is difficult to achieve and requires concerted and sustained efforts by political, military, and diplomatic leaders – not just for better understanding international roles and national values, but also toward improving the very content of these contested dimensions of identity.

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A Cognitive Approach to Ethnic Identity Construction in the Korean Enclave in Beijing

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With increasing economic interdependence between South Korea and the PRC since the 1990s, in recent years, over two million South Koreans are reported to cross the sea for tourism and employment opportunities in China each year.¹ Many of the first South Korean grass-roots entrepreneurs who ventured to the PRC in search of opportunities for upward mobility in the early 1990s sought out the help of bilingual Korean Chinese ethnic minorities in setting up their entrepreneurial firms. But before long, co-ethnic relations between the South Korean immigrants and their Korean Chinese workers became wrought with tension and conflict. Today, the Korean ethnic enclaves in the PRC are institutionally and socially bifurcated.² This is rather unfortunate considering the fact that the damaged relations between the South Korean immigrants and the Korean Chinese rural migrants present significant barriers to upward mobility for both parties.

Explanations for why the Korean Chinese and South Koreans have failed to establish ethnic solidarity in China are, indeed, complex. This chapter focuses on one important dimension of this problem. In the proceeding pages, I analyze how cognitive schemata based on narrow and insular understandings of Korean-ness among the South Korean immigrants in the enclave have acted as significant barriers in propagating trust and harmonious interactions between the two groups of co-ethnics. At the chapter's end, I elaborate on the implications of my findings to an understanding of "national identity gaps" in East Asia.³ The data I use for this analysis stems from ethnographic field research and formal interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 with South Koreans, Korean Chinese, and Han Chinese living and working in the Korean enclave in Beijing.

A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY

In the chapters of this volume, scholars have grappled with how economics, culture, and politics interact to account for failed institutional integration within East Asia.⁴ On the surface, East Asia possesses many of the structural traits necessary for regional integration. Aside from geographic proximity, these countries share a historical tradition of Confucianism, similar trajectories of rapid economic growth, and increasing economic interdependence in recent years. For the most part, scholars have attributed the lack of regional integration to cultural explanations. In particular, they have pointed to the lack of a collective identity, the resurgence of nationalism, and the adverse impact of historical memories on diplomatic relations as the major reasons accounting for failed regionalism.

As Gilbert Rozman in this volume argues, however, the existing literature fails to provide a systematic and empirically rigorous explanation for why East Asia continues to struggle with institutional integration despite the slew of conditions that seem to favor it. In this chapter, I argue that in order to address this problem more directly, we need to make use of current sociological theories on culture and, more specifically, the study of boundaries and classification in the social sciences.

In their influential article, “Ethnicity as Cognition,” Rogers Brubaker and his associates point out that studies of nationalism have experienced a general “shift from definitions of nationhood in terms of common language, territory, history, economic life, political arrangements, and so on to definitions that emphasize the subjective sense of or claim to nationhood.”⁵ The authors reference the canonical work of Norwegian anthropologist, Frederik Barth, who argued that ethnicity was not a “matter of shared traits or cultural commonalities, but rather practices of classification and categorization.”⁶

In accordance, I argue that in order to understand why nationalism in the East Asian region has overshadowed the formation of a collective identity, we need to understand why nationalism is framed in the way that it is and the contexts in which these ideas are manipulated, rather than fixating on the actual “content” of nationalism itself. One important methodological tool that cultural sociologists have relied on to study how cultural objects and events are framed is the concept of cognitive schemata. Schemata are mental structures, or clusters of pre-conceived ideas, that shape how knowledge is acquired, stored, recalled, and activated.⁷ For the purposes of this chapter, I focus the scope of my analysis on the study of schemata as processors of information.

While psychologists have found that when sufficiently motivated, individuals can “override programmed modes of thought to think critically and reflexively,” such modes of thinking are rare as deliberative thinking is highly inefficient considering the overwhelming complexity of social stimuli in our everyday lives.⁸ Instead, cognitive theorists argue that in our routine interactions, individuals rely heavily on existing schemata, or structured clusters of concepts, to organize the vast amount of information we encounter. For instance, many cognitive theorists give the example of a “restaurant schema,” in which individuals habitually follow a sequence of actions including “ordering, being served, eating and paying for food at a restaurant.”⁹ Schemata also overlap with chains of events that are associated with particular racial stereotypes, as in the schema of “being-watched-in-the-store-as-if-one-were-considered-a-potential-shoplifter” for African Americans in the United States.¹⁰

Paul DiMaggio highlights four important traits in the copious literature on schemata that I would like to reiterate here for structuring my analysis. First, he notes that when faced with vast amounts of information, “people are more likely to perceive information that is germane to existing schemas.” Concepts that are schematically irrelevant often go unnoticed. Second, “people recall schematically embedded information more quickly.” Laboratory subjects were reported to have remembered more “longer lists of words, or interpret ambiguous stimuli more accurately” if the information was embedded in recognizable schemata. Third, “people recall schematically embedded information more accurately.” Finally, “people may falsely recall schematically embedded events that did not occur” in order to avoid cognitive dissonance (discomfort due to conflicting ideas).¹¹

I demonstrate below how dominant schemata play a major role in drawing in-group and out-group boundaries among Korean co-ethnics in the Korean enclave in Beijing. Due to limitations in scope, I focus primarily on how South Korean schemata constrict interpretations of Korean ethnic identity.¹² I argue that insular understandings of Korean ethnic identity that privilege mainstream South Korean views marginalize the Korean Chinese from joining South Korean social circles, networks, and organizations in the enclave. Moreover, such exclusionary views of Korean ethnic identity also actively contribute to the formation of tensions and animosity between South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese minorities in the enclave.

DATA AND METHODS

Interview and Ethnographic Data

I analyzed twenty-eight hours of transcription manuscripts of forty-five semi-structured interviews with Korean Chinese and South Korean individuals who work and live in Wangjing, the Korean enclave in Beijing. Each interview ranged from thirty minutes to two hours. I conducted these interviews in a variety of settings including bars, restaurants, churches, coffee shops, streets, stores, and private residences. I used the snowball method with multiple entry points to recruit Korean Chinese and South Korean interviewees. These different entry points correspond to the various roles I assumed while conducting ethnographic fieldwork, including a major South Korean conglomerate where I worked, a Korean Chinese ethnic church where I taught English, a South Korean church where I served as a translator and keyboardist, a Korean Chinese-run tea shop I frequented, and a small Korean Chinese-run clothing shop where I also worked part-time. I made an effort to interview individuals of varying ages, gender, marital status, educational levels, and socioeconomic status. Because I experienced difficulty recruiting men, individuals of lower socioeconomic status, and individuals over fifty among both Korean Chinese and South Korean populations, the reader should be cognizant of this demographic bias.

Survey Data

I also administered a survey with a team of Korean Chinese and South Korean college students between 2010 and 2011. We mainly targeted Korean ethnic churches as well as public spaces in the enclave such as popular parks and shopping centers. Our team offered an honorarium of thirty RMB (a little less than five US dollars) or a USB port as an incentive to participate in our survey. We were able to obtain 381 South Korean and 417 Korean Chinese participants. Questions on the survey covered basic demographic traits such as educational background, hometown, years in Beijing, and income, as well as nature of work environment, relationships and networks, and attitudes on inter-group relations in the enclave. The National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant provided funding for the data collection of this project.

DISCUSSION

Broken Solidarity and Trust in the Korean Enclave in Beijing: Broad Empirical Trends

Results of an originally conducted survey of nearly 800 Korean co-ethnics provide overwhelming evidence of feelings of alienation and disconnect between the South Koreans and Korean Chinese in the Korean enclave in Beijing. To briefly cite trends here, results indicate that despite the fact that South Koreans come into extensive contact with Korean Chinese minorities in the workplace and elsewhere in the enclave, few develop personal relationships with each other. Of 381 South Korean respondents in the enclave, only 23% socialized with Korean Chinese minorities outside of the workplace. Fifty percent of respondents reported that they knew no Korean Chinese minorities whom they could ask for help during a time of need and another 19% only knew of one Korean Chinese person they felt comfortable contacting. These figures are striking in light of the fact that only 4% of the same group of people knew of no South Koreans and only 34% knew of no Han Chinese to rely on during trying times. This is to say that South Koreans are more isolated from the Korean Chinese community than they are from the Han Chinese in Beijing.

Furthermore, responses to attitudinal questions reflect strong trends of distrust and tension between the two waves of co-ethnics. Only about one-fifth of the population answered that they believed that South Korean entrepreneurs who collaborated with Korean Chinese minorities were more likely to succeed in their businesses. Only about ten percent of South Koreans surveyed reported that they trusted Korean Chinese minorities more than the Han Chinese. And only about a third of the population regarded the Korean Chinese as members of their in-group.

Empirical evidence of South Korean and Korean Chinese animosity extends beyond the survey responses that I have produced above. Through my experiences conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Beijing from 2010 to 2011, I have found that the Korean enclave is deeply bifurcated institutionally, separating the Korean Chinese organizations from those of their South Korean co-ethnics. South Koreans and the Korean Chinese live in distinct neighborhoods within the Korean enclave. They do not shop at the same shopping malls. They do not socialize together outside of the workplace. They attend separate churches, hold separate annual sports and cultural events, and congregate in separate business organizations.

Interview transcripts and field notes provide deeper insight as to how and why the South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese minorities have come to develop such strong feelings of animosity towards each other. Here, I delve only into the implications of one important trend, arguing that the lack of a cognitive schema or conceptual framework that is inclusive of both South Koreans and the Korean Chinese minorities plays a powerful role in contributing to the bifurcation of the Korean ethnic community in Beijing. The lack of a broad and inclusive Korean ethnic identity schema is not only indicative of discursive barriers in describing more inclusive interpretations of a Korean ethnic identity, but it also reflects the

lack of a means to cognitively grasp the notion of a Korean ethnic identity that expands beyond insular understandings of South Korean ethno-national identity as propagated by the mainstream South Korean media.

Cultural Differences and Group Boundary Construction

During many of my interviews, I asked Korean Chinese and South Korean migrants in my field site why they thought the enclave was so noticeably fragmented. Many responded that they thought that it was because the South Koreans and Korean Chinese had evolved to embody different forms of Korean ethnic culture over the five decades of isolation they experienced. As one Korean Chinese lawyer to whom I spoke put it:

In the very beginning... in the early nineties when the South Koreans first came over to China in large numbers, they were so excited to meet us [Korean Chinese]. They saw us as co-ethnic brothers who they were reunited with after a long period of separation. But the more they got to know us, the more they realized that we were so different. It's as if there is always something a bit off... something a bit inauthentic about us... We eat kimchee, just like they do, but something about our kimchee is a bit too sour. We speak Korean just like they do, but we speak Korean with a strong regional dialect... it's closer to North Korean than South Korean speech. We are filial to our parents and respect our elders, just like South Koreans are... but something about our Korean culture is different. Everything is slightly off. I mean it's inevitable that it would be since there was no contact between South Korea and the PRC for over fifty years before [Sino-South Korean] normalization.

Culture is, indeed, dynamic and constantly evolving. And certainly, few would argue that all ethnic Koreans inherently share only one authentic Korean culture. Rather, scholars by and large have argued that the ways in which Korean culture is understood and manifested depend on the contexts in which it is practiced. Thus, I was, on the one hand, surprised by the nuanced and sophisticated understanding of culture that the Korean Chinese lawyer and others I interviewed in the enclave seemed to have. But on the other hand, I believe that even such sophisticated understandings of culture fall short of capturing the actual reasons why the Korean Chinese and South Koreans fail to get along in the enclave. I argue below that it is precisely because culture is such a malleable social construct that it serves conveniently as a mechanism for understanding difference in the enclave.

What do I mean by this? The fact that the Korean Chinese and South Koreans in China practice different forms of Korean culture as a result of having framed different understandings of Korean culture after many years of isolation is certainly true. However, if this “difference” in culture were to actually account for the social and institutional bifurcation of the Korean enclave, then we would also expect further fragmentation along regional lines. Koreans from Pusan, a major city in South Korea, for instance, also speak with a distinct regional accent and are known to have particular mannerisms. Similarly, Korean Chinese minorities

from Yanbian, the Korea Autonomous Prefecture in China, speak a strong North Korean accent while those from Heilongjiang, a province in China located north of Yanbian, speak with a distinct South Korean regional accent.

While one can argue that the cultural “distance” between South Koreans from Pusan and Seoul is much closer than that between South Koreans and the Korean Chinese collectively, we soon run into ambiguous territory as to where to draw the line in how much “difference” justifies demarcation of distinct cultural groups. Indeed, some would even argue that the Korean culture that the Korean Chinese practice is no more different from the regional distinctions between Koreans from Pusan and Seoul. Thus, it is much more likely that culture is used as a means for South Koreans and Korean Chinese to retroactively rationalize the driving force behind their internal conflicts. It is much more likely that for the Korean co-ethnics living in the enclave, differences between South Korean and Korean Chinese culture is used as a vehicle for explaining and understanding why the two groups cannot get along. The actual cause of fragmentation within the enclave, however, is more difficult to discern.

Previous sociological accounts of ethnic identity construction demonstrate that the boundaries of in-group and out-group membership vary by the circumstances that individuals are in. In the canonical works on immigrant adaptation in America, scholars find that Polish peasants and rural lords, who had little in common in the homeland, came together and formed ethnic communities upon landing in the United States.¹³ Along similar lines, the ethnic enclave hypothesis, for instance, argues that a common structural position of disadvantage creates a sense of “common fate” among ethnic minorities who might have previously seen themselves as belonging to disparate backgrounds in the homeland.¹⁴ Upon immigration to the United States, these ethnic minorities construct a new collective identity and community based on a shared ancestral heritage and native language. As Portes and Bach argue:

[Ethnic] culture is not a mere continuation of that originally brought by immigrants, but is a distinct emergent product. It is forged in the interaction of the group with the dominant majority, incorporating some aspects of the core culture, and lending privilege to those from the past who appear most suited in the struggle for self-worth and mobility. ‘Nationalities’ thus emerge among immigrants who shared only the most tenuous linkages in the old country. They are brought together by the imputation of a common ethnicity by the core society and its use to justify their exploitation.¹⁵

This line of work argues that immigrants reconstruct boundaries of what is considered in-group culture according to the contexts and structural positions that they are in.

From this perspective, we can argue that one critical reason why the South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese have been unable to manipulate Korean ethnic identity schemata such that they are inclusive of both groups of co-ethnics in the enclave is due to the sharply distinct structural positions the Korean Chinese minorities and South Korean immigrants hold in Chinese society. The South Korean immigrants, as foreigners in the PRC, have precarious legal statuses. While

those elite expatriate businessmen who are dispatched by large South Korean conglomerates such as LG, Samsung, Hyundai and the like have access to proper legal documents that allow employment in China, the vast majority of grass-roots South Korean entrepreneurs do not have access to such a luxury. These immigrants arrive in China on short-term tourist visas and set up their small shops without proper legal documentation for their entrepreneurial activities in the enclave.

In contrast, the Korean Chinese rural migrants do not face the same risks for deportation nor the same legal barriers in setting up businesses due to their status as PRC nationals. As a result, in the early years of Sino-South Korean diplomatic normalization, South Korean entrepreneurs often partnered with Korean Chinese rural migrants in order to gain access to various licenses and legal documentation required to establish their entrepreneurial firms. But rather than stories of co-ethnic partnership, stories of co-ethnic betrayal have since started to circulate around the enclave. Many of the South Korean entrepreneurs I interviewed claimed that their businesses had failed because they were blackmailed by their Korean Chinese managers. One South Korean entrepreneur I met provided me with one rendition of such a story of co-ethnic betrayal:

Most of the South Koreans here don't trust the Korean Chinese. They've come to be that way through personal experience. Even though there are some people who have not experienced being deceived by the Korean Chinese, when people first arrive here in Beijing and we South Koreans tell them about what it's like to live here, we let them know right away about this situation... Let's take, for instance, that you wanted to start a restaurant here in Beijing. South Koreans have enough money or other financial capital to start a business here... However in situations where the CEO is really unfamiliar with Chinese culture and cannot speak Chinese, and only invests his money in his business, the businesses have all failed. The Korean Chinese are blinded by money. They see that they can earn money really quickly and easily without trying very hard... If they are able to fool the owner even for just a moment, money just flows into their pockets... those Korean Chinese who are not educated try to just deceive South Koreans. They act as intermediaries, fool their bosses, and try to slip money from between the cracks. And because they speak Korean, they seek out problems that South Koreans struggle with most and scheme South Koreans into giving them money.

Whether these stories are actually as far-reaching as they purport to be is difficult to verify. But suffice it to say that they act as further empirical evidence of distrust between the South Korean immigrants and the Korean Chinese minorities in the enclave.

In the Korean enclave, there is less of a sense of "common fate" binding the Korean Chinese minorities and South Koreans together, of which Portes and Bach speak in their study of Latin American immigrants in the United States. This lack of a common consciousness of shared disadvantage in Chinese society helps us understand why the Korean co-ethnics in the enclave have failed to manipulate

schemata related to Korean ethnic identity such that they are more inclusive of both themselves and their co-ethnic brethren. Along these lines, we can argue that one's structural position compels individuals to perceive "differences" or "similarities" in ways that allow them to successfully consolidate and mobilize resources within their in-group. Here, culture plays an important role in acting as a mechanism for justifying boundary-marking behavior separating members of the in-group from the out-group.

South Korean Discursive Marginalization of the Korean Chinese Minorities in Beijing

South Koreans in Beijing grapple with understanding how to define the Korean Chinese minorities in the enclave. On the one hand, the Korean Chinese are co-ethnic brethren and as co-ethnics they should be considered part of their in-group. But on the other hand, as Chinese nationals who spent the majority of their lives in the Chinese countryside, many South Koreans feel that recognizing the Korean Chinese as members of their in-group implicitly threatens their privileged status as wealthy and "civilized" South Koreans. Thus, for these immigrants, perhaps the most socially acceptable way of describing the ambiguous identity of the Korean Chinese is as Chinese people who can speak Korean. One South Korean man I worked with closely at a major South Korean church in the Korean enclave in Beijing illustrates this tendency particularly clearly. During an interview, he stated:

I was really curious about what kind of people the Korean Chinese minorities were [prior to coming to Beijing]. Why do they know how to speak Korean? How are these people able to carry a conversation with me even though they are Chinese [중국사람]? How come they are in China? I was curious about things like that but, honestly, because I didn't really have many opportunities to come across them [in Korea], so I was more or less indifferent about their existence.

Prior to coming to the PRC, South Korean immigrants are largely ignorant of the existence of the Korean Chinese minorities despite the fact that these ethnic minorities have in the past decade become a significant minority population within South Korea, as well. According to South Korean mass media sources, in 2011, 500,000 Korean Chinese were reported to live in South Korea and over half were found to reside in Seoul. As a result of such ignorance and indifference towards the Korean Chinese ethnic minority, many South Koreans fall susceptible to mainstream media depictions of the Chinese and the Korean Chinese in forming their impressions of these groups.

This leads us to ask: what then, are the nature of the cognitive schemata that South Koreans hold towards the Chinese, and by default, the Korean Chinese, as well. When I asked a South Korean woman in her thirties who worked for a large South Korean firm in the enclave, why she had come to have such a negative image of China before she arrived, she answered:

Like from the Internet and other forms of mass media. For instance, you know how we use a lot of products...and foods from China, right? So if something was made in China, we expect it to break really fast. Or, if we buy food imported from China... from the media, we are exposed to a lot of weird stuff... to give you an example, like chicken feet... they were showing Chinese women eating chicken feet... but how can I explain it... they were ripping off the skin of the chicken and the way they were filmed, they really looked very uncivilized. It was kind of disgusting. There were a lot of pictures of those women on the Internet. Or, there was this news story about a sandwich that was imported from China, and from the outside, it looked like there were eggs and ham like any other ordinary sandwich, but once you opened up the sandwich, there was nothing inside. There were only the trimmings of eggs and ham, on the outside that it looked like an ordinary sandwich to people at first glance. So most of the pictures and news stories on China I came across on the Internet and TV were along these lines. It's really common for Koreans to associate their impressions of the Chinese with something that is uncivilized, low-quality, underdeveloped, inferior, boisterous and so on.

To many of the South Koreans I interviewed, China represented an all-encompassing image of something that was “uncivilized, low-quality, underdeveloped, inferior and boisterous.” Moreover, schemata were not distinguished according to the type of object, but included a whole slew of diverse cultural symbols that ranged from individuals to customs to commercial products to a country.

Due to this lack of differentiation, one negative comment made about Chinese customs, for instance, is also easily interpreted as a negative comment about their people and the country, itself. And because the Korean Chinese are primarily seen as “Chinese who can speak Korean,” the Korean Chinese have come to interpret negative stereotypes that South Koreans hold towards the PRC as indirect, yet deeply personal, affronts. An excerpt from a recorded conversation with my Korean Chinese research assistant illustrates this dynamic.

I know it's not fair of me, but I react more sensitively to things that South Koreans say to me. I think it's because I have a bias that they look down on us Korean Chinese. Once, I was leading a group of South Korean tourists around major sites in Beijing, and one of the men in my group said something like, 'Wow, I never knew that there were so many nice European cars in Beijing, too.' I was really offended by what he said because he seemed to imply that China was still backwards and underdeveloped. But then later on, he said that he had visited Beijing ten years ago, and back then, there were a lot of bicycles and not as many cars. I thought about it and what he said made sense. I know that I was being a little over-sensitive with him because he

was South Korean, but I can't help it. When a South Korean starts to make a comment about China, it kind of makes me put my guard up instinctively. That's just the way things are for us Korean Chinese.

Here, we can see how a Korean Chinese woman admits that her initial interpretation of the South Korean man's observation of the surprising number of luxury vehicles in Beijing was negative. Upon hearing his comment, she immediately assumes that the South Korean is implying that China is a poor, underdeveloped country. Moreover, she automatically connects the notion that China is underdeveloped to South Korean views on Chinese people in general. Later on, by speaking to him at more length, the woman realizes that he was making a simple empirical observation rather than unfavorably comparing China to South Korea.

Assumptions that the South Koreans look down on the Korean Chinese as PRC nationals and as outsiders, who cannot be trusted, complicate social interactions between the South Koreans and Korean Chinese in Beijing. In many cases, it causes the Korean Chinese to react more sensitively to comments that in more neutral settings would be interpreted as innocuous. This tendency also creates hypersensitivity on the part of South Koreans to act cautiously when interacting with the Korean Chinese. As one South Korean man put it:

When I see a Korean Chinese person, sometimes I want to go over and start a conversation with that person. But then, I think to myself, what if he thinks that I am suspicious or strange for wanting to talk to him for no apparent reason. What if he realizes that I am South Korean and feels intimidated by me? I want to go over and talk to them and become friends with them not because I want them to help me with something, but because they know how to speak Korean, but I often feel silly for feeling these things. I feel like I would cause more problems if I did.

What is interesting about the interview excerpt above is the fact that he assumes that it is strange and out of the ordinary for a South Korean to want to act friendly towards a Korean Chinese minority with no ulterior motive. In a sense, this is because throughout my interactions with both Korean Chinese and South Korean individuals in Beijing, I have found that the vast majority of relationships between South Koreans and Korean Chinese are born out of necessity. South Koreans seek out the help of the Korean Chinese in order to navigate the foreign environment that is China and the Korean Chinese allow themselves to enter into relationships with the South Koreans despite knowing that they are considered outsiders and as inferior due to material gains that close networks with South Koreans potentially provide. Nonetheless, the two excerpts I have presented above demonstrate how derogatory South Korean schemata of the Korean Chinese as primarily "Chinese people" rather than as co-ethnics can lead to significant barriers in forming personal relationships. Such personal relationships are necessary for the eventual modification of these rigid and exclusive schemata that continue to bifurcate the Korean ethnic community.

During a different interview, a highly educated Korean Chinese woman elaborated on why she thought there was a lack of distinction in perceptions of individuals and the countries from which they come. She said the following:

How should I explain this? Let me give you an example. A lot of Korean Chinese women get married to South Korean men. But even though a lot of these women actually bring home a higher salary than their husbands, they are still looked down upon by their South Korean mothers-in-law even if she didn't work at all. We're mistreated for the sole reason of being Chinese and it doesn't matter how hard we work at trying to please the South Koreans... When I read South Korean newspapers, there are so few articles that have anything positive to say about China. They proactively publish a lot of articles that portray China in a bad light because mass media is closely related to politics. I don't remember one time when they talked about how developed China had become or how it was to live here.

As this woman articulates, the ways in which individuals perceive each other in the enclave are not shaped so much by individual-level characteristics such as socioeconomic status or economic background. Rather, one's nationality plays a more potent role such that the stigmas that are related to one's national identity trump the concrete backgrounds of the individuals involved in the social interaction.

A South Korean woman I interviewed further demonstrates how this dynamic blocks intimate relationships between the Korean Chinese and the South Koreans from forming in the Korean enclave in Beijing.

In the eyes of South Koreans, the Korean Chinese only appear subordinate to them. They do not feel that they are on equal terms with the Korean Chinese no matter how poorly educated a South Korean is. At our church, there is a young Korean Chinese woman who is married to a South Korean man. She graduated from a very elite university in Beijing. When she goes back to her hometown, they have banners with her name and university on it because they were so proud of her accomplishments. Even people as elite as her are looked down upon by South Koreans by virtue of being Korean Chinese. When they speak, the South Koreans have these types of facial expressions [she crinkles her forehead and squints]. You can tell from their facial expressions [that they are prejudiced]. To other people they are so warm and friendly, but they are brusque towards the Korean Chinese and walk past them. I think this behavior comes from a sub-conscious prejudice that South Koreans have that the Korean Chinese are of a lower class.

The prejudice that the South Koreans hold towards the Korean Chinese acts as a negative feedback loop in causing the South Koreans to continue to avoid associating with their Korean Chinese counterparts as members of their in-group for fear that they, too, will be treated as inferior by doing so.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY GAPS

In reaching these series of findings, I am able to provide empirical evidence that Rozman's concept of national identity gaps affects not only the nature of diplomatic relations between the PRC and South Korea at the macro-sociological level, but also that they play a palpable role in blocking cross-cultural relations between immigrants and locals at the micro-sociological level. Here, I define national identity gaps as perceptions that one's nation is markedly different from another, or in this case, the notion that South Korea for various reasons is distinct and, thus, superior to the PRC. In this section, I analyze how the analytical framework of the cognitive schema might develop existing understandings of national identity gaps on two major levels.

First, one can show that the perceptions of difference and superiority that individuals hold at the grassroots level are strongly shaped by the mass media. National identity gaps are so deeply entrenched and resistant to modification according to new, and often more accurate, information obtained from actual social interactions with the "Other" precisely because they are enacted via cognitive schemata. Hence, my findings show that national identity gaps shape social interactions and the formation of networks rather than the other way around. This implies that in order for trust to form between two parties that are characterized by animosity, change needs to occur on the level of national identity discourse, particularly in the media, such that similarities are stressed. Moreover, when this change is complemented by structural changes such that the legal statuses of South Korean immigrants and Korean Chinese minorities in the PRC become more comparable with each other, it is more likely that Korean co-ethnics will begin to interpret schemata on Korean ethnic identity to emphasize similarities over differences. However, increased social contact on its own will not necessarily lead to closer, more harmonious relations between two groups if this contact is not accompanied by change at the discursive and structural levels.

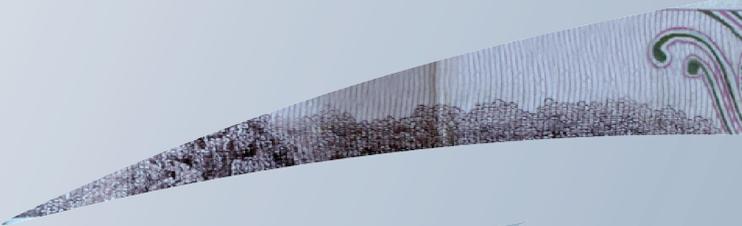
Second, my case study demonstrates that in the case of China and South Korea, national identity gaps are used not only to distinguish the Han Chinese from the South Koreans, but also, to distinguish the South Koreans from co-ethnic Korean Chinese rural migrants despite the fact that the two groups of co-ethnics clearly share an ancestral heritage. I argue that one major reason why the South Koreans are motivated to do so is because the Chinese upbringing of the Korean Chinese potentially threatens the symbolic superiority of their South Korean status. In the eyes of the South Korean immigrants in the enclave, the Korean Chinese are viewed as an economically disadvantaged group due to their Chinese background, and thus, associating with them as members of an in-group threatens their self-perceptions that they are a group that is economically privileged in contrast to the Chinese.

Here is a case that demonstrates how national identity gaps do not necessarily function along clearly demarcated boundaries of nation-states—which in this series of papers, includes South Korea, the PRC, and Japan—but they also powerfully work to distinguish the in-group as unique from ambiguous "Others," who according to different historical and social contexts could just as easily be framed

as members of the in-group. Individuals utilize these “perceptions of difference” in their everyday lives to achieve strategic ends—to preserve the sanctity of their self-image as superior. But by doing so, the South Koreans unfortunately miss out on an important opportunity to collaborate more effectively with the Korean Chinese to secure successful businesses in Beijing.

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ASIA AT A TIPPING POINT: KOREA, THE RISE OF CHINA, AND THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

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