

**An Asian Barometer Survey Conference on
How East Asians View the Rise of China**

**Panel I: Are East Asians Anticipating and Welcoming the
Rise of China?**

[Paper 1]

How Do Asians View the Rise of China?

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Paper prepared for delivery at the conference "How East Asians View the Rise of China", organized by the Program for East Asia Democratic Studies, Institute for the Advanced Studies of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Taiwan University, and co-sponsored by the Institute of Arts and Humanities, Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Introduction

The rise of China has become one of the hottest topics in the fields of international relations over the last decade.¹ Scholars not only debate whether the rise of China is a fact or fiction, but also speculate what would be the implication if China does rise.² These debates and speculations spread out in many disciplines. In military science, whether China has risen militarily and by what standard such a judgment can be made are highly contentious.³ In international relations, the concept of “China’s rise” is never crystal clear. Some scholars specifically define China’s rise in military sense, but more scholars concern this phenomenon in broader terms, such as composite national capability, political influence, or even soft power.⁴ Still, for economists, whether China can maintain its fast-growing economy while solving the inequality problem draws great attention and research interest.⁵ Even in cultural studies, scholars begin to discuss whether the influence of China’s economic prosperity has extended to cultural arenas and propose China’s cultural rise.⁶ Regardless of whether China does rise, it is no doubt that scholars of social science now recognize the criticalness of this issue.

As a matter of fact, public concern for the rise of China is even more fervent than scholarly attention. Today, the idea of China’s rise in ordinary language has been understood as a general consensus that China has become, or will become the major power that could challenge the United States in all respects, including military, political, economic, and cultural areas. Such a perception does not emerge without reasons. According to the 2012 annual report from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), China has the largest military troops in terms of active personnel numbers.⁷ China’s military expenditure in 2012, based on dataset estimated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), ranks the second in the world, despite the fact that the number is only one-fifth of the US military

¹ Pablo Bustelo. (2005) *China’s Emergence: Threat or Peaceful rise?* , ARI 135/2005 (translated from Spanish), Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano de Estudio Internacionales y Estrategicos; Jeffrey W. Legro. (2005). *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Bijian Zheng. (2005). China’s “Peaceful Rise” to Great Power Status, *Foreign Affairs* 84(5), p.18.

² Quansheng Zhao and Guoli Liu Eds. (2008). *Managing the China Challenge: Global Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

³ John J. Mearsheimer. (2006). China’s Unpeaceful Rise, *Current History* 105(690), pp. 160-162; Thomas J. Christensen. (2006) Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia, *International Security* 31(1), pp.84-86.

⁴ Li Hak Yin. (2010) *Discrepancies, Political Discourses, and Implications of China’s Multidimensional Diplomacy*, in Simon Shen and Jean-Marc F. Blanchard (eds) *Multidimensional Diplomacy of Contemporary China*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, p. 51.

⁵ Morrison W.M. and M. Labonte. *China’s currency: A summary of the economic issues*. Congressional research Service, 7 December 2009.

⁶ David S.G. Goodman. (2004). *China in East Asian and World Culture*, in Barry Buzan and Rosemary Foot, *Does China Matter? A Reassessment* (New York: Routledge), p.73.

⁷ *The Military Balance 2012*, the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

expenditure.⁸ In terms of nuclear weapon and ballistic missiles, China is one of the five nuclear-weapon states,⁹ and the inventory of the ballistic missiles (including MRBMs, IRBMs, and ICBMs) is only lagging behind the United States and Russia.¹⁰ According to the estimate of the Nuclear Information Project, the Chinese warheads primarily targeted against United States will significantly increase from 20 (2006) to 175 (2015).¹¹ Even for the naval power and air force, the area that is conventionally believed as the weakest part of Chinese military, China is now significantly catching up with a rapid pace.¹² For instance, the landmark of Chinese naval development can be illuminated by the fact that China's first aircraft carrier just entered service in September, 2012.¹³ While a huge gap still exists between China and the United States in terms of power projection capability,¹⁴ China's military buildup will persistent and this trend is going to narrow the Sino-American military gap.¹⁵

Another salient dimension is China's rapid economic development, particularly the fact that China has become the world factory for the past decade. In 2010, China's GDP has passed Japan and now ranks the second largest economy in the world.¹⁶ Some forecasts even estimate that China will pass the United States by 2030 and become the largest economic power.¹⁷ If we examine specific statistics closely, what China has already achieved economically is tremendous. For instance, China's GDP growth rate averages 10.4% from 1991 to 2011.¹⁸ China attracts 1.949 trillion FDI inflows and contributes 1.319 trillion FDI outflows; the two figures rank as the second and fifth in the world as of 2011.¹⁹ In terms of exchange foreign reserves, China's number skyrockets from 20.6 billion in 1992 to 3181.1 billion in 2011, and this number is nearly triple the figure of the second largest country (Japan).²⁰ More

⁸ SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

⁹ N.R.F. Al-Rodhan. (2006). Prevention of WMD Proliferation, Globalization, and International Security. Editorial of GCSP Policy Brief 3, p.2.

¹⁰ H.M Kristensen, R.S. Norris and M.G. McKinzie. (2006). *Chinese Nuclear Forces and U.S. Nuclear War Planning*. The Federation of American Scientists & the Natural Resources Defense Council.

¹¹ The Estimate for 2015 Combines the ICBMs with or without MRV (Multiple Reentry Vehicle). *Ibid*, p.40.

¹² Rahul Burman.(1974). China's Naval Capabilities. *Economic and Political Weekly* 9(5), p.134. Chinese Military Seeks to Extend Its Naval Power, *The New York Times*, 23 April 2010.

¹³ BBC News, "China's First Aircraft Carrier Enters Service", 25 September 2012.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-19710040> (retrieved October 10, 2012)

¹⁴ R. Kaplan. (2010). The Geography of Chinese Power: How Far can Beijing Reach on Land and at Sea?. *Foreign Affairs*, p. 35.

¹⁵ Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2012. The Office of the Secretary of Defense. Annual Report to Congress, pp. 7-10.

¹⁶ The Economist, 16 August 2010.

¹⁷ China Passes Japan as Second-Largest Economy. *The New York Times*. On Monday August 16, 2010.

¹⁸ The average of China's GDP annual growth is computed with the data from World Development Indicators.

¹⁹ The FDI figure combines China, Hong Kong, and Macau. Data is compiled from CIA World Factbook 2012.

²⁰ The chronicle statistics are from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, People's Republic of China and the People's Bank of China. The data of foreign exchange reserves for China (3240 billion

importantly, China manages to control inflation and unemployment rates, and meanwhile, continues to maintain social stability despite the rampant problem of income inequality.²¹ Comparing to the sagging US economy, China has demonstrated unlimited potentials by solid economic performance over the past two decades.

While different opinions do exist as to whether these improvements are enough for China to effectively challenge the incumbent US hegemony, the aforementioned statistics has delineated the objective evidence of China's enhancement in military and economic spheres. Apparently, popular conception of China's rise is closely associated with the great leap of national capability. The recognition of the rise of China, however, is not limited to the increase of the hard power in military and economy, but also covers the soft-power dimension such as greater political influence or convincing cultural discourses. Therefore, we should not completely reduce the impact of soft power to the mechanic effect of hard power, even though the establishment of soft power to certain extent can be explained by the spill-over effect of increasing hard power. Rather, the strength of soft power exhibits in the effectiveness of persuasion and mobilization that a state demonstrates in the international society. Given that the rise of China is an overall phenomenon covering both the hard and soft dimensions, it is intriguing to know what factor explains the popular conception and evaluation of this phenomenon, and what implication these findings provide for the future international politics.

Why Do Asians Need to Care about the Rise of China?

In international relations theory, the conventional wisdom believes that international politics is a game of great powers. Realists and Neo-realists argue that only distribution of capability matters and that the definition of capability is exclusively specified in military terms. As a rising power, China has successfully elevated its position in the hierarchy of great powers politics. But there are significant differences for how China's rise can be interpreted in global or regional perspective. From the global standpoint, despite the impressive enhancement of China's military power, the United States and Russia still maintain their superiority with a significant margin. The focal point of China's rise is therefore not about whether China currently poses a great military threat to the United States, but rather when and how China is capable to reach the point of power transition in strategic sense. The case is totally different if we look at this issue from the regional standpoint. In Asia, China undoubtedly has become the hegemony and topped all other countries in military

USD) and Japan (1273 billion USD) in 2012 is from the People's Bank of China (China, June 2012) and IMF (Japan, August 2012).

²¹ Wen Jiabao. Report on the Work of the Government. The Fifth Session of the Eleventh National People's Congress on March 5, 2012. Premier of the State Council. pp. 1-8.

power. While the US engagement in Asia to great extent limits China's superiority and contains China's strategic possibility through US military presence, the short geographic distance and the velocity of China's rise further intensify the awareness that China can make a decisive move and cause a permanent change before the US allies respond. This awareness not only magnifies the anxiety about how much threat China could bring, but also amplifies the distrust of China's intention behind its great power status. These psychological factors completely change the public perception for Asians, and consequently more advantage should be weighted in to the Chinese side despite US security assistance. As the result, Asians do have a prominent reason to care about the rise of China even from the realist perspective.

Greater apprehension over the rise of China can be found from neo-liberalist's point of view. Although trailing behind the United States, China develops its economy with incredible speed through an unprecedented path. The consequence of China's economic rise is that China now becomes the pillar of the global economy, and major economic powers all depend on China to maintain the stability of their domestic markets. This relationship can be easily characterized by the large U.S.-China trade deficit. In 2011, the U.S. trade deficit with China reaches a new high to \$295 billion. China continues to produce all kinds of goods that Americans want in a cheap price, further weakening the competitive power of American manufacture companies in the world and causing job loss and economic problems. As the U.S. consumers rely more and more on Chinese products, U.S. economy also depends on China deeper and deeper. Eventually, China is capable to influence U.S. economy given the fact China owns the largest share of debt of the U.S. government. If our concern only limits to the regional scope, the economic rise of China might have a totally different meaning to Asian countries. Unlike the American case, most of Asian countries are China's economic partners in terms of production chains. They work with China to produce manufacture goods and sell to the U.S. and European markets to earn revenues. Therefore, they share the common interest and a stronger Chinese economy actually helps the economic growth in Asian countries. Apparently, the political implication is mixed for those countries since the economic rise of China hurts their most important ally, the United States, but meanwhile, it benefits their own economy and that is more substantial in most of the time except when the tension of international conflict escalates. Again, from neo-liberalist point of view, it is critical for Asians to care about the rise of China, no matter which scope is adopted.

Constructivists of international relations theory provide a more interesting reason to concern about the rise of China. Unlike neo-realists and neo-liberalists, constructivists claim that China's rise could be benign or harmful, and it depends on how China position herself and how people in other countries perceive and understand

this phenomenon. Therefore, China could pass the United States in military and economic capability but remains benevolent to the incumbent world order. China, however, could also become an ambitious rising power that intends to establish itself as the new hegemony. Paradoxically, what is more important might not be China's true intention, but instead how other countries interpret China's motive. In this sense, China could rise with revisionist's purpose but others wrongly interpret it in a benign way; conversely, China could pursue the peaceful rise and comply to the existing international order, and yet others might still view China's rise as pernicious and try to prevent its happening. Neither China's subjective intention nor how other countries perceive it can be automatically determined by the objective evidence of China's military or economic rise. It is only through public opinion research that we can actually detect how China and the world look at the rise of China, and whether they perceive it positively or negatively.

Measuring the Cognitive Dimension of the Rise of China

The current literature has plenty of discussion about whether China actually rises, but those works mostly depend on objective information of military and economic statistics. The lack of cognitive evidence prevents scholars from capturing how people perceive and understand the rise of China. This problem leads to a great difficulty when we intend to evaluate three major IR paradigms in terms of their theoretical expectations about China's rise. To fill up this gap, Liu Kang, Tianjiang Shi, and John Aldrich initiated the National Image Project in 2009, which is jointly sponsored by the Shanghai Jiaotong University and Duke University. By conducting cross-national surveys, the National Image Project in the first stage provides 37 probabilistic country samples to evaluate how people perceive and understand the rise of China. In collaboration with Asian Barometer, Afrobarometer, and Americas Barometer (Vanderbilt), the National Image Project is capable to employ a battery of seven related questions for large-scale surveys as below:

What Table 1 presents is the questionnaire of the seven questions applying in the third-wave Asian Barometer Survey. Until October 2012, the National Image Project has finished 12 Asian country surveys, including Japan, Korea, China, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Malaysia. More samples will be completed in 2013-2014 in African and Latin American countries.

As Table 1 shows, the first question (Q156) in this battery directly asks respondents which country has the most influence in Asia. The geographic term here is replaceable according to the region where the interview is implemented. The scope of our measurement regarding China's rise is regional and bilateral instead of global.

The next two questions (Q157 and Q157a) are follow-up items to tap into respondent's evaluation about China, regardless of whether they think China as the most influential country in the region or not. The fourth question (Q158) is about whether respondents anticipate the rise of China in the future. We apply "ten years" as the time referent for the future. Further, we also want to know whether China's influence has extended to institutional arenas by asking respondents which country should be their political model for the future development (Q159). The last two questions (Q160 and Q161) focus on the bilateral relationship between China and respondent's country, and they ask whether the respondent think China has great influence on his/her country and whether such an influence is positive or negative.

**Table 1 The Battery of the National Image Project,
(Asian Barometer Version)**

Q156.	Which country has the most influence in Asia?
Q157.	Does (answer in Q156) do more good or harm to the region?
	Ask Q157a if the answer in Q156 is not <u>China</u>, otherwise skip to Q158
Q157a.	Does China do more good or harm to the region?
Q158.	In ten years, which country will have the most influence in Asia?
Q159.	Which country should be a model for our own country's future development?
Q160.	How much influence does China have on our country?
Q161.	General speaking, the influence China has on our country is?

The design of the seven-item battery in the National Image Project can be summarized into four elements: whether China has risen now or will rise in the near future, whether China's rise is positive to region, whether the result of China's rise makes people think China's developmental model appealing, and how people think their bilateral relationship with China. These questions are evaluative in nature, but at the same time, respondents could be very subjective and that makes the questions become thermometer measures, which reflect the attitudes instead of objective evaluations. As we discuss earlier about constructivism, we believe that the rise of China is a complicated phenomenon with a multifarious nature, including material dimensions, such as military power, economic development, and technological innovation, as well as ideational dimensions, such as perception, understanding, or prejudice. Therefore, our analytical goal is to find out what would be the cognitively factual status for the rise of China, and this result reflects the overall synthetic attitude that is shaped by all kinds of factors in material and ideational dimensions.

Perception and Evaluation of the Rise of China

While our scope of analysis is limited to the regional level, it is undeniable that the rise of China always implies a relative comparison between the incumbent US power and the ascending competitor China. As Table 2 presents, when respondents are asked which country has the most influence in Asia, people in the adjacent countries to China think that China has stronger influence than the United States, including Japan (60.9% vs. 29.1%), Korea (55.8% vs. 31.5%), China (43.6% vs. 25.3%), Mongolia (66.2% vs. 13.2%), Taiwan (66.7% vs. 21.0%), and Vietnam (69.4% vs. 15.5%). The result in non-adjacent countries is the opposite, in which people think that the United States has stronger influence than China in Asia, including Philippines (16.9% vs. 65.5%), Thailand (41.5% vs. 44.3%), Indonesia (23.0% vs. 41.0%), Cambodia (25.6% vs. 58.1%), and Malaysia (35.8% vs. 43.5%). Singapore is a special case because 80% of the people are Chinese immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong province. While Singaporean territory is not adjacent to China, they are ethnic Chinese and most of them still have distant relatives in China. Therefore, their psychological proximity to China is even closer and the result shows that more Singaporeans think that China has the most influence than the United States (59.8% vs. 27.5%).

Table 2 Which country has the most influence in Asia?

Country	China	United States
Japan	0.609	0.291
Korea	0.558	0.315
China	0.436	0.253
Mongolia	0.662	0.132
Taiwan	0.667	0.210
Singapore	0.598	0.275
Vietnam	0.694	0.155
Philippines	0.169	0.655
Thailand	0.415	0.443
Indonesia	0.230	0.410
Cambodia	0.256	0.581
Malaysia	0.358	0.435
Total	0.470	0.349

Data source: ABS Wave Three

The finding in Table 2 is remarkable: for those countries that are territorially adjacent to China, people’s perception of China’s rise is very strong, but such a perception becomes much weaker to those non-adjacent Southeast Asian countries. How can we explain the difference of perception between the two groups? One plausible explanation is related to geopolitical proximity since political interaction is more frequent and the issues related to adjacent borders such as security, trade, crime, and personnel exchange are more complicated. Therefore, people in these countries pay more attention to China and they are alarmed with the rapid development of China in all respects. Another possible explanation is about the cultural similarity. For those adjacent countries to China, traditionally they all belong to the area under the influence of Confucian culture. These countries also shared the common historical experience for the past two centuries under Western colonialism, despite the exceptional case of Japan where the Japanese emperor successfully turned his country into a colonial power in the late-nineteenth century. In fact, except Japan and Singapore, all the adjacent countries to China were previously part of the Qing dynasty or Chinese protectorates. The common historical memory and cultural framework make people in these countries more aware of China’s revolutionary change in the past two decades.

Table 3 Does China do more good or harm to the region?

Country	More Good	More Harm
Japan	0.168	0.822
Korea	0.558	0.374
China	0.882	0.019
Mongolia	0.330	0.609
Taiwan	0.597	0.300
Singapore	0.792	0.094
Vietnam	0.473	0.380
Philippines	0.828	0.161
Thailand	0.503	0.280
Indonesia	0.620	0.322
Cambodia	0.769	0.228
Malaysia	0.714	0.213
Total	0.563	0.354

Data source: ABS Wave Three

As Table 3 shows, we further ask those who think that China has the most

influence in Asia, and discover a startling result that people in most Asian countries do believe that China's rise do more good than harm to the region, and the number (except China) ranges between Vietnam (47.3%) to Philippines (82.8).²² Only in Japan and Mongolia, people tend to be very negative about the consequence of China's rise; 82.2% in Japan and 60.9% in Mongolia believe that China's rise do more harm than good to Asia. The negative view of Japanese is well understood because the political tension between Japan and Chinese never stops since the World War II for the historical rivalry. However, the Mongolia case might be associated with the increasing fear that Chinese might pursue territorial expansion. For many Mongolians, the Inner Mongolia and part of Xinjiang were their inherent territory, and the adversarial feeling intensifies as China becomes a dominant power in the region.

Interestingly, Taiwan, Korea, and Vietnam has similar issues of territorial or sovereignty disputes with China, but our findings suggest that people in those countries are more positive toward China's rise. Close partnership in the global economy might explain the wide difference of perception. For Mongolia, while China is her major trading partner, Mongolia plays little role in the global production chains as Taiwan, Korea, and Vietnam do. Therefore, Mongolia's economic relationship with China is not actually a partnership, but rather an asymmetrical dependent relationship and this further aggravate the grievance of nationalistic emotion. In contrast, the economic ties of Taiwan, Vietnam, and Korea with China are more symmetrical and reciprocal in interest. While these countries compete with each other in the global market, they also cooperate with each other in the global production chains, mostly based on China. They benefit from participating in such an economic partnership with China, and meanwhile, China also needs those countries to strengthen her comparative advantages in financial, technological, managerial, and many other realms. The deep economic interdependence to the great extent changes people's perception toward the positive direction because of mutual interest.

Do Asians Anticipate the Rise of China?

Many scholars believe that China is still far away from catching the United States, militarily, economically, politically, and even culturally, but they agree that China is in the ascending trend with remarkable speed. By this perspective, China's rise is a hypothetical judgment based on anticipation and projection. Since there is little doubt about the ascendance of China's national capability, we can expect a higher number for the anticipation of China's rise, which including those believe that China has risen but will rise in the future.

²² If we combine the answers from those who do not think that China has the most influence, the result is very similar as Table 3 presents. This indicates whether people view China positively or negatively is not affected by whether they think China does rise.

The findings are reported in Table 4, and the first glance shows that people do anticipate the rise of China even in those non-adjacent countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia. Among the twelve Asian countries, only Philippines show a predominant view that the United States will be still the most influential state in Asia in ten years (17.0% vs. 65.1%). In Indonesia, the numbers do not differ significantly for those who think China and U.S. as the most influential state (31.3% vs. 32.5%). For the rest of the others, the margin is very significant and many cases show overwhelm view about the anticipation of China's rise. For instance, the margin for the Confucian states is all above 47.9%, and the least number is from China where 58.78% people anticipate that China will have the most influence and 10.8% do not think so. For Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, Singapore, and Vietnam, the margin ranges from 52% (Japan) to 74.2% (Korea), and we can confidently conclude that Asians do anticipate the rise of China in most of countries.

Table 4 Which country will have the most influence in Asia in ten years?

Country	China	United States
Japan	0.646	0.126
Korea	0.830	0.088
China	0.587	0.108
Mongolia	0.707	0.094
Taiwan	0.820	0.098
Singapore	0.730	0.127
Vietnam	0.697	0.155
Philippines	0.170	0.651
Thailand	0.562	0.314
Indonesia	0.313	0.325
Cambodia	0.427	0.341
Malaysia	0.441	0.264
Total	0.581	0.220

Data source: ABS Wave Three

It is interesting to know whether people find Chinese developmental model attractive²³ given the fact most Asians recognize or anticipate the rise of China. As Table 5 reports, none of the country shows that China's model is the most favorable

²³ Recently there are some debates about whether the China model is justified and can be another way other for political and economic development other than western style of liberal democracy. See Zheng Yongnian. (2010). *China Model: Experience and Difficulties*. Zhejiang: Zhejiang People's Publishing House.

one for future development. However, we do find stronger support of the Chinese model in Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam (22%), Singapore (14.1%), Thailand (16.2%), Indonesia (13.5%), Cambodia (19.5%), and Malaysia (13.9%). Overall, Asians still prefer the U.S. and Japanese models; particularly the U.S. model enjoys largest support in Korea (38.5%), China (48.1%), Philippines (68.0%), and Cambodia (42.2%) and the Japanese model has the highest support in Japan (52.0%), Taiwan (31.2%), and Indonesia (35.2%). In Malaysia, the Japanese model also has a very high supporting rate (31.1%) and just falls short from the top choice (the self model). Overall, among the five choices of development models, China’s model is least attractive despite most Asians agree that China has risen or will rise soon. We believe what this result indicates is not the rejection of the effectiveness of the China’s model, but rather, it means that Chinese experiences and conditions are so unique that such path can be hardly replicated, and meanwhile, there might be some other desirable goals Asians would like to pursue but the China’s model cannot provide, such as the idea of liberal democracy.

Table 5 Which country should be a model for our own country’s future development?

Country	China	United States	Japan	Singapore	Self
Japan	0.021	0.194	0.520	0.099	—
Korea	0.083	0.385	0.235	0.162	0.101
China	0.090	0.481	0.121	0.280	—
Mongolia	0.100	0.247	0.177	0.078	0.292
Taiwan	0.045	0.149	0.312	0.230	0.222
Singapore	0.141	0.229	0.155	0.400	—
Vietnam	0.220	0.094	0.157	0.101	0.415
Philippines	0.072	0.680	0.169	0.057	^a 0.000
Thailand	0.162	0.155	0.124	0.084	0.460
Indonesia	0.135	0.259	0.352	0.128	0.082
Cambodia	0.195	0.422	0.222	0.061	0.051
Malaysia	0.139	0.080	0.311	0.114	0.339
Total	0.114	0.282	0.245	0.147	0.242

^aIn the Philippines, the zero percentage of the Filipino model might be related to the way of how the interview was executed. It is likely that interviewers did not read out the last option of the answer set, “We should follow our country’s own model”.

Data source: ABS Wave Three

If we further combine the U.S. and Japanese model and label it as liberal democratic model, and combine the Chinese and Singaporean model as developmental authoritarian model, we found that the developmental authoritarian

model only acquire more support in Singapore (54.1%) and Vietnam (32.1%). Remarkably, the liberal democratic model has predominant support in most of the countries, even in China, where 60.2% people choose the liberal democratic model and only 37.0% choose the authoritarian developmental model. This reflects the counter-intuitive evidence that people in China, after achieving great economic success, are even more fascinated about the liberal democratic model than their own model. In contrast to what neo-realists and neo-liberalists expect, the rise of China will not drive Chinese people into a confrontational thinking as to the western political ideas. Instead, the rise of China is more like a socialization process in which Chinese people assimilate to the mainstream world values and the ideational structure is moving toward a more convergent than divergent trajectory.

Table 6 Liberal Democratic Model (US and Japan) vs. Developmental Authoritarian Model (China and Singapore)

Country	Liberal Democratic	Developmental Authoritarian
Japan	0.714	0.120
Korea	0.620	0.244
China	0.602	0.370
Mongolia	0.425	0.178
Taiwan	0.460	0.276
Singapore	0.384	0.541
Vietnam	0.251	0.321
Philippines	0.849	0.129
Thailand	0.279	0.246
Indonesia	0.611	0.264
Cambodia	0.644	0.257
Malaysia	0.391	0.252
Total	0.527	0.261

Data source: ABS Wave Three

Bilateral Evaluations of China's Influence

The distinction of China's rise from China's influence over a particular country is that we need situation China within the global or regional politics, but the latter is simply the perception of China's influence without consideration of complicated international relations. We can hardly imagine that Asians do not think China has great influence in the bilateral relationship to their countries, while they do think that China is even more influential in regional or global politics. Therefore, we expect to

see greater numbers in the bilateral evaluations of China influence. As Table 7 makes evidence, all the eleven countries where the data is available unanimously shows that Asians do recognize China’s influence over their own countries, regardless of whether they agree that Chinas has risen.²⁴ The number ranges from the lowest in Indonesia (79.6%) to the highest in Taiwan (96.2%), and even the lowest number is about 80%. Conspicuously, most Asians are aware of China’s influence in the lateral relationship.

Table 7 How much influence does China have on our country?

Country	China has some or great influence on us
Japan	0.931
Korea	0.915
China	0.925
Mongolia	0.877
Taiwan	0.962
Singapore	0.926
Vietnam	na
Philippines	0.907
Thailand	0.829
Indonesia	0.796
Cambodia	0.822
Malaysia	0.832
Total	0.887

Data source: ABS Wave Three

With regard to whether such influence is positive, it is no wonder that the answers from Chinese respondents are overwhelmingly positive (96.5%), and we can conclude the result with a clear pattern: people have much more positive view about China’s bilateral influence if their country geographically situates in Southeast Asia, otherwise the evaluation is more negative than positive. As Table 8 presents, the positive evaluations in Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Malaysia are all above 70%, but they are all below 50% in East Asian countries. Particularly in Japan and Mongolia, only 23.3% and 28.3% people think that China’s bilateral influence is positive. This result is consistent with our previous discussion regarding the negative evaluation of China’s rise in Japan and Mongolia.

²⁴ It is noteworthy that this question is modified in China as “How much influence does China have on other Asian countries?” After modification, this item becomes a self-evaluative question in China but not in bilateral sense.

Table 8 General speaking, the influence China has on our country is?

Country	China's Influence is positive
Japan	0.233
Korea	0.476
China	0.965
Mongolia	0.283
Taiwan	0.462
Singapore	0.792
Vietnam	na
Philippines	0.820
Thailand	0.709
Indonesia	0.763
Cambodia	0.803
Malaysia	0.810
Total	0.636

Data source: ABS Wave Three

How can we make sense of the findings from bilateral questions as opposed to previous findings of China's rise? Here we offer two observations. First, contrary to the result that only people in the adjacent countries to China recognize the rise of China, Southeast Asians do recognize the great bilateral influence of China but still think that the United States is more influential than China in the region. In other words, Southeast Asians think that China is influential to them, but not that influential in comparison to the United States. Second, contrary to the result that most Asians believe China's rise in positive sense, East Asians tend to be more negative when China's influence is restricted to bilateral sense. This means that the positive view about China's rise is a deliberative response since East Asians generally do not like China's influence over themselves per se. They give positive evaluations because China's rise could bring important interest to their economic development, and such interest is vital for their long-term development. When the tradeoff has to be made between economic interest and personal likes, we found great compromise in the countries such Korea and Taiwan since both are highly interdependent with China economically. But if the country does not need to depend on China such as Japan, or totally depend on China such as Mongolia, we can see that people would express their personal likes without much compromise.

Country-Specific Explanations of Perception on China's Rise

Our previous discussion has pointed out that the factors associated with how Asians view the rise of China are tangled and cross-cutting to each other. Some factors could promote positive thinking about China's rise, but others might engender negative thoughts. The synthetic opinion of each individual country reflects the relative important of these factors under a specific context. With this understanding in mind, we reexamine three questions about China's rise. What we want to know is whether the margin of favorable responses to China is connected to the official policy in individual countries. For the first question, "which country has the most influence in Asia", we subtract the percentage for China from the percentage for U.S. and derive a net measure of China's rise. The same method is applied to another two questions, "does China (if you think China has the most influence) do more good or harm to the region" and "in ten years, which country will have the most influence in Asia?"

Since the rise of China is a global issue that associates with the comparison of China and U.S., the net measure of favorable responses represents how strongly the rise of China is now recognized, how positively the rise of China is now evaluated, and how greatly the rise of China is anticipated, respectively. We discuss how Chinese look at this issue first. As Table 9 reports, 18.4% more Chinese think that China has the most influence in Asia, and this net measure is only modest if compared with Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, Singapore, and Vietnam. In terms of whether China's rise is positively or negatively perceived, the net measure for positive responses to China's rise is overwhelming, reaching 86.2%. For anticipation of China's rise, the net measure shows a slightly lower rating (47.9%) than other East Asian countries, such as Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, Singapore, and Vietnam. Relatively speaking, Chinese people recognize and anticipate China's rise only in a moderate degree, but their view about China's rise is extremely positive. This pattern of response matches what China repeatedly positions itself about its peaceful rise throughout the past decade. One of the most salient cases is Premier Wen Jiabao's public proclamation of "China will never threaten any country, pursue expansion, or seek hegemony." This policy orientation can be traced back to Deng's fundamental principle of "concealing our ability and biding our time" and "keeping a low profile and avoiding unnecessary confrontation" in early 1990s. While such a modest pronouncement might be suspected as diplomatic rhetoric instead of revelation of genuine grand strategy in foreign policy, the relative moderate statistics in the recognition and anticipation of China's rise have already shown the effectiveness of policy education in shaping the domestic opinion in China.

While Chinese public perception does agree with the official policy proclamation, people in other countries might perceive China's rise very differently. As Table 9

reports, the net measures for recognition, evaluation, and anticipation of China's rise in Japan are 31.8%, -65.3%, 52.0%, indicating that Japanese people recognize and anticipate China's rise very much, but at the same they feel huge threat from this phenomenon. Specifically, the anti-Japanese nationalistic sentiment in China has soared to a new high in recent years due to the territorial dispute of the Diaoyu Island. Complicated with Chinese painful historical memory against Japan, The above statistics do nicely convey how much Japanese people worry about the rise of China. Such apprehension is also illuminated in Japanese foreign policy. As a regional major power, Japan's economic and military capability is tantamount to China's level, at least in terms of naval power and air force. For many years, China is always the prime suspect of enemy in Japanese security policy. What Japan tries to achieve, related to this situational assumption, is how to balance China with minimal rearmament under U.S. military assistantship.²⁵ However, the recent surge of threat perception in public opinion regarding North Korea and China has driven LDP leaders, such as Koizumi Junichiro, calling for the military normalization.²⁶ While the DPJ government did not change the fundamental principle of "defense-oriented" policy in 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines,²⁷ there is little opposition against the voice of military normalization inside Japan, either. In fact, the escalation of the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu Island was triggered by the DPJ government's provocative move in purchasing and nationalizing the island. No matter whether this is a campaign strategy aiming to boost DPJ's political support for the 2013 general election, Japanese security policy in fact has shifted toward a rightist direction in favor of military normalization.

The next group which shows similar public opinions contains Korea and Taiwan, where both have a high level of anticipation toward China's rise, but Taiwanese has stronger recognition and better evaluation than Koreans. Despite the slight difference, both countries show a very positive attitude toward (above 55%, see Table 3) China's rise. This runs counter to the fact that Korea and Taiwan still depend on U.S. alliance to defend themselves from China's military threat. Until today, U.S. still has more than 28,000 troops in Korea and the joint military exercises between U.S. and Korea, aiming to cope with North Korea's threat and react to possible China's engagement, become even more consolidated. For Taiwan, while the Ma Ying-jeou's government

²⁵ Elena Atanassova-Cornelis and Carmen A. Mendes. (2010), Dynamics of Japanese and Chinese Security Policies in East Asia and Implications for Regional Stability, *Asian Politics & Policy*, 2(3), p.398.

²⁶ Jacob Brown. (2005). Catalysts, Choices and Cooperation: Japanese Military Normalization and the US-Japan Alliances. *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 5(2), pp.42-43.

²⁷ Axel Berkofsky. (2011). Japan's December 2010 "National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG)": The "Big Bang" of Japanese Security and Defense Policies? *Korean Review of International Studies*, 14(1), p.49.

greatly improves the cross-strait relationship, Taiwan and China have not formally ended their adversarial relationship and the potential military conflict might still happen if both sides intend to change the status quo. From security point of view, Korea and Taiwan are protégés of U.S. military power in Asian Pacific region, and China is the intended opponent for both countries. Such a relationship is the so-called “asymmetrical alliance”: China (or with North Korea) on one side and U.S. with Korea or Taiwan on the other.

Given such a security risk, why are Koreans and Taiwanese so positive toward China’s rise? We believe that is associated with two factors. First, Korea and Taiwan have largely improved their relationship with China for the past several years. While the fundamental problem still remains, both countries are managed to build greater level of political trust and reduce security hazard. Second, more importantly, Korea and Taiwan have already fully integrated into the global production chain based on China. Both are highly interdependent to Chinese economy. The common interest between China is so great that people in both countries realize that China’s rise is beneficial to their long-term economic interest, and this thinking results in positive attitudes toward China’s rise in Korea and Taiwan.

Table 9 The Margin of Favorable Responses to China Regarding China’s Rise

Country	Recognition	Evaluation	Anticipation	Characterization of Official Policy
China	0.184	0.862	0.479	Never seek hegemony
Japan	0.318	-0.653	0.520	Balancing China
Korea	0.243	0.183	0.742	Asymmetrical alliance with U.S.
Taiwan	0.457	0.297	0.722	Asymmetrical alliance with U.S.
Mongolia	0.530	-0.279	0.613	Balancing threat from China and Russia
Singapore	0.323	0.698	0.603	Political alliance with China
Vietnam	0.540	0.093	0.541	Political alliance with China
Philippines	-0.485	0.667	-0.481	Balancing interest from China and U.S.
Thailand	-0.028	0.223	0.248	Balancing interest from China and U.S.
Indonesia	-0.179	0.298	-0.012	Balancing interest from China and U.S.
Cambodia	-0.325	0.541	0.086	Balancing interest from China and U.S.
Malaysia	-0.077	0.502	0.176	Balancing interest from China and U.S.

Entry is the percentage difference of China vs. U.S. or positive vs. negative in the following questions: “which country has the most influence in Asia?” (Recognition), “does China (if you think China has the most influence) do more good or harm to the region?” (Evaluation), and “in ten years, which country will have the most influence in Asia?” (Anticipation).

Data source: ABS Wave Three

Similar to Japan, Mongolia feels great security threat from China. Unlike Japan,

Mongolia does not have strong U.S. support because the geographical location always makes it under the squeeze of China and Russia. As a weak state, Mongolia official foreign policy is to balance the threat from China and Russia by establishing its alliance relationship with U.S., Japan, European Union and other western countries.²⁸ While the negative view is significantly lower than the Japanese case, the worry that China's rise would bring greater threat is manifest by the fact that more than 60% (see figure 3) Mongolians think China's rise doing more harm than good to the region.

Another group that shares the same status in related to China's rise includes Singapore and Vietnam. While both countries are very different in terms of economic developmental level, geographical proximity to China, as well as historical relationship with China, both countries promote the same political discourse as does China to legitimize their one-party authoritarian rule. In Singapore, former Prime Minister Lee Kuna-Yew has been suggested that the western standards of human rights and democracy will not work in Asia, and he proposed Asian values for promoting economic development and political stability by restricting personal liberty. This viewpoint is shared by the Chinese and Vietnamese government, and the three countries all face the same issue: how can these countries continue maintain high economic growth while remain one-party authoritarian rule? Lee's theory on Asian values to a great extent provides the justification for the current political system of the three countries. As Table 9 shows, Singapore and Vietnam both recognize and anticipate China's rise, despite some difference. The major discrepancy is that Singaporeans are extremely positive toward China's rise, while their positive evaluation is only slightly higher than the negative view for Vietnamese. This might be related to the recent close partnership between Singaporean and Chinese leaders in economic and political affairs. In additions, the common cultural and ethnic background might also increase the likeness of China's rise for Singaporeans.

The last group is the ASEAN countries which neither territorial adjacent or ethnically affiliated to China, including Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Vietnam. As Table 9 shows, people in these five countries deny China's rise, but their evaluation is very positive once they acknowledge it. In addition, except Philippines and Indonesia, the other three countries have different level of anticipation toward China's rise. This finding shows, Southeast Asian countries believe that U.S. dominates the region and China's military and economic power, despite the ascending trend, cannot effectively compete with U.S. now and probably remains so in the future. On the other hand, those who do believe China's rise are very positive toward China's image. As a matter of fact, China has been actively developed its relationship with

²⁸ Concept of Mongolia's Foreign Policy, Military of Foreign Affairs, Mongolia.
http://www.mfat.gov.mn/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=36&Itemid=55&lang=en
(retrieved October 16, 2012)

ASEAN countries by increasing economic relations through trade and investment. If people realize that China's influential status in Asia and the world, they will understand how tightly their interest is bonded with Chinese economy, and thus, they are more willing to give positive evaluations toward China's rise. The above statistics indicate less concern for people in ASEAN countries to regard China as a threat, but more concern being paid if they recognize China's rise. Such mindset resembles to ASEAN official policy that keeps U.S. and China by equal distance and tries to benefit from both powers without losing their autonomy in foreign policy.

Conclusions

How do Asians view the rise of China? Our findings suggest that East Asians have recognized China's rise but not Southeast Asians. Most Asians view China's rise positively except Japanese and Mongolians. Most Asians anticipate China's rise, except Filipinos and Indonesians, but Southeast Asian's anticipation is much weaker. The China model is not found attractive to Asians at all. Even in China, more people think that the liberal democratic model, instead of developmental authoritarian alternative, should be China's future model. Regarding the bilateral relationship with China, contrary to the view towards China's rise, most Asians unanimously recognize the influence of China, including Southeast Asians. Also, East Asians generally dislike China in bilateral sense, and this attitude differs greatly from their evaluation of China's rise, but Southeast Asians remains very positive about China's bilateral influence.

What is the theoretical implication for the current perception status toward China's rise in Asia? From China's perspective, the leaders intend to position China as a non-revisionist state that pursues great power status without ambition to alter the status quo. However, some countries do not find this image construction very credible. For Japan and Mongolia, China is very ambitious and poses great threat to their national security. In both cases, realist's thoughts still dominates people's mindset toward China's image, regardless how China presents itself. In many Southeast Asian countries, people tend to underrate China's influence in regional as well as global politics, but their view about China's rise is more positive. Apparently, U.S. influence is still deeper than China's recent effort to promote its image through consolidation of economic ties. Surprisingly, Korea and Taiwan, the two countries that have higher risk of military conflict with China, are very positive toward the recognition, evaluation, and anticipation regarding China's rise. These two cases indicate that China has successfully reduced the mutual distrust with Korea and Taiwan, and establishing a reciprocal relationship via economic interdependence does effectively improve the perception of China in recent years. For Singapore and Vietnam, both are positive

toward the recognition, evaluation, and anticipation of China's rise, but the Singaporean case is more salient in terms of favorable perception. Such amicable attitudes might be associated with the similar political institution, the shared Confucian culture, economic interdependence, as well as lack of major interest conflict. In both cases, constructivist's argument might make better sense to explain their current perception status.

Overall, we found that none of the major paradigms in international relations can capture the cognitive factor satisfactorily. In Japan and Mongolia, realist's claim fits the reality much better. People are still haunted by the perception of zero-sum game, as well as the fear of China's revisionist ambition. For Korea, Taiwan, and most Southeast Asian countries, on the other hand, the economic common interest has outplayed the potential security concern, and therefore, the rise of China does not result in great panic even for the countries that used to have an intense relationship with China. At last, the Singaporean and Vietnamese cases demonstrate, if countries share many similarities in domestic and international politics without salient conflict of interest, constructivist's claim that these countries can establish a collective identity and strong mutual consensus is indeed possible, although it is still unknown whether this friendly relationship would stand if divergent interest starts to emerge.

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