



THE DETERIORATION OF SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS : KEY EVENTS IN THE 1990S

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博士学位論文

THE DETERIORATION OF SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS: KEY EVENTS IN THE 1990S

日中関係の衰退：１９９０年代の意義深い事件

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ABSTRACT

The study of Sino-Japanese relations is a challenging yet important endeavor, given the importance of these two nations in world politics, the reasons why politically constructive relations fail to be solidly built is a matter of much debate. Analysis founded on the major IR paradigms of realism and liberalism seem to give way when faced with the webs and flows of the relationship, and disagreement among scholars is the norm. The grim historical facts that inform many exchanges plus its apparent resistance to material constraints make it a case where an identity-based approach in the constructivist tradition can prove useful.

To achieve this, Wendt's understanding of interaction structures and Lebow's account of actor motives is applied to develop a novel research framework that permits a complex analysis of actors' interaction history interpreting the long-standing estranged political ties as socially constructed. Respectively, Wendt's concept of structure of interaction or micro-structure permits addressing the actor's relational identities' mutual constitution, and Lebow's threefold actor-motive permits problematizing the disparate pursuits that determine action. Through constructivism's emphasis on agency and process, the progressive deterioration of bilateral ties from the 1990's onwards will be our primary focus. China's turn to militant patriotic affirmation is thought to have encouraged unrestrained assertive actions in order to fulfill its national esteem, which in turn provoked deterioration of trust with Japan, a country now growingly trying to carve a policy of international prestige, worried too about China's brashness, and therefore less available to kowtow to China's demands for remembrance of its violent past. Eventually, through repeated negative encounters a structure of interaction (or microstructure) was

reached where adversarial relational identities are deeply internalized.

To assess the validity of such an approach three cases are presented: The imperial visit to China (1992), Chinese nuclear tests during non-proliferation treaty preparations (1995/1996) and Premier Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan (1998). These cases allow us to analyze the validity of our interpretative structure by comparing material and immaterial concerns for the actors in each one of them.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CTBT – Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

G7 – Group of Seven

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IR – International Relations

KMT – Kuomintang

LDP – Liberal Democratic Party

MoD – Ministry of Defense

MoFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MEXT – Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

NPT – Non-Proliferation Treaty

ODA – Official Development Assistance

PK – Peace Keeping

SDF – Self-Defense Forces

TMD – Theater Missile Defenses

UN – United Nations

U.S.A – United States of America

U.S.S.R – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WTO – World Trade Organization

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Introduction

Economic development and integration in Northeast Asia have been correlated, since the end of the cold war, to the growingly difficult relationships amongst the region's nations. This is the truer concerning the area's economic titans: China and Japan. In an age of deepening interdependence and integrated markets nationalist rhetoric, jet scrambles, atoll fortification and naval and aerial stand-offs seem eerily out of place in the trade-bustling waters of the region. Relational deterioration and quasi-skirmishes along the sea-borders between the two nations have almost made Russia's ever looming military presence in the north tame and even somewhat pedestrian.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, an event that was once heralded by Francis Fukuyama as the ultimate vindication of western liberalism (Fukuyama, 1992), Sino-Japanese relations, ironically stable before, saw instead the end of decades of entente and the resurrection of phantoms from the past. The nowadays unthinkable Imperial visit in 1992 marked the high-water mark of what has become at best an uncomfortable condominium, at worst a creeping rivalry.

The problematic Sino-Japanese exchanges that started during the 1990's have been well documented (Bush, 2010; Christensen, 2003; Green, 2003; Gries, 2004; He, 2004; Hughes, 2009; Zhao, 1997...), moreover, the role decision-making elites have had in this is also well known (Gries, 2004; He, 2007; Nau and Ollapally, 2012). The progressive disappearance from political life of the Friendship Treaty generation in both countries left a vacuum in the management of the bilateral relationship. Key figures such as Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Takeo Miki and Kakuei Tanaka would be sorely missed. Yet, this begs the question, was this simply a matter of a new *status quo* dictated by

China's rise and consequent natural erosion or, were there any, if any, defining events that actualized conflictuality and mutual distrust in the relationship? What was the nature of this bilateral deterioration? Were there defining features? What reasoning was behind controversial decisions that pushed the *other* away? Did the actors experience changes in their own identities? This thesis argues that, yes, there were key events during the 1990's that set the stage for the current confrontational dynamics by actualizing incompatible ideational pursuits. We argue that actors will ultimately resist learning identities that conflict with their pursuit of self-esteem. Their sense of realization and conception of national identity and prestige has a determinate effect in their behavior and relationships with others. Thus, if actors engage in practices that consistently ignore each other's needs, they necessarily come to internalize adversarial attitudes (Wendt (1999) 2010, 332).

We ultimately posit that China's emphasis on nationalism and Japan's policy of international prestige and 'normalization', in the end, had to necessarily pan out in the relationship. We intend to show that at key points during the decade one or both actors, in their drive to make true their post-cold war pursuit of esteem, ignored or dismissed the other. Thus, the relationship spiraled down more and more towards rivalry. Balancing forces that had usually tended to the relation were conspicuously absent or powerless to act. Concretely, this takes shape in the following hypothesis:

In the 1990's the Sino-Japanese relational decline (DV) was driven by ideational factors related to each country's seeking for esteem (IV) in their post-cold war selves.

If so, this should be noticeable in key interactions between the nations. The identification and exploration of these events will allow us a better understanding of the relational deterioration, highlighting its peculiar characteristics and thus bringing light

upon the already commented upon macro-level change. If the changing pursuits in the seeking of esteem and international affirmation were indeed transformative, this ought to clearly show during the 1990's, when said deterioration took place.

This research will help clarify the nature and depth of Sino-Japanese antagonism by putting long-neglected ideational structures in the forefront. In addition, its abandonment of "black-box" actors and embracing of multi-layered motives will also make the case for the explanatory capacity of constructivist theoretical concepts and structures in face of liberal and realist alternatives. This will in turn contribute to inter-paradigm debate. Therefore, this project stands as a relevant contribution not only in the field of Sino-Japanese relations but also of constructivist theory.

To bring this to fruition, we have opted to rely on both Alexander Wendt and Richard Ned Lebow's work. They provide well-established constructivist frameworks that both understand actors as complex socially constituted entities and, precisely because of that, value process and change as a key part of international affairs. Thus, they have a nuanced understanding of identity, interests and interaction that pre-socialized rationalist "thin" agents cannot have. Structures of interaction, or microstructures, (Wendt (1999) 2010, 143) are all but absent from most liberal and realist theory, so are multidimensional understandings of motives (Lebow 2008, 509). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Wendt and Lebow's accounts are not only rich, but also complementary, operationalizable and do not fall in the common post-positivist morass of subjectivism.

By thus framing our research, we are supplied therefore with rich and proven conceptualizations of actors, process and change that allow us to properly picture a bilateral relation of which dynamics are, as we shall see, heavily informed by ideational

content. The precise nature and cogent theoretical definitions put forward by the authors will enable us to both advance specific predictions and depict the key events in a clear yet nuanced and historically informed manner.

Methodology-wise, this research relies on qualitative methods, namely the congruence method¹ (Bennet and George, 2004). This option is chosen for two reasons. First and foremost, it is recognized as an effective methodology of case analysis, second, it allows for theories with determinate theoretical language such as ours to be scrutinized in the context of a single or few cases (Bennet and George, 2004). A macro-characterization of the relationship is performed, this historically informed narrative is framed in the aforementioned theoretical language and serves as a basis to posit a relation between changes in ideational factors related to esteem (IV) and relational deterioration as an outcome (improvement/status quo/deterioration being the possibilities for DV) in accordance with the congruence method. If this can be consistently achieved, we are therefore warranted in entertaining the possibility that a causal relationship may exist (Bennet and George 2004, 182). Building up on our falsifying of alternatives in chapter one, we finally test the validity of our preliminary conclusions through the analysis of three cases:

- The imperial visit to China (1992);

¹ "The essential characteristic of the congruence method is that the investigator begins with a theory and then attempts to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case. The theory posits a relation between variance in the independent variable and variance in the dependent variable; it can be deductive or take the form of an empirical generalization. The analyst first ascertains the value of the independent variable in the case at hand and then asks what prediction or expectation about the outcome of the dependent variable should follow from the theory. If the outcome of the case is consistent with the theory's prediction, the analyst can entertain the possibility that a causal relationship may exist." (Bennet and George 2004, 151)

- Chinese nuclear tests during non-proliferation treaty preparations (1995/1996);
- Premier Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan (1998)

The rationale behind these choices is first and foremost their relative importance, the first symbolizes the crowning achievement and peak of the entente period and the latter two respectively address issues dear to China and Japan: historical memory and nuclear weaponry. All of them involve high-level officials which also makes them both more relevant and more amenable to scrutiny. The first case will serve as a benchmark for what a positive outcome would be. The latter two are key steps in the by then deteriorating relationship, thus providing where to look for ideational factors. Of course, further events could be pinpointed and, indeed, if sharing the same characteristics, ought to, to a lesser or larger extent, reveal similar ideational traits.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. First, we will give a focused literature review and a general account of how liberal and realist interpretations of Sino-Japanese relations are insufficient. Second, we expound Lebow's theory of actor motives and Wendt's understanding of interaction next to provide the theoretical framework necessary to better understand relational decline and thus put forward our case. Next, we turn to proposing an alternative ideational account of the deterioration and outlining our understanding of the relationship. Fourth, this definite theoretical language will, then, allow us to present a general macro-level characterization of the relationship in the form of analytical explanation (Bennet and George 2004, 211). This, in turn, will serve as a basis for both justifying and exploring three key instances that helped define Sino-

Japanese ties in the 1990's. Finally, we will assess the presence or lack thereof of ideational factors, namely esteem, in these exchanges.

Chapter I: Literature Review and Theoretical Overview

1.1 Literature Review

Our research focus and this literature review are centered on the debate on the nature and origin of the strained relation the two powers have maintained in the aftermath of the cold-war. Predictably, this is characterized by many inter-theory fault lines, authors interpreting data differently, or imparting more relative importance to certain segments of it. For this reason and to better square this project, it is useful to classify and group differentiated theoretical perspectives. Writing from an International Relations standpoint, we center our account in what its three major paradigms - realism, liberalism and constructivism - have to offer.

Naturally, due to China's growth and expansive capacities many of the arguments concerning Sino-Japanese relations are coupled with considerations on China's international affirmation. This is particularly true for the realist tradition. On the one hand, Mearsheimer's *Offensive Realism* considers that the scale of the increases in China's economic and military capacity simply preclude a peaceful *modus vivendi* with its neighbors. Its sheer blunt weight meaning that many, including Japan, are to increasingly align with the US; Mearsheimer emphasizes power alone (Mearsheimer 2006, 160). On the other hand, Friedberg, closer to *Defensive Realism*, even if also skeptical of good bilateral relations, argues that there are non-structural factors that can diminish the effects of anarchy. Factors such as the existence of a moral consensus, homogeneity in domestic structures or recognized rules of international conduct are thought to have an important contribution (Friedberg 1993-1994, 10). Regardless, these being generally absent from Asia disputes between the major regional players, China vs.

Japan included, are expected by the author (Friedberg, 1993-1994, 31). In spite of this Waltz, another defensive realist, notes that it is a fact that Japan has kept its military expenditures and endeavors relatively restrained when taking into account its economic power. This despite nuclearized troublesome neighbors (China one of them). In Waltz's view, this is an uneasy position, an anomaly for what power politics is regarded because uncertainty would advise armament (Waltz 2000, 33-36), in this way the author seems to infer a confrontation.

Recently though, a relevant number of realist authors have moved beyond structure alone to compound and complement it with conditional variables, catalysts and even actor psychology. This has led many realists to take into account the specificity of Sino-Japanese relations. The authors that seek to complement structure with other factors are often grouped under the term "Neo-Classical realism" for their noted proximity to the views of classical theorists. Among them, Kirshner presents a very interesting picture of the East Asian region, the author draws on Morgenthau to argue that "the complexities of international affairs make simple solutions and trustworthy prophecies impossible" (Kirshner 2010, 69). It is argued that hedging, which is to a large degree what Japan is currently doing, would be the right approach to defuse a conflict *that is not necessary* [my italic]; conflict is being forced and compounded by historical antagonism/nationalism and lack of conciliatory measures by the ruling elites (Kirshner 2010, 66). In the realist tradition, Self (2002), Christensen (2003), Green (2003), Pei and Swaine (2005), Taniguchi (2005), Calder (2006), Yahuda (2006), Goldstein (2007), Bush (2010) and Kirshner (2010) all broadly consider the end of the Cold War to have been a structural challenge to Sino-Japanese relations, while at the same time noting that this alone cannot determine/explain bad bilateral relations, taking into account, for instance, history and

elite/popular feeling as crucial factors. Still, there is a largely material focus and, despite closeness to constructivism of many of their considerations, “blunt” material facts remain the crux of the argument.

As for Neo-liberalism, it has placed a lot of hope in the development and maintenance of economic ties to shore up the bilateral relation. Sutter (2002) and Heazle (2007) indicate a linkage between economics and de-escalation of bilateral crisis (Sutter 2002, 40; Heazle 2007, 200). Both authors accept that bilateral tensions are derived from security, territory, nationalism and other causes, overriding economic incentives (Sutter 2002, 37; Heazle 2007, 176). Mochizuki (2009), in a sense, is peculiar because of the appraisal that rather than a downward spiral, the current problems are the consequence of a transitional period that is to soon give way to mutual respect and understanding (Mochizuki 2009, 140).

Going beyond materialist accounts there is a plethora of authors. Nonetheless, despite the existence of a very large pool of works analyzing Japanese and Chinese identities and nationalisms *per se*; such as Zhao (1997,1998), Gries (2004) and Hughes (2006) for China, and McCormack (2000), McVeigh (2004) and Shimazu (2006) for Japan, these do not do more than a partial or marginal treatment of its effects in bilateral relations. Those authors who actually do go further and consider the issue of bilateral problems put a ‘clash of objectives’ at the center or have these differentiated objectives more clearly delineated as a ‘clash of identities’. This normally related with historical memory and its impact in changing images and perceptions: Rose (1998, 2000), Tamamoto (2001), Rozman (2002), He (2006), Roy (2006) and Wan (2006) being crucial examples. To these can be added the “Stockholm School”, namely Gustafsson, that

introduces the novelty of “anxiety” as the product of breaks in routinized recognition (Gustafsson, 2016).

1.2 Alternative Explanations

To evaluate the significance of ideational motives for the deterioration of Sino-Japanese ties it is paramount to point out the flaws in materialist paradigms. Without these more immediate causes being “out of the way” parsimony alone would preclude further inquiry. Security and interdependence are generally understood to be the most obvious drivers of bilateral relationships; thus we need to address them in order to validate our approach. The omission of ideational factors is expected to result in major explanatory problems which should become clear through critical scrutiny (Lebow 2008, 518).

Realism

Despite recent developments, realism arguably continues to be the dominant paradigm from which IR scholars draw insight and inspiration (Pekkanen 2014, 12). This juncture in Asia is particularly reinforced by the fact that the continent is state-centered and traditional norms of state sovereignty tend to be upheld across most issue areas (Pekkanen 2014, 5). The focus on the material distribution of power that Realism asserts would then be expected to have particular explanatory strength in such a context. This, though, does not imply that realism can be seen as uniform or having a sole direction when explaining relations between China and Japan. An overview of the paradigm has identified no less than thirteen different brands of this school of thought (Pekkanen 2014, 25). Hence, first and foremost, when making sense of realist perspectives it is pressing to acknowledge not only the paradigm’s commonalities but also its major divisions. Namely between the two main branches of structural or neo-realism (offensive and defensive) and its classical/neo-classical cousins. All be addressed as the chapter progresses. Starting

with the commonalities, Mearsheimer, a preeminent structural realist, describes them as such:

Realists believe that power is the currency of international politics. Great Powers, the main actors in the realists' account, pay careful attention to how much economic and military power they have relative to each other. It is important not only to have a substantial amount of power, but also to make sure that no other state sharply shifts the balance of power in its favour. For realists, international politics is synonymous with power politics (Mearsheimer 2013, 77).

Accordingly, Mastanduno (2014), another important realist scholar, points out four shared assumptions common to virtually all realist authors: 1) the key actors in political life are groups, 2) State behavior is best understood in rational and instrumental terms, 3) power and interests are mutually reinforcing and are key variables, and 4) the international environment is inherently competitive. Realist's focus on factors such as the balance of power and the devious incentives anarchy presses upon states means that when looking over the Sino-Japanese conundrum their vision is mostly informed by changes in relative capacity, and thus in the general impact of China's rise on Northeast Asia. Indeed, due to China's growth and expanding capacities many of the arguments concerning Sino-Japanese relations are coupled with considerations on China's international affirmation and its systemic implications. Offensive Realism considers that the scale of the increases in China's economic and military power simply preclude a peaceful *modus vivendi* with its neighbors. Mearsheimer, for instance, considers that the country's sheer capacity and potential means that many, including Japan, are to increasingly align with the US. Power alone is emphasized (Mearsheimer 2006, 160). For the author the best outcome possible

is to become a regional hegemon by dominating its own geographical area (Mearsheimer 2013, 88). Consequently, growing tensions between China and Japan are both expected and inevitable (Mearsheimer 2013, 88-89).

Defensive realism shares the former's exclusive focus on power but differs on how much power is enough. States ought to, above all, seek to keep their positions within the system. A pursuit of hegemony is deemed unfeasible. It faces unsurmountable barriers, namely balancing coalitions. Instead, national autonomy and defensive capabilities are the path towards security (Waltz (1979) 2010, 126). The pursuit of hegemony that offensive realism encourages is, in defensive realism's understanding, a self-destructing policy. States first priority should be to maintain their positions within the system (Waltz (1979) 2010, 126), a pursuit of hegemony would just generate a massive balancing coalition (Mearsheimer 2013, 81, 90), rather, autonomy is the logical goal for states to assure their security (Waltz (1979) 2010, 204). The lessons of history constitute a socialization-against-aggression that would dictate restrained behavior pursuing one's security (Twomey 2000, 173). Thus, China and Japan ought to have limited aims, this despite looking for shifting the balance of power in their favor, opening the possibility of a less intense security competition.

Nevertheless, the theory does expect that "states with the opportunity to choose for themselves respond to the challenges of insecurity that anarchy poses by attempting to check the potential threat inherent in the accumulation of power" (Goldstein 2007, 8). While this is coherent with China's military investment in the 1990's, which it was able to fuel by its extraordinary economic growth (Wan 2006, 206-207), Japan, on the other hand, seems "obviously reluctant to assume the mantle of a great power". (Waltz 2000,

33). There are indications this is changing (Waltz 2000, 33), Waltz points to Japan's growing awareness of its vulnerabilities and dependence that have led the Japanese to acquire further military resources (Waltz 2000, 33). But this still leaves Japan short of the capabilities it could have. For Waltz it is surprising "how any state with the economic capability of a great power [which Japan has] can refrain from arming itself with the [nuclear] weapons that have served so well as the great deterrent" (Waltz 2000, 33). "In a self-help system, the possession of most but not all of the capabilities of a great power leaves a state vulnerable to others that have the instruments that the lesser state lacks" (Waltz 2000, 33).

Notwithstanding the theoretical differences, both fall short when justifying the evolution of contemporary and post-cold Sino-Japanese war relations. Through Neo-Realism it is difficult to comprehend that an economically ascendant Japan in the 1980's and early 1990's actively sought to economically empower China, its most obvious potential rival. Japanese loans, politically encouraged trade and investment poured in and helped make China the powerhouse it is today (Smith 2014, 35). The yen loan program lasted decades, technical assistance and grant aid continue to this day (Smith 2014, 35-36). Moreover, when China made the choice of cracking down opposition in face of Soviet collapse in 1989, thus facing international isolation, Japan actively sought to break the deadlock, lobbying for a mild reaction by other powers (Dreyer 2016, 184-189). As the relation soured after 1994, Japan did seek to acquire new military capabilities and reassert the American alliance yet never crossed the 1% expenditure limit nor nuclearized. The pursuit of a balance-of-power logic would have Japan seek relative, not absolute, gains generally choosing policies that retard China's economic growth (Green 2003, 79).

As for China, the Middle Kingdom had been at least moderately friendly towards Japan for decades, including at the peak of the latter's economic power in 1990 (Wan 2006, 207). This notwithstanding three decades of continued economic growth and rises in Japanese military expenditure (Wan 2006, 209-210). The 1980's were called the period of "friendship diplomacy" (Yahuda 2014, 20) or even a "golden age" (Dreyer 2016, 156). Ties developed despite the first identity clashes, careful and tactful diplomacy avoided significant rifts (Dreyer 2016, 182; Wan 2006, 96). In contrast, in the 1990's, China growingly disregarded Japanese concerns over nuclear tests, missile launches or opaque military budgets. Then and nowadays, China's relative weakness *vis-a-vis* Japan and the US would advise a restrained behavior, playing to its potential. As China is getting comparatively stronger, it is not in its interest to provoke powers that it still can't face, thus it shouldn't act in a way that opens the path for a balancing coalition. Contrary to realist expectations, fighter intrusions near the Diaoyu/Senkaku²³ and constant nationalist grandstanding are common. Occasionally, even the damage of Japanese property has been tacitly allowed by the government (Dreyer 2016, 211).

If a mounting security problem is developing it arguably only slowly began to do so after the 1990's two security shocks: China's nuclear tests in 1995 and the Taiwan missile crisis in 1996. The emergence of a Japanese "reluctant realism" (Green, 2003) can only be conceived as an unfortunate result of the deterioration in political relations, not the cause. Bush analyses the 1995-2006 downturn precisely from this point of view. The author finds that even in the aftermath of the aforementioned events the concept of

² In 2013 Japan scrambled more than 400 aircraft in response to Chinese activity (Choong 2014, 81)

³ When referring to the islands we use both Chinese and Japanese names, except when we are talking solely about one of the countries; we use then one or the other.

the “security dilemma”, as defensive realism understands it, is “only moderately helpful” and insufficient on its own to explain bilateral strife (Bush 2010, 24). It is a fact that on the first half of the 2000s “statements of both Chinese and Japanese governments conveyed [...] growing concerns about security” (Bush 2010, 25); despite this, Bush considers “there is not a direct and strong connection between one country’s perception of vulnerability in the face of the other’s growing power and the decisions that it makes to strengthen its own capabilities” (Bush 2010, 29). As early as 1997 Japan’s defense white paper did mention China’s ballistic missile arsenal, but it was also only in 2004 that Tokyo’s *National Defense Program Guidelines* identify China as a potential threat. (Nathan 2012, 120). This is nearly a decade after the worrying Chinese nuclear tests and missile launches. Despite the downward trend, responses were slow and security interaction intermittent at best. (Wan 2006, 44)

Actions then, viewed and framed by beliefs and ideas, might be more appropriate as a starting point to address the causes of bilateral problems than mechanistic structuralism; as we have seen, Sino-Japanese relations worsened over specific interactions, not capabilities alone. This preliminary consideration, though, does not mean we are to discard contributions by the realist paradigm. Classical realists considered material factors such as relative power very important but thought them incomplete and non-intelligible without nonmaterial ones such as fear, honor and prestige. They were sensitive to the necessity of understanding domestic politics and state intentions (Mastanduno 2014, 26).

Neo-classical realism, a refreshing novelty within the paradigm, admits the importance of non-structural factors for diminishing the effects of anarchy (Friedberg 1993-1994; Goldstein 2003; Kirshner 2010). Neoclassical realism's preoccupation with agency stresses that accommodation is possible and security dilemmas avoidable or at least made much less dangerous. Conversely, the inability to have restrain pursuing aggressive rhetoric or actions make them that much perilous (Kirshner 2010, 54). Following a neo-classical realist understanding, the negative historical burden fueling Sino-Japanese negativity can be more important than particular present diplomatic policies (Christensen 2003, 29). Even new defensive roles for Japan can be considered "provocative to China" (Christensen 2003, 45) because of these perceptions.

This perspective has clear advantages over structure-alone interpretations. Still, the approach has two crucial misgivings. First, it still emphasizes material structure as a blunt fact, second, while it recognizes non-material factors, it doesn't tell us why they are so important for Sino-Japanese relations.

Liberalism

Beyond balance of power, given the intensity of bilateral and regional exchanges, there is interdependence as a factor: the depth of economic and institutional integration. Japan was China's largest trading partner between 1994-2003, in 2015, it was second only after the US⁴. China, on the other hand, has been Japan's number two partner since 1993

⁴ Japan is the 3rd biggest source for imports (120 billion; 9.8%), (after the US and South Korea; respectively 122B and 121B). Hong Kong adds 32,9B to this. Also, Japan is China's second biggest export market (149 billion, 6.6%; HK adds 1.56B), (after the US, 436B, 19%) as of 2016. Nowadays, Chinese trade with the US largely surpasses trade with Japan. US trade in 2016 amounted to 593.4 billion dollars; with Japan in 2016 it was worth 303.5 billion dollars; both include Hong Kong. <<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en>> (Accessed June 1, 2019)

and its largest from 2004 onwards⁵. In the last decades, China's economic ascendancy has come to contrast strikingly with Japanese stagnation, which has meant a relative decline of Japanese importance for China.⁶ Oppositely, the value of Japan's trade with China has exceeded that of its trade with the U.S by about 40 percent (\$303.5 billion to \$ 195.5 billion)⁷.

That said, we must not be led to think that Japan is not fundamental for the Chinese economy. Many of the goods that China exports have been manufactured in China by Japanese companies, these supplying high-tech designs and technology with great added-value. The sheer weight of Japanese corporations in China cannot be understated (Yahuda 2014, 76). Despite the growing asymmetry, it is a fair assessment that economic ties are very important for both parties.

Liberal authors (Heazle, 2007; Mochizuki, 2009; Sutter, 2002), aware that economic interdependence hasn't translated into good political ties, focus their attention on the role economy plays in giving the actors stakes thus stopping relational deterioration. The reasons for the unsavory clashes are relegated to other factors such as security, territory, nationalism, history, and other causes (Haezle 2007, 176; Sutter 2002, 37). Mochizuki (2009) suggests the current downturn as something temporary, positive incentives such as trade and human relationships leading thus to a new equilibrium

⁵ In 2016 Japanese imports from China amounted to a peak 26.3% of all imports (China, 149B; HK, 1.56B). As for the exports, percentage-wise, they peaked in 2010 at 20% of all exports, or 25% if we include Hong Kong (respectively 150 billion dollars and 187 billion dollars). Currently, it amounts to 21.8% (152.9B) including HK<<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en>> (Accessed June 1, 2019).

⁶ Nowadays, Chinese trade with the US largely surpasses trade with Japan. US trade in 2016 amounted to 593.4 billion dollars; with Japan in 2016 it was worth 303.5 billion dollars; both include Hong Kong. Exports to Japan have decreased in relative terms to 6.6% (2016). <<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en>> (Accessed June 1, 2019)

⁷ Hong Kong included; <<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/>> (Accessed June 1, 2019).

(Mochizuki 2009: 140). This said, as time passes, it becomes more and more far-fetched that economic interdependence alone, no matter how strong, will come to signify a bettering of political relations. The remaining two pillars of neo-liberal analysis, international institutions and norms plus democratization (Haggard 2014, 45) are generally undervalued in East Asia's case. Why that is so is clearly illustrated by the nature of regional frameworks.

Economic interdependence in Northeast Asia itself has not been accompanied by regional institutionalization (Kahler 2012, 67). The institutions that do exist in the broader East Asia, like ASEAN, the APT and APEC, have their institutional effects limited by their design (Kahler 2012, 78). Institutions have developed through inclusion, not depth (Haggard 2014, 46), therefore there are few institutionalized mechanisms and delegated authority); lack of formality and legalization being the norm (Kahler 2012, 86). It is thus not unexpected that given the mixture of dictatorships and democracies the region present regime is not high up on the discussions. The ATP, despite having both Japan and China as members, remains less an institution than a dialogue. Institutions such as the APT, the East Asian Summit, and the ASEAN Regional Forum "retain a minimal intergovernmental format, with little or no delegation to a permanent international staff or set of institutions" (Kahler 2012, 80). Plus, "the three major powers - China, Japan and South Korea - have not negotiated any preferential trade or investment agreement" (Kahler 2012, 86). The region has also failed to produce any sort of security community, this despite the multiple extant challenges (Kahler 2012, 67).

Constructivism and East Asia: Prosperity and Conflict

The failure of both material structures, power and interdependence, to serve as a foundation to comprehend bilateral strife can be seen as a determinate clue that immaterial realities are the culprits. This strengthens the case for a constructivist approach. Through narrative and interpretative forms (Leheny 2014, 68), constructivism's focus on cultural-ideational variables enables it to shed light on aspects that traditional IR theory cannot (Lai 2014, 33). "Constructivism posits that social reality is constructed out of the meanings that people give to things" (Leheny 2014, 64), thus the ideas and conceptions actors employ when engaging reality are considered inseparable from the meaning of reality itself, and they should be analyzed as such.

Despite differences concerning ontology, methodology or theoretical language, constructivist authors largely agree that identity is crucial to understand not only Sino-Japanese relations but East Asia itself (Berger 2003; He 2008; Roy 2005; Suzuki 2007 etc.). East Asian regional affairs display less great power tension than a neo-realist account might suggest. At the same time, the potential for conflict and the obstacles to cooperation are greater than what a neo-liberal institutionalist might expect (Berger 2003, 388). The way nations in East Asia perceive threats and cooperation opportunities is strongly conditioned by the way these issues are defined in the context of their political cultures (Berger 2003, 388).

The surprising peacefulness of East Asia despite generalized political rivalries and constant confrontation between neighbors can be attributed to the fact that economic growth is one of the primary bases of governmental legitimacy (Berger 2003, 389). Consequently, in East Asia, unlike Western Europe, the decision to shelve or not escalate disputes would rest not in a common identity or real commitment to peace, but in largely

instrumental considerations (Berger 2003, 389). As a result, regional cooperation is fragile (Berger 2003, 389).

This can help us understand why China and Japan have managed a virtual separation between politics and economics. In spite of economic interconnectedness animosities are just “under the surface”. Japan affirmed itself in the post-war era as a “merchant nation” under the “Yoshida doctrine” (Berger 2003, 394) and China sought to replace fading Maoist ideology’s legitimacy and enable the nation’s political goals through the instrumental use of market mechanisms (Berger 2003, 396). Contrary to what neoliberal institutionalism might expect, the interdependence and sophistication of trade resulted from determinate ideational shifts in actor interests, it was not their cause (Berger 2003, 398).

Useful and rich they may be, constructivist accounts often do not give clear predictions or observable implications or follow an explicit research framework. This likely being so due to reluctance concerning giving assent to a positivist cause/effect epistemology. These attempts are closer to the mark though, yet still are not equipped with a nuanced and comprehensive enough understanding of actor, thus the historical rebuilding of the identity of both countries that is so well established by scholars of east Asian nationalisms (Zhao; Gries; Hughes etc.) is presented only in limited fashion and fails to pan out in its entirety. The relational and domestic aspects are therefore often compartmentalized, preeminence given to one or the other. We intend to show that our framework based on Lebow’s three-pronged approach surpasses these limitations, producing both an historically informed and theoretically insightful picture of the relationship. We will demonstrate how domestic factors pan out and are bilaterally

operationalized in bilateral exchanges.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

All in all, identity, memory and agency are all needed to understand the intersubjectivity and ideational aspects of Sino-Japanese relations. Identity change is key, but without memory and agency its actualization in a negative relational structure cannot be understood. We argue that a systematic understanding can be produced from the above insights, which thus requires subsequent corroboration through an analysis of key interactions by pinpointing ideational factors in their unraveling.

2.1 Theoretical Background: Wendt's Structure and Lebow's Motives

To achieve the above, theoretically, we rely on both Richard Ned Lebow's actor motive scheme and Alexander Wendt's account of structure. The latter is also important in supplying us with a threefold categorization of the international system⁸ which enables us to incorporate systemic conditions in our analysis. Basically, Wendt's constructivism gives us our general tools in how we are to understand both bilateral and systemic structures, Lebow, in turn, allows us to flesh out in a nuanced manner the actors that play out outcomes in the aforementioned.

Structure in Wendt

Wendt provides us with a deeper understanding of international structure. He adds to the customary systemic macro-structure the concept of micro-structure, which amounts to "structures of interaction" (Wendt (1999) 2010, 147) in between unit and system levels

⁸ This refers to the three cultures of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian (Wendt (1999) 2010, 247-251).

(Wendt (1999) 2010, 147-150). In contrast to unit-level explanations, micro-structural theory relies on the relationship between a given system's parts to explain outcomes (Wendt (1999) 2010, 148).

“In contrast to unit-level theories, interaction-level micro-structural theories explain outcomes by reference to the relationships between a system's parts” (Wendt (1999) 2010, 148). Therefore, micro-structures in the states system exist in the same number as interaction complexes among states (Wendt (1999) 2010, 147). It is at this level that our enquiry is to be understood.

According to Wendt structure, be it macro or micro, will contain three elements: material conditions, interests and ideas; although related, these levels are to a degree distinct and have different explanatory roles (Wendt (1999) 2010, 139). Consequentially, even if structure is “in the singular” (Wendt (1999) 2010, 139), for analytical purposes “it may be useful (...) to treat the distributions of the three elements as separate ‘structures’ (Wendt (1999) 2010, 139). The ideational aspect is thought to take precedence (Wendt 2010, 140) for “without ideas there are no interests, without interests there are no meaningful material conditions, without material conditions there is no reality at all” (Wendt (1999) 2010, 139). Ideas, of course, include the actors' beliefs about each other's rationality, strategies, and preferences (Wendt (1999) 2010, 159). These necessarily inform their every interaction, giving meaning to material conditions and shaping their perspectives at every turn. Every key interaction leaves a mark on the bilateral relationship and changes mutual expectations, this demands that both our understanding of domestic change, relationship dynamics and negative key interactions match in terms of ideational content.

Cultures of anarchy

At the macro-level, Wendt recognizes three cultures of anarchy. These are named Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian (Wendt (1999) 2010, 247). This allows us to understand the context of actor interactions: If a pure self-help system, which happens in the Hobbesian culture only (Wendt (1999) 2010, 247), the balance of power defines relations *per se*. On the other extreme, a Kantian system is based on friendship (Wendt (1999) 2010, 298), which would preclude conflict and distrust (Wendt (1999) 2010, 299). The Lockean culture though, has countries generally recognize each other's sovereignty *as a right* (Wendt (1999) 2010, 279), therefore borders change rarely and inter-state war is normally limited. Violence is a possibility but is constrained (Wendt (1999) 2010, 281). This leaves a natural space for ideational concerns to shape relations. Ideas and history can have the influence we will pinpoint precisely because the material strategic environment is indeterminate and therefore gives actors a large degree of freedom.

Lebow's Motives Scheme

Lebow, in turn, gives us a more diverse picture of what actors pursue. Given that material factors alone are insufficient, a more nuanced approach to agency is needed. Not only economic gain or security drive actors, norms and the need for esteem do so too. Lebow identifies three fundamental motives and one emotion respectively. *Appetite, spirit, reason* and *fear* (Lebow 2008, 61-72)⁹.

⁹ "Institutions and states have neither psyche nor emotions. However, the people who comprise and run them do. They often project their psychological needs on to their political units, and feel better about themselves when those units win victories or perform well... The active pursuit of honor and standing is often costly; vast sums have been spent on colonies, national airlines and space exploration, often with no expectation of net material gain" (Lebow 2008, 509).

Appetite is rooted in material well-being (Lebow 2008, 72-76), *spirit* in self-esteem (Lebow 2008, 61-72) and *reason* in the sustenance and realization of a given normative consensus. Seeking to be coherent with it and recognizing in others the pursuit of their own interests, therefore valuing cooperative behavior (Lebow 2008, 76-82)¹⁰. If *reason* amounts to sustaining normative orders, *fear* stands as anathema to *reason* at the other end of the scale. It means the breakdown of order (*stasis*) caused by lack of restraint, “the unrestricted pursuit by actors - individuals, factions or political units - of their parochial goals” (Lebow 2008, 89). Therefore, the dichotomy *reason/fear* frames the actor’s pursuits of *appetite* and *spirit*, self-restraint playing a key role in maintaining trust and, thus, an intelligible and viable order, be it at the system, subsystem or bilateral level (Lebow 2008, 47). A breakdown of order (*stasis*) caused by lack of restraint, which always plays out through key events, results in the progressive “unrestricted pursuit by actors - individuals, factions or political units - of their parochial goals” (Lebow 2008, 89). It amounts to the persecution of the dual motives of *appetite* and *reason* in a disorderly, unpredictable and anti-social manner¹¹ (Lebow 2008, 88-93).

Consequently, the achievement of ordered international communities or bilateral relations depends on the development of relations of trust, without which normative consensus cannot subsist. This is central in establishing expectations for future behavior and framing the pursuit of wealth and esteem, contributing to a stable and efficient social

¹⁰ Reason as a fundamental motive is not to be understood instrumentally but as reflexive, in an Aristotelian fashion. Seeking the maintenance of normative orders, recognizing that short-term restraint enables actors to build meaningful relations and to pursue long-term goals more effectively, therefore being better placed to achieve material well-being and esteem (Lebow 2008, 77)

¹¹ “When reason the drive loses control of either appetite or spirit, actors no longer understand why self-restraint is in their fundamental interest and behave in ways that threaten the ability of others to satisfy their appetites or spirits, and, in extreme circumstances, their survival (Lebow 2008, 511).

order, both at macro and micro levels (Lebow 2013, 18)¹². It demands the willingness to be selfless at times, to do things for others that have little to do with one's own objectives (Lebow 2008, 23)¹³.

If *reason*, amounting to sustaining normative orders, recognizing the interests of others and having self-restraint, stands as the optimum frame for fulfilling *appetite* and *spirit* orderly, *fear* stands as anathema to *reason* at the other end of the scale. It means the breakdown of order (*stasis*) caused by lack of restraint, "the unrestricted pursuit by actors - individuals, factions or political units - of their parochial goals" (Lebow 2008, 89). It amounts to the persecution of the dual motives of *appetite* and *reason* in a disorderly, unpredictable and anti-social manner¹⁴ (Lebow 2008, 88-93). Reality becomes highly conflictual, "and neither the ends nor means of conflict are constrained by norms" (Lebow 2008, 90)¹⁵.

Therefore, being that the dichotomy *reason/fear* frames the actor's pursuit of *appetite* and *spirit*, Lebow graphically represents motives and their consequences for behavior in two triangles:

¹² In contrast with realist skepticism and liberal instrumentalism, constructivists argue that "domestic and international law are social phenomena deeply embedded in the practices, beliefs, and traditions of societies. To understand compliance and defection one must determine the congruence of law, custom, rule or agreement with social practices. When there is a good fit, actors will recognize the legitimacy of what they are being asked to do and are more likely to comply even when they perceive it as contrary to their interests (Lebow 2013, 21).

¹³ Lebow relates this to Kant's emphasis on the treatment of others as "ends in themselves" (Lebow 2013, 23)

¹⁴ "When reason the drive loses control of either appetite or spirit, actors no longer understand why self-restraint is in their fundamental interest and behave in ways that threaten the ability of others to satisfy their appetites or spirits, and, in extreme circumstances, their survival (Lebow 2008, 511).

¹⁵ "Actors make security their first concern and attempt to become strong enough to deter or defeat any possible combination of likely adversaries. Arms races, reciprocal escalation, alliances and forward deployments intensify everyone's insecurity as the security dilemma predicts" (Lebow 2008, 90).

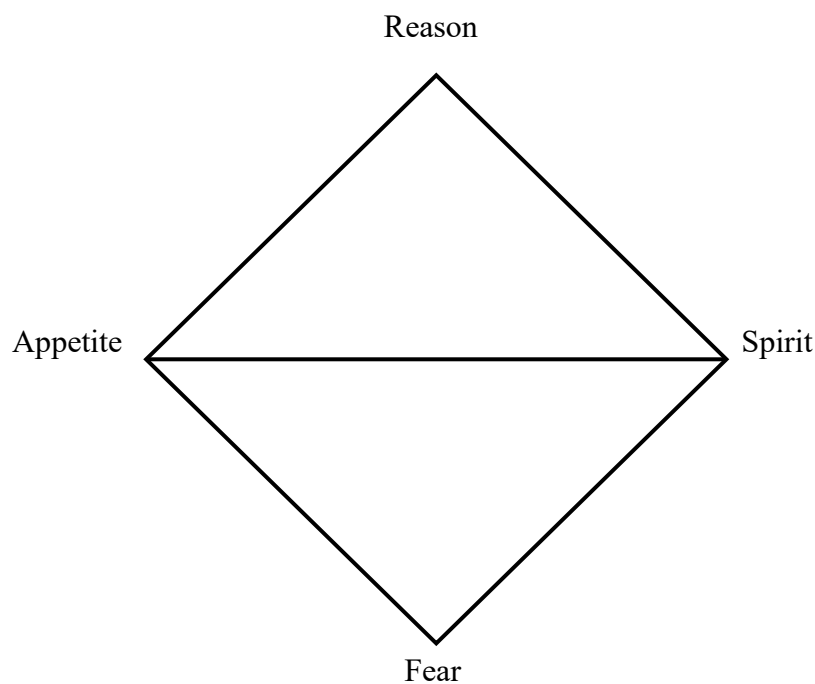


Figure 1: Lebow's motive/emotion structure; (by the author)

If we were to place a regional society or relation complex within (a point representing each actor), there are thus two types of movement possible within the triangles for a cluster or pair, up and down, that is away from and towards *fear*, and horizontal, oscillating between *appetite* and *spirit* (Lebow 2008, 511).

In the real world all three motives are present to a larger or smaller extent in an actor's motivation, *fear* as a conditionality too (Lebow 2008, 510). Lebow theorizes,

“(...) multiple motives would reveal themselves as mixtures, not solutions; they

would not blend but rather give rise to behavior associated with each of the motives present. Such behavior would present anomalies to existing [materialist] theories of international relations because they are all rooted in fear - or appetite - based worlds” (Lebow 2008, 518)

Motives are an important constituent of identity (Lebow 2008, 563). The drives are universal but different actors value and express their seeking of *appetite*, *spirit* and *reason* differently (Lebow 2008, 563). This correlates with the cognitive model part of identity: a particular worldview through which actors or societal complexes “make sense of social, political and economic conditions” (Abdelal et. al 2006, 699).

Changes in motive structure result in changes concerning the valuation of motives and their modes of operationalization (Lebow 2008, 563), which in turn can indirectly have constitutive effects in the relational content of identity. This is especially true in what regards the *spirit*. Self-esteem, which is its goal (Lebow 2008, 122), is maintained through a quest for honor or standing (Lebow 2008, 26). This is to a large degree relational and depends on the recognition of others (Lebow 2008, 61). Consequently, if the pursuits of each countries’ esteem (*spirit*) are conflicting, this may present an equal or even greater danger than power unbalances or zero-sum economic competition (Lebow 2008). It can trigger all the same a negative spiral in bilateral ties. It is here that we find the key to understanding the Sino-Japanese conflict.

The end of the Cold war brought opportunities and novelty for Sino-Japanese relations, the new geo-political situation arguably gave the two nations growing strategic freedom and discretion. The fall of the Soviet Union and the advent of American

hegemony delivered both countries of their most plausible security threat (the USSR) and therefore added to their diplomatic options and pathways. Accordingly, the disintegration of the URRS and the end of bipolarity was accompanied by a redefinition of their domestic policies (Yahuda 2014, 24), these changes were crucial to the actors self-understanding and thus for their bilateral relations, illustrating how they processed systemic changes. Incidentally, the decade not only saw the end of the ‘friendship system’, but also increasing friction and political hostility. We can now turn to how the framework just put forward produces insights from the historical period post-cold war at the macro-level and presents thus a clearer view of the relational decline.

Chapter III: China and Japan in the 1990's

3.1 Changes in internal politics

Tiananmen and changes in Chinese internal politics

In China, the impending Soviet crises encouraged changes brought in the eighties that started the process of reducing socialism to the raising of national production. In the 1990s this would come to gradually solidify 'techno-nationalism' as official policy. The conjoining of nationalist rhetoric with economic and scientific development (Hughes 2006, 30). Deng Xiaoping envisioned a future where party conferences were dominated by well-educated technocrats, even if, or necessarily so, tempered by socialization in the correct virtues of "socialist morality, love for the socialist motherland and a sense of national dignity"¹⁶ (Hughes 2006, 34). Consolidating patriotic ideology that upheld this association of socialism with economic opening became the task of the new generation of technocratic personnel within the party hierarchy. These individuals would come to form the core of leadership in the 1990s, preeminent among them the party secretary Jiang Zemin (Hughes 2006, 44).

Incidentally though, nationalism itself was not (at least yet) a state-monopoly, therefore as an idea it was vulnerable to competing interpretations. In fact, the Tiananmen protesters claimed the patriotic high ground when they took to the streets. A declaration was issued that identified them with the patriotic movement of 1919, defining themselves as both 'patriotic' and 'democratic' (Hughes 2006, 52). Hughes argues that the prevalence

¹⁶ Hughes quotes Deng's (1984) "The Present Situation and the Tasks Before Us", *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*, Beijing; Foreign Language Press:224-258.

of nationalist discourse has a determinate meaning:

“The resulting salience of nationalistic themes in the democracy movement shows how, in times of political reform such as the late 1980s, it is imperative for political dissident actors to be able to legitimate their actions as not amounting to traitorous activities likely to derail the process of nation-building. It is in this way that the need for the Party leadership to reclaim [a monopoly of] the nationalist mantle became central to the politics of legitimacy that emerged in the 1990s” (Hughes 2006, 53).

Capturing nationalistic legitimacy determinately became essential. The internal disputes following Tiananmen did make evident the friction between those in the CCP who would rather turn back to Maoism and those who would further reforms. This though did not extend to questioning whether the Party was to retain complete political control. In fact, it presupposed it. Hegemony, in turn, demanded clear *normative* authority (Zhao 2004, 213).

The Patriotic Education Campaigns

Unsurprisingly, the social isolation and economic sanctions China faced from 1989 plus the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 heated up the debate between die-hard ideologues and reform-inspired pragmatism even further (Hughes 2006, 56; Yahuda 2014, 24-26; Zhao 2004, 210-214). Both the character of the regime and general direction of ideological education were at stake. The pragmatists wanted to continue elevating nationalism as the legitimization of economic reform and the leadership role of

the communist party. Deng and the reformists attributed the collapse of the East European regimes to their failure to improve people's livelihoods, for the CCP to avoid a similar fate in China the economic openness was paramount. They wanted to focus education on patriotism, market-oriented reform, and traditional culture. For the conservatives this 'peaceful evolution' and reformation was just a path for the regime to be overthrown, just as the Soviet regime was overthrown (Zhao 2004, 214-215). It betrayed the ideas and principles of socialism and played into the strategy of the capitalist West; therefore education should address ideological purity and opposition to Western capitalism and values (Zhao 2004, 215). The new secretary general Jiang Zemin was an heir to Deng's technocratic project and, soon after his appointment in 1989, predictably expressed his support for the further internalization of nationalism (Hughes 2006, 57). The Education Commission, accordingly, further expanded the exposition to patriotism by the students, incorporating it in subjects like language, history and geography (Hughes 2006, 57). Politically though, the situation was at a stand still. The conservatives controlled key institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, the Central Propaganda Department and leading newspapers. Chen Yun, the head of the conservative upheaval, challenged the reformists openly in the Preparatory Meeting on Nationwide Propaganda Work in 1992 (Zhao 2004, 216). Eventually, Deng Xiaoping deemed necessary a return to active politics in order to reassert the country's direction. This resulted in the 'Southern tour'. Traveling through South China, he whipped local party support praising the success of the special economic zones and criticizing the ideologues, thus mobilizing to his support the local cadres who had much to win with economic openness.

The impasse broken, China's commitment to nationalism, supplanting socialism, was completed. All in all, the scope of the 1990s campaigns would dwarf previous efforts

in scope, intensity and content, engulfing the whole social body. (Wang 2012, 96). In 1993, the Education Commission issued a central document, 'A Program for China's Education Reform and Development' (Zhao 2004, 218) laying patriotism as the guiding principal of the whole reform (Zhao 2004, 218). In November that same year, a circular was issued on 'Carrying out Patriotic Education in Primary and Secondary Schools throughout the Country by Film and Television' (Zhao 2004, 218), by May 1994, more than 95% of students of primary and middle school students were watching patriotic films recommended by the Education Commission (Zhao 204, 218).

Soon, in the Summer of 1994, Marxist indoctrination had been almost completely replaced, or rather subordinated to patriotic themes (Zhao 2004, 219). For instance, the new 'Guidelines for Patriotic Education' removed the Marxist-thought examination and courses from university science degrees, it was substituted by the 'I am Chinese' program "which taught students to be proud of being Chinese by concentrating on the 'great achievements' of the Chinese people and especially the Communist Party" (Zhao 2004, 219). A climax was reached that same year with the 'Outline for Conducting Patriotic Education (Zhao 2004, 219), its objectives included:

'Boosting the nation's spirit, enhancing its cohesion, fostering its self-esteem and sense of pride, consolidating and developing a patriotic united front to the broadest extent possible, and directing and rallying the masses' patriotic passions to the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics [and] helping the motherland become unified prosperous and strong' (Zhao 2004, 219).

Ultimately, all Chinese people were intended to take lessons on patriotism, everything from tourist stops and museums to local community centers were ordered to highlight their patriotic identities (Zhao 2012, 221). Pragmatically led and efficiently executed (Zhao 2004, 239), Zhao tells us that the final goal of patriotic education “was to build ties between individuals and the state, to encourage unity and modernization among the citizens regardless of their political beliefs and ethnicity while defusing any challenges to the legitimacy of the communist state (Zhao 2004, 223). If it was not possible or desirable to bind China through the socialist rejection of Western capitalism, it would rather be cemented and united by the broad appeal of Sun Yat Sen’s brand of nationalism (Yahuda 2014, 25). The CCP was to be understood by all, through these campaigns, as the embodiment of ‘Chineseness’ (Yahuda 2014, 26), the nation moving from dark to light under its leadership (Hughes 2006, 75). Simply put, the intended message was clear and straightforward: the best way to defend and glorify the Chinese nation was to defend and glorify the CCP (Zhao 2004, 239).

In general, the education campaign and ideological shift appear to have paid off. (Zhao 2004, 239). There is no doubt about the societal strength of Chinese patriotism: an 1995 official survey of 10.000 young people across China found that patriotism had risen from fifth place (1984) to become the second most important ‘personal value’ (Zhao 2004, 241). It would be a mistake though, to attribute the whole collective change of attitudes entirely to it (Zhao 2004, 242). Its greatest success perhaps was more subtle and indirect: the valorization and letting loose of popular and elite patriotism, before constricted, in due time achieving its subordination to the state (Zhao 2004, 242). It is important to note that despite sharing many of its assumptions, liberal and popular nationalism could be critical of the CCP, the Tiananmen demonstrations a living proof of this. These

alternatives progressively lost strength in the 1990s though, to a large degree because the ascendancy of the official narrative surrounding Chinese *victimization* by foreign powers (Suzuki 2007, 33). In the post-1989 diplomatic isolation, China was singled out through sanctions and condemnation as ‘the last bastion of communism’, standing against liberal democracy and democratization, an ‘Other’ (Suzuki 2007, 33). Its poor human rights record went against the current normative agendas and therefore call for constant criticism, in addition, this brought additional suspicion to its non-democratic status. All of this made China’s growth in wealth and military power be easily framed as revisionist (Suzuki 2007,33). The constant foreign calls to internal reform and negative comments on the Chinese regime were growingly perceived through the narrative and framework of the last hundred years of foreign oppression and therefore brought sympathy to the internationally harassed CCP (Suzuki 2007, 34). Foreign criticism growingly rallied people around the government, not against it (Zhao 2004, 244). Moreover, the failure of postcommunism in Russia and much of East Europe came to give substance to the governments’ skepticism towards political reform. Many intellectuals became more concerned with disorder and disunity than democratization (Zhao 2004, 243). Liberal democracy lost appeal, thus the illiberal developmentalist alternative defended by the CCP gained support (Zhao 2004, 243). As the confluence of all of this, the CCP nationalist strategy was growingly strengthened.

China’s New Perspective on Relations

If we dully take into account the global importance of nationalist discourse, born in the 1980s and sacralized in the 1990s, it becomes unsurprising that the Chinese government often terms a ‘proper’ Japanese attitude towards history as a pre-condition

for constructive relations (Gries 2004, 90-98; Rozman 2012, 166-168; Wan 2006, 110; Zhen 1999, 136). As Gries and Zhao point out, no matter how flexible and malleable China's pragmatic state-nationalism is, it is inherently vulnerable to the triggering of historical sensitivities (Gries 2004, 90-98; Zhao 2004, 32). Its necessity of coopting the public and elite's nationalistic feelings necessarily make it so. Interestingly though, the Chinese government does not persistently discuss history with other countries. Even if China's claim and rationale of historical victimization is broader, including Western imperialism, the USA and the Soviet Union (Suzuki 2007, 37), for its relation with Japan it became a crucial aspect in the 1990s. Wan argues that China's insistence on the 'history issue' has a double significance: on the one hand, China claims that the issue has value *per se*, Japan not having repented properly, that itself constituting a risk of resurgent Japanese militarism. Most of the Chinese analysts share this view (Rozman 2012, 166-168; Wan 2006, 111). On the other hand, even if China's officials and analysts deny it, history is occasionally used for diplomatic and economic gain; a tendency already seen in the 1980's (Wan 2006, 111). The first aspect though was the one which became hyperbolized under Jiang Zemin (Rozman 2012, 159-169; Wan 2006, 112). The new generation of Chinese leaders had no sensibility towards or memory of Japan as the first developed Asian country, in this they contrasted the likes of Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. Their experience was wholly shaped by the war experience, Jiang Zemin himself was known for his antipathy towards China's neighbor (Yahuda 2014, 35). Alas, Japan was required to stay permanently aware of its past flaws and crimes, something that, as we shall see, it was less and less willing to do so. Economic necessity tempers what is a *spirited* dislike for the neighbor by most of its elites.

Indeed, the Japanese contribution to Chinese economic development continued

and continues to be actively sought by the Chinese authorities. Both economies became more and more integrated during the 1990's, and even if relations worsened substantially, the Chinese government highly valued economic intercourse with Japan¹⁷, albeit it is not as publicized as before (Wan 2006, 115). This holds despite Japan's relative economic decline, the Chinese commitment to keeping its economy growing and open reaffirming the importance of Japanese technology and investment (Hook et. al 2012, 173).

New issues also came to the spotlight. Taiwan, which had been mostly a non-issue since the 1970s reemerged (Wan 2006, 115). Since the island's democratization, Japan has been engaging it more and more, building rapport and, in return, being courted by local officials. Chinese authorities and analysts have grown weary of these developments, reaffirming in turn the need for Japan to maintain its relations shy of officialization (Wan 2006, 114). The Taiwan status is obviously central to China's policy, more-so to a regime flouting nationalist credentials, it's important to its integrity as a nation, which means it relates to its self-image, its *spirit*. This particular issue is also connected with the matter of the American-Japanese alliance, the Chinese side requiring Japan openly not to include it in U.S-Japanese security cooperation. Here the tables also have turned for China, during the Cold War Beijing was largely acceptant of Japan's ties to America, this for the purpose of keeping the Soviet Union in check (Wan 2006, 115-116), since the mid-1990s though worries have emerged concerning the alliance's terms revision. Wan quotes the Chinese Foreign Ministry as stating that their central point of concern is first its involvement with the issue of Taiwan, second the general direction of

¹⁷ In 2005, after anti-Japanese demonstrations, the Chinese government engaged the protesters and explained the relationship with Japan is economically important, boycotting Japanese goods being counterproductive (Wan 2006, 115)

Japan's military (Wan 2006, 116). Chinese authorities show relative concern and alarm concerning Japanese military modernization, but understand Japan is a sovereign nation and know themselves are modernizing their military means (Wan 2006, 116).

Finally, the Senkaku/Diaoyudao islands are, from a practical standpoint, crucial, despite all the noise around it. It is civil society's initiative that props the government to take a stance, while at home trying to control activists (Wan 2006, 117; Weiss 2014, 104-105); Weiss mentions a circular to local party committees referring to the islands as economic and strategically insignificant compared to the importance of bilateral relations. (Weiss 2014, 104-105) This contrast is scarcely surprising giving the already described relation between state-nationalism and popular feeling. What happens to be key is the maintenance of the dispute, giving in decisively to Japan's demands being inconceivable in the new nationalist atmosphere. Given the symbolic value and practical irrelevance of the islets to both the regime and China's esteem, its *spirit* appears to be what drives bold declarations, jet scrambles and naval incursions. It can be, for all intents and purposes, a "micro-Taiwan" in the national consciousness.

Japan's 'normalization'

With the end of the cold war, the Soviet Union was gone, and with it the most serious threat to Japanese security, a definite structural change in Japan's international environment. Internally, Japan's consensus around the Yoshida doctrine began to falter, albeit slowly (Samuels 2007, 37). This double altercation meant that Japan's international positioning was to change. First, it coincided with a decrease in its economic influence. Albeit, it must be said, despite the bubble, the continuation of the policy of economic engagement and developmental cooperation with Asia was never at stake, it kept its place

as an essential pillar to Japan's diplomacy. It is also true though, that Japan's post-bubble fragility slashed its hopes of spearheading East Asia's integration nevertheless (Rozman 2002, 82).

The crash and the need for internal economic reform already posed enough difficulties for the island nation. These were compounded by 'catalytic crises' (Samuels 2007, 65) which pressed upon the country, challenging Japan's traditional post-war policies. It was in the strategic realm that the country faced a whole new situation, the difficult challenges coming to open the way to 'normalization' and an increased international role. Already in 1990, the first Iraq war prompted a reaction by those conservatives who disparaged the continued influence of the Yoshida Doctrine, seeking for Japan to have a more participatory role in international security. The Liberal Democratic Party's secretary-general Ichiro Ozawa, who later coined the expression 'normal nation' (*hutsu no kuni*)¹⁸ (Samuels 2007, 35), pressed hard, but Prime-minister Toshiki Kaifu responded by saying it was considered "constitutionally impossible", supporters of the *status quo* remained strong (Samuels 2007, 66). Japan, even impeded of refugee rescue operations (Samuels 2007, 66), ended up writing the customary large check, bringing criticism from its partners and allies alike (Samuels 2007, 67¹⁹; Yahuda 2014, 27). This humiliation of yet another accusation of 'checkbook diplomacy' had Ozawa and his anti-mainstream allies commit themselves to bringing down what they saw as an overdue Japanese inability to act in the appropriate manner demanded by its

¹⁸ As in having Japan assume all the purple of sovereignty by eschewing Article 9.

¹⁹ Ambassador Michael Armacost cabled the following to Washington: "A large gap was revealed between Japan's desire for recognition as a great power and its willingness and ability to assume these risks and responsibilities... For all its economic prowess, Japan is not in the great power league... Opportunities for dramatic initiatives... Were lost to caution... [and] Japan's crisis management system proved totally inadequate." (Samuels 2007, 67)

economic status and international reputation²⁰ (Samuels 2007, 67). The situation though remained. The taboo of foreign deployment did break with the 1992 Cambodia peacekeeping (Yahuda 2014, 27), but despite SDF presence, key functions of PK were disallowed (Drifte 2000, 54). Alas, even this small Japanese physical presence and the International Cooperation Law that permitted it were only achieved because of the US's leading role (Drifte 2000, 54).

Expectedly, when the threat of an American-North Korean war surfaced in 1993-1994 Japan was still wholly unprepared (Drifte 2000, 54; Samuels 2007, 67). Insufficient response to the new strategic environment could clearly put the American alliance in jeopardy (Samuels 2007, 67), Japan's ally regularly showing dissatisfaction towards Japan's passivity. The 1990s shift towards international management and containment of low intensity conflict has the international community expecting more of a role by a democratic economic powerhouse such as Japan (Samuels 2007, 71). This becomes specially true if the island nation wills to affirm itself as a prestigious 'civilian power' (Drifte 2000, 110-111), deepening its presence in international institutions. Japan has in fact signaled this, concretely through its permanent security council bid (Drifte 2000, 110). Ironically, it was North Korea's hostile rhetoric and missile launches, a challenge in Japan's immediate surroundings, that became an opportunity to erode domestic resistance to both a tighter alliance with American and a more assertive Japan (Samuels 2007, 67).

Indeed, Japan has generally been adapting slowly to the post-East-West confrontation (Drifte 2000, 53) but adapting it is. Adding to the mentioned external

²⁰ Ozawa's vision for Japan were expressed in his popular book which the title translates to 'Blueprint for a New Japan', arguing that the country should accept risks in foreign and economic policy in order to enhance national power and prestige (Green 2003, 19).

pressures, after a series of weak cabinets in the early 1990s (Drifte 2000, 53), the domestic situation unraveled. By the early 1990's pacifism as an ideal came under severe pressure, regional instability made people believe pacifism less and less feasible (Samuels 2007, 118). Contrastingly, the SDF polished its image, it associated itself with the idea of peace and evolved from being a 'nuisance' to becoming growingly popular and accepted (Samuels 2007, 72). On the political sphere, two crucial changes occurred. First, the Japanese Socialist Party, the historical upholder of an unconditional commitment to Article 9 politically collapsed. Its grasping of power in a deal with the LDP in 1994 had its administration uphold the constitutionality of the SDF and the legitimacy of the U.S.-Japan mutual security treaty (Samuels 2007, 118), moreover, that same year's electoral system change ended multiple seat constituencies in favor of single seat constituencies (Yahuda 2014, 26), helping the demise of the Japan Socialist Party as a major party. Secondly, intergenerational change altered the political balance inside the LDP. Certainly influenced by the demands of Japan's new geostrategic situation, more and more younger conservatives were comfortable with, and made an effort for Japan to have an expanded international role (Samuels 2007, 74), patriotism too had found a broader appeal. The decade saw both the national flag and the anthem officialized (Rozman 2002, 85) Finally, in 2000, Koizumi Junichiro became prime-minister and the 'mercantile realists' (Michishita and Samuels 2012, 150), that had dominated since the advent of the Yoshida Doctrine, were relatively sidelined (Samuels 2007, 74). A newly found self-confidence emerged, accompanied by a desire to end post-war self-depreciation and affirm the country as a great power (Rozman 2002, 89). Reforms to bring stronger executive leadership soon followed, the bureaucracy was reined in and, in the advent of the 'war on terror', the Japanese executive reacted quickly (Samuels 2007, 74-75).

The trend, since the mid-1990s, has been the gradual removal of institutional restraints to Japan's diplomatic and military freedom of action. Fifteen new security laws were enacted from 1991 to 2003 and in 2007 the Japanese Defense Agency became a full fledged ministry (Samuels 2007, 86).

The Yoshida Doctrine has not been discarded though, Japan's defense profile is limited to Japan's periphery and 'international contributions' (Samuels 2007, 89), even if itching towards collective self-defense as military exchanges with the U.S increase (Samuels 2007, 94). Samuels paraphrases and agrees with Mochizuki in the end result of the 'revisionists' rise to power:

... the assault on the Yoshida Doctrine by revisionists has not yet resulted in fundamental doctrinal change. By wrapping SDF deployments in pacifist ideals and by steadfastly refusing to declare Japan capable of collective self-defense, Japan has hewn to the Yoshida line. Tokyo has stretched the idea of complementary defense geographically and has extended its roles and missions to rear areas far from home, but it has not tinkered with basic doctrinal elements. Maintaining the asymmetric alliance with the United States, relying on U.S forces based in Japan, refusing to adopt offensive rules of engagement, and continuing to cheap ride with limited budgets all point towards the extension, rather than the discarding, of Japan's postwar grand strategy. The Yoshida Doctrine is not in tatters, it has been updated (Samuels 2007, 107).

A paradigm change is yet to unfold, even if debate about doing so is now commonplace (Yahuda 2014, 29) and such a change is imaginable (Samuels 2007, 108). For now, what is certain is that Japan's previous strategy of economic engagement and

developmental assistance has been added to. There is a growing awareness of regional security threats, efforts for ‘normalization’ and the seeking of prestige as a civilian power (Drifte 2000, 187; Lebow 2008, 184; Rozman 2002, 74; Samuels 2007, 86; Yahuda 2014, 29). This indicates that the country’s *spirit* is becoming intertwined with its international prestige and the aforementioned role as a civilian pro-status quo power, which, in turn, demands leaving the war guilt behind.

Japan’s ‘reluctant realism’

Japan’s policy towards China in the 1990’s initially showed signs of resilient continuity. The Chinese commitment to economic opening guaranteed that Japan could continue its policy of engagement, disbursing ODA and encouraging the neighbor’s entrance into international institutions such as the ARF, the APEC forum and the WTO (Hook et. all 2012, 173). In conjunction, trade remained a major Japanese interest, not only as a tool for socializing Beijing, but also because by the 1990s China became the biggest Japanese trade partner and recipient of FDI (Wan 2006, 118). As we can see, the guaranteeing of both China’s internal stability and the fostering of economic linkages remained a priority for Japan (Hook et. all 2012, 174). It was in this context that Japan sought to minimize sanctions against its neighbor and bridge China with the West in the aftermath of the Tiananmen square issue. Diplomacy gave an extra incentive to this positioning. In the post-cold war situation emerged a fear of ‘Japan-passing’ (Hook et. all 2012, 174), becoming unimportant, or of being caught in a ‘tug of war’ (Hook et. all 2012, 174) between the U.S and China. This further required Japanese proximity with both nations and thus reinforced its commitment to its ‘connecting’ role (Hook et. all 2012,

174). Japan though now also growingly expressed a wish to end the disparity in the bilateral relation (Wan 2006, 117). As we previously mentioned, Japan's historical guilt towards China shaped the ODA policy itself and, in the 1980's, had come to frame Japan as a necessarily repenting nation that had to acquiesce China's needs or demands. Now, Japan was seeking a more prestigious and forward-looking extended role in international society, therefore it saw as appropriate to leave history behind and have 'normal' cooperative relations (Wan 2006, 117).

Appallingly and contrary to expectation, soon the whole policy of engagement would be questioned. The most important rationale for engaging China always had been to have a stable, peaceful and predictable neighbor. Yet, this objective and vision, one that had come all the way from the early Cold-War, was checked in the mid-1990s due to a growing weariness and worry about Chinese behavior (Green 2003, 78). Ballooning military spending had played its role, but, in the end, it was Chinese nuclear tests and missile launches that shocked Japanese policy-makers (Green 2003, 78). Japan's disenchantment with China was, of course compounded by generational change in the LDP, the new leaders being less favorable to Chinese concerns over history and bilateral relations. (Hook et. all 2012, 174). Indeed, a China that had stomped protest in Tiananmen, tested nuclear weapons and shot threatening missiles contrasted greatly with the democratizing Taiwan (Hook et. all 2012, 174). The old 'china hands' that had built the normalization and the positive relations of the past twenty years faded too with this generational change (Yahuda 2014, 36). Duly, Japan's perspective has partially moved from engagement to hedging (Green 2003, 78; Hook et. all 2012, 174; Wan 2006, 118). Continuing to socialize its neighbor through aid and economic links, yes, but from then on tempering it with a suspicion towards Chinese motives (Green 2003, 80).

3.2 Changes in bilateral relations

The worsening and stagnation of bilateral relations

Taking into account all that was just described, namely the opposition of the post-cold war Japanese and Chinese identities, it is easy to imagine a quick unraveling of bilateral ties. This, though, was not true. Both actors were and are aware of the advantages they derive of mutually constructive relations, even if ties came to be strained later, fueled by mutual distrust. America too had come to pursue a general policy of economic and political engagement with China by then, which helped lessen barriers to Sino-Japanese cooperation even more (Hook et.al 2012, 173). In the 1990s, Japanese and Chinese economic links came to an all time high, growing abruptly since the beginning of the decade, the case being the same with people-to-people exchanges²¹ (Wan 2006, 64).

The two countries have been important trading partners for each other. Japan was China's largest trading partner in the period 1994-2003. In 2004 the European Union, with ten new members joining in May, became China's largest trading partner at \$177.29, and the United States remained number two at \$169.63 billion. China has been Japan's second-largest trading partner since 1993, trailing only the United States. But if we include trade with Hong Kong, much of it transshipment to China, Japan's trade with China (¥22.48 trillion) surpassed its trade with the United States (¥20.48 trillion) in 2004 (Wan 2006, 47).

This did not change with the difficult and worsening of political ties, giving origin to the expression "separation of politics and economics", the development and growth of

²¹ Tourism and student exchanges have increased substantially also, in fact Wan describes the increase as "astronomical" (Wan 2006, 64).

economic interdependence being almost entirely insulated from the political process.

The beginning of the last decade of the XX century started with an upswing (Wan 2006, 123). China was in disarray after the Tiananmen crackdown, isolated and stung by economic sanctions (Weiss 2014, 104). At the time, it saw Japan as a sure pathway to bridge that isolation and with good reason. Japan had been more restrained than its peers in criticizing and taking action against China. In fact there was a tussle about what would be the best course of action between the LDP and the MOFA (Hook et. all 2012, 172), but in the end the traditional approach of valuing Chinese stability and secure bilateral ties prevailed. It was decided that the optimum was to minimize ostracism and value economic and political engagement (Hook et. all 2012, 172).

Japan, first, suspended its yen loan program and high-level diplomatic contacts with Beijing as part of a concerted effort by the international community to pressure China (Green 2003, 78; Hook et.all 2012, 172). Nonetheless, it was never comfortable with this turn of events, lobbying quietly and using its influence in the G7 to progressively remove sanctions against China (Hook et.all 2012, 172). Fruit of its efforts, Japan could gather agreement over resuming its third yen loan program in the 1990 Houston G7 summit (Hook et. all 2012, 172), then, Japanese policymakers proceeded to restore full diplomatic ties in 1991. The Chinese leadership acknowledged Japanese efforts and tried to break through its isolation by laying groundwork for a visit by the Emperor of Japan, a breakthrough of profound significance given the recent past (Weiss 2014, 108). Surprisingly, Jiang Zemin himself, known for having no sympathy for Japan, announced the visit in July the 7th, the anniversary of Japan's invasion of China (Weiss 2014, 108). When the imperial visit itself took place protests were rooted out and any possible

situation that might create discomfort was stifled by Chinese authorities (Weiss 2014, 109-112). Emperor Akihito's show of remorse and respectful demeanor were deemed appropriate, the Chinese authorities expressing satisfaction (Weiss 2014, 111). The successful visit was the high point of a number of very positive bilateral events. In 1990 happened a little known controversy over the existent lighthouse in Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, it was resolved without much trouble and domestic upheaval on either side (Weiss 2014, 108), in 1992, the same year of the emperor's visit, China praised the dispatching of the SDF to Cambodia, its first foreign deployment (Green 2003, 78); for the next two years the two governments continued to deepen bilateral engagement (Wan 2006, 24; Weiss 2014, 111). All things considered, the imperial visit stands as a paradigmatic example of what would be a fundamentally positive exchange.

This period, of course, was not indicative at all of what would be post-cold war relations, something that could be imagined from our discussion of the domestic changes in both countries. Chinese isolation would not last long and, already in 1992, Beijing passed a law opening the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands to oil exploration and asserting the willingness to 'defend' its claim (Green 2003, 85). In 1993, Japan too expressed its first concerns about China's ballooning defense spending (Hook et. all 2012, 174): the country's military budget had started to increase above 10% from 1988-89, a course that was confirmed by Jiang Zemin as appropriate to achieve 'comprehensive national power' (Drifte 2003, 41). China was in a course of political affirmation, internally and externally. By 1994 the 'patriotic education' campaign was in full swing (Shirk 2007, 162) and with it the role of 'enemy' Japanese 'rightists' hyperbolized (Rozman 2002, 108). Concerned about the democratization and the political capital Taiwan was gaining with the West and Japan, an assertive China conducted successive nuclear tests (Hook et.all 2012, 174)

which much appalled Japan. Despite atomic weaponry use happening previously, namely in 1992, 1993 and 1994, by 1995 tension was rising quickly. In 1995 there were concerted efforts to enhance the nuclear non-proliferation regime, China blatantly defying this consensus (Drifte 2003, 45).

Japan had tried to convince China not to undertake the tests, but the Chinese leadership was keen on signaling a possible use of force if faced with the reality of Taiwanese independence; that, of course, left Japan devoid of countermeasures for it had bet everything in socializing China through engagement (Hook et. all 2012, 174), it was the end of the ‘friendship diplomacy’ (Yahuda 2014, 74). Japan froze some aid (Wan 2006, 24) symbolically after the first tests, but to no avail: China conducted further explosions in the Autumn and in 1996. Highly sensible to the nuclear weaponry issue, Japanese politicians from both the left and the right disparaged China (Green 2003, 81). Chinese authorities responded to Japan’s holding back aid with indignation, pointing towards Japan’s ‘historical responsibility’ towards China, which in turn led to more hostility from LDP policy-makers (Green 2003, 82). The symbolic importance of nuclear issues for Japan makes these events stand out. A Japan faced with North-Korean nuclear activism and a Chinese neighbor engaged in shows of force realized closer ties with the United States, in 1996, issuing the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (Wan 2006, 25), this extended Japanese security responsibilities to its ‘areas surrounding Japan’, which much alarmed China due to the Taiwan issue (Weiss 2014, 115), considering it directed against itself (Green 2003, 91) Furthermore, let us not forget that that in the context of the ‘Patriotic Education Campaign’, the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in 1995 in China “put the history of Japanese aggression against China front and center” (Shirk 2007, 164-165). Things were not looking up. Alas, when in 1996 Japanese

activists reacted to Chinese drilling in the vicinity of the Senkaku islands by sponsoring a lighthouse in the islands (Green 2003, 85), Japan was not at all willing to stop the activists as it had did in 1991, a very confrontational environment already been set up (Green 2003, 85). Tokyo's Chief Cabinet Secretary declared he did not see any irregularity with the building (Green 2003, 85) and the Foreign Minister commented Japanese ownership of the islands was 'immemorial' (Gries 2005, 122). Emboldened, the activists escalated the situation by placing a war memorial in the islands, additionally, later that year the group was allowed back into the islands to repair the lighthouse. Of course, Beijing protested and relations soured even more (Green 2003, 85), Tokyo, alarmed with the whole situation, consequently sought guarantees from the U.S.A concerning the defense of the islands (Green 2003, 87). By that time, the previously discussed drift of LDP politicians towards Taiwan was also already being felt. The VISA given to Taiwan's vice-premier to attend the 1994 Asian games became a matter of controversy (Wan 2006, 24), as did nationalistic remarks by some LDP politicians (Green 2003, 94-96)²². Prime-Minister Hashimoto's visit to Yasukuni Shrine in 1996 (Wan 2006, 25), the first since Nakasone, was plainly symptomatic of a relationship in tatters.

The next year, the two governments dedicated themselves to damage control (Wan 2006, 25). After China signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Japan resumed aid in March 1997 (Wan 2006, 25). That same month, it was decided that Prime Minister Hashimoto would visit later that year and President Jiang Zemin in 1998, respectively taking advantage of the twenty-five year anniversary of diplomatic normalization and the twenty year of the Sino-Japanese treaty (Wan 2006, 25). A total

²² In May 1994, the Justice Minister was forced to resign over comments about the Nanjing massacre (Green 2003, 95).

collapse of bilateral ties was averted, Prime Minister Hashimoto's visited China's northeast and, in preparation for Jiang Zemin's visit, Vice President Hu Jintao arrived in Japan early 1998 to lay the ground for Jiang Zemin's visit (Wan 2006, 25). The divide between the two countries though showed itself hard to mend. The visit was considered a total failure (Wan 2006, 25).

In the aftermath of the Taiwan Straits crisis, Jiang Zemin was domestically hard-pressed, specially by the military to take a stronger line against Japan (Hughes 2006, 83). Securing a new Japanese apology for the past and guarantees of non-intervention in the Taiwan straits were deemed essential (Hughes 2006, 83), which meant the relation would not be put in a positive footing at any cost. Unable to deliver, became frustrated during the visit at the host's unwillingness to apologize, going as far as lecturing the Emperor on history during the formal toast. The next day, in the summit session with the Prime Minister, Jiang broke the pre-agreed agenda and gave a lengthy expression of his dissatisfaction over history and Taiwan. The Prime Minister though did not budge nor comply (Green 2003, 97-98). Despite all of this, the Fourth Yen Loan advanced and Keizo Obuchi expressed 'remorse' about the past (Green 2003, 98). Once again, diplomacy would be mobilized to repair the wreckage and prevent further damage. The pattern of constant roadblocks had by that time been established and the disparate narratives had already come to be a source of strife. Jiang Zemin's visit, as it were, stands as the antithesis of the imperial visit. In fact, such an event would by 1998 be deemed politically impossible.

3.3 Conclusions and case choice

From this lengthy historical analysis, we derive the following points which are to

be borne in mind when operationalizing the research framework:

1. Japan and China had a generally healthy and constructive relation from normalization to the mid-1990's, this despite changes in international structure like the end of the cold war and the shadow of previous military conflicts.

2. From the 1990's crises have peppered the relation constantly. Political problems related to identity (territory, history revision, Yasukuni) and, later, the consolidation of the U.S.-Japanese alliance drove an increasingly nationalistic China's dissatisfaction. As for Japan, the 1990's saw a relative failure of engagement, security shocks (Chinese nuclear testing; Taiwan missile crisis; North Korea missile launches etc.) compounding domestic willfulness for the country's 'normalization'. There is distrust and a movement towards hedging, Japan became country less comfortable with constant apologies and a relation with China framed by its history as an aggressor.

3. The multiple crises happening in the 90's and in the XXI century were eventually defused by initiative of one or both countries. Still, these 'reconciliations' were less solid than in the 1980's, crumbling quickly. Bilateral disputes stay determinately unresolved, which leads to intermittent attrition and crisis. More recently, a security dilemma centered around the East China Sea is apparently budding, security interactions, only relevant from the 1990s, are become more and more important.

4. To this day, economic ties have not been severely affected, it is reasonable to assume that the recognition by both countries of their crucial importance have mostly insulated them from the political squabbling.

5. Rather than the change of international structure, which led to post-cold war American hegemony, Sino-Japanese friction grew following specific interactions. The emergence of bilateral friction correlates with the acceleration of domestic political changes. Namely, China's emphasis on nationalism and Japan's policy of international prestige and 'normalization'.

These points suggest that a negative ideational frame indeed has come to shape the Sino-Japanese structure of interaction, both material and economic motives either tempering the aforementioned or arising at a later stage altogether.

The imperial visit, the 1994 nuclear tests and Jiang Zemin's visit are thus, as already mentioned, pivotal events ideal to investigate the ideational content of the emerging ideational friction growingly plaguing relations: They involve key characters, and were ideationally charged events, making them ideal to address the *spirit* as a motive. They are likely to have played a role, or at the very least show, the relational degradation. The presence or absence of the aforementioned ideational strife will reinforce or disprove any such narrative and is thus key to a better understanding of Sino-Japanese relations.

Now we turn to framing the above historical summary in our determinate historical language that, then, finally, will enable us to present the cases.

Chapter IV: Analytical Narrative: New paradigms and ideational conflict

Both the Chinese and the Japanese have been reimagining their national identities since the end of the Cold War. China is developing the identity of a major power since. At the same time, the Chinese government has been fostering nationalism in order to legitimize its political dominance, of which the *Patriotic Education* is a key part (Hughes 2006, Wang 2014, Zhao 2004). This has enhanced China's self-image as a country that was victimized and is under threat. Which in turn helps explain why China continues to look at Japan with suspicion and needs to remind the Japanese of their past crimes. Of course, any hesitation from Japan on apologies or any *faux pas* concerning history are taken with extreme hostility. Contrastingly, Japan is gradually embracing "normalization". There is less and less space for its old 'special' relationship with China and the consequent apologies for the past (Wan 2006, 167). Instead, the island nation is seeking an expanded role in the international community. Japan wants to contrast itself with its old militarist self, China scarcely differentiates them, which in turn brews hostility from Japan. This eventually leading to further negative characterizations of China (Gustafsson 2016, Suzuki 2007, Wan 2006). Japanese attitude changes have also been catalyzed by the Tiananmen massacre, atomic tests and the Taiwan Straits crisis. Rather than framing her as a victim, Japan growingly understands China as a fast developing potentially aggressive autocracy (Gustafsson 2015, Wan 2006, 162-165). Such mismatches in recognition are understood, both theoretically and historically to foster negativity and even conflict (Lebow 2008, Lebow 2010, Lebow 2013, Shogo 2007, Wendt (1999) 2010, Wolf 2011).

The aforementioned facts have led us to put forward a theoretical reinterpretation of the bilateral decline that integrates identity change, memory and bilateral interactions. It appears threat perceptions deriving from the mentioned political problems are fueling geo-political opposition, not the other way around, therefore “the future of Sino-Japanese cooperation heavily depends on their efforts to resolve the negative historical legacy” (He 2008, 162).

In China, there is a “blowback” effect where nationalism fostered or encouraged by the CCP is increasingly harder to control therefore demanding “steering” from the government (He 2008: 180). Furthermore, the overall anti-Japanese public mood can promote hardline elites while serving to isolate or weaken the domestic position of moderates, and therefore indirectly sway government policy” (He 2008, 181). Supporters of detente with Japan have visibly become targets of popular nationalism, CCP legitimacy itself being threatened by critiques (Hughes 2006, 146-151). In Japan too, mainly due to the negative change in China’s image and “apology fatigue”, China threat arguments surged, from both officials and the public (He 2008, 182-183; Ueki 2006, 336-342). Thus, we have posited that lack of self-restraint has, over time, actualized these adversarial attitudes. Having a spat or a disagreement alone, no matter how deep, does not suffice to materialize this degree of opposition. We argue that lack of self-restraint has allowed for ideational issues closely affecting self-esteem to create a rift between the countries. This constitutes a negative relational micro-structure.

This not only precludes the resolution of historical and territorial problems but also hinders the formation and pursuit of common interests by the two actors. China’s vilification of Japan makes the middle kingdom’s military build-up, territorial claims and

assertiveness be interpreted as threatening. On the other hand, Japan's wish for an extended national role, its "normalization", implying the progressive removal of the domestic barriers to it and less availability to apologize to China, is considered disrespectful to China's past woes and a dangerous ignoring of history. Identity's relational content reinforces the impediment of *a definite positive breakthrough* and the creation of a strategic partnership. *Because of the negative micro-structure, identity-related issues must be and remain irresolvable, sapping the relationship independently of economic or security conditions.* Furthermore, the deterioration of trust and strengthening adversarial relational identities lead as a sub product to the securitization of the relation. Under the current ideational framework, either the definitive solving of an identity issue or the creation of a strategic partnership would mean the falsification of this account. To prove our point not only material accounts have to be insufficient, as already argued, but the relationship also has to be plagued by identity concerns that drive adversarial identities. We thus argue that concerns about relative gains and preferences are heightened by divergent memories and perspectives (He 2008, 177). This fosters a negative intention-based perception of mutual threats and propels the tendency of worst-casing. (He 2008: 188).

Culture being self-reproducing (Wendt (1999) 2010, 339), the displacement of this negative intersubjective micro-structure and related adversarial identity demands restraint from the actors and, above everything, a reflective reinterpretation of either their cognitive models, relational identities or both. Nothing short of Gorbachev's "new thinking" by the Chinese leadership and, for Japan, at least a toning down of the most vocal "right of the right" "minorities in the LDP, at best their ostracism from the political

mainstream.

Chapter V: Case Studies

5.1 Imperial Visit (1992)

The 1992 imperial visit is sometimes understood as a great success of Japanese diplomacy, a crowning achievement of post-war friendship between the two former enemies. Indeed, it was to be so. Yet, the visit was far from largely consensual at first for Japanese decision makers, and it was harder to secure domestic support among LDP leadership in Japan than to settle the details with the CCP counterparts. In truth, it was the Chinese that first advanced this possibility, extending no less than nine invitations starting in April 1989, which hardly comes as a surprise²³ (Kim, 2001). The Chinese had plenty of reasons to want to speed up the schedule: The visit would symbolize a break with the post-Tiananmen isolation, it would normalize bilateral relations and catalyze diplomacy, technology transfer and development aid. It would also secure leverage with the western powers, of which Japan was the key regional partner.

Furthermore, in Japan, Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe and Prime-Minister Kiichi Miyazawa favored the visit (Kim 2001, 241). The cabinet favored Japan's established post-war economic diplomacy and the "Fukuda doctrine". The visit arguably had the potential to bury history once and for all and produce a lasting economic and political partnership in line with what had been LDP policy for decades.

Then why the delay? As we will see, Japan, despite its accommodative policies, threaded carefully in dealing with what was a *de facto* pariah in the international system. More so, a pariah that seemed less and less accommodative of Japan's ambitions as time

²³ It was the month when arguably the Tiananmen incident started.

went by, these being the main reasons for the lack of consensus in the island country.

In January 1992 Foreign Minister Watanabe visited Beijing and things got moving. The Chinese leaders, namely Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, once again brought up the issue. 1992 was thought to be an ideal date due to the year being the 20th after the normalization of bilateral relations. Officially, Watanabe responded that the government would give it “serious consideration”, unofficially, and according to the press, we now know that Watanabe went so far as asking the Chinese if late October was an acceptable time. (Kim, 2001).

This left the Miyazawa cabinet about three months to ensure they had the necessary support. Premier Jang Zemin was scheduled to visit Japan in April of the same year and thus would be a good time for the announcement. Given the volatile international environment, the first steps taken by the cabinet were to make sure such a step would not peril their relationship with America. The country’s blessing was secured also in January. President Bush raised no objections and, indeed, commented on the issue in good light in later conversation with the Japanese Emperor (Kim 2001, 228). Japan had been the first to break ranks and reestablish high-level exchanges with the communist government soon before this. It was thus considered important to go over the proposal with its American ally.

At the parliamentary level too all was well, every single party in the diet showed a degree of support for the initiative with the exception of the Communist Party, which opposed what was could be depicted as a political role for the emperor. There were other reservations, namely from the head of the JSP, that didn’t want the visit to be used for political purposes (ironically exactly China’s intention), yet these did not materialize in

parliamentary sessions nor forums. The obstacles would come instead from the infamous LDP factionalism, more interestingly.

That opposition began to materialize in the few months following the January visit to China. This took place in party organs, particularly the Council on General Affairs (Somukai) and soon came to the attention of the cabinet. Two vocal voices against the visit were Fujio Masayuki and Itagaki Tadashi. Both had close ties with Taiwan and did not see positively accommodating China. Indeed, their sentiment was shared by many within the party (Asahi Shimbun, April 3rd 1992; Kim 2001, 231). Exposing the Emperor in such a visit might result in discomfort concerning wartime apologies, it also seemed to run roughshod over global condemnation of the regime. Not to mention China had recently incorporated the Senkaku in its territorial water laws. (Kim 2001, 231).

In March 18th in a meeting with the “supreme advisors of the LDP”, mostly former Prime Ministers, Miyazawa failed thus to whip the necessary support. The plan to make a public announcement together with Jiang Zemin in April derailed and had the prime-minister decline to make a commitment on whether or not the visit would happen (*New York Times*, April 7th 1992). This despite Jiang Zemin promising positive coverage of the imperial visit and silence concerning war-related criticism (Hagstrom 2005, 129).

It seems the prime minister himself had no choice but to cater to the discontent within the party concerning the proposal, on April 13th he commented on the visit depending on “the formation of a national consensus (*Asahi Shimbun*, April 14th 1992). To pile up the pressure, a group of top officials which included the secretary general Watanuki issue a statement calling the visit “premature” on April 24th (Kim 2001, 233). Nonetheless, behind the scenes the Prime-Minister was trying to build the cited consensus,

from March to July met several LDP heavy-weights including former Prime Ministers Nakasone (March) and Fukuda (July) (Kim 2001, 233).

Finally, after these consultations, consensus trickled down through the different influence spheres of the LDP top figures. This led to the pacification of the more right leaning groups. Eventually, in August 5th, an informal meeting confirmed LDP leadership support. All the top officials and ex-prime ministers nodded the cabinet's project. The official announcement came the 25th.

Conclusion

The first case presents us with an incredibly interesting situation, right during the emergence of the post-cold war order. Unsurprisingly, Japan threads lightly. It seeks the approval for its venture with its pivotal ally. Policy-wise, along with the quick reinstatement of aid and high-level exchanges, nothing seems out of place. It is all consistent with *appetite* and, indirectly, this linked with the old post-war Japan qua economic powerhouse *spirit*. What is surprising is the opposition faced by the Japanese cabinet from within the party. Two events that seem to have driven this were the unilateral legal annexation of the Diaoyu/Senkaku²⁴ in February and a perceived risk of the Emperor being pushed on the "history-issue." That those further right were to react negatively is expected, what is surprising is that this negativity extended to top echelons reaching even former prime ministers. Opposingly, this seems consistent the new post-cold war Japan that we have previously presented: growingly confident of its self and unavailable to

²⁴ Hagstrom argues it's the only impediment (Hagstrom 2005)

kowtow and meander back to its repentant post-war self. The imperial visit presents us a transitional phase where *appetite* is slowly giving way to a more *spirit* driven motive structure.

China, on the other hand, faces a difficult domestic situation and seeks to breakout of its isolation. One could argue that the visit represented added *security*, or *fear*, for China. In the sense that without external recognition the country could risk further instability, further catalyzed by a stagnant economy. Devoid of international capital, this represented a quasi-existential threat for the CCP regime. Thus, contrastingly, in China its emergent nationalism qua *spirit* was very toned down. It expressed itself in the February 1992 legal changes but was immediately dialed down in the shape of Jiang Zemin's promises to Miyazawa. Expectedly, the visit was a rapturous success and the party made sure no rude acts of protest took place, the Emperor got positive press coverage and its cautious yet heartfelt words of apology were welcomed by Chinese officials. Therefore, in China's case, the *fear* of isolation and instability trumped *spirit* as a motive.

5.2 Chinese nuclear tests during non-proliferation treaty preparations (1995/1996)

In the aftermath of the imperial visit, the Japanese government proposed resuming military exchanges and high-level security related talks which had gone into a lull post-Tiananmen. This request came to be during Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visit to Japan in May 1993. This time, it was Japan taking the initiative. There were several reasons why this was so.

First, there had been an increase in nuclear testing activity, not to mention ballooning military budgets, concerning which Japan had patiently kept silent. Second,

Japan's proximity as a neighbor and historical experience with nuclear destruction highlighted the issue in the national consciousness. Third, Japan had been garnering a substantial amount of good will through its engagement policy: the imperial visit, Japan's solidarity during the Tiananmen crisis and its development aid to China were expected to guarantee a certain degree of reciprocity.

There had been earlier queries, namely during Prime Minister Kaifu's good will visit to Beijing in 1991. At the time, Foreign Minister Li Peng had promised that China would join the non-proliferation treaty. Instead, China further multiplied the number and intensity of its tests in the years after. Thus, it is not surprising an uncomfortable Japan pushed for aforementioned resumption of security dialogue, especially given the astonishing success that the imperial visit was.

Yet, it is also not surprising that the Chinese ignored Japan's plea. For China, the possession of a nuclear arsenal was a key matter of national interest, it reinforced the regime and, perhaps above everything else, provided it with prestige. It signified China's independence and autonomy as a nation, surpassing the "hundred years of humiliation". In the 14th party congress, late 1992, Deng Xiaoping affirmed what would be China's bifocal policy for the decade: on the one hand, engaging in and fostering global trade and, on the other, precisely maximizing Chinese power and autonomy in an age of renewed power struggle (Rozman 2010, 71). The latter, of course, connects with *spirit* and can lead to hubris.

The year of 1993 yielded further tests, as would the following years, which in turn produced consequent Japanese requests for restraint that were, then, ignored. First, in that same month of May, Foreign Minister Kaifu Muto expressed concern regarding previous

nuclear tests (*Asahi Shimbun* September 29th, 1994; Wan, 2006, 36). Notwithstanding, testing occurred in October. It was then Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata's turn in January 1994, again, to no avail. Subsequent tests took place in June and October 1994.

In the meantime, Japan's image of China kept eroding, politicians both on the right and the left grew exasperated. We must remind ourselves that the *status quo* was slowly changing in Japan. Many LDP China hands had or were retiring with new, less keen on China, politicians rising through the ranks. The now democratic Taiwan garnered their preference. The left too, despite historically apologetic and understanding towards the country, was very sensitive to nuclear weaponry issues. A first sign of this dissatisfaction, which heralded what was to come, was the temporary suspension of aid package negotiations (*Asahi Shimbun* October 10th, 1994) from October to December that year.

A diplomatic dispute would eventually erupt in 1995, our main focus, a year which ominously should have been a date to celebrate peace: 50 years had passed since the end of World War II and, consequently, the second Sino-Japanese war. There were aggravating circumstances that made the 1995 Chinese tests stand out. First, with the end of the Cold-War nuclear testing had been dwindling, on the contrary, diplomatic movements had been made to control and regulate nuclear weapons. Japan took a proactive role in this. In May, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Conference was to be extended indefinitely and, on top of that, talks on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) were well advanced. Meanwhile, while many nations had declared moratoriums, China was busying itself with miniaturizing nuclear warheads, testing medium-range missiles and exporting nuclear technology to Iran and Pakistan (Drifte 2003, 46). Second,

the Chinese tests would be conducted three days after the NPT Conference, ten days after Prime-Minister Murayama visited China, and one week after the annual remembrance of the atomic bombings. Japan had already, if quietly, expressed concerns repeatedly. This time, things would boil over. Prime-Minister Murayama's visit, the first socialist Prime-Minister to do so, was an opportunity to set things right and bring the relationship back onto a positive note and away from both historical disputes and security concerns. The latter Murayama declaration illustrates just this fact. Once again, despite the Prime-Minister's diplomatic stance, urges for China to refrain from testing fell on deaf ears. It was as if Japan's soft power, ODA, trade and all, counted for nothing.

The Japanese cabinet was stuck between a rock and a hard place, its engagement efforts proved fruitless, more so, it growingly conflicted with its anti-proliferation policy and ODA policy. We have already established the global commitment to the NPT and CTBT. Accordingly, in 1992 Japan had enacted new ODA guidelines, these called for reconsidering aid in case of production and testing of weapons of mass destruction, yet China's actions remained unpunished.

After the May tests, pressure to take action slowly accumulated within Japan. In May, the Foreign Ministry commented on the possibility of "compressing" grant aid but was quick to emphasize to this wasn't a "sanction" (Katada, 2001, 46). Senior officials also commented on the obvious incompatibility between the ODA charter and accommodating China's actions (Long 1999, 333-336). And yet again, China proceeded with further tests in August 1995. Something had to be done. Finally, on the 30th of August, the Japanese government informed the China that it would be suspending grant aid. It is important to mention that this was nothing but a symbolic action, the aid (78 million US

dollars) was but a very small portion if we take into account, for instance, the total value for fiscal 1994 (1.6 billion US dollars) (Katada, 2001, 46-47).

Despite this having surprised China, it garnered ample support in Japan, even the business minded Kendanren accepted the suspension (Katada 2001, p. 47). This was the case too with the left leaning *Asahi Shimbun* and, as a matter of fact, with most of the Japanese public (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2nd of November 1995). In China, negative reactions abounded and, perhaps unsurprisingly, history-related criticism and a sense of entitlement showed:

The Japanese side ought to deeply self-examine its war-crimes and conscientiously draw lessons from history rather than make a big issue of China's nuclear testing.

Chen Jian, PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesman

(Washington Post, November 25th, 1998)

The comment above illustrates a common perspective among the Chinese leadership at the time: the nuclear tests were just an excuse for Japan to shift away from the “special relationship” it has with China and thus avoid its historical responsibilities (Rozman 2010, p. 164). The implication being Japan did not have the *right* to unilaterally suspend aid. In 1996, after one more test in July, China announced it would sign the CTBT. The “sanctions” were duly lifted in 1997, after China's announcement triggered a recommendation to resume grant aid by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Conclusion

Given the American umbrella and ever-growing interdependence, this diplomatic

fallout, for the Japanese, was less about *fear* and more about Chinese insensitivity. The fact that literally all of Japan's pleas had been ignored and, moreover, China reacted very critically to what was simply a symbolic withholding of funds mirrors the growing divide between the two countries.

The post-cold war Japan wanted, as we have already commented upon, affirm itself as a "normal" country and thus was less ready to acquiesce to China's history card and consequent political expectations. It was transitioning to a *spirit* that relied less on economic leadership and more on affirming concrete political roles for the redeemed nation (for instance, the pursuit of a Security council seat or the integration of human rights in its ODA policy). This said, Japan treaded carefully and, as with Tiananmen, avoided openly chastising the Chinese regime. In 1995, it had summoned the French ambassador in the aftermath of nuclear tests, later on, in 1998, the island nation would freeze all aid to India and Pakistan for similar reasons. China, due to the special relationship they had built never endured such harshness. This, in the end, only meant compounded frustration for the Japanese as their efforts went unreciprocated. China not only ignored the country repeatedly but also revealed it expected the *status quo ante* of an unconditionally repentant, meek Japan as something they were entitled to. The CCP was not aware that between its flagrant human rights violations and its nuclear bravado it had fundamentally spent a great part of the good will Japan had had towards it.

In China, the early 1990's had sparked a great wave of publicly sponsored nationalism. Under Jiang Zemin's guise educational reforms had enshrined China's victim status in face of Japanese aggression in the national psyche. Unsurprisingly, when the 50th anniversary of the end of the war came around, the strides made by a reformed

post-war Japan were disregarded. The emphasis was on political history, hyperbolized assessments of “right-wing” thinking and worrisome regional ambitions set the tone. Many scholars even declared that criticism of Japan’s past behavior had been insufficient (Rozman 2010, 165).

China was in the process of affirming itself as a great power, its *spirit* grew attached to its surpassing of a condition of victimhood through national autonomy, therefore, it considered Japan’s eventual sanctions as an unjustified attack, the result of a revisionist coup that would deny China her “blood debt”. If we take with account the slow and contained nature of Japan’s actions, it is easy to see that such a position implied a large degree of hubris. China’s stance, now that it wasn’t going through an existential crisis as it had previous to the imperial visit, affirmed its *spirit* as an independent autonomous nation, fully disregarded of Japanese interests, these not being recognized as legitimate whatsoever.

Both Japan and China show to be moving their selves in incompatible directions, the Japanese process being slower, the Chinese speedier. The disparate interactions during the 1995 diplomatic clash are consistent with the importance of ideational factors.

5.3 Jiang Zemin’s visit to Japan

After the resignation of Prime Minister Hashimoto, which had built a relationship of mutual respect with Jiang Zemin, the new Japanese cabinet was thrust into a bilateral conundrum that could be considered the inevitable result of a continuum of bilateral dissonance for the past years. The discord during Jiang Zemin’s visit to Japan had everything to do with historical issues and their implications for the relationship. The

immediate cause were the ideational implications of the Japan–South Korea settlement of October that year.

The visit had been in the cards for quite a while, it was to mark the anniversary of the Friendship treaty of 1978 and, therefore, could be reasonably expected to produce a positive framework from which to launch XXI century relations. No matter the disputes of recent years, both sides benefited politically and economically from a stable relationship. In this particular instance, Beijing was the one to advance the idea of a “third document” (after the joint communiqué of 1972 and the friendship treaty of 1978) (Sato 2001, 5-6). It can be speculated that, beyond pragmatic considerations, Jiang Zemin wanted to follow in the steps of both Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, who had produced the two previous documents.

In February 1998, bilateral talks were held in Tokyo to discuss the ongoing Iraq issue, the opportunity was grasped by the Chinese leadership to propose a joint declaration as a steppingstone to improved bilateral relations. At first, Vice-Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan’s counterpart, deputy Foreign Minister Tamba Minoru, was skeptical (Sato 2001, 7) but soon his worries were soothed by Jiaxuan’s commitment to work on a forward-looking document, free from history or Taiwan related demands (Sato 2001, 5-6)

Soon the details were worked out between the two ministries and the visit was scheduled for September. Ironically, if the date had stood perhaps no issues would have arisen. Alas, due to dramatic flooding in China it was postponed and, therefore, Prime Minister Obuchi’s visit to Korea was to precede the visit. Incidentally, this visit proved

to be a high watermark in Korea-Japan relations, where, in exchange for the promise of a final settlement for the historical issue, the Japanese government included for the first time a written apology (*owabi*) in a bilateral document. This, in turn, triggered a strong reaction in Jiang Zemin, he demanded that Jiaxuan Tang obtained the same concession from Japan, though without no comparable promise of permanently settling the issue. (Sato 2001, 7)

At a foreign minister gathering in Malaysia already in November the previously accommodative Jiaxuan Tang painted both the Taiwan issue and a formal apology as critical for the declaration. The Japanese government was reluctant. Obuchi's domestic position was fragile and the apology to South Korea had been taxing enough. We could also argue that Japan had already formally apologized to China during the emperor's visit and through the Murayama declaration. Domestically speaking, opposition to what was seen as another formalized apology was high (Rozman 2010, 167-168). Negotiations continued fruitlessly until the days before the arrival and, talking to the press, Jiaxuan Tang stated the following:

Japan has never completely abandoned its militarist past in the same way as Germany has with the Nazis, if it were to do so, China and other Asian nations would not have to keep reminding Japan of history so often.

(Washington Post, November 27th 1998)

The Obuchi cabinet in a last-ditch effort, offered to include a written apology if a promise equivalent to the Korean one was made. The proposal was shot down by Jiang Zemin and Beijing threatened to call off the summit altogether. Then, Obuchi offered a compromise: he would offer a verbal apology. This was accepted, with the addition of some other concessions, for instance, the inclusion of the word “aggression” in the document, yet, it was ultimately insufficient (Sato 2001, 19).

During the visit Jiang Zemin repeatedly brought up the history-issue. First, at the summit, on the 26th:

The problems of history and Taiwan, which are at the root of Japan-China relations, cannot be sidestepped. I am opposed to the opinion that the problem of history has been sufficiently discussed

(Sato 2001, 11)

The Prime minister in response phrases an apology and acknowledged Chinese unit to boot. This though, did not satisfy the Chinese leader who, despite its ceremonial nature, repeated similar criticisms in his dinner with the Japanese emperor. Then, did the same in his speech at Waseda University. Japanese media coverage was largely negative and the agreed upon document ultimately went unsigned, the visit is largely recognized as having been a failure.

Conclusion

The auspicious start the initial planning offered highlighted the importance of China and Japan to each other. The obvious benefits, economical and political, of cordial

relations illustrate *appetite*, as these can translate in added economic growth, which in turn legitimizes government (specially the Chinese). However, a golden opportunity to finish the century with a silver lining went wasted. Instead, we have a repetition of the dynamics already seen during the nuclear testing case: the Chinese have history-informed expectations and ignore Japan's attempts at compromise. Japan, on the other hand, is less and less available to play the repentant victimizer and understands itself "beyond" that role.

Jiang Zemin's demands, given his well-known antagonistic feelings towards Japan, express this clearly. Nothing but a full apologize was acceptable, and this unconditionally. Gries (2004) argues that this is best understood through a Sinocentric lens where Japan, a pupil, aggressed its civilizational reference, or teacher. Such violation by the inferior can only be repaired by profound and repetitive public prostrations, with this only stopping at the superior's will. When *he* considers the acts satisfactory (Gries 2004, 92) This might as well be the case. What is at stake is China's self-image and its proper relationship with the Japanese other, which clearly illustrates *spirit* has a drive.

So does the Japanese position, even if with much less hubris, Prime-Minister Obuchi was very conscious that Japanese good will, both among the public and the elites, was much reduced. He considered, as most Japanese do, that the proper apologies have been offered, both with words (Murayama declaration, imperial visit etc.) and actions (ODA, tolerance of human rights violations, grand aid etc.). Japan, for all intents and purposes, has been a peaceful diplomatic nation in the post-war period which has contributed to global growth in no small measure, therefore it is not available to see this misrecognized by China, specially when other victims of past Japanese aggression openly state this

(Taiwan, first and foremost). Given the relation between this and Japanese self-esteem, we can see the refusal to kowtow to Chinese demands is deeply founded in the new self-understanding, the new Japanese post-cold war *spirit* of a “normal”, *status quo* nation.

CONCLUSION

From the three cases we have seen *spirit* was apparent in all of them. Particularly intensely from China. On the first, (Imperial visit, 1992), China played the role of the accommodative considerate partner due to its post-Tiananmen, therefore it was able to restrain itself and, out of *fear*, disregarded any sort of ideational controversy with Japan. Jiang Zemin made sure his interlocuter was aware China would treat the Japanese emperor with the utmost respect. Ironically, it was Japan instead which had doubts about Chinese intentions. The country showed a *spirited* lack of willingness to play the role of the “special partner”, yet, in the end, restraint triumphed and the Imperial visit took place.

As for the second and third cases (Nuclear tests, 1995/1996 and Jiang Zemin’s visit, 1998), we see the roles largely reversed. China is absolutely adamant in its right to conduct the security policy of a great power, and it also expects Japan to pay its dues as past aggressor, both of these realities being key to its self-esteem, i.e. *spirit*. Despite the advantages that could derive for *appetite* if it showed restraint, China did not show itself available to constructively engage with Japanese intentions of seeing itself recognized as a peaceful normalized *status quo* power in both cases. Moreover, it was very unsatisfied that Japan would withhold aid China though was entitled to. China ignored Japan’s plea to abate nuclear testing and was unwillingly to drop the historical issue. The latter was paradigmatic. Jiang Zemin demanded the Japanese comply with China’s identity-related expectations and, even when a compromise was reached, victimization at Japanese hands made it back into the forefront. In an impressive display of hubris, the goodwill he had guaranteed towards the Japanese emperor in 1992 was no longer relevant in 1998. As for

Japan, the transition between economically driven engagement, focused on *appetite*, and its newly sought status of a *normal* nation is apparent. Japan's self-esteem, *spirit*, was shown to demand an end to an unconditionally apologetic stance towards China. By freezing a part of the ODA and refusing to give in to demands of a formalized apology showed just this, and yet it did so without hubris. In both cases, the Japanese sought to accommodate Chinese interests and demonstrated a great amount of patience and tolerance towards their interlocutors.

All things considered, except for China in 1992, *spirit* was an active consideration for both countries during the exchanges, and this despite political and economic costs. Therefore, the cases are congruent with an ideational interpretation of bilateral strife. In addition, the fact that the relationship keeps going up and down also reveals that *appetite* still remains an important factor. *Fear*, in turn, boils up as trust degrades. Our conclusions show that it is expectable, excluding another radical change in internal dynamics, that the identity changes that occurred during the 1990's will continue to present themselves *in loco* in diplomatic exchanges. These changes show themselves to be resilient and are a critical barrier that encourages hubris and degrades mutual good will.

In order to further support the argument for an ideational turn in analyzing Sino-Japanese relations it is necessary to delve into additional cases and later timeframes. Similar attributes should be present.

Theses conclusions, at the theoretical level, support Lebow's argument for a tripartite motive scheme, showing that heightened scrutiny of actor motives can allow for added insight into bilateral relationships. Furthermore, they show that identity changes can be key drivers in determining bilateral and system level outcomes that cannot be

adequately accounted by materialist paradigms. Wendtian structures of interaction prove to be a useful theoretical tool in capturing this.

At the practical level, Berger (2003) is shown to have essentially grasped the East Asian conundrum: trade helps hold the pieces together, nonetheless, actors scarcely identify with each other and thus there is an inherent volatility to things. Japan and China are determinately at odds and only mutual interests (*appetite*), not identity, will sustain a regional condominium and keep *fear* in check. In regard to policy, as far as diplomacy goes, this advises a down to earth issue specific approach by both countries, focusing on mutual gain and avoiding as much as possible ideationally charged issues. Though, given their importance, this is easier said than done. The last twenty years of Sino-Japanese relations suggest a growing divide where trust will further be eroded and the potential for *fear* to have come to haunt the bilateral structure. Nowadays, negative security interactions in the form of naval and aerial encounters are the norm. Slow economic decoupling driven by diplomatic fatigue is also a possibility, as Prime-Minister Abe's initiative to subsidize Japanese businesses willing to relocate from China illustrates.

We can only hope that agent malleability and radical capacity for change allows for another reinterpretation of both selves and others by China and Japan that leads to the surpassing of history and the building of solid foundations for a solid partnership. To expect this as a likely outcome though seems to be unfounded.

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