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**Shi Chen**

**Asymmetric Structure of Mutual Distrust and the “Locked” Sino-Japanese Relations**

**Material Abstract**

The thesis presents a way of interpreting problems and disputes between China and Japan through identifying distrust in Sino-Japanese relations. It is abnormal that the two former rivals still could not move forward from the legacies of history while the status quo of the rise of China brings more problems. One explanation would be that the continuous mutual distrust with an asymmetric structure on different core concerns of strategic and moral issues leads to the locked Sino-Japanese relations.

The thesis argues that both of the two countries distrust each other while the priori concerns are different. Japan concentrates on the strategic issues and China currently pays more attention on the moral issues. The different priorities lead to a lack of motivation of the two countries to make compromises to solve the problems from the other's perspective. Hence, the thesis will try to verify the existence of mutual distrust and the asymmetric structure and examine the impacts of distrust on interstate relations. The analysis on the governmental discourse and existing policies and activities of the two countries will be the main method. The qualitative analysis on the essence of discourse and the quantitative verification of the reliability will be used in the case studies for the empirical materials collected. Besides, to collect information from the academic and public levels, the thesis will use the secondary data from the existing public opinion polls and conduct a small scale interview on both Chinese and Japanese scholars.

In general, the results show that the asymmetric mutual distrust greatly contributes to the current Sino-Japanese contradictions. The two countries might keep suffering from it in a long term before the potential recommendations on trust-building and distrust-eliminating processes could effectively work.

**Asymmetric Structure of Mutual Distrust and the  
“Locked” Sino-Japanese Relations**

By

Shi Chen

A thesis presented for the degree  
PhD in Politics

School of Government and International Affairs  
Durham University

2016

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## **Declaration**

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

If someone asked the question, “How would you describe current Sino-Japanese relations using the words ‘positive/negative’ or ‘trust/distrust’”, scholars, government officials or normal citizens might answer “negative” and “distrust”. That is to say, current Sino-Japanese relations are suffering from evident difficulties, which leave a strong impression on most people that the two countries are not interacting well at the present time. The question is why this could happen between two modern states with strong interdependence, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

For most of their shared history, bilateral relations between China and Japan have been considered positive. Though there has not been a mature international society or diplomatic relationship, the two countries are connected to some extent. Cultural exchanges and communications are supposed to be the most significant interaction in the relations. Since science and technology, and even Chinese culture was comparatively advanced long ago, a major pattern of communication between China and Japan was that Japan would send students and envoys to China to learn different kinds of knowledge. In this way, it is reasonable that two states with close cultural ties—for example, the use of Chinese characters in Japanese language, and architectural styles—could help build a harmonious relationship.

There are also different discussions on the way in which China and Japan could maintain peaceful relations with each other. In the past due to the lack of efficient transportation and information, interactions between different states of the region was quite limited, and disputes and wars were not easily conducted. This situation changed towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the relations between the two countries changed into semi-colonial pattern with the invasion of a backward China by a modern Japan. In the beginning of its imperial era, Japan achieved many of its national interest goals in China, following the example of some Western states. The rise of Japanese militarism was followed by a war



between Japan and China, as a part of World War II, which created a series of problems affecting bilateral relations even today. The war led to millions of deaths and casualties in both countries, and ruined the process of modernization. Moreover, the confrontation between the communist and capitalist camps in the Cold War made timely reconciliation impossible, as the two countries were involved with different ideological groups. It was not until 1972 that China and Japan finally realized the normalization of their official relationship—most of which is owed to re-engagement between the US and China.

Even in the era of normalization, in contrast to the situation of deeper trust among European states, such as France and Germany, the bilateral relationship between China and Japan does not work that smoothly. There was indeed a period, nearly two decades, of peace and cooperation between the two states after the 1972 normalization. As soon as normalization was achieved, the relationship between China and Japan warmed up rapidly. Though the two states did not form an alliance, the political atmosphere was overall positive, both on the intergovernmental level and the social level. Both states distrusted the Soviet Union during the Cold War era, which brought them together by sharing a common strategic goal.

However, the trust context between China and Japan was unstable. After the fall of the Soviet Union, increased friction in disputes about issues left unsettled during the normalization process were observed. The disputes over historical legacies soon emerged as obstacles to the development of bilateral relations. With the growth of China's economic and military power, the Sino-Japanese relationship in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has witnessed a wider array of problems, including both historical legacies and strategic confrontations or competition. A series of disputes in Sino-Japanese relations occurred leading to limited progress in cooperation. This context led to increased awareness of the problem of bilateral trust between China and Japan.

Another important element is that, although both Japan and China acknowledge the existence of disputes and wish that they should be controlled within a certain scope instead of letting them drive the two countries into direct conflict, they still seem stuck

with the problems without appropriate solutions. Hence, the problem might not only be distrust based on certain issues, but also a structural dilemma that leads to a “locked” Sino-Japanese relationship. This is the primary focus of the current research. It has to be emphasized that though historical patterns of course provide much of the context of the relationship the research focuses on the contemporary international relations between the two countries, which is after the year 2000. The years prior are only discussed as supporting evidence in terms of the legacies, and the current status quo is the main focus of the research project and its questions.

## **1.2 Research questions**

We can therefore define the research questions and expected outcomes as follows:

1. How can the problem of trust be identified and understood in terms of International Relations (IR)? How will trust – or distrust - affect international relations between states?
2. Why are Sino-Japanese relations ‘locked’ in terms of distrust? What is the nature of this structural dilemma and what are the asymmetries in the status of trust?
3. Is it possible to ‘unlock’ the problem of trust between the two countries and improve general relations? If yes, how can this be achieved? If no, why not?

The assumptions of behind these research questions can be set out as follows:

Question 1: How can the problem of trust be identified and understood in terms of International Relations (IR)? How will trust – or distrust - affect international relations between states?

“Trust” is firstly a sociological term about relationships between human beings. However, states are interdependent in international society and they can have social relations with one another; as a result we can see that international relations support and benefit from the existence of trust. As Rathbun (2009) argues, trust is the belief that one’s interests will not be harmed when placed in the hands of another. When adopted in international

relations, different types of trust are identified, such as social trust and political trust as described by Brewer (2004), or strategic trust and moralistic trust as identified by Rathbun (2009). What can be concluded from the facts of international relations is that states with deep trust have different types of interactions (more positive) from those who do not.

In terms of IR theories, different approaches are involved. For realists, national interests or national security are the main goals and concerns of a state. Therefore, cooperation between states is contingent and trust does not essentially exist in this approach. In general, trust is much closer to the ideas of liberalism. Liberalists argue that international cooperation is achievable and that states might trust each other for mutually beneficial relations. Moreover, the perspectives of rationalism and constructivism should also be included.

However, part of the disputes between the IR approaches as to the existence and function of trust in international relations lies in the difficulty of identifying and measuring trust. The measurement of trust is to some extent difficult, but it is still possible. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are adopted for this research, as discussed in the methodology section. The basic standard for methods of measuring trust looks at three levels:

--The political interactions between the two states: both positive interactions and negative should be taken into consideration. Positive activities, such as mutual VIP visits, joint agreements, integration and other cooperative actions, can be regarded as signs of existing mutual trust. Competitive interactions, such as disputes over historical issues, are symbols of mutual distrust.

--Social interactions are also crucial, as political trust might develop from the social level. Public opinion towards each other is a measurement of social trust, which could be assessed in a comparatively effective way. Moreover, whether public interactions go smoothly is also a method for measuring the quality of mutual trust.

--Analysis of the content of governmental documents, public opinion and interview on scholars: the standards of measurements to discover evidence of trust among existing

processes is based on analysis of key materials, which is combined with quantitative methods.

*How could trust shape international relations?*

When defining the notion of trust, a widely accepted general definition is that to trust is to believe one's interests would not be harmed under the control of another actor. There are discussions about different types of trust in international relations, such as Rathbun's (2009) categorisation of two broad forms: "strategic trust" and "moralistic trust". According to Rathbun, "strategic trust" is "a belief that potential partners have a self-interest in cooperation, generally an incentive in building or sustaining a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship" (2009: 349); and "moralistic trust" is a belief "about the honesty and integrity of potential partners" (2009: 351). Trust affects the modes of actions by shaping decisions as to whether another actor is trustworthy or not. With the different actions of other actors on strategic or moralistic issues, a reflection of a state could be seen at both governmental and social levels, which seems to conform to Paul R. Brewer (2004) definitions of "social trust" and "political trust".

In the case of Sino-Japanese relations, both strategic and moralistic distrust exist. The two states distrust each other based on the other's strategic goals and national interests, which have the potential to harm their own interests. Meanwhile, due to historical legacies, China and Japan doubt the other's honesty and integrity. The influences of mutual distrust have negative effects on the process of reconciliation, and both social and political interactions. Why distrust is significant is because it weakens attempts by the states to conduct or even to consider the necessity of conducting actions to reconcile or cooperate, as one state has few positive perceptions of the other. Since the relationship itself is deteriorating and the will to change the situation is very low, a vicious cycle can be observed.

Question 2: Why are Sino-Japanese relations 'locked' in terms of distrust? What is the nature of this structural dilemma and what are the asymmetries in the status of trust?

As mentioned above, Sino-Japanese relations have become trapped by mutual distrust. The research focuses on mutual relations after the normalization in 1972. What can be seen is that the relationship has been worsening ever since. Theoretically, China and Japan should have settled their historical disputes when World War II ended, more than 70 years ago, but the opposite is true. The characteristics of different periods and specific issues are the problems that leads the two states into mutual distrust. The trust or distrust affects the process of forming political attitudes and judgments of foreign policies, which in turn have direct influences on bilateral relations.

Moreover, the distrust between the two states has asymmetries from China's and Japan's different viewpoints. This can be shown by the following figure:

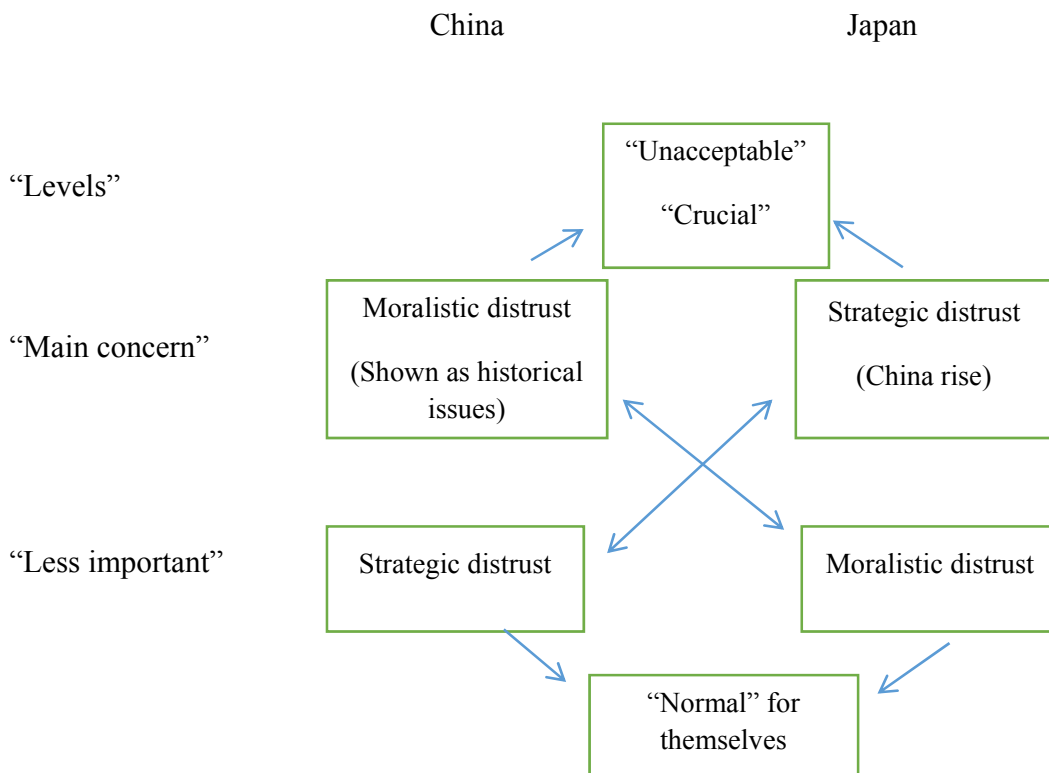


Figure 1. 1: Asymmetries in the structure of distrust of Sino-Japanese relations

Both states have strategic and moralistic distrust toward the other. However, the main concerns of each are on different levels and are driven by different dynamics. For China moralistic distrust is stronger than strategic; for Japan the reverse. The asymmetries make it difficult to unlock the status quo of mutual distrust. As the two states tend to regard the other as unfriendly or threatening in their 'normal' demands, such as China's call for apologies about history and Japan's worry about China's expansion, the disputes are more complicated.

Question3: Is it possible to 'unlock' the problem of trust between the two countries and improve general relations? If yes, how can this be achieved? If no, why not?

The author would argue that 'trust' is not the only determinant of Sino-Japanese relations, but is indeed a crucial one. Rebuilding mutual trust is a potential recommendation that would help unlock relations. Specific patterns are likely:

- (1). Settling the historical legacies and disputes to achieve basic understandings, since these cases remain as obstacles to further steps towards reconciliation.
- (2). Declaring transparency in strategic goals and national interests. Both are dissatisfied with the other on this. Japan worries about China's lack of transparency, and China doubts the intentions of the US-Japan alliance.
- (3). Building efficient channels between governments to deal with emergencies and disputes. Enhancements in social interactions without political influence should also be strengthened for mutual understanding.
- (4). Controlling the risk of nationalism. The two should avoid using nationalism as a tool to take advantage of the other.
- (5). China and Japan should have a clear understanding of the asymmetries of the others' core concerns, and the dynamics at different levels (including governmental/civil levels), in order to reduce misunderstandings and misreading of intentions.

However, whether these possible recommendations are accepted is a serious problem. The mutual distrust has brought about a vicious cycle – that the two states are likely to follow a competitive zero-sum approach instead of a cooperative positive-sum approach. With

fierce disputes over specific issues, such as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, it is extremely difficult to even start rebuilding trust. What methods the two governments take to overcome the obstacles is significant. On the other hand, the two states have reasons to cooperate. As the most important states in the region, confrontation would only harm the interests of both in the long term. Therefore, the situation of distrust and negative relationship might remain unstable for a comparatively long period, but should be resolved eventually.

### **1.3 Methodology**

One noted one of the main obstacles for the research is the measurement of trust or distrust between China and Japan. Being a more-or-less elusive term in international relations, the status of trust between states might not be identifiable directly and easily. However, evidence exists in international relations behaviour to measure trust and distrust. Beyond the theoretical exploration of trust relationships, mutual trust is endowed with certain particulars in Sino-Japanese relations. In general, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods is adopted in the research.

Qualitative study contributes to the research in the following ways: First, the essence of Sino-Japanese relations is far beyond the data, which shows an incredible growth in military spending. To understand the shifts in ‘unstable’ bilateral relations and ‘unstable trust’, analysis of historical legacies and specific issues of disputes is necessary. The development of Sino-Japanese relations could be interpreted in terms of IR theories; however, it is also history-based. The research discusses the changes in relations since the 1972 bilateral normalization, in order to discover how trust and distrust shapes interstate relations. Second, with the necessity of defining trust in international relations as a framework for the thesis, a theoretical analysis of trust in terms of different approaches is constructed. For example, using Rathbun’s framework (2009), identifying strategic trust and moralistic trust, how the traditional IR approaches fit the basic claims of these kinds of trust needs to be strengthened. Third, a series of approaches to define trust are basically qualitative. The mutual trust between the two states could be analysed through exploring empirical materials. By studying factors such as commonly-used political terms,

the interstate positioning processes, mutual visits and speeches of leaders, and interstate treaties or agreements, it could be possible to identify whether the level of trust between China and Japan is positive or negative at certain times. Similar methods can be observed in the arguments of Aaron M. Hoffman (2002), in which measurements of trust are built on the elements of foreign policy decision-making records, oversight indicators, and rule indicators. Based on the findings above, selected cases are discussed in detail.

Meanwhile, quantitative methods have been inevitably connected. On one hand, it is valuable in defining trust. As Paul R. Brewer (2004) has argued, different kinds of trust—both social and political—are to some extent related to public opinion. Public opinion surveys reflecting clear attitudes toward each other could serve as empirical evidence to verify trust relations. It is also possible because the data is easily accessible, due to the surveys being conducted perennially. On the other hand, the qualitative research methods could be extended with quantitative methods. By collecting data such as the frequency of use of hostile, dispute-strengthening, cooperation-publicising words in the most influential media; or by counting the key words of cooperative, competitive, or neutral issues and relations in the speeches by governmental leaders on both sides, evidence could be discovered from these viewpoints. Politicians' use of language and the media is a form of expressing attitudes towards the other state. The media are crucial because they inhabit important positions in Chinese and Japanese politics. The Japanese media have strong influence over its people; while some Chinese media is controlled by the Communist Party, and is a clear reflection of or guide to the strategies of the party and the government. The quality of interstate relations, the status of mutual trust and the link between the two could be better understood through quantitative efforts.

#### **1.4 Structure of the research**

The thesis is constructed across eight chapters, including this introduction. Chapter 2 is the theoretical framework, and tries to define the notion of trust in the case of Sino-Japanese relations. Firstly, there is a task to define trust in international relations, because there are debates over its significance in this discipline among different international relations theories. The existence of trust/distrust needs to be verified in



order to guide the research and avoiding confusion with trust between human beings. Secondly, it is crucial to indicate how the general concepts are adopted in this thesis. Specifically, this thesis mainly analyses “strategic distrust” and “moral distrust” between Japan and China. However, these two terms are not entirely similar to the “strategic trust” and “moralistic trust” introduced by Rathbun and Uslaner, which are discussed in detail in the chapter. Thirdly, the chapter focuses on the aims and measurements of trust, which could help us understand the significance and the reliability of this research. Fourth, the chapter tries to provide a theoretical framework, so that later chapters could be supported by the theories.

Chapter 3 is a literature review of how effectively the existing literature examines trust and distrust in Sino-Japanese relations. The literature review is constructed in the form of a chronology of Sino-Japanese relations, from the 1970s until now. Since it has already been acknowledged that Sino-Japanese relations have had both positive and negative periods, the chapter tries to explore how the literature understands the sources and reasons for the changes. To be specific, whether the literature provides explanations for how distrust between the two countries affects bilateral relations is a concern of this chapter.

Chapter 4 connects the theoretical structure and the empirical cases. Although the theoretical discussions might make sense, whether it has the expected influence on Sino-Japanese relations is another matter. Therefore, identifying the particular characteristics of the two countries and Sino-Japanese relations, such as domestic politics, foreign policy-making process, and historical legacies is crucial. This chapter discusses how they lead to and contribute to the influences of trust and distrust in Sino-Japanese relations.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 are two case studies. Chapter 5 examines Japan’s strategic and moral distrust of China. There are three sub-hypotheses in this chapter, including: that strategic distrust of China exists; that moral distrust exists; and that, of the two, Japan’s strategic distrust of China is currently predominant. In terms of strategic distrust,

maritime disputes have been selected as the cases, because they are frequently hotspots in the region. For moral distrust, Japan's distrust of China's ideology, political system, and responsibilities as a country are analysed. After the analysis of each, a comparative study is conducted, to verify the final hypothesis.

Chapter 6 is similar in structure to chapter 5, and it focuses on China's strategic and moral distrust of Japan. The three hypotheses are similar, except that for China, the *a priori* concern is moral distrust. The analysis of China's moral distrust focuses on historical issues, especially that of the Yasukuni Shrine. At the same time, China's strategic distrust is based on Japan's potential revival as a normal state, or as a great military power.

Chapter 7 focuses on two main tasks. Firstly, although the cases have answered some of the research questions on mutual distrust between Japan and China, it is still necessary to explain why mutual distrust can lead to a locked status in bilateral relations. With the supportive theoretical framework and the case studies as empirical evidence, the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust can be tested as another hypothesis. This chapter also tries to provide academic sources of interviews with scholars to support verification and discuss the final research question about possible recommendations for unlocking Sino-Japanese relations. Although there are more pessimistic views of the future of mutual trust, solving the structural problem and enhancing trust is the inevitable choice for the two countries.

Chapter 8 is a conclusion, reviewing the soundness and completeness of the thesis. It also identifies the limitations of and potential for continuing the research in the future.

### **1.5 Conclusion: why the research is significant**

The existing literature indeed discusses the important elements affecting the bilateral relationship, and frequently mentions the word "distrust" in different cases. However, differing from the relationship-based arguments, this research pays more attention to the situation of bilateral trust/distrust, based on how events move the relationship between

trust and distrust. The status of trust greatly affects the interactions between and reactions of China and Japan, which are based on each's anticipations and strategies towards the other. The research focuses on the quantitative interpretation of how good or bad the status of trust/distrust is in bilateral relations and the qualitative study of how the notion of trust plays a role in Sino-Japanese relations, and if there are recommendations.

## Chapter 2: A theoretical framework

During the China-Japan 21<sup>st</sup> Century Friendship Committee in 2011, former Chinese foreign minister and state councillor Tang Jiaxuan told the media that the lack of mutual political trust between China and Japan, as well as instability in the civil friendship between the two countries were problematic. The deep roots of these problems between the two East Asian giants could be identified as the absence of mutual trust at both the governmental and civil society levels. Tang Jiaxuan also argued that the mutual distrust between China and Japan should be understood as originating from a variety of sources. Historical and growing nationalism in both countries could be the first impression people have of Sino-Japanese relations, while the rapid growth of Chinese national power, and the emergence of the so called ‘China threat’ connected to the rise of China, might enhance mutual distrust as well.<sup>1</sup> From a similar perspective, in February 2013, former Japanese Ambassador to China Niwa Uichirō has also suggested that the crisis surrounding the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands is a consequence of the distrust between the two countries’ leaders.<sup>2</sup>

Originally, ‘trust’ was not considered a political term. It was a sociological concern, such as the basic methodology of developing trust “in order to face the future actively and constructively” (Sztompka, 1999, p.11); and thus trust could be interpreted as an alternative choice “in situations when we have to act in spite of uncertainty and risk” (Sztompka, 1999, p. 25). In other cases, one could describe trust as being “a simplifying strategy that enables individuals to adapt to complex social environment, and thereby benefit from increased opportunities” (Earle & Cvetkovich, 1995, p.38), and “particularly relevant in conditions of ignorance or uncertainty with respect to unknown or unknowable actions of others” (Gambetta, 1988, p.218). However, more governmental officials and scholars are discussing trust and its significance in politics and international relations. Michael P. Jasinski argues,

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/wjdt\\_611265/gjldrhd\\_611267/t870569.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/wjdt_611265/gjldrhd_611267/t870569.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> See <http://mil.huanqiu.com/observation/2013-02/3644634.html>

“It would be a mistake to treat social trust as merely an aspect of interpersonal interactions. It is a concept that has considerable influence on a variety of political phenomena, ranging from economic development to violent crime, trust in government, governmental performance, and... international conflict behaviour.”  
(Jasinski, c2011, p. 51)

It can therefore be seen that relations between states without trust will likely suffer difficulties (Yan, 2013). At the same time, we could also expect a number of positive effects brought about by mutual trust in international relations. A fundamental question, therefore, is how do states find themselves in a state of trust or mistrust, and what they can do to change the situation to affect bilateral relations?

In terms of understanding the notion of trust in international relations, there are several crucial stages or tasks that should be explored. The initial issue would be the definition of trust. As has been mentioned, trust was regarded as a moral or a sociological term, rather than a political one to begin with (Sztompka, 1999; Baier, 1995). It cannot be avoided that certain challenges or problems might occur when introducing a term that has traditionally been regarded as based on the relationships between human beings into the fields of International Relations. This chapter will analyse trust in International Relations in three stages. First, a definition of trust will be discussed, including the sources of trust and how trust changes in international relations. The issue of trust as a changeable factor in relations between states and societies also requires discussing the possibility of measuring trust. Not only the main IR theories of trust will be discussed, but also the related approaches – such as rational choice theory and the security dilemma – which should be taken into consideration. Second, the chapter will discuss how trust and distrust could directly or indirectly affect mutual relations between China and Japan. Levels of trust and distrust in relations between states would vary due to each state’s specific circumstances, so these factors need comprehensive analysis. In particular, the critical argument about certain asymmetries in the different focuses, which have led to the current ‘locked’ relationship between the two countries, need close examination. In

general, the sources of trust and distrust between the two states, and the performance and impact of levels of trust, are the main concerns of this research.

## **2.1 Is trust a normative behavior or a rational choice for states in international relations?**

The logic of exploring the role and meaning of trust in international relations should have the following stages. First, it is necessary to view trust as a normative category that reflects and shapes behaviour among states. This helps with the analysis of the functions of both trust and distrust. At the same time, one should consider whether or not trust is a form of incentive or rational choice in interstate relations, and whether this is a helpful way of understanding the motivation of states' activities. Therefore, a discussion of the notions of trust in international relations will be conducted in this chapter, focusing on normative explanations of trust as well as rational choice assumptions. Finally, how trust would be understood and explained within these possible approaches, and how the main International Relations Theories view trust will also be examined.

### **2.1.1 A basic understanding of trust in international relations**

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, trust is the belief in “the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something.”<sup>3</sup> Originally, ‘trust’ was a notion used mostly in describing the status of relationships between human beings in a sociological sense. Human society relies on the trust between individuals and associations, which then could be formed to become an entirety. The notion of trust is closely connected with issues in other fields of social enquiry, such as law, economics, psychology and management. In fact, ‘trust’ has always been present within international affairs, since the international society was formed even without being raised as a clearly defined academic notion or subject of study. Trust among different states and societies can be crucial to their relationships. The existence of bilateral trust might ensure that friendly and healthy interactions between countries can develop. Conversely, a lack of trust might lead to

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/trust?q=trust>, accessed 25/10/2013

suspicion and enmity in international relations, and create a multitude of problems and rivalries between countries

Trust in international relations is a state's belief in or judgement of the interaction among states, that the activities of another actor could not damage its interests, values, or reputation (Hardin, 2006; Hoffman, 2006; Sztompka, 1999; Kramer, Brewer, & Hanna, 1996; Larson, 1997). As this suggests, trust has been seen from one perspective as a positive or negative normative category. Aaron M. Hoffman defined the notion of trust as, "At root, trust refers to an actor's willingness to place something valued under another's control." (Hoffman, 2006, p. 4) Russell Hardin described trust concisely: "As a rule, we trust only those with whom we have a rich enough relationship to judge them trustworthy, and even then we trust only over certain ranges of actions. Hence, trust is a three-part relation: A trusts B to do, or with respect to X." (Hardin, 2006, p.18) Andrew H. Kydd offers a slightly different interpretation, stating that "trust is a belief that the other side prefers mutual cooperation to exploiting one's own cooperation, while mistrust is a belief that the other side prefers exploiting one's cooperation to returning it." (Kydd, 2005), p.6) As Kydd explicitly indicates, cooperation should be seen as one component of trust — possibly as a rational choice for actors. His notion of trust therefore combines certain normative assumptions and also some rational choice ideas, such as that states should rationally advance trust since this will maximise gains from cooperation.

In a similar way, J. David Lewis and Andrew Weigert (1985), suggest that there are different "types of trust": "Trusting behaviour may be motivated primarily by strong positive affect for the object of trust (emotional trust) or by 'good rational reasons' why the object of trust merits trust (cognitive trust), or more usually, some combination of both." There could also be other divisions, including "political trust (i.e., generalized trust in government) and social trust (i.e., generalized trust in other people)" as argued by Brewer, Gross, Aday and Willnat (2004).

Academic debate has suggested that, when viewing trust in international relations, states will very often have to take risks, with the expectation that other actors will follow

international principles (Tar, 1998) and show sufficient respect for their national interests. At the same time, whether a state will trust or distrust another would probably depend, to a degree, on its rational choices, which are determined by collective experiences or information about their mutual history and making predictions of the future. This thesis would accept that trust in international relations is an idea, belief or experience based on interstate activities. However, it is crucial to identify differences in interpretations of trust despite these similarities. The most important considerations are as follows:

- 1) The main carrier of trust would have to be established. Whether the state would be the main instrument of trust or whether it is individuals or other social formations—public opinion, media, cultural representations—is a critical component of this issue. Though trust from the actors of lower levels will be more easily identified and measured, countries remain as the primary actors in international relations – although, even here there would be debates among different IR theories (Hobson, 2000; Arts, 2000).
- 2) There would be a variety of contributing factors to the notion of trust which would be open to interpretation. These elements include national interests, cooperation between states and risk in interstate actions. It is important to understand how these contributing factors operate in specific kinds of trusting or distrustful relationships.
- 3) Another issue is the need to identify the manifestations of trust in international relations, which could indicate whether a state trust or distrust another.

A significant issue in the question of international trust is to establish what the main carrier of trust and distrust is between states. It is evident that the basis of trust is produced through the ideas of human beings and observed in interpersonal relations. The extension of relations between individuals, and then groups of individuals would finally form the bonds that establish international society. Russell Hardin (2002) expresses the importance of individuals in his description of trust: “the best way to address these issues is to begin at the individual level and then to proceed to the societal and governmental levels” (Hardin, 2002)). The individual and the state—or to be more exact, the government—do not have the same capacity to affect trust, nor to be affected by trust. The problem lies in which way this kind of trust, which could have an identifiable impact



on international relations, could be formed based on individuals. The fact is that a ‘state’ or a ‘country’ is an abstract term, without the ability of independent thought like a human being. To be more exact, the executor of the interstate activities of a country is its government. One government’s trust and distrust of another is neither the same as the trust and distrust between individuals, nor that between individuals and governments. The government of a state is assembled from individuals; however, it would have to go beyond the beliefs of individuals, since the national interests of the state would distinguish it from the individual’s. When the people work in and for the government, they would act differently compared to those who only need to care for themselves. In this way, the government might have to make rational choices (Reus-Smit, 2009; Snidal, 2013) —or to be more conservative, the rational actor model can be applied (Rubin , 1997) — on whether to trust or distrust another, considering standards such as the vital national interest, the country’s reputation, and other factors.

It can be concluded that a government formed by individuals would have to gather enough information to decide the attitudes and intentions of another actor in international affairs. Trust would be linked with the confidence and expectations (Tonkiss & Passey, 1999; Cook, Lawrence, & Kim, 2010) that another state would not harm the national interests, and should follow international principles in both present and future occasions. Otherwise, distrust would increase, if a lack of positive information or perceived conflicts in national interests were observable between states. There have been many sources of trust and distrust among states, which will be discussed in the forthcoming sections. The guidance of the strategy of a state, the scientifically-based assessments as well as the values-based judgements will all have to be included.

### **The interaction between trust, cooperation and risk**

There is a crucial question in the relationship between trust and cooperation. A mistake of muddling the division of trust and cooperation might occur when studying trust, which is to make judgements that trust would no doubt exist if cooperation could be achieved between states. The existence of trust and cooperation might be treated as mutually exclusive. To be honest, it is reasonable that the evidence of trust and cooperation in

many cases could be linked (Kydd, 2000; 2001; Das & Teng, 1998). Put another way, “trust is the key to international cooperation” (McGillivray & Smith, 2000). However, as Hoffman states, the gap between the two notions could lead to a misinterpretation of the inner motivations of trust:

“Although these studies contribute to our understanding of the circumstances under which trust is required, they often conflate trust and cooperation, even though the former is not necessary for the later. Cooperation, for example, can be coerced or conducted through a third party in addition to being agreed voluntarily, but many studies of trust are insensitive to distinctions between cooperation without trust and cooperation with trust.” (Hoffman, 2006, p. 6)

Robert Axelrod also claims that, “there is no need to assume trust between the players: the use of reciprocity can be enough to make defection unproductive.” (Axelrod, 1984, p.173)

The argument that cooperation could be achieved without the existence of trust (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005) actually reveals three points of contention: the inequality between trust and cooperation, the relationship between trust and interests, and the existence of rational choices. In terms of the national interest, many scholars have mentioned this in their statements on defining trust. As in Hoffman’s definition above, Rathbun indicates that “trust is the belief that one’s interests will not be harmed when placed in the hands of another” (Rathbun, 2009, p.346). Trust would not purely be a moral judgement on the ‘personality’ or ‘nature’ of another state when the factor of interest is involved. There would be two approaches to trust including both the interest-oriented and morality-oriented ways of understanding the notion. Both Eric M. Uslaner and Brian C. Rathbun have introduced the “strategic trust” and “moralistic trust” (or “generalized trust”) to divide the different patterns. This thesis would, to some extent, agree with the adoption of these ideas in Sino-Japanese relations—with some modifications and exceptions. In terms of the trust between China and Japan, “strategic trust on strategic issues” and “moral and political trustworthy” would be the two favoured approaches.

Going back to the previous discussion on why cooperation could not be equated to trust, it could be argued that cooperation could still be achieved even when one state believes another to be untrustworthy, or even potentially dangerous to its own national interests (Axelrod, 1984; Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Raymond, 2006; Yamagishi, Kanazawa, Mashima, & Terai, 2005). The door to cooperation would never be completely closed on certain issues. Reducing the danger of confrontation by enhancing cooperation is also a kind of national interest. States will always try to advance their interests (even the firmest liberalists could hardly deny that there is plenty of evidence of states pursuing their interests), and then might be conservative on securing their interests in different cases or under different circumstances. In this way, it would be more difficult to achieve trust than cooperation between countries. Therefore, cooperation would not be a sufficient/necessary condition for trust.

Whenever a state trusts another, it would have to accept the risk of being betrayed by the other actor (Cook, et al., 2005; Evans & Krueger, 2011; Uslaner, 2005; Fukuyama, 1996). This thesis tends to believe that absolute trust between states can hardly be achieved while state rationality would drive them to cooperate with others without trust when their interests demand it. Similarly, it is also a type of rational choice that states would preserve to a certain extent even if they do trust another actor. However, trust between states is still significant to the positive development of international relations, without the overall optimism and ‘moralistic trust’. The impact of a trusting relationship is that it can help reduce the high cost brought about by risk control preparations among states (Luhmann, 1988). For example, states with comparatively high levels of military trust could spend less resources on deploying forces near a border, than those states with high levels of military distrust. Meanwhile, trust itself would be a method to control risk and to reduce the potential for crises caused by misinterpretation and misunderstanding, especially in emergencies.

According to Uslaner (2013), trust is “an alternative to risk”. In terms of strategic trust, it would realise the control of risk based on the forecast of the worst situation and possibility. “We may overcome risk by strong institutions such as courts—if you don’t

pay me back, I can sue you.” (Uslaner, Trust as an alternative to risk, 2013, p.2) It would be similar in interstate activities, when countries would rely on the evidence they have to trust one another, while also taking precautions. After being betrayed by another actor, a state would use the methods of punishment to seek revenge (McGillivray & Smith, 2000). Political, economic and military measures could all be institutionalized as the sanctions.

The approaches to risk control of moralistic trust are comparatively different due to an optimistic world view (Uslaner, 2002). If the moralistic trust is popularly accepted by most states in the world, the risks of war and conflicts might be significantly reduced, in addition to a reduction in potential danger at lower stages. Though this kind of idealistic description would not fit the status quo, as it has not been widely adopted by most states, the efforts towards the goal of trust could still have positive impacts within a certain scope. As mentioned above, trust helps to reduce the cost of risk. For instance, in terms of trusting “not to be invaded by other states”, the state of trust between the US and Canada would be much stronger than that between North Korea and South Korea. Considering the fact that Canada is adjacent to the US, which maintains the strongest military force in the world, while not feeling as threatened as South Korea is by North Korea, it could not be denied that trust indeed works in international relations.

### **2.1.2 Normative relations versus rationality in international relations**

The actions of every actor are based on certain standards. Despite exceptional cases (such as the actor losing control), both the individuals in human society and states as the main actors in the international relations would have their own principles and standards of behaviour. Among these actions, the possibility of trusting others would also have certain standards, as the states would be less contingent than individual human beings in dealing with their affairs. Therefore, the study of norms, especially international norms, would help understand the sources and motivations of trust.

Norms can be defined as certain patterns of rules that are then used to define and shape different international behaviours (Hurrell, 2012; Klotz, 1995). The literature may have different concentrations due to specific, unique research aims. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argue that, “The definition of a ‘norm’ is generally stated as ‘a standard of

appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity.’ Sometimes the use of the word institution is used interchangeably with norm.” They also provide different types of norms, including “regulatory norms (which order and constrain behaviour)”, “constitutive norms (which set up new actors, behaviours or interests)”, and “evaluative or prescriptive norms”. It is important to note that the notion of “international norm” contains the idea of “being ought to do something”, or the “rules” of behaviour. Other academics, such as Karl-Dieter Opp (2013), Arie M. Kacowicz (2005) and Janice Thomson (1993), have put forward similar theories. For international norms, states will try to follow certain expectations of behaviour in their interactions under this circumstance. This extends beyond the “behavioural regularities”. (Florini, 1996, p.364) As Kacowicz argues,

“we should differentiate between ‘moral’ or prescriptive (‘normative’) norms, stemming from an international ethics position, and ‘nonnormative’ or ‘non-moral’ norms, stemming mainly from positivist approaches, including international law (see Morgenthau 1934).” (Kacowicz, 2005, p. 19)

According to Opp (2013), there has been another crucial debate between the “incentives thesis” and “autonomy thesis” on norms. The position of the incentives thesis indicates that “norms are incentives and do not differ from other costs and benefits such as material rewards.” By contrast, the autonomy thesis denies the similarity between norms and incentives: “In short, norm following is ‘irrational’ behaviour in the sense that it cannot be explained by RCT (rational choice theory).” (Opp, 2013, p.385) This kind of argument has led to opposition between moral norms and rational choice. Otherwise, it might be regarded as the opposition between norms and interests in international relations, if norm-following activities in international relations are irrational and will lead to higher costs, rather than benefiting interests for states. However, there are those who argue that norms and rational choice are not irreconcilable:

“That is, more often than we think, norms and self-interests tend to coincide rather than stand in opposition to each other. They usually move in the same direction, and they complement each other. Thus, interests might shape norms, but norms also shape interests. (Tannenwald, 1992, p.24)” (Kacowicz, 2005, p.27).

This thesis will accept the judgement that countries are trying to be rational when addressing international affairs. Hence, several steps need to be taken to explain the significance of normative-versus-rational choice for trust in international relations. First, it is crucial to ascertain if trust can be identified as a type of international norm. Second, whether the goal of trusting other actors is beneficial to the interests of states should be explored; otherwise, trust would hardly have space to be treated as an international norm, leaving only the rational behaviour.

### **2.1.3 Does trust in international relations conform to norms or reflect a rational choice?**

By distinguishing the two terms of “norms” and “rational choice”, the thesis uses narrative definitions of each term. Norms would refer to the normative assumptions and related behaviour, or what can be called moral norms (Voina-Motoc, 1999). The rational choice assumption refers to the rationality of non-moral factors among states (Goldsmith & Posner, 2000), which means that countries would act in certain ways (different from the outcome of morality) to attain the benefits of cooperation. Exploring if trust complies with any characteristics of the two options will identify the way in which trust works in international relations.

McElroy (1992, p.31), as cited in Kacowicz (2005, p.18), “a moral norm can be defined as a behavioural prescription that is universal in the claims it makes and that involves a view of the actors’ own interest, but from the point of view of the others’ interests.” It would be a debate of whether countries consider the interests of others as being important in conducting international relations. The definition of trust from Hardin and other scholars similarly suggests that trust means that countries believe that their national interests will not be harmed by others in international relations. Though this is a generalized definition, there is this consistency between the two theories. The moral norms in international relations represent the good will of interstate behaviour. Trusting others is in our/a state’s nature; or, as Uslander (2002) argues, believing that other states should be trusted obeys moral norms and corresponds with the internal quality of “oughtness”. (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.891) Hence, this kind of trust could be

regarded as a moral norm. However, the political facts in international relations (or, to be more optimistic, in international society) show that no essential institutions actually could support a moral requirement, but following these principles might have been accepted as a universal value. The competition between national interests highlights the significance of the other kind of trust and rationality.

As stated above, the thesis suggests that the rationality of states will play an important role in international relations. If the moral norms and moral trust are irrational, it is doubtful that trust could exist between states. It would be difficult to argue that trust could also be a rational choice for countries. The controversy lies in the gap between the sources of trust—moral motivation and information-based motivation, which can manifest differently – such as “beliefs about itself, others and the environment; a set of desires representing the states it wants to achieve; and intentions corresponding to the plans adopted in pursuit of these desires” (Griffiths & Luck, 2003). A country would trust another in international affairs according to the information it holds. Trusting others in this case would be beneficial due to its characteristics of rationality. This will be discussed in the following sections as strategic trust—also mentioned by Uslaner (2001, 2002) and Hoffman (2002, 2006). One simple example of this kind of trust is when a country trusts one of its neighbouring states because it has enough empirical evidence to prove the other’s peaceful attitude and goals, and as a result military spending on the boundary will be reduced. In this way, trust might also be the result of rationality. Therefore, it is important to understand how International Relations theories see the sources of trust, in terms of normative behaviours and rationality.

## **2.2 Trust and International Relations Theory approaches**

There are two aspects to discuss when considering the theories related to trust in international relations. The first are the interpretations of trust in the traditional IR theories on trust-related issues. The second are the other viewpoints of scholars on the factors affecting trust and distrust mentioned above, including the interactions between trust, risk, cooperation and national interests. International Relations theory agrees that trust is generally a belief that actors will follow the disciplines of not harming the

interests of others. Richard Ned Lebow (2013) points out the relationship between trust and the role of international “norms”. He argues, “Trust becomes problematic in situations where there are no norms or weak norms” (Lebow, 2013, p.18). Therefore, different views of the role norms play in the international system must be one of the determinants that explain different attitudes of international relations theories towards trust.

### **2.2.1 Realism**

In the Realist tradition, the common understanding of an anarchical international system is one of the most significant aspects of this approach’s perception of the possibilities of international trust. Or, to be more specific, it could be argued that distrust is one of the core arguments of realism. (Rengger, 1997). Scholars might reasonably face doubts as to whether there is a Realist acceptance of the role of trust.

In general, the realist tradition is not concerned with the significance of international norms and trust in international relations, because of the characteristics of rational self-interest (Gralnick, 1988). According to realists, the ultimate goal of states in an international system of anarchy would be national security. As no transnational institutions could guarantee the security of all states, the self-interested characteristic of countries would lead to increasing attention on the military capabilities of potential enemies. This traditional judgement indeed tends to deny the moral norms in international relations. Hence, one could hardly expect that trust would be high or determine the actions of these security-seeking states. Whenever states feel insecure, they will not prioritise trust in their foreign policy procedures.

However, to be honest, trust cannot be totally abandoned by realist approaches. There have been cases of existing international treaties, agreements and even alliance which could be regarded as examples of international norms and international trust. If the realist tradition denies the existence of international norms and trust, these interstate agreements would be left unexplained, as proposed by Lebow: “Why would leaders negotiate and sign agreements they have no intention of following?” (Lebow, 2013, p.19) As Kacowicz



(2005, p.21) argues, “At the same time, even realists cannot live without norms, since the behaviour they propose is presented and depicted as ‘normative’... In other words, international norms and rules provide standards of behaviour that regulate the ‘normal’ action of states, in times of peace and war.” At the same time, “reputation and prestige” are also the normative components of realist explanations of norms. Therefore, trust exists in realism—dependant on strong countermeasures and driven by pure interests as an optional choice, rather than being a core guiding strategy of international relations. Meanwhile, moral norms will also complement international relations. The characteristics of pursuing interests would correspond with rationality in interstate relations. If the international norm of strategic trust follows rationality and was based on the information held by actors, it would not be in conflict with realist tradition.

Many scholars, including Kydd (2005) and Deborah Welch Larson (1997), have discussed distinct understandings of trust through different approaches within realism. Indeed, Kydd (2005) has introduced three approaches to different views of anarchy and trust: offensive realism, defensive realism, and Bayesian realism. For the defensive realists, even though states are still seeking security in the international system, mistrust is not an absolute status in international relations, as it is described to be by offensive realists or hard realists. “Some states trust each other enough to cooperate... other states, unfortunately, develop deep levels of mutual distrust for each other.” (Kydd, 2005, p.16). The essential argument is that the universality of seeking for security in anarchy would not directly determine whether a country trusts another. Instead, the specific conditions between states would be the basic determinants. In terms of Bayesian realism, it would depend on the varying motivations of states other than traditional security concerns, and the available information regarding the motivations of other states. Whether there would be trust or distrust among states would depend on the motivations and the correct information about the other’s. Larson describes the issue of trust in the views of “hard realists” and “soft realists” thus: “Hard realists” actually strengthen the status of conflicts and distrust among states in anarchy. For “soft realists”, a term of “trust, but verify” raised by the former President of the US Ronald Reagan is mentioned by both Lebow (2013, p.18) and Larson (1997, p.706) as an important way of understanding the

possibility of the existence of trust. It could be argued that trust could exist in certain interstate relations. There will be gaps between different understandings on trust. If trust is identified as a normative approach toward a cooperative international system, realists will downgrade it—while it does indeed exist as a component of interstate politics of international morality. However, if trust could be treated as a result of the rationality of countries, it could be explained by realism as the demand of interests. “Yet normative calculations are inferred first of all as a function of the power distribution and the rational calculation of national interests. Norms are largely the product of rational utility calculations on the part of state actors.” (Kacowicz, 2005, p.23).

### **2.2.2 Liberalism**

It could hardly be denied that liberal approaches would naturally integrate with the notion of trust. As mentioned above, liberalism generally agrees with the possibility of positive international norms in international relations. For idealists, trusting other actors in international relations might be an understanding between countries, as well as evident in their actions in political reality. Liberal institutionalism also believes that international norms could offer international relations a better recommendation to deal with conflict in worldwide anarchy. Lebow (2013) would argue that, while facing the risks of “agreements or institutions already in place” and “the difficulty of creating agreements and institutions”, trust would occupy a totally different position among liberals compared to that in the realist approaches. “Liberals believe institutions have the potential to overcome anarchy and thus institutions are created, expand and become influential when states and other international actors consider them useful.” (Lebow, 2013, p.20) The neoliberalist approach would recognise a possibility of international cooperation in an institutionalised international society rather than a world of anarchy (Milner, 1992). The non-power elements, the international mechanisms, and international interdependence might make it possible for states to trust each other.

Kydd also states that:

“liberal theory can be said to support two basic points related to international trust. First, because democracies find war costly and of little intrinsic benefit, democracies are more likely to be security seeking states...Second, given that democracy is a

readily visible characteristic of a regime, other states will have relatively high confidence that a democracy is a security seeker.” (Kydd, c2005, pp.20-21).

The theory of ‘democratic peace’ – that is, democratic states would not wage war against each other due to the people’s preference for seeking peace – has been raised for a long time, on the basis of the optimistic view of the good nature of human beings, which has not been proven wrong until now. What could be challenging is the impact of the involvement of non-democratic states such as China. Whether trust or distrust is more likely between states of similar or different political systems is a question that needs to be addressed.

The basic strategies of a state on development and surviving in a highly interdependent modern world could decide the likelihood of trusting others, though political realities might bring changes in different cases. States could also be rational about their interests in neoliberalism. This we could describe as strategic trust. “According to the neoliberal perspective, norms serve the egoistic interests of individual, rational actors.” (Kacowicz, 2005, p.23) In international relations, it could be realised by forming certain international regimes. In terms of moral trust, it falls on the basic belief of liberal approaches of potentially achievable international institutions.

### **2.2.3 Constructivism**

Despite of the confrontational arguments from realist and liberal approaches, there has been discussion of the idea of trust from other International Relations theories. Constructivism emphasises norms as an important component in political realities (Adler, 2012). Constructivists argue that international norms will shape the identities of countries and thereby explain their interests. “Norms reflect a certain collective identity, while at the same time they can affect and change the interests and the consequential behaviour of states. In this sense, the interests of states are partly created and changed, by the way of the interaction between the social structure and the actors, through the action of norms.” (Kacowicz, 2005, p.26) Therefore, constructivism would not reject trust in international relations. One interesting example would be, as proposed by Lebow (2013), that within

certain international client-based hierarchies supported by honour-based societies, “defection is less common and trust is greater, but it is limited to actors within the system”. (Lebow, 2013, p.21) There is not such a distinctive gap between the normative relations and rationality of countries when discussing trust from a constructivist perspective. Realists and liberalists would regard trust—whether a normative or rational choice of states—as a restrictive term. However, just as Kacowicz (2005, p.26) argues, “The constructivists elevate norms (and identity) to the centre of their research programme.”

#### **2.2.4 Other related IR theory approaches or perspectives**

##### **Security dilemma theory**

Thomas J. Christensen has discussed the significance of mistrust in the security dilemma theory. “The theory states that, in an uncertain and anarchic international system, mistrust between two or more potential adversaries can lead each side to take precautionary and defensively motivated measures that are perceived as offensive threats.” (Christensen, 2003, p.25) The theory of security dilemma, also discussed by John H. Herz (1950), Robert Jervis (1978), Ken Booth and Nicholas J. Wheeler (2008), and Wheeler (2012), would pair closely with “distrust” rather than “trust”. “In a state of international anarchy, according to the security dilemma model, distrust of another state can elicit a hostile reaction from the other side even if the two states have had no previous conflict of interest.” (Larson, 2004, p.47) In fact, when people study the notion of trust, both the “positive” trust and the “negative” distrust are being taken into consideration as separate experiences. The difference between the notions of trust (not between trust and distrust) will be explored in other sections. It has been mentioned that the term “trust” is disputed by different approaches of IR theories, while the notion distrust would have more diverse sources, among which the security dilemma would be one crucial example. The dilemma is about how to interpret conditions and how to react. Indeed, the core concepts of anarchy and uncertainty are connected with the realist approach. The distrust between international actors are the core issue of the security dilemma. However, Booth and Wheeler (2008) still argue that, “Between political collectives, trust is constituted by four linked pairs of attributes, all of which are integral to its existence. (Leap in the

dark/uncertainty, empathy/bonding, dependence/vulnerability/, integrity/reliability...)” Trust-building processes under the security dilemma are still weak, and few states have achieved a high level of mutual trust with others. However, Wheeler argues that, “the key question is to understand the conditions under which some forms of interpersonal communication which are empathetic can lead actors to take a decision to trust by making themselves vulnerable.” (Wheeler, 2012) Just like other approaches concentrating on international cooperation, the effort to gain trust under the circumstance of overall international distrust is still the aim of reducing conflicts and risks.

### **Rational choice theory**

Andrew Hindmoor argues that in the rational choice approach, there are two “core assumptions of rational choice theory; that individuals are rational and self-interested” (Hindmoor, 2006, p.181). Though rational choice theory is normally used in economic decisions, it would also be valid in the case of international trust. As Larson (1997, p.709) argues: “Just as people should consider the possible consequences should the other party take advantage of their trust, so they should assess his incentives to do so... ‘Every man has his price’ and even an honest person might lie in certain circumstances.” If countries in the international system could be regarded as rational actors pursuing their interests, they might make “rational” decisions to achieve their goals and maximize the benefits. The result would be based on how the states defined their “national interests”. If following the discipline or cooperating with others would benefit one’s own interests, states would not act aggressively as they do in a zero-sum game. Therefore, if the belief in trust itself is one of the interests of states, they would tend to trust other actors.

“Rational choice theorists have reformulated the concept of trust, basing it on straightforward coordination, supplemented by sanctions, rather than principled agreement that may at some point in the future deviate from agents’ assessments of their personal best interests. In this view, because it is irrational for any individual to go against personal preferences, trust among individuals must always be consistent with preferences in order to be a meaningful social category of engagement.” (Amadae, 2007, p.789).

For a short conclusion, Keith Dowding (2001, p.209) asks:

“Can rational choice theory explain trust as an institution in these terms? ... Indeed rational choice theory does not explain why people trust each other: rather it explains why people learn to trust, to varying degrees and in certain contexts, some subsets of others; while learning to distrust, to varying degrees and in certain contexts, other subsets.”

## **2.3 The definition of trust in this research**

### **2.3.1 Strategic trust on strategic issues**

According to Uslaner (2000, p.571), strategic trust “depends upon knowledge and experience”, or “trust in people we know”. Although the definition is discussed more at the level of individuals, it would be appropriate to adapt this argument to international relations. States would judge whether another actor could be trusted or not depending on all the information it has; and this is what all states in the world are doing. Hence, the information contains the goals and actions of other states in consideration of one’s own interests.

The “strategic trust” in this research, also interpreted as “trust on strategic issues”, is beyond the particularized “strategic trust” of “trust with information”. In terms of the strategic issues mentioned in this thesis, the interactions in international relations on the issues of vital national interests would be of top concern. Strategic trust is a kind of assessment on the possibility to reduce the worry of others to realize a double-win cooperative relationship at the strategic level. On the other hand, strategic distrust reflects the worry that strategic interests and other factors could be damaged. It is more likely to fit the realist view that every single participant would have to be nervous about others with regards to their security in a world of anarchy (Jackson R.H., 2005; Hsiung, 1997; Donnelly, 2015; Powell, 1994). “The implication of strategic trust is that even if there is an on-going relationship of mutual self-interest in one area, those involved draw no general lesson about the moral character of the other into other domains.” (Rathbun, 2009, p.350)

The detailed ‘strategic issues’ between China and Japan would generally be the well-known and traditional type of affairs in international relations. How to face a rising China with stronger national power has become Japan’s top concern, as the political reality of two huge powers existing in the region at the same time has never before been the case (Yahuda, 2013). The disputes over territorial integrity, such as with the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and the East China Sea, have grown fiercer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, the worry over national security has led to increased nervousness for both of China and Japan. China has always been dissatisfied with the US-Japan alliance in the East Asian region, which could pose a potential threat (Christensen, 2003; Sasaki, 2010; Urayama, 2000; Christensen, 2006; Garrett & Glaser, 1997). Neither China nor Japan would ever want to be strategically restricted by the other. The reality between the two states is that, according to the information they have, they tend to distrust each other. This is just one component of the status of bilateral trust and the relationship between China and Japan.

### **2.3.2 Moral trust and political trustworthiness**

Before moving on to the issue of trustworthiness, another approach to trust raised by Uslaner (2000) should be discussed. Other than the ‘strategic trust’ based on information collection, ‘moralistic trust’ is different: “This form of trust is based upon a world view of optimism and control: the world is a good place, is going to get better and we can make it better (Rosenberg 1956; Lane 1959:163~166).” (Uslaner, 2013, p.629) Besides, “moralistic trust does not depend upon evidence, but upon the belief that we ought to trust others because they are part of our moral community” (Ibid.). According to the statements above, moralistic trust would be a kind of stability, which would be decided by the subject’s view of world and independent of any changes outside. It is reasonable for individuals such as human beings to hold a variety of values, resulting from their different personal experiences. However, states are not the same as human beings, who have certain personalities. As this thesis regards countries as rational actors in international relations, it would be hard to imagine that a state would trust another due to the optimistic judgement of “another state should be trusted”, with no other specific reasons in the long term. It could not be denied that irrational trust might occur in certain

cases, and some examples could be the idealistic approaches in international relations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, states could hardly be regarded as morally oriented actors, as they are more likely to act in pursuit of their interests and information.

“‘The central idea behind moralistic trust is the belief that most people share your fundamental moral values. To put it another way, a wide range of people belong to your moral community. They need not share your views on policy issues or even your ideology. They may have different religious beliefs. Yet, despite these differences, we see deeper similarities.’ Fukayama (1995, p.153) states the following central idea behind moralistic trust: “trust arises when a community shares a set of moral values in such a way as to create regular expectations of regular and honest behaviour.” (Uslaner, 2002, p.4).

For China and Japan, the two states hardly have a sense of moral community, nor do they share a similar ideology, nor have a shared recognition of identity. In this way, Sino-Japanese moralistic trust has not been achieved.

This thesis would like to introduce the idea of ‘political and moral trustworthiness’, or ‘moral trust’, as a corresponding notion to ‘strategic trust’. The ‘trustworthiness’ of a country is also a kind of trust based on the information of other actors on whether or not they can be trusted based on their morality and ethics. It would be based on the judgements of whether another state tends to follow international laws, principles and treaties, as well as on whether it respects the dignity and reputation of others in international relations. The definition of political and moral trustworthiness is connected with both ‘strategic trust’ and ‘moralistic trust’ by Rathbun and Uslaner to a certain extent that, without a belief that other actors have the possibility to be trusted, trustworthiness could never be a potential option for a state. On the other hand, states still need to collect information to formulate and plan their actions.

Unfortunately, the lack of political and moral trust between China and Japan is a continuing, main problem. China’s worry is based on Japanese attitudes towards the



history, which leads to an image of untrustworthiness. With regards to China, Japan has not been understanding, nor apologised enough for what the Japanese invasion did to China (Lam, 2002; He, 2007; Green & Self, 1996). With this attitude, the history of war might be forgotten, due to changes in education for the next generations. Besides, negative prospects for future are brought about not only by the new history textbooks, but also the on-going rise of conservative politics in Japan – these have become the main causes of disputes between the two states (Morris, 1974; Nozaki, 2002). The Japanese also have concerns, which can lead them to see China as untrustworthy. Japan treats the historical legacies of the war as resolved. In bringing up Japanese historical responsibility, China is attempting to build a moral hierarchy with themselves above Japan. For example, China “can use the history card more effectively to marginalize Japan than previously due to its growing political and economic clout” (Calder, 2006). The two states have suffered greatly in their negative evaluations of each other on these issues.

Under these circumstances, it could be concluded that in international relations, states will have to face different types of challenges, of trust and distrust. Particular issues between certain states should be taken into consideration, including history, culture and political system, all of which would affect the actions of countries towards developing a trusting relationship.

### **2.3.3 The manifestations of trust**

Broadly speaking, trust in international relations is observable in many ways. Even though cooperation cannot be directly equated with trust, it could be a crucial component of trust. In this way, the alliances between states, special interstate relations (such as the ‘strategic partner relationship’), international organizations and cooperation in certain fields or on issues are all potential evidence of trust, which need to be verified. It should be noted that these types of manifestation are at different ‘levels’. For example, the trust between two states with a military alliance might be more stable than that between states which do not even have many economic ties. It is not absolute, but the states which could share similar national interests and enjoy different types of positive and institutionalised

interactions would likely face lower level risks of distrust, considering the existing notions on “high politics” and “low politics” (Jackson & Sørensen, 2013).

On the contrary, states experiencing disputes and conflicts on vital national interests would be more likely to distrust each other. For China and Japan, a lack of mutual trust is evident in a number of issues from recent years. Even though the two states have launched attempts to improve the situation, such as building ‘strategic and mutually beneficial relations’,<sup>4</sup> not many positive interactions have resulted, but instead fiercer disputes have arisen over high-priority issues such as territorial unification and historical recognition of responsibilities of aggression. The ‘trusting’ activities generally exist in the form of economic communications, rather than the institutionalized interactions or treaties for political relations—for example, the description of “cold politics and hot economics” (Koo, 2009). The evidence of distrust at “higher levels” is more common in Sino-Japanese relations.

### **2.3.4 Trust, not trust and distrust**

There is a crucial issue that is sometimes easily ignored when defining trust: that “not to trust” is the same as “distrust”. Russell Hardin referred to Edna Ullmann-Margalit’s conclusion in his book on the subject: “If I trust you, I have specific grounds for the trust. In parallel, if I distrust you, I have specific grounds for the distrust. I could be in a state of such ignorance about you, however, that I neither trust nor distrust you. I may therefore be wary of you until I have better information on you.” (Hardin, 2004 p.3) Ullmann-Margalit (2004) has also made a clear argument about “institutional trust” and “institutional distrust”, which states that “Institutional distrust embodies one’s belief that intentions of the officeholders of the institution are discriminatory and that the institution is consequently unfair in ways that work against one’s interests.” (Ullmann-Margalit, 2004, pp.76-80)

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<sup>4</sup> See “Joint Statement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Comprehensive Promotion of a ‘Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests’”. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint0805.html>, accessed 08/02/16

## **2.4 The measurement of trust**

### **2.4.1 How to measure trust/distrust in existing literature**

As mentioned above regarding the blurred lines between different manifestations of trust, the notion of trust is abstract when placed into international relations. It would be extremely difficult to measure. There are two main problems in measuring trust between states. The first would be the standards used to define whether a state trusts another or not. The second would be the different levels of trust, or how to understand to what extent a state trusts or distrusts another, which might not only be interpreted, but also explained quantitatively. These two questions cannot be avoided when studying trust between states.

Aaron M. Hoffman (2002) has indicated three approaches of measuring trust:

“The first detects trusting relationships by connecting the decision-making record to the policy choices of leaders. The second approach examines the types of oversight actors employ to monitor each other’s behaviour and the third focuses on the restrictiveness of rules actors develop to constrain each other’s activities.” (Hoffman, 2002, p.376)

It is reasonable that Hoffman would measure trust based on cooperation that IS motivated by trust, as it indeed offers evidence that trust could exist in such interactions by connecting cooperation and trust. There are two theoretical sources for the argument. First, “all efforts to cooperate must involve trust because they all involve risk.” (Ibid, p.384) Secondly, “trust involves risk, but cannot be reduced to risk—trust and risk are separable constructs” (Ibid). This thesis does not wholly accept this argument, but what Hoffman actually argues is that both trust with no specific reasons, and cooperation without trust indeed exist. What could be done is to filter those kinds of cooperation that could be interpreted as elements of trust from others. It is not guaranteed that cooperation inevitably signifies a trusting relationship; however, it is reasonable that states with trusting relationships will cooperate on certain issues—that is where the measurement

can exist. In order to deal with the challenges of quantitative studies of trust, Guido Möllering offers the following point:

“Researchers may focus on trusting behaviours, rather than trusting attitudes, and measure the frequency of trusting and trustful interactions. The strength of trust is then expressed in terms of how many actors within a population trust how many times relative to non-trusting behaviours.” (Möllering, c2006, p.135)

The Chinese scholar Wei Zhijiang has systematically analysed the strategic trusting relationship between China, Japan and Korea, and drew the conclusion that the level of Sino-Japanese strategic and mutually beneficial relations is at 40% (Wei, 2010). Despite of the quantitative methods in Wei’s research, his “affecting factors” in Sino-Japanese trust would also require examination and valuation. Criteria used to measure trust in this relationship include: “History of traditional communications and identity recognition of East Asia”, “the history of Japan invading China”, “political system”, “ideology and values”, “rights of territory and sea and the disputes of islands”, “trade and market economy”, “transparency in national policies”, “whether to follow international principles”, “the US-Japan alliance” and “the rise of China”. The economic ties and trade between the two countries have a positive impact on the Sino-Japanese strategic trust (on strategic issues). Yet the trust in traditional fields of national security remains at a comparatively low level.

#### **2.4.2 The core argument: measuring trust/distrust through analysis at different levels**

To draw on the criteria used by Wei, this thesis will argue that the interpretations of detailed issues come from empirical evidence. Three categories should be used in the measurement of the status of trust. First, the interactions at the governmental level, such as alliances/hostility, treaties, VIP mutual visits, and positive and negative speeches by the leadership – these all have direct impacts on the trusting relationships. In addition, the activities in the civil society, such as civic communications, public opinion, and the news media could become reflections of civil trust. Meanwhile, another measurement could be

raised from the perspectives of academic discussions. In general, identifying trust between states using these elements is an important method for understanding and evaluating the issue of trust in Sino-Japanese relations.

In terms of the three categories, they rely on the following factors. The three approaches to measure trust in international relations are actually based on interpreting methods for seeking evidence of trust in related actions. The significance of intergovernmental communications is that the government, as the executor of international relations, controls the highest power and tools of a state, including diplomacy and military forces, which would be directly connected with national interests such as national security. Taking the military as an example, if two states are at war with each other, they could be identified as having the 'lowest' level of trust. On the other hand, if two states have a military alliance, then they will likely appear to have the 'highest' level of trust (Jackson & Sørensen, 2013). There are also several other levels of trust between these two extremes – including hostilities with no war or conflict, no hostilities without any military cooperation and communication, interactions such as military exercises without reaching the level of an alliance level, and so on. The situation would be similar in diplomatic affairs – from strategic competitor, to cooperative partner, or even regional integration. These different statuses could reflect the level of trust and distrust in bilateral relations. In addition, other patterns of activities between governments could also be interpreted through analysis – including treaties, declarations and elite communications.

The communications at the civil level can also be directly and indirectly indicative of a level of trust. A direct reflection is the public opinion of one state towards another. Different media and research institutions could launch surveys on public opinion to understand how positive or negative are the national images of other states in the minds of the people. There could be questions such as, "How much do you trust Japan?", or more detailed ones such as "What do you think are the problems which lead to negative bilateral relations?" These questions could be the best way to understand how and why the people trust each other or not. Both positive and negative elements of trust could be identified. The indirect way to understand trust in civil societies is to observe civil

activities, such as commercial conferences, investments of enterprises, cultural communications, nongovernmental academic forums, and so on. It is reasonable that, with a better level of mutual trust between two states, civil activities could be smooth, without disturbances and political interventions, while levels of commitments on interactions would be much higher. Otherwise, it could promote a vicious cycle, which would result in less communication and less cooperative activities, which could in turn sour the bilateral relationship.

Academic discussions might offer a different perspective from the previous two approaches, as they could be unofficial, and not as emotional as public opinion. It is possible that academic opinions provide more information on the existence and levels of trust/distrust.

## **2.5 Reconciliation as the aim of trust**

There is the question of why it is necessary to understand the status of trust and distrust between countries. Moreover, the political realities in international relations dictate that it would be extremely difficult to realize the ideal of ‘moralistic trust’ between countries. The states are not individuals, so the external influencing elements would set up obstacles to trust. And yet, the enhancement of trust is achievable, and can improve interstate relations. One of the most important and direct effects of trust is the potential for reconciliation between states. In general, there is a dilemma for states with distrustful relations: better interstate relations need better mutual trust in order to be achieved, while better levels of trust are also needed to improve relationships. Hence, reconciliation, which could bring an end to existing conflicts and create an environment for enhanced relations, is a significant hoped-for outcome of better trust.

### **2.5.1 Ending conflicts**

Reconciliation is not only desired to put an end to conflicts and wars between states, but also to help overcome hostility in national emotions and generate forgiveness for other states at both the governmental and civic levels. The relationship between trust and reconciliation is complicated. First, as it is difficult to achieve a level of trust between

states, the most practical influence of pursuing trust will be the promotion of reconciliation and the improvement of international relations. Under conditions of low trust between states, it would be a tough task to deal with disputes, and problems might move in negative directions. Therefore, 'trust to reconcile' is significant for the states experiencing strained relations.

### **2.5.2 Improving interstate relations**

Meanwhile, after attaining a certain level of trust, relations could go beyond reconciliation, to include cooperation and even the formation of an official alliance, or even integration (it is not necessary for states to achieve these goals, which are only a possible outcome of increased levels of trust). Reconciliation would become the basis of trust at higher levels (Lerche, 2000), without which trust could never be stable. The Sino-Japanese relationship is a good example for this proposal, because even though China and Japan had achieved a normalization of their bilateral relationship in 1972, they have been continually keeping a vigilant eye on each other for more than 40 years. It can be concluded from the interactions of the two states that positive evaluations and mutual support on issues of national interests can hardly be expected from the other without reconciliation. For example, when Japan tried to join the UN Security Council as a permanent member in 2005, China explicitly opposed any related schemes.

The problem between China and Japan is whether the two states have achieved reconciliation or not. The war between the two states ended in 1945, when Japan surrendered at the end of World War II. Since then, there has been no military conflict between the two. It has also been more than 40 years since China and Japan achieved the normalization of bilateral relationship, in 1972, and the Cold War also ended more than 20 years ago. It is difficult to imagine that the two states have not reached an essential reconciliation under these circumstances. However, the two states are still trapped in a quagmire of historical recognition of Japanese responsibilities for war in East Asia (or, to be exact, the forgiveness issue of reconciliation), territorial and other political and security disputes. These historical legacies have their particular components. Due to the rapid process of normalization in the 1970s, many of these disputes were left unsettled,

with no proposed solutions that are acceptable to both sides. These disputes have gradually emerged as the central problems in the Sino-Japanese relations. The difficulties of achieving reconciliation lie in the complexity of the issues, and the disagreements over and attitudes towards the problems in the two states. China insists that Japan's apparent lack of attention to the disputes is the problem, while Japan thinks that they have made enough apologies and that no more attention is needed. Therefore, reconciliation between China and Japan remains unachieved.

In conclusion, reconciliation is one crucial component of the process of developing trust, even though there may be no serious conflicts between states. Reconciliation is a milestone of trust for those states experiencing lower levels of trust, as well as the basis for further progress in developing trusting relationships. Different stages exist in reconciliation efforts; such as overcoming conflicts, agreements on recognition of responsibility for aggression, the realization of forgiveness, and stable political relations. As an important reflection of attempts to gain trust in international relations, reconciliation a practical trust-building goal.

## **2.6 A theoretical framework**

### **2.6.1 A conclusive remark**

One of the realities of current international relations is that 'trust' is a subtle quality. It often appears in speeches and statements by government officials at the same time that interstate relations have been accompanied by both trust and distrust. Even more problematic, distrust between states is the mainstream trend in many circumstances, including some of the most crucial relationships between great powers. The reason for this is complicated. It comes from both the characteristics of the notion of trust, as well as the characteristics derived from the interests pursued by governments, a state's executor of trust. Arguments from many of scholars could offer a generally recognized and accepted opinion that trust exists on the basis of confidence and positive judgements of another actor in its practice of international relations. This belief could arise from the information that a state holds – including the national strategies of the other actor, how other states follow international laws and principles, and the prediction of potential



conflicts over national interests between states. In addition, a source of the willingness to trust might also lie in whether or not a state views international society in a positive light. These two situations have been defined as the “strategic trust” and “moralistic trust” in the existing literature.

One cannot deny that the realist tradition of International Relations has a considerable continued impact on international affairs. Facing issues related to national interests, especially the core concern of national security, states might be more likely to show their conservative aspects, rather than the expectations of liberals to be more open and cooperative with other actors to solve problems. However, the existence of trust in international relations is not determined by an absolute choice between realist and liberalist approaches, but from a combination of a variety of elements. The debate between normative relations and the rationality of countries will have a significant impact on the discussion of trust. Is trust a normative term to follow in international relations, or is it a rational choice for countries that benefits their national interests? Different theoretical approaches offer different explanations. This thesis will insist that trust in international relations is a research object which needs to be explored in a comprehensive way with these theories.

The realist approach has gone beyond the judgements of classic realism—it would not completely insist on the absence of cooperation due to self-interest in global anarchy, and has turned to flexible arguments which have some similarities to neoliberalism. Just as Kydd mentioned (see previous sections), defensive realism and Bayesian realism both, to a certain extent, accept the possibility of trust between states. Of all the international relations theories, the notion of trust best suits liberalism. The ‘moralistic trust’ and liberalism both focus on the good nature of human beings and then international society, believing trust would be achievable in the way of moral norms. In addition, the focus on international cooperation and institutions would also help realise trust among states. Therefore, realism’s focus on national interests, and liberalism’s focus on international cooperation and belief in a positive future are the domestic motivations for the notion of ‘trust’. From the perspectives of states, therefore, the formation of trust is a combination

of ‘cooperation’, ‘national interests’, ‘risk’ and so on. Different states would be influenced by their specific histories, political traditions, and immediate international environments, which would lead to unique judgements and policies. In this way, interstate trust actually has specific characteristics. Though some common elements might occur in different cases, examples of bilateral trust could not be extended to a global generalisation. Neither Japan-US trust nor China-US trust can be applied to the China-Japan case as templates.

The main theoretical guide is, in the case of Sino-Japanese relations, that interstate trust would mainly be composed of two parts: trust on ‘strategic issues’, which concentrates on the regional conflicts of national interests; and ‘moral trustworthiness’, such as following international principles. This division is based on the following evidence. First, this thesis admits the rationality of the idea of ‘moralistic trust’, but would deny its existence in current Sino-Japanese relations. It is not purely a question of both governments following a realist or liberal institutionalist approach in foreign policy and national strategy as opposed to having confidence in international moral norms. The matter would also depend on the characteristics of the bilateral relations. The status quo is determined by specific issues between the two states, including leadership, foreign policy-making processes, public opinion, and so on. Based on the issues of specific history, these determinants would connect with Sino-Japanese relations and trust. Meanwhile, though trust is an abstract term, it could be measured to a certain degree. Specifically, the interpretations of the crucial factors of trust would be the measurements of that trust and distrust between states. Interpretations of leaders’ speeches, treaties and other statements could provide the intuitive image, and explain whether a state trusts or distrusts another on strategic and moral grounds, based on certain standards.

Despite the definition of trust, the influences it brings to interstate relations and the way it works are another research focus of this thesis. According to the descriptions of trust for different international relations theories mentioned above, it would not be surprising that trust would have a significant impact on international relations; though it may not directly determine it. A positive level of bilateral trust would help improve relations. On the other

hand, distrust could have a negative influence on relations. Meanwhile, the determinants would not only be the manifestations of trust and distrust, but also the approach in which trust could affect the interstate relations. For instance, a certain foreign policy could reflect to what extent a state trusts or distrusts another actor. If the answer can be interpreted as being positive, the foreign strategy might tend to be beneficial to the development of the relationship. If the policy shows a negative/low level of trust, it might even exacerbate tensions. China's declaration, in late 2013, of the air defence identification zone in the East China Sea area was obviously caused by its distrust of Japan, and the policy in turn led to nervousness and protest from Japan. This kind of vicious cycle is theoretical evidence of the research. It could be concluded that the existence of trust can be perceived, as well as its manifestation in international relations.

To answer the research question of how trust and distrust between China and Japan could lead to 'locked' Sino-Japanese relations, another theoretical foundation needs to be strengthened. If distrust exists in interstate relations, it could be an obstacle. If 'asymmetries' exist between states, the relations could be locked and a vicious cycle might arise. The 'asymmetries' refer to circumstances in which the two states have issues with trust and distrust in different fields. However, the states might have different priorities within these fields due to their specific situations. In certain bilateral relationships, distrust of one state could be its main concern but does not receive enough attention from another actor, while the same demand from the other is also not addressed. This would create asymmetries. Therefore, asymmetries would have a greater impact on interstate relations than unilateral distrust. One crucial reason for this is that the two actors would lose the motivation to communicate and cooperate to solve the problems, without satisfying the requirements of their primary concerns, while at the same time treating the other's concerns as offensive and losing patience with lower-priority issues. International relations in this vicious cycle would face difficulties, as the two actors would have to achieve comparatively high levels of understanding, as well as make compromises to solve the problems. On the one hand, essential actions should be taken by one country to ease the distrust with other actors in areas of lesser concern to them, but great concern to others. On the other hand, the state would have to be confident that

another actor would respond to the expectations as well. Specifically, the government would have to be responsible for the interests and dignity of the state, and it would therefore face both internal and external pressures. Therefore, it would not be easy to take the essential steps to solve the trust problems created by ‘asymmetries’ in international relations. The two states in this research, China and Japan, are indeed facing this problem and it will be discussed in the following chapters.

It could be argued that trust belongs to a certain International Relations theory – either realism, liberalism, or another such as constructivism. If this is reasonable, the recommendations to the problems of international relations provided by different approaches should be focused on how to solve the trust crisis, and then the problem of ‘unlocking’ relations. The philosophy of realists on solving problems has a strong self-interest component, and so would have reservations about releasing the persistence of the absolute anarchy of international society. The guidance would still be to seek to secure national interests, even when trying to reduce the distrust between states. With regards to liberalism, it would be closer to the ‘moralistic trust’ in a traditional way – that is, to admit the rationality and feasibility of trust, which is the inner motivation of trust. Promoting mutual understanding and trust is what liberalists offer to the trust problem. This thesis would argue that any single approach might neither explain nor provide appropriate recommendations for the trust issue in interstate relations. Trust is actually a complex mixture of multiple elements. As Lebow (2013, p.21) argues,

“In societies where material wellbeing is the dominant motive, co-operation is issue-specific and motivated by narrow calculations of self-interest. Trust is not diffuse, but limited to situations where actors judge that others have the same incentives they do to co-operate or play by the rules. This is why liberals turn to institutions in the hope of creating incentives for trust and co-operation to be more widely accepted.”

Broadly speaking, there might be two paths to solve the trust crisis between states: to enhance trust as well as to reduce distrust in certain norms and customs. The two

processes are essentially different. To enhance trust is a constructive action, which tries to improve the mutual trust and relations through communication, interaction and cooperation. To reduce distrust is the remedial method to remove obstacles in bilateral relations through compromise and consultation. It would not be possible to identify which one is more important, but the former might be restricted by the process of the latter. The reason is that, in practice, the activities of moralistic confidence-building would still be based on collection of information. As mentioned above, to deal with the vicious cycle caused by distrust, governments have to take very high risks and face great pressures. Therefore, both states in a relationship should acquire enough motivation and conduct great efforts to solve a trust crisis (including 'a lack of trust' and 'distrust', which correspond with the two processes). In this research, China and Japan face the problem of a 'locked' bilateral relationship, and whether it is possible to 'unlock' the relationship through trust. Despite the common characteristics in international relations, the special determinants in Sino-Japanese relations would present more difficulties for both enhancing trust and reducing distrust. These determinants will have to be analysed to find a breakthrough in relations.

In conclusion, the research is conducted with a recognition of the importance of trust in international relations; or, to be more exact, a recognition that distrust between states could have negative consequences. In terms of exploring the manifestations of trust and distrust, an interpretive approach has been chosen. To move forward, the way in which trust and distrust influence Sino-Japanese relations are the 'asymmetries' in different fields. Japan's top concern lies in the area of strategic issues, such as the rise of China; and China does not accept the trustworthiness of Japan on questions of history. The asymmetries then lead to a vicious cycle of distrust between the two states and the 'locked' relationship. If the two states try to 'unlock' the bilateral relationship, the breakthrough point might be unlocking the vicious cycle of bilateral distrust. China and Japan, and the two areas of strategic issues and moral issues are the primary focuses of this thesis.

## **2.6.2 A description of the structure of the thesis**

### **Chapter 3: Literature review**

Considering the existing theoretical discussions in this chapter, it will be possible to combine the specific background of Sino-Japanese relations with the theoretical base. The literature review is presented in the form of a chronology, to examine the status of trust and distrust between China and Japan following the normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations in 1972. It will attempt to measure and discuss the grand picture to evaluate whether the notion of trust has attracted enough attention. Whether there is trust and distrust defining them, what are the sources of trust and distrust, and what is the impact of each. In general, it is a review of the existing understandings of long-term, mutual interactions from the perspective of trust.

### **Chapter 4: The determinants in Sino-Japanese relations**

It has been mentioned in the theoretical framework that the factors of “trust”, “determinants” and “relations” are interconnected. The determinants are significant because of the way trust influences relations between countries. As trust is basically an abstract notion in international relations, it is necessary to understand it through the lenses of specific and detailed issues and case studies. This will help demonstrate that these determinants are the most important categories of issues affecting interstate relations, and also help to ascertain how trust and distrust work.

### **Chapter 5&6: The two case study chapters on mutual distrust**

The two case studies have similar structures in order to verify the hypotheses of a mutual distrust between Japan and China. The theoretical base would include:

- 1) The first question would focus on identifying the existence of trust/distrust in bilateral relations. It has been mentioned that measuring trust/distrust would need related empirical evidence. In this way, the cases would form the empirical material, which are presented in the categories of the determinants in Sino-Japanese relations.
- 2) To be detailed, the case studies are based around analysis of materials from multiple sources. On the one hand, there will be qualitative analysis judging which of the discourse/activities could be regarded as containing the essence of trust/distrust.

Considering the theoretical discussions, for example, distrust would exist based on information and/or on moral values. Hence, the first task must be to identify the evidence of trust/distrust. At the same time, quantitative research will also be conducted to verify the level of trust/distrust. Whether or not the problems are serious forms another aspect of the question, because only significant evidence would be persuasive.

- 3) The theoretical framework also pays attention to the question of “asymmetries” in Sino-Japanese mutual distrust, in terms of the existing research question. It is the problem of an asymmetric structure between the two countries that has led to a “locked” bilateral relationship. The two case study chapters would verify one type of the asymmetries that both the two countries have internal asymmetries in the areas of distrust. It is possible to identify what are the primary concerns of the two countries by analysing the determinants of strategic and moral issues.

## **Chapter 7: The “locked” Sino-Japanese relations and the recommendations for unlocking**

In order to verify the formation of the “locked” Sino-Japanese relationship, it is not enough to focus only on the two countries’ internal asymmetries. A comparison between the countries’ asymmetries is also crucial. By analysing the two countries’ different a priori concerns of distrust, it could be possible to understand how the asymmetric structure affects mutual distrust, and hence affects the bilateral relationship. Theoretically, managing the sources and the approaches of how distrust leads to the locked Sino-Japanese relations could therefore provide possible recommendations for unlocking the relationship. In short, enhancing mutual trust and reducing mutual distrust are the two approaches which need to be verified in detail in further discussions.

## **Chapter 3 Literature Review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

#### **3.1.1 How the literature review is constructed**

Although having certain universal characteristics of interstate relations, specific incidents and processes between China and Japan have also affected the bilateral relationship. Therefore we need to examine the significance of events in explain the developments in the Sino-Japanese relationship especially the turbulence experienced by these two countries.

It is not the aim of this research to identify and describe particular events or issues. Rather, the thesis will try to track the discussions of the status of Sino-Japanese mutual trust/distrust and their impact on Sino-Japanese relations. As mentioned above, the Sino-Japanese relationship has been dynamically shaped by a series of events. As a result, the literature review is constructed in the form of a chronology of Sino-Japanese relations, rather than that of the literature. Three periods are discussed, selected on the basis of the different characteristics of China and Japan's political interactions and mutual trust, from 1972 to the present. Again, it needs to be emphasised that the division into different periods is not aimed at summarizing the events, but rather to trace the reasonable evidence and oversights in discussion provided by the literature in certain categories of issues that affect mutual trust and the bilateral relationship.

#### **3.1.2 The core questions of the literature review**

This chapter will analyse the existing literature to identify the discussions of the following elements of the internal and external transformations in bilateral relations between China and Japan: whether the two states have a trust crisis in these periods; what factors could lead to changes in trust or mistrust, together with the changes in the political environment; and what can be observed as the evidence of mistrust in different periods. The chapter will try to evaluate the existing literature on their merits and weaknesses for examining Sino-Japanese relations in different periods. There are several key issues to be



analysed, including whether the literature provides evidence to explain the dynamic changes in Sino-Japanese relations; what are the links and differences between this research and the literature in interpreting the ups and downs of Sino-Japanese relations; and whether the literature could effectively identify the existence and significance of trust/distrust in Sino-Japanese relations.

Detailed issues of trust or mistrust, in different eras, are discussed to reflect on the shifts of bilateral relations. As some of the disputes between China and Japan are long-lasting, stretching across several decades, it is necessary to look at specific cases to analyse how they continually affect the trust and relations between the two states. Meanwhile, have these cases changed together with time, and why, and what influenced these changes will also be included. In general, “whether”, “when” and “how” the trust has been affected in these periods and fields are the main concern of the literature review.

It could hardly be denied that researchers widely acknowledge that there were periods of both positive and negative bilateral relations between Japan and China. However, there might be the possibility that literature would provide very different explanations for the asymmetric status. Considering one of the main arguments, that trust/distrust can reflect and affect bilateral relations, it is important to search the related evidence in the literature—as they might offer different explanations as well. In general, “whether”, “when” and “how” the status of trust has been affected, and how the Sino-Japanese relations have been shaped in these periods in terms of the strategic and moral/normative fields, are the main concerns of the literature review.

### **3.1.3 The overall bilateral relations and trust in different periods**

Sino-Japan relations have suffered considerably since the fall of Chinese empire and the rise of modern Japan. Though the surrender of Japan at the end of the World War Two brought an end to the war between China and Japan, a long time passed before the two states could restart normal relations. China and Japan were unable to re-establish communications for a number of reasons before normalization in 1972. The historical background is the first thing to consider. After the end of the World War Two, in 1945,

China was soon trapped in a civil war between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The chaos in China made it impossible to pay more attention to Japan, and maintain a stable strategy. Meanwhile, Japan was also in a difficult situation, as it was under military occupation by the US and lacked independence in its diplomatic relations with other states. When the Chinese civil war ended in 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded by the CCP in mainland China, and the Republic of China (ROC) controlled by the KMT withdrew to Taiwan. Japan's official relations with "China" were actually with the ROC in Taiwan, before it finally acknowledged that the PRC was the legal representative of "China", in the 1970s. Due to the fact that mainland China and Japan were in different camps during the Cold War, the relationship between Japan and the PRC was essentially at a standstill at the governmental level. Although there were some civil exchanges and communication, based on humanitarian issues such as the return of war orphans, the overall situation did not changed until the 1970s (Hoadley & Hasegawa, 1971). Due to the extreme lack of positive official interactions, there was not a problem of trust or mistrust in the bilateral relations: it was total mistrust, because of the differences in ideologies and strategic positions. In this way, the research will focus mainly on the issue of trust in Sino-Japanese relations post-1972 to the present, rather than pre-normalization.

It is generally accepted by the literature that Sino-Japanese relations did indeed once enjoy a period of very positive cooperation and engagement. With the changes in the international environment, the level of China-Japan friendship cooled over the course of occasional disputes. As there was no effective improvement in the situation, issues grew fiercer, which led to tensions in the Sino-Japanese relationship. Huang Dahui (2008), in his article *The 30 Years of Development of Sino-Japanese Relations*, claims that,

“After experiencing the ‘honeymoon’ at the beginning of China’s reforming and opening up policy, the period of ‘friction’ after the Cold War, the Sino-Japanese relations has gone through. And now the relationship is now stepping into a new period constructing ‘Strategically and Mutually Beneficial Relationship’.” (Huang, 2008)

Huang's three periods are divided and described thus: the "honeymoon" period started in 1972, when the two states realized the normalization of bilateral relations, and ended after the mutual visit of President Jiang Zemin to Japan and Emperor Akihito to China in 1992 – this categorisation is also supported by scholars such as Wu Xinbo (2000) and Woondo Choi (2003). The "friction" period was between the mid-1990s and the retirement of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2006, the characteristics of which were China's dissatisfaction with Japan's attitudes on historical issues, and the US-Japan alliance against China. Other academics have proposed that this period could be described as one of "structural fluctuation" (Mori, 2007, p.3). Meanwhile, Huang has also indicated that, after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took office in 2006, he (and his successors) sought ways of "icebreaking" together with the Chinese leadership. As the two states conducted a series of cooperative actions, a "Strategically and Mutually Beneficial Relationship" was successfully built, which could label the period after 2006 as a new era of positive coordination.

In terms of the division of periods, the author would substantially agree with Huang. However, though Sino-Japanese relations indeed experienced three such periods of ups-and-downs, Huang's analysis is more based on the political relationship and the political environment. In this thesis, the research focus is on the status of mutual trust between China and Japan at different times and in different political atmospheres. In this way, small differences might exist. To be specific, the "honeymoon" period is from normalization in 1972 to the end of the Cold War at the beginning in the 1990s; the "friction" period, or the period with the emergence of a trust crisis, started in the 1990s and ended in 2001, when the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi took office; then, from the early 21<sup>st</sup> century to the present is the period of mutual mistrust. Instead of Huang's description of further cooperation, this author tends to emphasize the negative features during the third period. Though both states have tried to take measures to eliminate hostility, they have not succeeded yet, as these activities are more likely to be temporary in reaction to emergencies rather than long-term constructions, and they do not succeed in achieving their goals. The period is filled with both crises and opportunities, and yet it seems that "crisis" is the more significant feature.

## **3.2 Mutual trust and “Honeymoon”: 1972 to the end of the Cold War**

### **3.2.1 An overall assessment: no evidences of a trust crisis**

The existing literature would generally agree that the relationship between China and Japan achieved great progress during this period, and significant changes were observed in the official Sino-Japanese relationship. (Many scholars would agree with the description of this as a “honeymoon” period for the bilateral relationship.) The literature has pointed out that there were several significant reasons for the change in situation, compared with that in the earlier period of the Cold War. Firstly, the common threat from the Soviet Union continually generated strategic pressure for both Japan and China. (Yoshihide, 2002, pp.210-213) Under this circumstance, it would be reasonable that the two countries would seek to create different ties to each other to deal with the problem. Secondly, the changes in the US-China relationship directly placed on the table an urgent need for the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations. Actually, the rapprochement of the US-China relationship was partly the result of the Soviet threat. Considering the special relationship between Japan and the US, it became a diplomatic emergency for Japan when the US directly contacted China without informing its most important regional partner. Moreover, there was a growing need for both countries for the normalization of relations in the face of growing mutual understandings (Qureshi, 1973, p.56). Hence, the literature has concluded that Sino-Japanese relations in the 1970s were surprisingly good, which can be seen in the empirical evidence of mutual interactions and speeches.

In this way, the literature provides a basic judgement that positive internal and external backgrounds and factors led to the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations in the 1970s. This is logically correct when examined. However, this is a “point-to-point” pattern of describing the Sino-Japanese relationship during a fixed term. In order to review Sino-Japanese relations as a dynamic entirety, the logic of the existing literature can be extended by introducing the status of trust/distrust. Then, the hypothesis becomes: positive internal and external backgrounds and factors brought no crisis on trust which led to the improvement of Sino-Japanese relations in the 1970s. In this circumstance, the positive Sino-Japanese relations in the 1970s could be explained as fundamental and

comprehensive improvement. It would be difficult if scholars wanted to use every single event/area of positive interactions to explain the changes in the overall relationship because, for example, proving the influence of common strategic threats on the improving moral relations in civil society would be very difficult—the limited amount of interaction presents a problem for fitting the issues in different areas. However, if the hypothesis focuses on the strengthening of the role of trust/distrust, the problem can be dealt with as trust/distrust, generated in all areas, and could reflect and affect the changes in overall interstate relations.

In addition, there are doubts and debates about how improved Sino-Japanese relations actually were. Or put another way, was the honeymoon between China and Japan an illusion? There are two assumptions: that the improvement of bilateral relations was either genuine or a false impression. The former would fit the traditional logic of matching the “outcome” with the “incidents as reasons”. However, the reconciliation might not have been as successful as public opinion suggested. As argued above, there were internal and external requirements for the two states to normalize their relationship in the 1970s. However, rapprochement was not based on considerable or frequent communication and interaction, but rather through secret discussions between high level government officials. Therefore, it is more likely that normalization was created by executive orders and political propaganda. The level of trust between the two countries improved in the areas of strategic interest, while most other disputes were left unresolved, which contributed less to mutual trust. This could explain why the two countries continue to have problems when common strategic concerns are not urgent.

In general, mistrust did not appear to be a problem between China and Japan during this period. Despite its description as a “honeymoon”, the period of approximately two decades after normalization in 1972 was regarded as being very positive by many researchers on both political and economic issues (Choudhury, 1983). Vogel, Yuan and Tanaka (2002) use the phrase “the golden age” to describe the triangular U.S.-China-Japan relationship between 1972-1989, which includes Sino-Japanese

relations. Zhang Tuosheng (in Vogel, 2002) speaks highly of the period 1972-1992 in Sino-Japanese relations. He indicates that,

“[W]e have not overestimated the progress in these two decades. On the contrary, the problems and the complications that have occurred since the mid-1990s reflect the significant progress and the valuable experience achieved earlier.” (Zhang, 2002, p.193)

In short, the two countries seemed to have succeeded in establishing bilateral economic ties, positive political interactions, ended bilateral hostility, and improved civil communications in the two decades. At the same time, the fact that “these problems had basically been resolved, or at least brought under control” (Zhang, 2002, p.192) seems to suggest that the bilateral relationship would not be easily shaken by disputes, which might in turn suggest that Sino-Japanese relations were much more stable than we can observe today. It is important to understand the bilateral interactions between China and Japan during these two decades. Whether the two countries addressed the problem of mistrust during this honeymoon period needs to be discussed, because China and Japan once had different ways of dealing with disputes than the approaches they utilise now. It might be that trust affected the methods of interaction between the two countries.

### 3.2.2 The 1970s:

Time	Events	Cooperative or not
09/1972	Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka visited China and the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations	Yes
08/1978	Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's Republic of China signed	Yes
10/1978	Vice Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping visited Japan	Yes
12/1979	Prime Minister Masayoshi Ōhira visited China and declared the first round of ODA for China	Yes

Table 3. 1: Main interactions in the 1970s. Source: collected and edited by the author, the same in the next several sections

What can be observed from the interactions between the two states in the 1970s is that China and Japan were quite successful in creating a positive and cooperative atmosphere in this era. The emotions of the Japanese government and society towards China, based on respect and also guilt towards China (Barnds, 1976, p.34), could have created the conditions for new interaction. With high level mutual visits, political links were built and new types of communication were conducted. The progress of normalization was keenly studied by scholars such as Soeya Yoshihide (2002), because it finally offered Japan “a new era: Japanese diplomacy could now develop diversified relations with Asian countries that were also compatible with its most important alliance, that with the United States” (Yoshihide, 2002, p.216). Moreover, the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan could be “interpreted as a sign of Japan’s strategic tilt toward China... which tilted toward China and away from the Soviet Union” (Yoshihide, 2002, p.219). One cannot avoid taking the existence of the Soviet Union into consideration when studying the rapprochement between China and Japan during the Cold War. Even though the trust between the two countries was enhanced—no matter practically or theoretically—it is still necessary to re-examine how crucial the Soviet Union factor was in the bilateral relationship. It was reasonable to explain how two states with mutual hostility could become “friends” in such a short time—national security was obviously the priority under the threat from the Soviet Union. Hence, other issues would be considered of minor or lesser importance—just as traditional common sense between the two countries would allow for “letting minor difficulties be and agreeing on major common interests” (Tanino, 1990, p.30). Under this circumstance, negative opinions and actions towards each other were controlled by the two governments (Cheng, 1984-1985) with the support from businessmen and civil groups (Qureshi, 1973; Johnson, 1986). When the Chinese government turned from the from the politically oriented ideology to economic and social modernisation, Japan was in favour of supporting China (Lee, 1997; Eto, 1983), which is a typical symbol of trust during this period.

It would be difficult to deny the existence of trust in Sino-Japanese relations during this period, as the two states had done enough to show their cooperative attitudes even under the risk of failure in a changing strategic environment. Even though it has been argued that the trust between China and Japan was actually a result of the two countries' extreme distrust of the Soviet Union, pro-China and pro-Japan politicians and ideas indeed existed. This period of golden age was a breakthrough for China and Japan, which for the first time ended a long-term unnatural state caused by the war in 1895. The speed and level of improvement of bilateral relations was quite impressive in terms of the historical hostility and differences in ideology. Trust was a problem in bilateral relations, or it was consciously and actively avoided by both governments. However, it has also been widely observed that a potential threat in normalization was also created and left unsettled during this era.

#### A potential failure of reconciliation

There is a fundamental question in the Sino-Japanese relations after 1972: whether the "normalization" was actually normalization or merely a political declaration (normalization in name only). As Chalmers Johnson (1972) once stated,

"The second problem standing in the way of improved Chinese Japanese relations is that China is not likely to accept a 'normalization' of relations until Japan has met China's political requirements. In the terms of the Sino-American communiqué of February 28, 1972, the Chinese People's Republic 'firmly opposes the revival and outward expansion of Japanese militarism and firmly supports the Japanese people's desire to build an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral Japan.' Japanese deeply resent this particular choice of words by the Chinese because, since they themselves criticize any signs of a 'revival and outward expansion of Japanese militarism,' they understand Chinese propaganda on this theme to mean that China opposes Japan's regaining control over Okinawa and objects to Japan's close economic ties with the rimland states of East Asia." (Johnson, 1972)



Though the process could be seen to not be that bad or unreliable in the bilateral relationship, what Johnson expresses is consistent with the particulars of Sino-Japanese relations. Despite the achievements such as reopening official communications, expansion of civil interactions, and forming economic ties, the relationship between the two countries still contained grudges. More pessimistic observers could even believe that the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations was merely a political action, a strict and effective implementation of a political command from top decision-makers as required by national strategies, while the overall reconstruction of the relationship itself was much weaker than expected. Hidenori Ijiri (1990) doubts the reliability of normalization from the perspective of Japan's policy makers:

“However, in looking at Tanaka's China policy, especially the negotiation for normalization under the Tanaka-Ohira leadership, one doubts whether the Sino-Japanese normalization was a product of ‘trust and real friendship’ between the two countries. A careful examination of the negotiation process suggests that there was not an adequate blueprint on hand to attain Sino-Japanese normalization when Tanaka assumed power as the new prime minister. Instead, as ‘China fever’ heightened, Tanaka had to depend upon the political legacy of Eisaku Sato who had laid the foundation for the establishment of Sino-Japanese diplomatic rapprochement for whoever would take over his prime minister's office.” (Ijiri, 1990, p.641)

The Sino-Japanese relationship had not confronted many difficulties when Ijiri raised these points; however, Ijiri's arguments were quite common among observers of the bilateral relationship, concerned about whether trust and friendship had actually been attained alongside the normalization of official relations.

The year 2012 was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the normalization of the interstate relationship, achieved during the visit of former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka to China. Though the War ended approximately 70 years ago, the reason the two states are still debating the issue of Japan's war legacy is probably that they have *not* reached reconciliation. As

Caroline Rose (2005) argued, “despite the efforts of leaders and citizens alike, fundamental problems relating to the war between China and Japan still exist, and appear to pose a formidable obstacle to settlement of the past and, therefore, to the smooth running of the relationship in the future.” (Rose, 2005, p.15) Actually, Rose to some extent has a generally positive view of the efforts (or the potential) of reconciliation between the two states. She refers to “the two cycles of Sino-Japanese reconciliation”: “seeking truth and justice through trials and/or historical enquiry, reparations (compensation), and settling the past through apologies, commemoration and communicative history.” (Rose, 2005, p.24) However, though there indeed have been moves to push forward with reconciliation, such as joint research on historical issues, which seem to have not reached mutually satisfying resolutions, China and Japan are still suffering from the legacy of war and other persistent issues. Mistrust could stronger without a reconciliation, and the opportunity for reconciliation between China and Japan has its own particulars which can present difficulties for the process.

The inevitable confrontation between the two camps made it impossible for China and Japan to restart official communications after World War II. Even worse, the overall situation of the Cold War enhanced mistrust between the two states. There are different interpretations of the evaluation of bilateral interactions between China and Japan during the periods from 1949 to normalization in 1972, and then to the present. As Rose (1998) mentioned,

“The period between 1945 and 1972 was marked by a lack of diplomatic relations between China and Japan which inevitably had an effect on their political, economic and cultural interaction. The PRC, intent on that objective, while Japan, restrained by US policy dictates, could respond only in a limited fashion. Furthermore, the international system of the Cold War period had an enormous influence on the relationship, bringing China and Japan into the ‘subsystems’ of the two superpowers and placing them as Cold War ‘enemies’.” (Rose, 1998, p.43)

Even though there were different types of interaction, which Rose also described – for example, the “people’s diplomacy” and other civil communications – it was doubtful whether any connections between the people were actually restricted by politics, or even used as tools of a political agenda, which would hardly eliminate any existing mistrust. Zhang Tuosheng (in Vogel) stresses four points of “the major achievements in Sino-Japanese relations during this twenty-year period (1972-1992...)” (Zhang, 2002, p.193):

“First, politically, the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement and the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship built a legal framework of major principles for developing friendly cooperation between the two countries... Second, economically, imports and exports increased rapidly, from a very low level to a comprehensive, large-scale level of trade... Third, in security and international affairs, the two countries put an end to long-term hostility. The U.S.-Japan security alliance stopped targeting China, and China and Japan achieved a measure of indirect strategic cooperation... Fourth, in terms of friendly activities such as cultural exchanges and the exchange of visits, substantial progress was made through both official and unofficial efforts.” (Wan, 2006, pp.193-194)

Different to the positive evaluation in the description above, these achievements are limited due to the nature of the time—even we have to accept the existence of plenty of reasons and activities for the reconciliation between China and Japan.

To a great extent, the success of Sino-Japanese normalization was a contingency measure made after the normalization of Sino-US relations. As the US conducted secret contacts with China without notifying the Japanese, Japan would be shocked and have to take immediate action in order to avoid strategic and political embarrassment. In this way, the official Sino-Japanese negotiations and then normalization were achieved in a very short time. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1972, President Nixon visited China and started the normalization process for Sino-US relations. Then, on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1972, Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka visited the People’s Republic of China. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the PRC and the Japanese

government issued the Sino-Japanese Joint Statement, announcing the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. However, whether it was possible for both governments and their publics to adjust their existing images and opinions of each other to the new, fast-changing relationship could pose a problem. For example, due to the political cultures of China in the Maoist era, the public had to passively and suddenly accept the reality of “reconciliation” with Japan, which was a traditionally top-down political activity without enough consideration for public opinion. Moreover, the overtures between China and Japan were more likely to be strategically necessary for dealing with threats from the former Soviet Union. In this historical instance, China’s position was different from that at the beginning of the Cold War. Compared to China, the Soviet Union was a direct security threat to Japan and the US. It is important that China seemed to be identified as another victim of the shadow of Soviet’s hegemony. The same strategic interest brought changes to Chinese and Japanese opinions of each other—and yet, it was still doubtful whether the situation could last for long. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the primary cause that brought the two countries together was gone. The inadequate reconciliation broke down, through dozens of disputes, which may have formed the basis of mistrust.

One could assume that the normalization of the diplomatic relationship between China and Japan did not bring essential reconciliation between the two states. The fact is that the normalization of 1972, conducted by gifted politicians in secret, was achieved over a very short period of time. “However, is it really possible or feasible to ‘settle all’ the misery, damage and emotional scars caused by fifteen years of military invasion and occupation in a couple of days of negotiations and a resulting Communique?” (Mori, 2007, p.15) The Sino-Japanese relations in recent years might support the judgement of an unsuccessful reconciliation several decades ago. The failure in reconciliation, if it exists, would shock the Sino-Japanese trust, which should be based on the settlement of bilateral disputes.

### **3.2.3 The 1980s:**

Time	Events	Cooperative or not
05/1980	Prime Minister Hua Guofeng visited Japan	Yes
05/1982	Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang visited Japan and claimed the three basic principles of the bilateral relationship	Yes
06/1982	The outbreak of the Textbook Issue	No
09/1982	Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko visited China	Yes
11/1983	General Secretary Hu Yaobang visited Japan and raised the four principles of Sino-Japanese relations	Yes
03/1984	Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro visited China and declared the second round of ODA for China	Yes
09/1984	3000 Japanese youth visited China invited by Hu Yaobang	Yes
02/1987	The Kokaryo Case	No
08/1988	Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru visited China and declared the third round of ODA for China	Yes
04/1989	Prime Minister Li Peng visited Japan	Yes
07/1989	Japan joined the sanction on China due to the Tiananmen Incident	No

Table 3. 2: Main interactions between China and Japan in the 1980s

The main trend of the 1980s in this region could be described as, “shaped by the gravitation of the United States, Japan and China toward nearly identical positions on many foreign policy issues” (Nagorski, 1980, p.668). As Soeya Yoshihide (2002) argues, the bilateral relationship in the 1980s was more characterised by “complexities” than during the 1970s. There were examples of progress on mutual trust. The two states had conducted frequent mutual VIP visits during this decade, and essential cooperative and systematic principles were achieved. Unobstructed political communication was crucial for reducing misunderstanding. During the mutual visits, the principles of mutual relations, such as the three basic principles of the bilateral relationship as expressed by Zhao Ziyang (peace and friendship, equality and mutual benefit, long-term stability) were raised, which could function as guides for future interaction, thereby avoiding of disordered actions.

Another symbol of positive bilateral interaction was the implementation of Japan’s ODA (Official Development Assistance) for China. According to David Arase (in Lam Peng Er, 2006), Japan expected a better strategic environment with a stronger China, while China could obviously benefit from economic support from Japan. It is hard to imagine that a state would provide large scale economic assistance to another state with considerable political and economic and no shared trust. Though the Japanese ODA for China could be interpreted as a strategic tool aimed at the Soviet Union, and might also be a method of sanction against China, it had been implemented as a cooperative action based on goodwill. Even when Japan signed on to the joint declaration sanctioning the Tiananmen Incident, the negotiations for ODA were not fundamentally nor negatively affected (Choi, 2003).

Problems the two states met in the 1980s

In terms of the overall positive atmosphere, three important issues that took place during the 1980s presented problems for the Sino-Japanese relationship. The issue regarding Japanese textbooks first came to the fore in 1982, and was the first dispute following the

1972 normalization. The dispute arose on the 10-year anniversary of normalization, and was soon settled by the two governments. However, potential issues were left unresolved. The second problem was the Kokaryo Case, which should have been a simple civil case about the ownership of a student dormitory, without great repercussions or much public attention. However, the Kokaryo Case was a triangular issue, involving mainland China, Taiwan and Japan, and was extremely sensitive for China due to issues of 'sovereignty'. The case to some extent damaged the mutual trust between the two states, as suggested by Hidenori Ijiri (in Howe, 1996) who pointed out that the efforts to enhance mutual understanding by inviting Japanese youth to China by Hu Yaobang had been criticised within China. The mutual trust was apparently harmed in this case. Tomonori Sasaki also suggested that, although the issue might not have become predominant, there was a mutually-recognised threat of military action (Sasaki, 2010).

The last but crucial issue in the 1980s, which finally brought an end to the honeymoon period, was the Tiananmen Incident. Some scholars even believe that the friction period was a result of the Tiananmen Incident (Kim, 1990, p.403). When the incident, regarded by Western states as an anti-democratic suppression of the students occurred, Japan was struggling to decide on how to react to the Chinese government. Many scholars – including Hidenori Ijiri (1996), K. V. Kesavan (1990) and Whiting and Xin (1990/1991) – would argue that while Japanese was involved in placing sanctions against China, the essential Japanese attitude was not as strict as the US's position. Japan soon reopened high level communications and other mutual connections with China, within a year of the crackdown in Tiananmen. According to the literature, it was not due to trust between the two states, but rather the existing war guilt that decided Japan's actions. However, the collapse of communist factions worldwide, and attitudes on a totally different set of political values had led Japan to reconsider its strategy towards China in the post-Cold War era.

### **3.2.4 A sectional conclusion**

Whether the existing literature offers effective discussions on the status of trust/distrust between Japan and China, and its implications for Sino-Japanese relations, is a core

question. As far as the literature is concerned, a certain level of mutual trust could have been built for the first time after World War II. Although, there might have been certain conditions during the later years of the Cold War when other countries, including the US and Japan, needed China as a partner to deal with the Soviet threat. As they had a shared strategic problem to deal with, the literature indicates that China and Japan were experiencing mutual trust and positive bilateral relations during this period. At the same time, the potential risks had not become the problem of distrust between the two countries. Most other disputes were controlled or internally postponed to ensure the success of the normalization process. However, this might have led to a potential risk of reviving distrust in the future and the potential failure of reconciliation, which has been discussed by some of the literature.

Although literature has discussed the two aspects of successful and unsuccessful interactions, it has not provided enough discussion on the divisions between positive relations and trust. That is to say, it is necessary to dig deeper on how events have led to trust/distrust and had an impact on Sino-Japanese relations. For example, unsuccessful reconciliation might leave the potential risk that certain postponed disputes could re-emerge in the future—which actually has happened, in the case of the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute, to name but one. This thesis, therefore, will try to develop discussions on these issues beyond the existing literature.

### **3.3 Frictions and revive of distrust: the 1990s to the beginning of 21st century**

Time	Events	Cooperative or not
07/1990	Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki declared the restoration of ODA toward China	Yes



08/1991	Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki visited China as the first Western head of state after the Tiananmen Incident	Yes
04/1992	General Secretary Jiang Zemin visited Japan	Yes
10/1992	Emperor Akihito visited China as the first one in Sino-Japanese history	Yes
03/1994	Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro visited China	Yes
09/1994	Japan permitted the attendance on Hiroshima Asian Games of Taiwan vice Premier Xu Lide and led to protests from China	No
04/1994	Agreement on the fourth round of ODA	Yes
05/1995	Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi visited China and visited the Anti-Japanese War Memorial as the first Prime Minister ever	Yes
08/1995	Murayama Danwa: an apology on the war made by Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi	Yes
08/1995	Japan protested against China's nuclear test	No
07/1996	Japanese right-wing groups landed on Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and led to China's protests	No
07/1996	Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro visited the Yasukuni Shrine	No
09/1997	Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro visited China	Yes

11/1997	Prime Minister Li Peng visited Japan	Yes
11/1998	President Jiang Zemin visited Japan as the first Chinese head of state ever	Yes
07/1999	Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo visited China	Yes
10/2000	Prime Minister Zhu Rongji visited Japan	Yes

Table 3. 3: Main interactions from 1990 to 2000

### **3.3.1 An evaluation: the rise of problems of distrust without an overall subversion**

Described as “a period of frictions”, this period could be seen as having taken a negative turn, to a certain extent. This research provides a general judgement that a crisis of distrust had emerged, but this did not become an insurmountable problem between the two countries, according to the discussion in the literature.

In order to explain the structural fluctuations of this period, the existing literature provides an interpretation, that the end of the Cold War was the most significant change of this period. The absence of the common strategic threat posed by the Soviet Union led to the re-evaluation of the strategies of both China and Japan towards each other. Hence, a series of problems might occur on issues such as wartime apology, Taiwan, textbooks, security, and so on. It is possible that these problems reemerged due to a lack of a priori concerns, or they were newly raised. In general, the shifts in the background led to the main problems in the bilateral relations.

However, greater explanation is needed for these negative changes. In a more critical way, it was not inevitable that the collapse of the Soviet Union would inevitably lead to a worsened Sino-Japanese relationship. The collapse of the Soviet Union could have

impacts on the strategic arrangement (but was not necessary for an overall turnaround of policies), but not on historical disputes. In this way, it might be reasonable to come to the conclusion that the shift in the level of trust caused the other changes affecting bilateral relations, thereby explaining the rise in friction/tension.

It seemed that the routine, mutual visits by the two leaderships in the 1990s suggested that cooperation was not weakened, or at least that existing literature recognised the trend that the “larger issues” would be focused on instead of problems from a Chinese perspective (Soeya, Wang & Welch, 2003, p.187). However, to be labelled as “friction”, “the emergence of security dilemma” (Choi, 2003, p.79) or even the “coming confrontation” (Segal, 1993), this period certainly experienced changes away from the former harmony. Zhang Tuosheng (2002) acknowledged that, “beginning in the mid-1990s, bilateral relations suffered major frustrations, even setbacks”, which included “issues such as the interpretation of history, Japan-Taiwan relations, and the U.S.-Japan military alliance” (Zhang, 2002, p.192). To better understand the characteristics of this period, one could conclude that the two states began to recognize that there was a problem of mistrust, especially in some specific cases. Though these cases – such as the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, textbook issues, and other historical legacies – were not new in this era, the situation was much fiercer than during the “honeymoon” period.

Mori Kazuko (2007) understands the changes in the following way:

“...from the late 1990s to 2004 was a time of ‘structural fluctuation’, during which the Cold War ended, Taiwan demanded national independence, the US-Japan security system was destructed and China grew into an economic super power. During this time, the Japanese public began to feel that the ‘postwar’ era of apologizing to China over what had happened in the past had come to an end.”  
(Mori, 2007, p.3)

It seems clear that some observers tend to believe that, due to internal desires and external pressures—as Mori Kazuko mentioned above, about Japan’s change in apologizing—both China and Japan would have to adjust their attitudes toward each other, which brought changes to the bilateral relationship that allowed for the problem of

mistrust in certain areas. Michael J. Green and Benjamin L. Self (1996) listed a series of “signs of change in the relationship” in the 1990s:

“Evidence of the recent changes in Japan’s China policy is growing.

- In 1994, successive Prime Ministers Morihiro Hosokawa and Tsutomu Hata both took a harder line with Beijing on military transparency and nuclear tests than their predecessors ever had.
- Japan provoked China’s wrath by inviting Lee Yuan-tsu, vice-president of Taiwan, to the Hiroshima Asian Games in October of the same year
- In June 1995, Chairman of the Joint Staff General Tetsuya Nishimoto ended the Japan Self-Defense Force’s (JSDF) long-standing exclusive focus on the Soviet/Russian threat by announcing that he would express Japan’s concern to China over the missiles launched in the direction of Taiwan that same summer.
- In August 1995, the Japanese government informed China’s ambassador to Tokyo, Xu Dunxin, that Japan would suspend grant assistance to Beijing as a protest against continued nuclear weapons testing (a loss of \$75 million).
- Japanese Air Self-Defense Force fighter jets scrambled in response to threatening moves by Chinese jets in Japanese airspace for the first time ever in autumn 1995.
- In October 1995, Foreign Minister Kono Yohei made front-page news in Japan by mentioning in the National Diet that Chinese military modernization and territorial policies could be a source of instability in Asia
- In early 1996, Japan responded to Chinese activities in the East China Sea (and in effect to Beijing’s 1992 law reaffirming Beijing’s claim to the Senkaku Islands) by deciding to formally extend its Exclusive Economic Zone in the area.
- And in March 1996, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto summed up Tokyo’s new attitude towards China when he expressed his concern that Chinese policies in the region ‘might be heading in the wrong direction’.” (Green & Self, 1996, pp.36-37)

As Green and Self (1996) concluded, “Beneath the surface of overt policy changes a more fundamental shift has taken place in the dynamics of Japan’s China policy; a shift

resulting not from short-term tensions but from changes in the structures that underpinned Japanese policy towards China for four decades.” (Green & Self, 1996, p.37) This fractious period of time was not just a kind of “honeymoon burnout”. Whether it was because of the absence of the common strategic threat Soviet Union, or new considerations due to a shift in national power, or different attitudes towards history, the tensions were more than the normal debates between states, which might indicate a qualitative change. Both China and Japan would re-evaluate the actions of the other, to ascertain whether they had a comparatively accurate understanding of the political and strategic goals of the other, which had led to different views towards each other (Harris, 1997, p.127). This process of re-evaluation were affected by different kinds of cases, most of which were quite negative. For example, although China had a long way to catch up to the modernised world in the 1990s, the growth in defence expenditure still worried in Japan (Lee, 1997). The mistrust would be further enhanced by activities in relation to disputes, regarded as a challenges to each other. If the theoretical starting point of the vicious cycle of mistrust is failing to achieve genuine reconciliation and settlement of war (which will be discussed in the next chapters), the significant deterioration was in this period of friction.

### **3.3.2 Typical examples**

#### **The apology issue**

One crucial achievement of the mutual reconciliation in the 1990s was supposed to be the 1995 “Murayama Danwa”: an apology for the war made by Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi. Though there have been dissenting Japanese voices on the “weakness” of Murayama’s diplomacy, the spirit of the speech no doubt helped to mitigate the rivalry between China and Japan over historical disputes. Murayama’s speech was accepted and highly praised by the Chinese government, which could have helped to increase the moralistic trust between the two states. However, despite the progress made by Murayama, Japanese official government statements appear more conservative (Wu J., 1998, pp.61-65) considering the domestic politics or for other reasons. This led to the apology becoming an issue between the two states.

Reputation is so important in Chinese culture that the failure to express enough apologies and respect to the victims of war might have caused problems for Sino-Japanese relations. Indeed, Japan has made official apologies to the Asian countries it once invaded. However, the Chinese government is not satisfied with Japan's statements, which often use words such as "regret" instead of emotionally stronger words, and the lack of a written apology expected by China. Caroline Rose (2005) has concluded that,

"The main problem surrounding the apparent failure of the Japanese to come to terms with the past is, from the Chinese point of view, the refusal of successive Japanese governments to offer genuine, sincere apologies to the Chinese government and people, backed up by actions to reinforce the apologies. This view is at odds with that held by a number of Japanese prime ministers, politicians, the media, and, increasingly, the public who feel that apologies have been offered on a number of occasions, and that China uses the 'history card' when it is politically beneficial." (Rose, 2005, pp.100-102)

Lind has argued that failing to follow the German way of apology could lead to problems and distrust (Lind, 2009). There are several assumptions worth considering: whether Japan has expressed essential regret to China; whether the use of language to express regret from the Japanese is not considered "sincere" by the Chinese—in many cases, this would be described as the German approach; and whether China really cares about receiving an emotionally satisfactory apology, or is just playing the history card. However, even if one presumes that Japan is sincere in its apologies, while China focuses more on the victims' emotion as opposed to the political benefits, the differences in language and culture could still result in misunderstandings on this issue. Not to mention the other two possibilities, which might also lead to mutual mistrust.

In terms of cultural factors and interstate trust issues, the focus basically lies originally with the notion of trust. If the interpretations of political issues were different from the other culture, there could be misunderstandings and mistrust between China and Japan.

Meanwhile, the culture might also be used as an excuse, which brings further complexities when seeking solutions .

### **The Taiwan Issue in the 1990s**

The main dispute in this decade was over the Taiwan Issue. In 1994, Japan permitted Taiwan vice Premier Xu Lide to attend the Hiroshima Asian Games, which led to protests from China. The reunification of China and Taiwan is one of the most crucial and explicit national interests of the Chinese government. Though the Taiwan issue is a fundamental determinant for the political relations between China and other states, the special historical relationship between Japan and Taiwan complicates the issue.

China is concerned about the fifty-year post-colonial relationship between Japan on Taiwan, and so see any contacts between Japan and Taiwan as potentially suspicious. Some scholars, including Austin and Harris (1999), suggest that there are three elements to the Chinese perspective: Japan's position on "Taiwan independence", the closer political and economic partnership (than either country's with China), and the strategic goal of Japan regarding Taiwan. (Austin & Harris, 1999, p.134; Zha, 2001) For the Japanese, although Japan does share similar values with Taiwan, it is unlikely to take risks and conduct activities that question the status quo. Phil Deans (in Marie Söderberg, 2001) indicates that "Tokyo's preferred option for cross-Straits relations remains the continuation of the status quo." (Söderberg, 2001, p.95) Following this guideline, Japan avoids getting involved in the Taiwan issue, except by acting comparatively weak by asking for self-restraint from China between 1995 and 1996, when the US upgraded its relations with Taiwan during the crisis (NODA, 1997, p.124)—Japan clearly understands that more active and negative reactions would cause distrust from China. Dean also suggests that "Reconciliation between Beijing and Tokyo over the Taiwan question may not be possible, but there has been an admirable degree of compromise, from all three sides, over the maintenance of different levels of relationship" (Söderberg, 2001, p.100), and the situation generally progresses smoothly in recent decades. However, there could be hidden dangers, such as the disputes over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands between

mainland China, Japan and Taiwan. If a cooperative relationship between Japan and Taiwan were established, the trust between China and Japan would be shaken.

### 3.3.3 A sectional conclusion

Similar with the previous period, the literature has successfully indicated that the general situation remained stable, while some problems persisted for the two countries. It could be argued that, considering the ongoing interactions, mutual trust and bilateral relations between China and Japan should have been enhanced even though more problems arose during this period than during the 1970s. This contradiction could be interpreted from an analysis of the impact of trust/distrust on interstate relations. As argued above, the leftover disputes would contribute to distrust as they were not completely solved. Therefore, it is still a problem that the literature has not effectively built a connection between the events and trust, as well as relationship.

### 3.4 Deterioration: from 2001 till the present

Time	Events	Cooperative or not
04/2001	2001 Textbook Issue	No
04/2001	Japan permitted the visit of former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui which led to a series of problems in Sino-Japanese relations	No
08/2001	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine	No
10/2001	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited China and expressed apologies for the war	Yes
04/2002	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine	No
01/2003	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine	No



2005	Great number of protests in China against Japanese attempt to join the United Nations Security Council as a permanent member	No
04/2005	2005 Textbook Issue	No
08/2005	Defense White Paper of Japan claimed a great concern on the “China threats”	No
10/2005	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine	No
15/08/2006	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on the surrender day of World War II	No
10/2006	Prime Minister Abe Shinzo visited China, regarded as the ‘ice-breaking’ trip and agreed on building a mutually beneficial relationship	Yes
04/2007	Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Japan	Yes
12/2007	Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo visited China	Yes
05/2008	President Hu Jintao visited Japan, declared wish to enhance the mutually beneficial relationship	Yes
05/2008	Wenchuan Earthquake in China, Japan offered assistance and sent a rescue team to China	Yes
04/2009	Prime Minister Aso Taro visited China	Yes
05/2010	Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Japan	Yes
09/2010	Japan arrested Chinese fishermen on the sea around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands	No

03/2011	Japanese Northeast Earthquake, China offered assistance and sent a rescue team	Yes
12/2011	Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko visited China	Yes
02/2012	Japanese Mayor of Nagoya City, Takashi Kawamura denied the 'Nanjing Massacre', which led to serious problems in the bilateral relations	No
04/2012	Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro declared a plan to purchase the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands	No
08/2012	Hong Kong 'Baodiao' (protecting Diaoyu Islands) group landed on Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and then arrested by Japan	No
09/2012	Japanese government nationalized Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and led to fierce protests in China	No
09/2013	China started regular cruise near Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands	No
05/2014-06/2014	Chinese and Japanese military airplanes engaged in a dangerous distance over the East China Sea	No
07/2014	The Cabinet of Japan lifted collective self-defence	No
11/2014	China and Japan reached four principles of consensus on improving bilateral relations	Yes
11/2014	President Xi and Prime Minister Abe met during the APEC summit in Beijing	Yes
04/2015	President Xi and Prime Minister Abe met in Jakarta, Indonesia	Yes

08/2015	Prime Minister Abe delivered the speech on the 70 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II	Debatable
08/2015	China held the parade on 70 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of “anti-Japanese war and anti-fascist war”	Debatable

Table 3. 4: Main interactions the 21st century

### 3.4.1 The overall situation: distrust as crisis and the absence of effective trust-building interactions

Distrust as a phenomenon in Sino-Japanese relations has been a subject of debate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The start of the first decade was not purely negative,<sup>5</sup> considering the VIP visits and the positive speeches. However, the situation significantly worsened in the following years. The literature provides some possible explanations for this turn. Firstly, one of the most significant changes in this period would be the apparent growth of China’s comprehensive national power. It would be the first time for China since the decline of its empire when this country could become a major actor in terms of its hard power. Considering its more important position in the international economy, the demand for resources and security for import/export and development could in turn require potential military development or even expansion. Accompanied by the growth of national power, China would have significantly more say in world politics and on regional affairs, which could urge other actors, including Japan, to adjust to the new situation. Secondly, for the Japanese, an attempt by Japan to redefine its national identity in the world might lead to both strategic and moral tension with China, which could therefore cause more problems in their bilateral relations.

The situation would be similar if the literature had accurately identified the “variable factors” as the new trends in this era. However, the existing problems might be more significant and the direct links between “incidents” and “status of relations” would be stronger. This would be reasonable because the greater of incidents are, the stronger the

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<sup>5</sup> See interview on Xingyu WANG in Chapter 7 of this thesis, question 1.

impacts on the bilateral relations would be. Therefore, observers should focus on how the issues in certain fields lead to improvements or deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations.

It needs to be reemphasised that this research will try to look at bilateral relations as a whole, in a dynamic way, and this is why doubts are raised that “point to point” connections are not sufficient for interpreting the overall changes to bilateral relations—even certain “strategic” issues cannot explain the deterioration of strategic relations in other specific areas. Hence, the status of strategic and moral trust/distrust is necessary under this circumstance.

“The year 2002 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations... The positive tone of speeches, policy reviews, and the numerous celebratory activities of 2002 were, however, overshadowed by a series of issues that suggested a slightly different picture of the state of affairs. The main indication that something was awry in 2002 was the absence of Prime Minister Koizumi from the celebration in China in September to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the 1972 Joint Statement. Although there had been plans for him to attend the celebrations, a number of diplomatic incidents put a strain on the relationship and rendered the visit inappropriate as far as the Chinese and Japanese foreign ministries were concerned. Although no specific reasons were offered for his absence, China’s dissatisfaction with Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in April could have been a contributory factor, in addition to the row over the Shenyang consulate issue, which also threatened to stall the celebration plans.” (Rose, 2005, p.1)

What Rose describes are the unpleasant issues of 2002, an important anniversary for Sino-Japanese relations. Moreover, similar things keep happening at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, causing a new kind of “Cold War” between the two countries, which shows a significant level of mistrust (Hagström, 2008/2009).

The ups and downs China and Japan experienced in their bilateral relationship during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century had not been seen since the 1972 normalization, and both

security and history have re-emerged as problems and disputes in Sino-Japanese relations (Hook, Gilson, Hughes, & Dobson, 2005; Gilson, 2007). Compared to the political and strategic environments before, the main changes are: the apparent growth of Chinese national power both in economics and military capabilities, which makes China one of the strongest regional powers, exacerbating Japan's concern and worry over a potential China threat; and the attempt by Japan to redefine its national position in the world, to that of a normal state without historical burdens. China's rise might be a challenge to strategic trust between the two states, while Japan's attitude to history is seen as moralistically untrustworthy by the Chinese.

In terms of the main interactions in this period, three main findings can be observed:

- (1). the mutual visits at the highest levels of leadership have been interrupted for a long time since the outbreak of the crisis.
- (2). the main causes of the disputes are historical issues, while the strategic factors also an issue.
- (3). the political interactions after the crises were more likely to be "ice-breaking" remedies, rather than the creative construction of mutual trust.

Though there should be many more opportunities for cooperation now, because of the improved and close economic and trade ties between the two states, which are not so easily jettisoned, they do not confer much benefit to political and diplomatic relations. There are arguments in academia, such as put forward by Rose (2005) and Heazle (2007), that assume that the future of the Sino-Japanese relationship will actually be based on its history. Moreover, a pessimistic view of the Sino-Japanese relationship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is evident in the literature; for example in descriptions of "an emerging rivalry" by Wan (2005), and Mori Kazuko's description of "a gloomy, frail rivalry" (Mori, 2007, p.1), and the "Sino-Japanese interdependence and rivalry" (Buszynski, 2009, p.143).

The changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are a direct reflection of the internal and external influencing factors on the two states. The inevitable rise of Chinese national power, the development of disputes over history, territory and resource-related issues, the strategic

and security situation in the East Asian region, and the involvement of the U.S. are all elements that affect the interactions between China and Japan.

### **3.4.2 Strategic distrust**

The literature points to the rise of China, including the realities of military growth and the assumptions of potential expansion and the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance, as a strategic hot button issue.

For instance, when confronting the rise of China, Japan distrusts China because, first, there is the fact of growth in Chinese military expenditure, the large scale of naval actions, and the air defence identification zone, and so on. In this way, Japan feels its national interests are threatened, and as a result adjusts its foreign policies towards a stronger defence, which could lead to confrontation. Or, put another way, the relationship could be damaged due to a lack of Chinese transparency of intent, from the Japanese perspective. These two issues are what could lead to distrust, in theoretical discussions.

Compared to the “point to point” approach to understanding Sino-Japanese relations, it might be more suitable to use the “snowball effect” to describe the influences on the accumulation of distrust. With long-term negative impact from key problem areas of clear information and uncertainty, distrust could be deepened, and therefore give rise to negative impacts on bilateral relations. The significance of trust/distrust is that it can explain the influence of the “independent incidents” on the “whole field” of bilateral relations. For example, it would be reasonable to understand the purchase of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands by the Japanese government, in order to deal with the growing pressure of China’s naval activity in nearby waters. However, it would be problematic to directly interpret the quest for collective defence as a result of a collision incident near the islands. Therefore, it might be more reasonable to introduce the notion of continually growing distrust, resulting from the incidents, and as a source of negative interactions in respective foreign policies. In this way, trust/distrust acts as a credibility of trustworthiness of an actor in its relationship with the other.

On the other hand, one could debate the understanding of certain regional strategic issues. For example, it is doubtful whether the rise of China could inevitably lead to China being the challenger of current orders and then cause potential conflicts. However, there are different opinions that, first, the regional order and overall situation have not experienced dramatic changes. Second, in terms of Sino-Japanese relations, “whether China has already overturned the regional orders” might not be the only decisive factor. Since Japan tends to believe that there is the possibility for China to act in a way to challenge the status quo, distrust and policies reflecting this distrust would be devised, therefore affecting the bilateral relations. That is, distrust could be enough to lead to changes in foreign policy affecting international relations. In this way, it must be emphasised that Sino-Japanese relations should be understood through a comprehensive and dynamic perspective, instead of focusing just on results and outcomes.

Though China consistently declares its development strategy a “peaceful rise”, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century many scholars, such as Zheng Bijian (2005), argue that there have always been worries from Japan of the potential “threat” of a stronger China. Offensive Realism would also suggest a possible future of Chinese expansion after its rise (Mearsheimer, 2001; 2006). Japan’s concerns are about China’s strategic goals and military expansion, rather than its economic boom which actually offers Japan more opportunities—the co-existence of potential cooperation and risk (Hughes, 2009; Heng, 2007) would determine the attitude of trust/distrust. Huang Dahui indicates that Japan’s China policy in the post-Cold War era is linked to China’s “political, economic and social stability”, while being vigilant of the “military threat” (Huang, 2000, p.58). The asymmetry between the growth of China and Japan’s calls for more transparency has generated mistrust in the policy-making procedures. Meanwhile, as the U.S. pivots back to Asia, and strengthens its alliance with Japan, an emerging struggle might appear in the regional security and strategy situations. (Wu X., 2000; Soeya, Wang, & Welch, 2003; Davis, 1997)

The grand strategies and security concerns are more complex than the debates of the “paper based” history issues. The general situation is that both states have been the

economic, political and military giants in the East Asian region, so they could possibly compete for regional leadership (NABERS, 2010; Morrison & Petri, 2008). Scholars debate the importance that each actor has for the other, in terms of geopolitics and population, economic ties and geographic distance; and even with the Soviet threat during the 1970s and 1980s, both Japan and China never neglected the existence of the other (Iklé & Nakanishi, 1990). The feelings towards each other are quite complicated, due to the coexistence of deep interdependence and growing potential threats. As Masaru Tamamoto (2005/2006) argues, Japan can see “two Chinas” (Tamamoto, 2006, p.55): it can benefit from economic relations, while security relations are an evident concern or threat from “another” China. To a large extent, the foreign policies of the two countries are affected or even shaped by each other’s, especially with regards to security and grand strategies (Heng, 2007; Harris, 1997).

### **The territorial disputes**

The Sino-Japanese territorial disputes—mainly regarding maritime disputes (Lee J.-H., 2013)—connect to historical legacies, and mistrust over security and strategy. Issues such as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have been left unsettled since the end of World War II, and they have gained new backgrounds as the competition over resources between China and Japan has grown fiercer in the East China Sea. As M. Taylor Fravel (2010) argued, there are “four reasons help explain the absence of violent conflict in the Senkaku dispute since 1972: deterrence, de facto control, regional rivalry, and active dispute management.” (Fravel, 2010, p.150) However, both sides’ efforts to control the disputes might have been ruined due to new strategies, such as the normalization of the islands by Japan, and the Chinese government’s indulgence of domestic nationalism. In terms of international relations theories, Yee Andy (2011) would suggests, “Never in the course of history have China and Japan both emerged as major geopolitical players at the same time. This power balance is one characterised by uncertainty and mistrust.” (Yee, 2011, p.188) As the two states have avoided settling the territorial disputes, which are difficult to resolve due to strategic considerations, the Diaoyu/Senkaku and other similar problems in the East China Sea will continue to be sources of mistrust between China and Japan.



### **The security concern**

According to Jian Yang (in Heazle, 2007), Japan has been China's major security concern instead of the Soviet Union since the end of the Cold War, while the rise of China has left Japan with a security dilemma (Jain, 2009; Lee, 1997). Japan's military power, the existence of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the Taiwan Issue are the main reasons for increased distrust from China (Wang J., 2011; Wu J., 2005; Roy, 2004) of Japan, which might seek "full military freedom" as a result (Chang, 2009, p.49). Scholars have observed the dilemma for China, that the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance troubles China in terms of comparative power; but on the other hand, a US absence could lead to the remilitarization of Japan (Wasi, 2001)—therefore, distrust may be an inevitable result from the Chinese perspective. China's naval build-up has the potential to challenge the regional order from the Japanese perspective (Wiegand, 2008; Kaplan, 2010). Though, as Austin and Harris argue, "in recent years, neither Japan nor China has felt directly threatened by the other despite Japan's technological superiority in conventional arms and China's efforts at military modernization" (Austin & Harris, 1999, p.117). Both states cannot pay any less attention to the other's potential security threat. Conflicts might result from China's strategy of development with national security, and Japan's expanding need to become a major political power. China is more concerned with the enhancement of the U.S. role in the East Asia, and Japan is worried about the rise of China—that is a source of mutual distrust between the two states.

According to Japan's security strategy toward China – Integration, Balancing, and Deterrence in the Era of Power Shift by the Tokyo Foundation (2011):<sup>6</sup>

"Japan's security strategy toward China must be based on an assessment of the dynamism of China's changing status in the power distribution in the Asia-Pacific, China's approach and strategy for Asian security order, and how much Japan, the US-Japan alliance, and other regional partners can shape the strategic choice of China."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/additional\\_info/security\\_strategy\\_toward\\_china.pdf](http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/additional_info/security_strategy_toward_china.pdf), accessed 16/05/2013

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.5

It would not be surprising if Japan doubted China's concept of peaceful rise. Therefore, a contradiction exists in Sino-Japanese security relations: Japan distrusts China for a lack of transparency regarding its security strategy, while China distrusts Japan for its transparent strategy to bring the U.S. into the regional game as a deterrent against China.

### **3.4.3 Historical legacies in this era**

The literature has recognised the moral interactions between Japan and China as a crucial issue and direct cause of some disputes. Hence, the problems of history, ideology, nationalism and values have received considerable discussion among scholars. Taking the historical disputes as the example, some literature identified that the gap between China's historical vigilance and Japan's rising historical revisionism is a source of confrontation. This is a reasonable assumption, and verifies the assumptions of this research of the influences of mutual distrust on interstate relations.

Originally, the historical disputes between China and Japan were comprised of different interpretations of the Second World War, which emerged as a problem in Sino-Japanese relations after normalization. The essence of the historical battles might have dozens of reasons.. Caroline Rose (1998 & 2005), Laura Newby (1988) and Lu Yi (2002) indicate clearly the gap between China's historical vigilance and Japan's rising historical revisionism, which can be seen in a number of different cases. In other words, there are arguments that history is used as a tool, such as the claim that "history has remained surprisingly effective keeping the Japanese psychologically intimidated and politically subordinate" (Horner, 1996/97, p.28). Despite the different understandings of the essence of history, it remains an inevitable issue between Japan and China, which could lead to mistrust and therefore cause regional instability (Kim, 2008; Berger, 2000; Christensen, 1999; Kristof, 1998).

It is not surprising that China and Japan are still trapped by historical disputes. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there have been new manifestations of the issue on textbook controversies, territorial disputes over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and East

China Sea, Yasukuni Shrine, and the Nanjing Massacre. Moreover, as James Reilly (2012) suggests, the growth of Chinese civil society and public opinion towards Japan beyond the traditional control of the government will bring new elements into the Sino-Japanese mutual policy-making arena. There has been stronger negative public opinion towards each other in both China and Japan, which will affect intergovernmental activities and diplomatic measures to resolve disputes. If not well settled, future Sino-Japanese trust and maybe the overall relationship will confront difficulties, and a “rivalry” might be seen in a predictable future.

### **The Textbook Issue**

Regarding the history of war in the region, scholars have indicated the significance of historical memory in China and other East Asian countries (Fukuoka, 2011; Ducke, 2002; Lind, 2009; Rose, 1998; Nozaki, 2005). This leads to related issues in other fields, including education. The education of a country is not supposed to be a serious problem in a relationship with another state, as it is an internal affair of a sovereign state. However, textbooks about history are different, as they are symbols of how a state interprets history and even its attitudes towards other states. Due to different positions and different national interests in history, states probably develop diverse interpretations and conclusions of historical events, even when they view the same period of time objectively. Hence, it could possibly reflect and lead to the level of reconciliation or even distrust between countries, which can be observed in the protests in China and South Korea of Japan during the 2000s (Wang Z., 2009).

The general cause of the Textbook Issue was the modification of some Japanese history textbooks, which replaced words such as “aggression against China” with comparatively neutral ones such as “advance into China”. The Textbook Issue between China and Japan has at least twice caused larger problems in the bilateral relationship, in 1982 and 2005, after normalization. One undeniable fact in the post-war period is that the need for relinquishing the moral burden of the war did indeed exist, which included not only demands from right-wing politicians but also many of the Japanese people. Due to the extreme sensitivity and importance of history education, which affects the views of

generations of history and long-term international relations between states, the issue of textbooks soon attracted the attentions of other Asian states, including China. In the Chinese government's view, if the compilation of the history textbook could be explained as freedom of speech and publishing under the influence of right-wing politicians, then the acquiescence of Japan's Education Ministry would suggest a Japanese attitude, maybe even governmental strategy on the "prettification of war". There would be a trust problem between Japan and China, as Japan could appear not to have apologised enough for the invasions during the war. However, there are other aspects to consider in the Textbook Issue than just what Chinese government claims in public. Hidenori Ijiri (in Howe, 1996) took the 1982 Textbook Issue as an example to analyse the actions of the Chinese government. In his argument, Ijiri connects the Textbook Issue with "China's view on world order", using the points of Nakajima Mineo (1982):

"In his view, the 'revival of Japanese militarism' is a code-word for the Chinese leadership which needs to make Japan a 'scapegoat' when making a dramatic change of stance in its foreign policy: when China shifts her strategy from a close relationship with western countries to closer relations with the Soviet Union, it is necessary for China to open criticism against the 'imperialism' or 'militarism' of western nations (such as Japan) in order to educate and persuade the people within the country." (Howe, 1996, p.68)

One way to understand the Textbook Issue and other disputes is their relation to "nationalism", rather than purely being different interpretations of history, which the governments can use as tools to achieve other goals – for example, in domestic politics. Caroline Rose (1998) largely agrees with the role of nationalism in the Textbook Issue, claiming that, "by placing it (the Textbook Issue) in the boarder context of general 'ideological' and political trends in China and Japan, then the actions and reactions of both governments and people are better understood" (Rose, 1998, p.79). The key element that leads to the Textbook Issue is likely the growing nationalism in both China and Japan, together with their rising national power. Yet this consideration cannot fully explain why the Textbook Issue still exists more than 20 years after the issue first arose,

and it may overstate the Chinese government's power to control public opinion. China now has few reasons to subjectively worsen its relations with Japan: the regime's governance is quite stable, the economy is much better compared to most states in the world, the socio-economic ties with Japan are fairly important, and there are no global political or ideological camps that China must choose to side with.

However, the essence of the issue might not be that simple. As Rose (1998) argues, "the Textbook Issue in fact raises many questions which cannot be explained merely in terms of a gap in historical interpretation" (Rose, 1998, p.20). It has not changed that the Chinese government continually calls for treating history as "a mirror for the future", which seems to be less aggressive. Even if the governments try to control the dispute within a certain scope, things would not easily follow the "strategic concern". Claudia Schneider (2008), citing Reilly (2006), argues that,

"This even concerns authoritarian China, where the state no longer holds a complete definitional monopoly on many historical narratives. Apart from relying on anti-Japanese sentiments for its own legitimization, it cannot entirely ignore—or suppress—'popular will' in history-related affairs, and populist 'history activism' has turned into a force that can mobilize popular resentments and potentially exacerbate bilateral relations (Reilly 2006)." (Schneider, 2008, p.112)

No matter whether the Textbook Issue is that simple or not, the issue itself is a serious, hidden danger in the bilateral relationship. Japan's intentions to change the post-war mood might be connected with a revival of militarism, in China interpretation. As China is growing into a strong power in this region, it becomes ever-more dissatisfied with the non-apologist attitude of Japan. Because the Cold War prevented the states from properly reconciling, it was possible that both China and Japan would see themselves as victims and leave the controversies unsettled. At the intergovernmental level, the two states are paranoid about the other. Japan distrusts China, because it thinks China is playing the history card to take advantage of Japan. On the other hand, China is angry with Japan, because Japan's attitude to history is quite different from "the direction of the German

model of teaching national introspection and learning from past mistakes” (Schneider, 2008, p.118). It is worth noting that Japan is also dissatisfied with China’s “anti-Japanese” education, which makes the education issue a bilateral problem. Meanwhile, public opinion could deteriorate due to the influence of the media and propaganda. The textbook controversy is one of the elements that leads to, or enhances mutual mistrust between the two states.

### **The Yasukuni Shrine issue**

What makes the Yasukuni Shrine an extremely sensitive issue is that it enshrines Japan’s war-dead, including class-A war criminals from World War Two. Moreover, the Japanese Emperor, prime ministers and other Cabinet members have visited the Shrine—not privately, but in their political capacities. The visits to Yasukuni Shrine obviously ignite anger in China. Besides the official and diplomatic actions regarding the Textbook Issue, the Yasukuni case has caused large-scale demonstrations and protests by Chinese students and citizens. Ijiri (in Howe, 1996) indicates that “the student demonstrations this time were distinct from the anti-Japanese campaign officially made by the Chinese Government” (Howe, 1996, p.71). It should be understood that the Yasukuni Issue is not only a concerns between governments, but also a challenge to the trust in civil society, which means the governments have to control the protests. The negative effects of the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese government officials have been discussed by researchers. The Prime Ministers’ visits to Yasukuni Shrine, especially on 15 August every year—the anniversary of Japan’s surrender in World War II—evidently changed the bilateral interactions into a pattern of confrontation. Lu Yi (2002) points out the contradiction between the Japanese claim of paying homage to the souls of the dead, and Chinese anger towards the “Japanese Devils”. Wan (2006) analysed the annual visits of former Prime Minister Koizumi and identifies both sides position thus:

“Koizumi’s annual visits to the Yasukuni Shrine have challenged what the Chinese government considers to be the core political understanding between the two nations, namely, that the Japanese should acknowledge what their nation did to the Chinese people before and during World War II; without such an acknowledgement, China

believes, it is virtually impossible for Chinese to trust Japan. By contrast, Koizumi represents the postwar generation, which believes that the war ended a long time ago and that the two nations cannot be friends if the Chinese keep raising the history issue.” (Wan, 2006, p.260)

How the two cultures treat the dead are quite different, which might lead to serious misunderstandings in disputes, especially the Yasukuni Shrine Issue. Kang Youjin (2009) indicates that Japanese culture accepts the Western idea of “death settles all scores”, and the dead are not guilty; meanwhile, Chinese culture believes that the dead are guilty for crimes committed in life. This is a problem that cannot be easily solved, as the values are divergent. It could also be argued that the interpretation of culture serves political goals, the gap between understandings is undeniable. Though there have been suggestions that the Japanese government could move the tablets of the class-A war criminals out of the Yasukuni Shrine, to appease the complaints from China and Korea, no effective action on this draft proposal has been adopted until recently.

In terms of historical disputes, there are two patterns of problems which might worsen the trust crisis between China and Japan. The first is the basic attitudes on recognition of historical facts. From the Chinese viewpoint, Japan’s apologies about the war apparently infuriate China; while Japan believe they have done enough to take responsibility, which might be closely connected with Japanese nationalism and possibly US influence (Selden, 2008). The other pattern could be described as “taking advantage of” historical issues. Japan believes that China utilizes historical disputes to play the history card, while China is concerned about Japan’s intentions on education by including fewer memories of the war for younger generations. If the disputes could be settled properly, the trust crisis might be resolved. Yet, the two states’ worries lead them to distrust each other, which forms one of the most important and serious dangers for the bilateral relations.

### **“Nanjing Massacre”**

As with the Textbook Issue, the “Nanjing Massacre” is one of the historical legacies of Sino-Japanese war. However, the disputes over Nanjing go much beyond the

“interpretation” of history, and are more about whether the massacre actually happened or not. The dispute over the Nanjing Issue, as Yoshida Takashi (2006) argues, can be described thus:

“It is apparent that tens of thousands of Chinese were killed during and after the battle of Nanjing. Why, then, do revisionists continue to deny the massacre the status of a historical fact? They tend to believe that Imperial Japan and its history have been unfairly demonized in the postwar period and that post-war history education has deprived Japanese youth of national pride. The Nanjing Massacre has been taught as one of the symbols of Japan’s wartime evil in post-war Japan, and revisionists, responding to an impulse that they look upon as patriotic pride, feel obliged to liberate the Japanese from the illusion fabricated after the end of the war.” (Takashi, 2006, p.180)

There are different voices inside Japan concerning the “Nanjing Massacre”, or “Nanjing Incident”. However, both the ambiguous attitude of the Japanese government and the total denial of the massacre are in opposition to the Chinese government’s insistence that approximately 300,000 victims were killed in Nanjing.

Unlike the issue with the history textbooks, declarations on the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese politicians, for example Shintaro Ishihara and Takashi Kawamura, have a strong “official” colour. What increases China’s mistrust of Japan is that more Japanese politicians get involved in the disputes, which could present a more serious political problem between the two states. A very recent case, in 2012, showed the frustration in Sino-Japanese relations, on the 30-year anniversary of normalisation. The mayor of Nagoya, the sister city of Nanjing, Takashi Kawamura openly denied the Nanjing Massacre in a meeting with the visiting government officials from Nanjing. Then, a series of activities to celebrate the 30-year anniversary were cancelled or postponed, and a period of tough tensions in bilateral relations began.



### **3.4.4 Nationalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

It is clear that nationalism is on the rise in Japan and China, because both “want to play a larger role in world councils” (Harris, 1997, p.144). Che-po Chan and Brian Bridges (2006) define the nationalism between the two countries as “reactive nationalism”, although “both peoples see each other as expressing assertive nationalism” (Chan & Bridges, 2006, p.130). The role nationalism plays is extremely crucial in Sino-Japanese relations, and attracts ever-more attention. Nationalism can be seen as an ostensible cause for a series of disputes.

#### **China’s nationalism**

There is a fundamental argument about the background to China’s nationalism against Japan: that the legitimacy of the CCP government is constructed on its former “role as the stalwart defender of national interests during the war with Japan” (Calder, 2006, p.133). For the Chinese, the aim of nationalism is “to clear humiliation” (Chan & Bridges, 2006, p.135), or “nation building” and the “attainment of great power status” (Bhattacharya, 2007). However, as Daqing Yang (in Marie Söderberg, 2001) and Jian Zhang (in Michael Heazle, 2007) indicate, there is a possibility that the Chinese government would use “state-led nationalism” (Heazle & Knight, 2007, p.23) to achieve its goals. As Jian Zhang explains: “the fact that the Chinese government has been actively promoting nationalism is undisputed”, nationalism might be regarded to be used to either take advantage of Japan or “largely as part of patriotic education for domestic consumption” (Söderberg, 2001, p.16). In terms of domestic politics, many critics might argue that consolidating legitimacy is the real goal of the Chinese government, or more likely the Chinese Communist Party. However, while admitting the existence of impure nationalism, it is still quite doubtful that China—a state which highly values the social stability—would risk losing control of nationalism. Scholars such as Austin and Harris (1999) have also observed that, while the Chinese government has “generally tried to control expressions of anti-Japanese feelings, it has not always found this totally feasible.” (Austin & Harris, 1999, p.62) In this way, Japan’s concern over China’s history card is reasonable, but not feasible due to the facts and realities of today’s China. However, despite the deep roots of nationalism in China, foreign policy would be significantly affected by and also reflect

nationalism (Shih, 1995). Hence, stronger nationalism against Japan would be regarded as being accompanied by distrust.

### **Japan's new nationalism**

Despite China's possible use of the "history card", nationalism or patriotism also exists in Japan's post war period—not only inside the "right wing", but it is also becoming more widespread (Matthews, 2003; Penney & Wakefield, 2008/2009). The change in Japan, led by the Liberal Democratic Party, has garnered much more attention. Caroline Rose (2005), citing Tawara (2001), summarized the patterns of Japanese nationalism:

"The summary had four main points: that the Greater East Asia War (GEAW) was one of the self-defence and liberation; that the Nanjing Massacre and stories about comfort women were fabrications; that a new textbook battle was necessary in light of the emphasis on damage and invasion in recent textbooks; and that a national movement was needed to disseminate the historical view put forward in the first two points (Tawara 2001: 50-1)" (Rose, 2005, p.53).

Japanese nationalism, different from the Chinese version, could be described as "being driven by a desire to preserve its pride as a powerful nation in the global system" (Chan & Bridges, 2006, p.136), and might have a roots in Japan's culture and also the Shinto religion (Wu J. , 2005). The "Neo-Nationalism", as described by Mori Kazuko (2007), was initiated in the post-war era in the minds of Japanese, and hoped to turn Japan into a normal state in international politics. However, it might turn to revisionism in many cases that are offensive to the Chinese. Japan greatly desires to move beyond the memory of war, however, as Kazuko argues, the post war era will not come to an end without "a minimum degree of consensus of War and responsibility" (Mori , 2007, p.63). The reason why China distrusts Japan about historical issues is the lack of responsibility demonstrated by Japan's post-war generations. What Masaru Tamamoto (2005/2006) suggests is the confrontation, shown as the controversy between Japan's search for a new identity and normal statehood, and China's worry about the revival of Japanese nationalism.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Considering the ongoing academic discussions of Sino-Japanese relations, and especially their positive/negative interactions, there is an inevitable challenge for a literature review on how to bring particulars into the research. The literature review tries to examine whether the existing literature provides evidence to explain the significance of trust/distrust in Sino-Japanese relations. Since the different incidents/disputes in Sino-Japanese relations will always draw the attention of scholars, it is highly likely that the discussions would be based on the certain issues.

Moreover, the Sino-Japanese relationship in different periods has been closely linked to the characteristics of the conditions in the international politics. Hence, the literature might have offer different topics and judgements on bilateral relations, considering internal and external factors. In terms of the mutual trust between the two states—which began from scratch after normalization—it has been declining for decades. However, the emergence of the trust crisis was not only the result of negative political interactions, but also a fundamental question of whether there has ever been trust between the two states. Some literature has argued that it was the end of the Cold War and the rise of China in the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century that ruined the positive political relationship and mutual trust after 1972. It has also been argued that the “trust” after normalization was actually fake—politically manufactured without a basis of reconciliation—and only achieved in order to deal with common strategic and security goals. The crisis would arise, without external threats, in the post-Cold War era. Even though China and Japan have tried to build trust and enhance mutual understandings – through joint research on historical issues and intergovernmental activities – long-term reconciliation has not been in sight. As competition grows fiercer, there are more obstacles for the two states to clear to achieve a relationship characterised by trust.

The existing literature discusses the important elements affecting the bilateral relationship, and frequently mentions the word “mistrust” in different cases. However, the logic of the literature might be different from this research in terms of the formation of positive and

negative bilateral relations. It is understandable that the literature would pick a hot spot in Sino-Japanese relations to analyse for its origins and impact. Or, it can go the other way, by identifying a period of bilateral relations with certain characteristics and then analyse its roots. In this way, the literature can build a connection between the overall relationship and independent influencing factors and determinants between China and Japan.

It is reasonable that certain issues would be regarded as the sources of improvement and deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations. However, several decades have witnessed the dynamic status of bilateral relations, with hidden risks and problems that might be hard to explain by merely listing the “incidents”. For example, military growth might lead to worsened bilateral military relations. However, whether the postponement of the events for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary was the direct result of potential military confrontation would need further analysis—at least the two countries did not conduct actions that directly damaged the ceremony. This research does not deny the contributions of the existing literature, but values them for another approach, by introducing the notion of trust as a critical supplement. It is possible that the status of trust/distrust could be adopted to help explain the contradictions between the two countries, and why disputes have not been fundamentally resolved in the past, and how growing mutual distrust could lead to the emergence of deepening strategic and moral confrontations.

## **Chapter 4: Determinants of trust and distrust in Sino-Japanese relations**

### **4.1 Particular characteristics in Sino-Japanese relations**

Beyond studying the impact of trust and distrust on international relations in relation to IR theories, a series of factors on the current state of reality should be taken into consideration. The particulars of Sino-Japanese relations are to a great extent crucial to trust and distrust. Due to a variety of factors, the issues of trust between China and Japan differ from those of other states. It is crucial to ascertain why the problems in bilateral relations are so difficult to address, by interpreting the particulars brought by the two countries.

The significance of the study of the particular characteristics is its contribution to the understanding of why certain fields of issues are worthy of being studied. These characteristics have close connections with the bilateral relationship, as well as the mutual trust/distrust between China and Japan. It has been discussed how trust/distrust play their roles in affecting interstate relations. Hence, it is necessary to understand how the theoretical framework can be applied in specific cases in Sino-Japanese relations. The political culture, tradition and the special conditions between the two countries greatly affects the policies towards each other. Therefore, the task of connecting these factors is crucial for assessing the assumptions and hypothesis about the structure of asymmetric distrust. In conclusion, the determinants and how they work in Sino-Japanese relations will provide a methodological supplement to why certain cases are selected and why these cases are analysed in certain ways, including taking a look at governmental documents and public opinion.

#### **4.1.1 Particularities brought by China**

The domestic political traditions and political culture of China have always been one of the origins of diversity in international society. Peter Gries has indicated that “Chinese

national identity evolves in dynamic relationship with other nations and the past.” (Gries, 2004, p.19) It has been argued that factors such as “long history”, “Han people”, “Chinese empire”, “language”, “philosophy”, and other kinds of everyday culture (Meissner, 2006) have shaped the common feelings for the Chinese. Developed over thousands of years, combined with the capitalist and communist revolutions, a unique political entity has been created. In terms of historical concepts, the leadership of the Empire will always regard China as the “Celestial Empire” and the “Central Kingdom”, which is generally the national identity of the country, which even affects the neo-nationalism in China seeking international prestige today (He, 2009). Based on the strongest national power and most advanced ancient culture, a tributary system around China was established in the East Asia. Neighbouring small countries wanted the recognition and protection of the Chinese government, as well as the advanced technologies, which they acquired through the tributary system (Wan, 2006) Even though Japan was not a vassal state of China, it also could not totally break with the system, so interactions between the two states initially motivated Japan to send envoys and students to China. However, sudden changes occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of the Western states, and the decline of China gradually ruined the system and the traditional acknowledgement of China. The pain of the Chinese people, caused by invasion, especially felt by the elites and leadership, and the “one hundred years of humiliation” (Callahan, 2004; Wang, 2008) has become the nationalism which informs foreign policy.

Callahan’s research significantly points to the special feature of Chinese perspective on international relations within the notion of being *The Pessoptimist Nation* (Callahan, 2012). The word pessoptimist conveys the ambiguous characteristics of China for even now, although China has made great achievements in nation building especially on economy, the country and its people still have a mixed feeling about themselves. On one hand, they are optimistic on their revival as a strong state. On the other hand, they lack the sense of confidence and safety, fearing to be beaten or ignored or even un-recognised at the same time. China always reminds itself of past humiliation when there were many countries which brought the humiliation to China and Japan is the most special and prominent one among these. What could not be tolerated was that Japan,

historically the weaker neighbour, could become the powerful enemy that almost beat China. This type of psychological impact of history has come to affect every aspect in Chinese domestic and international politics, especially considering the fact that China is not regarded as upholding a different ideology and values to many Western countries (Pang, 2004).

For the current status of Chinese politics, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) plays an important role. The CCP's source of legitimacy is quite different from that of modern democracies and highly institutionalized states – elections. It could be argued that the legitimacy of the CCP is based on governmental performance, and the two political sources of nationalism and stability led by the CCP (Downs & Saunders, 1998-1999; Hwang & Schneider, 2011; Schoenhals, 1999; Cai, 2008; Chu, 2013; Esteban, 2006). One of the most important commitments is to avoid invasion and bully by other states, just as Mao Zedong declared in Tiananmen Square: “the Chinese people has stood up”. The territorial disputes and issues of dignity are great concerns of even the common citizens of China, so no failures by the CCP are accepted when dealing with other states over these problems, and especially with Japan. With the growth of social media and networks, deepening emotions might be decisive for Chinese foreign policy in the future. Therefore, the Chinese government has to be tough on and vigilant of Japan before the disputes are settled.

#### **4.1.2 Particularities brought by Japan**

For the Japanese, even though Japan has gradually turned to the West and accepted a series of modern Western ideologies and institutions – including democracy, a multiparty system and capitalism – a basic Asian view of politics still exists in its political values, and historical legacies affect Japanese politics in different ways from China. As the vanquished of the World War II, Japan was once occupied by the US. Meanwhile, with the restrictions of the ‘peaceful constitution’, Japan almost lost the majority of its military forces, and was banned from launching wars. Therefore, Japan is actually a non-normal state, which relies on the US-Japan alliance – a fundamental component of Japan's national security strategy and a policy premise (Green & Szechenyi, 2006; Vogel, 2002;

Yoda, 2006; Lee, 2014; Packard, 2010). Japan has always tried to change this situation in order to become a normal state, with a stronger political position and military capacity in accordance with its economy, population and the technology. (Soeya, Tadokoro, & Welch, 2011; Johnson, 1992; Inoguchi, 2003) Since the end of the Cold war, Japan has taken a variety of steps to achieve this goal, including applying for a permanent member position on the UN Security Council, sending the Self-Defence Forces overseas for logistical purposes in the Iraq War, and other peacekeeping actions. Also, changes in domestic politics, such as attempts to amend the constitution, upgrading the Self-Defence Forces to an army, and replacing “masochistic” views of history with the “victimhood” also characterise the general trend in recent years. (Bukh, 2007) As these demands to some extent conflict with the Chinese view of Japan’s potential for “remilitarization” (Arase, 2007; Hughes, 2009; McCormack, 2004; Pyle, 2007; Samuels, 2007; Tadokoro, 2011; Tanter, 2005; Tsuchiyama, 2007; Hagström, 2014), the attempts by the Japanese government have been obstructed in these fields, which could be a source of Japanese distrust of China, as its interests could not be supported and understood.

In terms of Japanese party politics, the competition between the Liber Democratic Party and the Democratic Party is also a factor that brings the Chinese elements into the issues. On the one hand, the “historical defeat” (Maeda, 2010) of the LDP, which is regarded as having a “conservative stream” (Jin, 2008), did not bring about an overall positive turn in policies towards China, as some observers had expectated. On the other hand, the changes in Japanese governments and Premier Ministers are comparatively frequent, compared to other states. However, the Prime Minister who was in office the longest since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was Junichiro Koizumi, whose visits to the Yasukuni Shrine directly contributed to the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations. It cannot be denied that there is a market for being tough towards China in Japanese foreign policy. Even though the connections with China cannot be severed, diplomacy might obey the voters and could affect the bilateral relations. One could expect that the two states could control the scope of diplomatic disputes, yet the long-term influences of tough strategies could enhance mutual distrust.



In general, the particulars of the two states present difficulties for the Sino-Japanese trust-building process. It has been the political tradition in East Asia states that problems and disputes between states have historical roots. Both China and Japan cannot easily trust each other, considering factors of policy-making and the other's levels of trustworthiness. The war between the states is crucial because its legacies still influence opinions today. However, the war cannot be the only determinant, because the military confrontations and conflicts between China and the US in the Korea War, and Japan and the US in the World War II did not give rise to such long-term distrust and anti-American, anti-Chinese, or anti-Japanese sentiments between these states. Based on the "unsettled historical disputes", "failure in reconciliation on both governmental and social levels", as well as factors of domestic political culture, party politics and legitimacy, the two states have not reached a level of mutual trust even of the France-Germany or Japan-US relationships. Compared to other interstate relations, Sino-Japanese mutual trust seems to be more difficult to achieve.

#### **4.2 The determinants of trust and distrust**

It could be argued that there are two approaches in which trust can have an impact on international relations. One, it could play a direct role at the governmental level to affect relationships with other states as the important reference of foreign policy making process. Meanwhile, trust at the civic level is influenced by international relations and becomes a considerable factor in governmental policy-making as public opinion. Trust could be seen as a kind of capital, or credit in a relationship between states. Rathbun claims that it is "a resource of individuals, groups or societies that serves to promote more optimal levels of cooperation that leave all better off" (Rathbun, 2012, p.26). The process of generating trust between states is actually dynamic. More trust would be generated if the actions of one state correspond with the expectations and confidence of another state. On the contrary, if one state's national interests are harmed by these actions, the incident would not only call into question the trustworthiness of the other state, but also accumulate as empirical evidence that would have a negative impact on future judgements. Under these two circumstances, a bilateral relationship could diverge significantly. In a situation with comparatively high levels of mutual trust, it would be

easier to conduct positive and cooperative activities between states, which could be a symbol of positive bilateral relations. As mentioned above, when there is a comparatively better status of trust, countries will spend less on preparing for potential danger from the other actor. States would be more focused on protecting their interests and even more aggressive with lower levels of trust towards others, due to fears brought about by a lack of information and confidence. Therefore, the foreign policies of governments indeed have become an intermediary for transferring trust in international relations, and policies could change based on whether one state trusts (strategically or morally) another, and the confidence it has of others. To conclude, the following determinants can't be ignored, as they are the most common in the bilateral relationship, which can also affect the method of trust.

#### **4.2.1 The making of foreign policies of China and Japan**

To understand the foreign policies of the two states and the impacts that trust and distrust have on them, two breakthrough points should be identified. The first is what are the contents of the foreign policies of the two states towards each other, and how trust or distrust can affect them at the micro level. The second is the way in which the foreign policies are produced, and how the process is influenced by trust.

##### **The contents of foreign policies of the two states**

In terms of China's foreign policy, Robert G. Sutter (2012) suggests that scholars have different opinions on whether China has a firm strategy in current foreign policy. However, even though there are arguments over whether a clear strategy exists, it can be observed through actions and statements that the Chinese government has several priorities. Thomas Christensen (2001) "summed up China's strategic goals along lines widely accepted by other particularities and commentators to include (1) regime security; (2) preserving territorial integrity; and (3) gaining prestige, power, and respect on the international stage." (Sutter, 2012) Wu Xinbo also identified "four contradictions constraining China's foreign policy behaviour (which are) a great power and a poor country, 'open-door' incentive and sovereignty concerns, principle and pragmatism, and bilateralism and multilateralism" (Wu, 2004). These could be regarded as China's core

interests even without detailed explanation from official channels. The three points that Sutter raises are actually interconnected. The guarantee of regime security includes not only traditional national security, but also domestic legitimacy, which has been already been mentioned. It would, to a certain extent, come from the performance of the government on the other two core interests.

With the common threat of the Soviet Union, China and Japan could locate the source of regional danger on the Soviet Union, as opposed to each other. After the collapse of the USSR, Japan became the main threat to China in the region, and vice versa. Even though Japan has been restricted from developing its military since the end of World War II, China still distrusts Japan due to the potential revival of Japanese militarism, and Japan's strategic support from the United States. The shift from trust to distrust, or the change in level of trust between China and Japan, could be seen during these different eras.

“Thus, though Chinese elite and popular opinion often showed angst over alleged Japanese militarism, Chinese leaders generally supported Japan's military efforts to offset Soviet power in eastern Asia. Beijing also generally supported a strong US-Japan security relationship aimed at countering the Soviet Union.” (Sutter, 2012, p.182)

The status and the policy orientations differ greatly from those of today. China's increasing worry of Japan is rooted not only in the changes to strategic status, but also the intensification of nationalism. One of the most significant examples, as well as a core manifestation of China's focus on territorial integrity, would be the dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. The dispute has existed for a long time, and can be dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the current outbreak of disputes as activists from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan landed on Diaoyu/Senkaku Island in August 2012 is quite different from the former ones. China is of the opinion that the two states held a tacit agreement on these kinds of disputes to put them aside, while both the actions and statements of the Japanese government denied such agreements. Besides, the so-called right-wing politicians, such as Shintaro Ishihara, seem to get stronger support from

Japanese society, so the trend in Japan might be towards a more aggressive stance on China. Therefore, in the Chinese view regime security, international respect and Chinese territorial integrity could be threatened. China could forecast facing off against a more conservative Japan, and therefore distrust Japan's claims of never turning back to militarism. As Jianwei Wang (in Takashi Inoguchi, 2002) argues, China insists on declaring a peaceful rise to comfort its neighbours over the "China threat",

"But China obviously does not apply the same logic to its analysis of Japan. Japan's increasing military capability seems to arouse Beijing's anxiety about Japan's foreign policy intentions in the region... a peaceful country or once again a militarily offensive country?" (Wang J., 2002, p.110)

The situation is the same when it comes to historical concerns over why Japan would be so eager to get rid of its history of invading China. Considering these areas of distrust, and also the background of growing national power, China has become tougher, including sending military aircrafts and naval ships to patrol the waters around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. This could be an impact of distrust in Sino-Japanese relations, which is obviously negative.

For Japan, as Yutaka Kawashima argues, the "key parameters of Japan's China policy" include "values, nationalism and political systems, China's posture toward the rest of the world, the military equation and Taiwan" (Kawashima, 2005, pp.104-107). The author indicates that the priority of Japanese foreign policy towards China is how it should face a rising China when it views China as following an "assertive foreign policy" (Bhattacharya, 2007; Christensen, 2011). A Sino-Japanese relationship with two strong nations has not been realised until recent years, with China and Japan as the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economy in the world (respectively), with comparable military force and other branches of national power. Under the circumstances of a strong China and weaker Japan, or a strong Japan with a weak China, the two states have experienced different relations, including friendly communications, hostility and even war. However, China and Japan do not have experience of dealing with co-existence when the two are both great powers in

the region and also worldwide. For Japan, the most practical issue it faces today is how to strategically survive in a system with a more powerful China. Even though Japan is a giant in East Asia, it would still be stressful, as its opponent is growing in every field of national power. Japan overall strategically distrusts China, and prefers to regard China as a potential threat. The sources of distrust are discussed in the other sections and chapters, and it can be concluded that there is a distrust of Chinese intentions with regards to its “peaceful rise” (Yi, 2005). With stronger economic and military forces, China could be on its way to expansion—that is what Japan worries about.

Due to this type of distrust on strategic issues as well as the restrictions on its own military capacity, Japan tries to break the limits of its power to become a normal state, one powerful enough to counter the perceived China threat; while also seeking the involvement of other powers in Sino-Japanese relations, including attempts to engage ASEAN on the sea issues against China, as well as its most important support – the US-Japan alliance. The reactions based on a distrust of China are rational choices by Japan, which could have an impact on Sino-Japanese relations, but Japan’s actions in turn lead to Chinese worry and greater distrust, thereby creating a vicious cycle. Distrust plays such a crucial role in interstate relations, and owes much to the different interpretations and viewpoints of the same issues, filtered through the lens of each state’s national interests. It is the same in the example of the nationalization of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands by Japan: the basic concern behind the action is a worry that China treats the territorial issue as a starting point for the strategic expansion of its position; while from the Chinese perspective, the incident is a sign of the revival of Japanese militarism and a shift towards conservatism. When the influences expand to other fields, such as moral values, distrust might guide Japan to treat China’s nationalism and its attitude towards history as being tools for ensuring domestic stability and pursuing regional interests (Bhattacharya, 2007).

### **The foreign policy making process of China and Japan**

In terms of the influences of trust and distrust on the Chinese foreign policy-making procedure, the role of the Chinese Communist Party is significant, and brings with it three

characteristics that make Chinese policy-making different to that in Western states. The first one is the difference in the ‘programme’ of policy making. The second is the complexity of the process, which includes potential factionalism. The third is a combination of pragmatism and flexibility in Chinese foreign policy.

“The CPC is the core decision-making organization in China with the dominant functions of ‘framing the strategic and macro-level guidelines, principles, and policies on the basis of the ideology and political theories’ (Hao & Hou, 2009, p.137). However, most routine decisions are made by professionals working in specialized sectorial government organizations.” (Paltiel, 2010, p.2)

Therefore, Chinese foreign policy-making is a two-way process which is not only delivers information from the bottom-up, from think tanks, local officials and professionals, to the central government and party; but also a top-down process of collective command from the centre to all other departments. As Jeremy Paltiel (2010) argues, the government departments actually have limited impact on the policies unless the senior leadership gets involved in the process:

“Typically, in China, reports flow up and are commented on by top leaders. The comments made by top leaders on reports submitted by lower levels and officially distributed through formal Party communications channels have a status similar to that of a Cabinet minute. Only those reports authorized by top leaders get circulated outside the departments that originated them.” (Paltiel, 2010, p.1)

It could be argued that the Chinese case is, to some extent, similar to elite politics, as Carol Lee Hamrin argues: “in the case of PRC, one must speak of the party-state or even the central leadership or specific leaders alone, as the single actor—the national authority structure—whose behaviour we are analysing” (Hamrin, 1994, p.79). The Chinese style differs from that of the Western modes of parliaments or the separation of powers, and it is not directly responsible to the voters (Hao & Hou, 2009). As the Chinese leadership

plays a determining role in the foreign policy-making process, the flexibility needed in order to achieve strategic goals is a possible factor for the characteristics of the leadership. Chih-yu Shih offered Nixon's visit to China, and Sino-Japanese re-engagement as examples (Hamrin, 1994, p.138), explaining how flexibility actually has worked well in the history of Chinese diplomacy, which appears different from the political reality today between China and Japan. In this way, whether the process is scientific is debateable. Zhiyu Shi argues in his book that factionalism exists in the foreign policy-making process, though it has always been denied by China (Shi, 2000, p.177). This is reasonable, however, because as the largest political party in the world, and in the human history, the CCP has more than 800 million members. At the individual level, judgements on the same issues might be distinct from each other due to different restrictions. The final decision for a foreign policy might be the result of considering grand strategy and interests from different perspectives.

Regardless of whether is assumed to be the result of compromise between different factions or not, foreign policies are a direct reflection of the national interest, which should be scientific for decision-makers. China is not a state concentrated on exporting ideology, as it was in the Mao era. However, China is still very wary of Japan, and take policy-precautions against Japan, which could prove the existence of broad distrust at both the leadership level and lower levels in the policy-making process. Specifically, the leadership's distrust of Japan directly leads to negative changes in Sino-Japanese relations. There are diverse sources of distrust among the Chinese leadership. On the one hand, as the highest and direct defender of Chinese national interests, the leadership has to be responsible for the state; otherwise both interests and legitimacy could be harmed. On the other hand, in its interactions with the Japanese leadership, a series of influencing factors – such as the frequent changes in Japanese leadership – the incoherent Japanese policies related to disputes with China lead to distrust between the two countries. These are all reasons for the negative trends in foreign policy and bilateral relations.

In Japan, there are a variety of different “schools of Japanese policy-making” (Hagström, 2005, p.69), for example “elitist” and “pluralist”, terms used to interpret the Japanese

policy-making procedure. Due to its political culture, the Japanese policy-making process has some similarities with the Chinese process, when it comes to the crucial role of senior leaders and elites. In Japan, it is politicians' families and their impacts on Japanese politics. Through political events such as the establishment of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relationship, the determining influences on foreign policy are observable. Party politics is also an important component of Japanese policy. Yet, the multiparty system is another difference from the CCP's rule in China. Though the Liberal Democratic Party had been in power for a long time, it was out of office from 2009-2012. Therefore, in the foreign policy-making process, despite the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the party would have to consider competing for political positions. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the LDP has generally shown a tougher attitude towards China over disputes, compared to the Democratic Party which was in power from 2009-2012. In the environment of overall distrust of China, the ruling party has to consider the possibility of acceptance of its policies. After the open disputes over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2012, the Democratic Party-controlled Japanese government launched a project for nationalization of the islands under domestic pressure, such as a plan of "purchasing the islands" proposed by the right-wing politician Ishihara Shintaro, even if the Democratic Party was considered to be pro-China. Both the parties and other political groups were affected by distrust and worry about China over the disputes, which then led to a serious crisis in Sino-Japanese relations. In addition, interest groups – especially financial groups – also play an important role in Japanese foreign policy-making process. Sino-Japanese relations have been described as "politically cold and economically hot" for a long time. Due to considerable economic interests and investments in China, Japanese financial groups play a dual role of persuading the Japanese government, as well as being messengers to the Chinese government whenever bilateral relations meet difficulties. However, if their trust of Chinese government to protect their interests in China was shaken, the situation could change. The best example of this was in 2012, when large-scale demonstrations in China surprisingly turned violent, resulting in the damage of Japanese brands and businesses, and the investment environment in China seemed to become worse for Japanese enterprises. It took a long time for Japanese financial groups to reconsider whether or not to continue mediating under the circumstance, and their



enthusiasm for inhabiting this role was obviously weaker as a result of growing distrust. It could be concluded that all decision-makers in Japanese foreign policy, including the bureaucracy, parties and financial groups are influenced by the trust and distrust of China, and the decisions they make decide the direction of Sino-Japanese relations.

#### **4.2.2 Public opinion in the bilateral relations**

Public opinion is a direct reflection of international relations at the civic level, as well as a basis for policy-making and conducting interstate relations by governments. It could be argued that democratic states are more focused on public opinion because the governments care about the public and the voters. Therefore, there is still a question of the source of power and legitimacy. Japan is a traditional democracy, and the Japanese government is responsible to the voters or it would face the risk of losing office. In this way, the activities of the Japanese government to a great extent follow public opinion. The situation is not much different in China, even though it is not a democracy. If the Chinese government does not answer to the demands of public opinion, the dissatisfaction with the government, as well as the CCP would increase, especially in a society of transition. The Chinese government and the Party cannot risk creating trouble for themselves over the sensitive Japan issues, in conditions where contradictions in domestic issues have been dominating the daily affairs of the government. In fact, it might be argued that both states have certain ways to 'guide' or even 'control' their public's opinion of the other. The Japanese media have a secure place in the society, so political opinions from different political elites, factions and groups can gain traction across the society via the media. Some Western commentators believe the CCP use the state-owned media, censorship and education to lead the public opinion to suit its own agenda. This is difficult to prove one way or the other, due to a lack of an effective source of information from the centre of government, yet while these suppositions might true to some extent, the influence and independence of public opinion has been underestimated.

The surveys of public opinion between China and Japan are conducted annually, by professional agents, the media and academic institutions. The 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-China Public Opinion Poll, conducted by the Genron NPO (Representative Yasushi Kudo) and China

Daily in 2015, has clearly shown the status of public opinion between the two states. According to Chart 4.1,<sup>8</sup> the public's opinion of each other in 2015 was amongst the worst since 2005. Generally, the trend of public opinion follows the contemporary status of bilateral relations, so that between 2005 and 2006 the two states were experiencing a period of crisis in their relationship. It is not only a reflection of bilateral relations, but also a bellwether of the states' foreign policy, which can further affect bilateral relations. For example, the demonstrations in China could drive the Sino-Japanese relationship into such a state of tension that the possible summit meeting of the two leaderships might not be achievable due to the demands of "domestic public opinion".

Public opinion can also highlight the real concerns about issues between the two states at the civic level. Charts 4.2 and 4.3 represent the reasons for negative impressions between the two states in 2013. Despite the confrontation over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, Japanese citizens viewed "China's criticism on Japan over history issues", "food security" and "China's action incompatible with international rules" as the most common reasons for negative opinions. For China, the focuses were on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, Japanese attitude to historical issues, as well as their activities countering and Japan's attempts to "besiege China". These concerns were more than hot-button news, but rather already-existing sources of mutual distrust, which have formed asymmetries in the "locked" bilateral relationship.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: see <http://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/archives/5217.html>, accessed 11/04/16, the same citations in the following charts

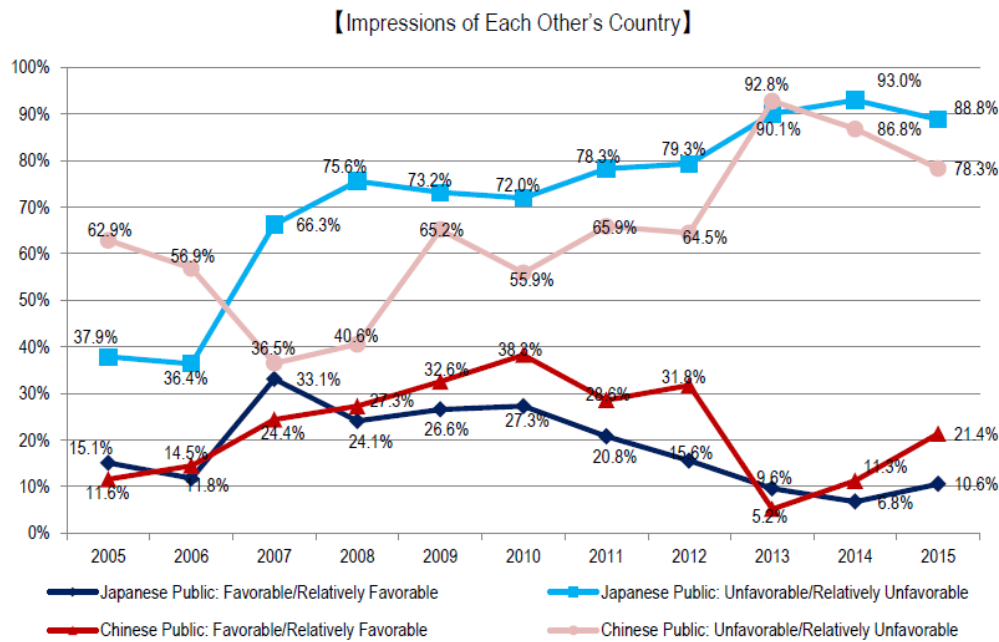


Chart 4. 1: Impressions of Each Other's Country

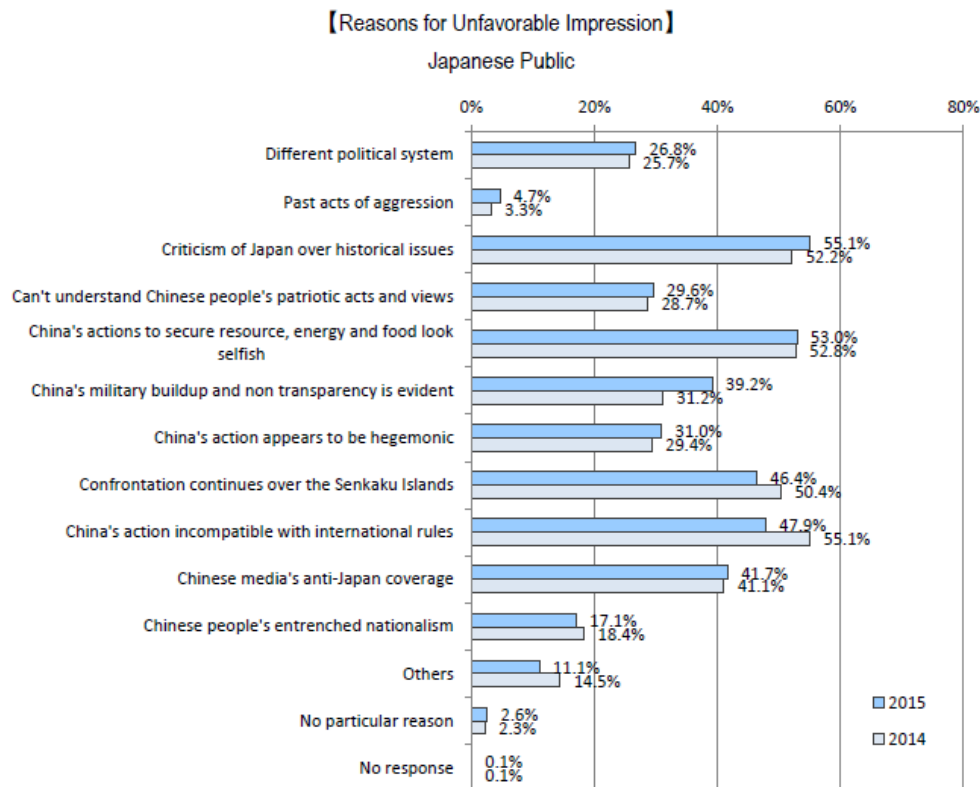


Chart 4. 2: Reasons for Unfavourable Impression, Japanese public

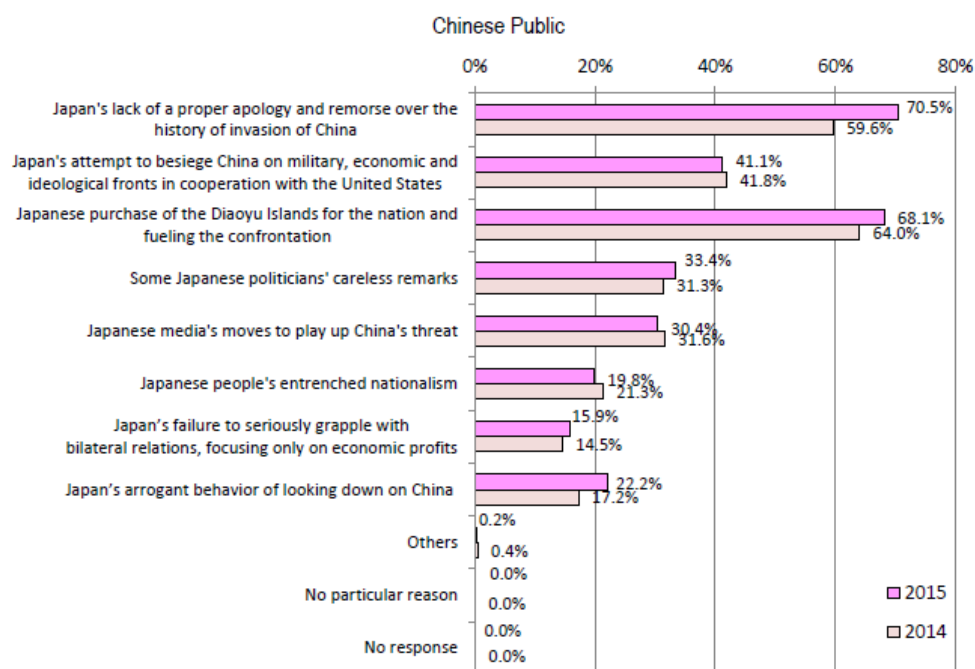


Chart 4. 3: Reasons for Unfavourable Impression, Chinese public

### 4.3 Asymmetries in Sino-Japanese trust and distrust

The determinants in Sino-Japanese relations indeed have a great impact on the bilateral relationship. However, any interstate relationship would have its own characteristics, and the “locked” Sino-Japanese relationship seems to be unique. In this case, the “determinants” could be considered to be the source of problems, while the “asymmetries” are a structural issue exacerbating the problems. Together, these factors lead to a bilateral distrust which is difficult to resolve.

	China	Japan
Strategic issues	Blocking China, US-Japan alliance	The Rise of China as a potential threat

Moralistic trustworthiness	History recognition	Playing the history card
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Table 4. 1: Different countries and different fields of mutual distrust

In the hypothesis of “asymmetries”, there are four pieces of evidence, which are shown in the chart above. The four are based on the two states (Japan and China) and trust/distrust over strategic issues and moralistic trustworthiness. The strategic distrust refers to a state’s decision to trust another actor or not, by analysing available information about strategic issues. The broad notion of strategic trust includes the following components: the demands of other states’ national interests, comprehensive national power (economic, military, and so on), strategic plans and trends, territorial issues, and maritime interests. The standard of judgement would be a comparison between the two countries’ strategic plans and national power, as well as specific actions. One state might be less vigilant of another if no serious conflicts of national interest exist between them, while distrust would exist when a state believes the other could become a strategic threat. On the other hand, the moral issues, mentioned earlier, are defined as the issue of a country’s moralistic trustworthiness in international society. Whether a state acts in a way that follows international laws and international principles, and whether national dignity at a basic moral level is harmed by others are the main concerns on moral issues of trust. In Sino-Japanese relations today, there are serious problems of distrust between the two states, in both of these areas. Meanwhile, the different interests of the two states form the “asymmetries”. This is the structure of the hypothesis.

The determinants of trust and distrust in Sino-Japanese relations represent “what the problems and disputes are”, while the asymmetries stand for “why and how the problems become so serious” in Sino-Japanese relations. The existence of determinants can show where distrust exists, and therefore could affect bilateral relations. The asymmetric structure is based on the determinants. Considering the importance of the different determinants, there are also priorities and less important issues of distrust. Hence, an asymmetric structure is created, and can lead to the locked Sino-Japanese relationship.

#### 4.3.1 Japan's strategic distrust of China

In terms of Japan's distrust of China on strategic issues, it could be argued that it is based on distrust of the rise of China. In general, the two states have approximately the same level of hard power, and both are the greatest powers of the East Asian region, and even in the world. China has always been big, and it is not the first time that Japan faces a powerful China. For a long period of history, China was more advanced in national power than its neighbours, including Japan. However, without a willingness to expand its direct governance to the East Asian region, and a lack of a mature international society, interstate communications were mainly accidental and peaceful. Therefore, there were mainly positive interactions and no large scale wars between Japan and China. The turning point came in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when Japan seized the chance to open up and take advantage of the Industrial Revolution. The result was a strong Japan and a weak China for the first time in history, and this lasted for the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Under these circumstances, Japan invaded China after the the Second World War began. However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, China has recovered greatly from the pain of more than one hundred years since. It can be seen from the table below, "GDP and Military expenditure of Japan and China, 2000 and 2011", that China has acquired a considerable amount of economic and military power, which now surpasses Japan. In addition, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and a nuclear-armed country, China could be a strategic challenger of Japan. It is the first time in the modern era that the bilateral relationship has been between two strong nations. Japan is not experienced enough to deal with this kind of relationship. The rise of China has become the main pressure and threat to Japan, and the "peaceful rise" is not trusted.

	Japan		China	
	2000	2011	2000	2011
GDP (billion USD)	4731	5896	1198	7321

Military expenditure (million USD)	54,785	54,529	33,496	129,272
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Table 4. 2: GDP and Military expenditure of Japan and China, 2000 and 2011<sup>9</sup>

To be specific, there are two sources for this kind of distrust. The first is the “worry”, and the other is “a lack of information”. The “worry” here refers to the prediction that China might challenge the existing status quo in the East Asian region, and in the world as its national power grows. It includes the possible challenges of the Japan’s leading position in Asia, unification of Taiwan through either peaceful or military methods, raising questions over the sovereignty of disputed islands and seas with Japan, developing a blue water navy to acquire enough power to cover mainland Japan, balancing the US-Japan alliance, and other strategic restraining activities. The other source is the distrust caused by a lack of information. Japan has always berated China over its low level of transparency on strategy and military expenditures. Due to the lack of information on both China’s strategies and ongoing activities, Japan can’t produce timely and appropriate responses and reactions. As the potential risks mentioned above seem to be dangerous for Japan, it would prefer to distrust China and prepare for the worst. The two sources of Japan’s distrust of China could be interpreted in other ways. There are both “explicit” and “hidden” strategic challenges posed by China. China has its clear goals, such as acquiring more national power, reviving the nation, and unifying with Taiwan. Japan understands these goals, but is still worried because attempts to achieve these goals might threaten Japanese interests. The problem with this is that Japan should clearly understand the potential challenges, which lead to distrust of China. On the other hand, China might also have hidden strategies. Japan has to consider that China will ask for more rights in the region, expand its imperialism, or even directly damage the national security of Japan. These are identified as the “hidden” goals of China in the worst-case predictions of Japan. Japan distrusts China because these hidden strategic challenges

<sup>9</sup> Source: GDP, see <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>; Military expenditure, see <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>

might come true through China's actions. These two categories form an overall level of strategic distrust.

It is reasonable that one state might be strategically alarming to its neighbours. However, there are other reasons for why China and Japan's strategic distrust has become one of the most important factors in the relationship. In terms of Japan's "worries", as mentioned above, Japan is not only worried about the geographical scale of China, as this situation has been the case for centuries. Instead, "power" is what concerns Japan. The trends of international relations seemed to be alleviated after the Cold War. International society became more interdependent than ever before, and different states had more opportunities to communicate with each other. As a result, the national interests of one state can be influenced by the strategies and actions of other actors in a more direct and significant way. However, Japan not only benefits from China's economic growth, but also feels threatened by it. China's power is the basis to realize its strategic goals. Japan is worried that the interests of China will expand alongside its power. If the conflicts over national interests occur between the two states, Japan is not confident that it could defend itself due to the shift in the balance of power.

There are examples to explain the sources of Japan's worry. Firstly, Japan pays great attention to the growth of China's military forces, especially the construction of a blue sea navy, and development of high-technology with military applications. One of the most representative incidents in recent years, was when China completed its first aircraft carrier, the shell of which was bought from Ukraine, and refitted by China in 2012. Even though the aircraft carrier *Liaoning* could hardly bring evolutionary changes to the Chinese navy, and the fact that it would mainly be used for training and research purposes (as reported by official Chinese channels) and as a 'symbol', rather than an active military asset, Japan was no doubt displeased with the situation. The strategy to transfer the offshore defence to the ocean is Japan's primary concern. Due to the geographic connections, it is inevitable that China would be able to engage with Japan at sea, on islands and the mainland, if China wanted to approach via the Pacific Ocean. As the status quo means they are blocked by the 'Island Chains', China could go beyond the



barriers and might threaten the security of Japan. Besides, China is more and more concerned with its marine interests, and is paying much attention to the sovereignty of islands, territorial seas and the rights of exclusive economic zones. The disputes over the East China Sea oil and gas fields and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are the best examples of these changes. For Japan, these are not only economic rights, but also issues of national security. The East China Sea between China and Japan bears rich resources, including oil and gas, which is crucial to the two countries. Japan has few resources in its mainland and is highly dependent on imports. Therefore, it is more focused on the issues of developing the marine resources, and the safety of sailing in related areas to secure resources. The issues is more crucial after Japan shut down a number of nuclear power plants, whose safety came into question after the 2011 earthquake in east Japan. Japan worried that China might take further steps – such as requesting sovereignty of more islands – which could place the Japanese lifeline in the sea into China’s control. This is unacceptable for Japanese strategy. Due to the higher frequency and stronger actions China takes to protect its interests in the surrounding seas in recent years, Japan’s concerns seem to be justified. In this way, Japan distrusts China’s “peaceful rise”, and would rather believe that China is in an imperialist manner.

Regarding China’s lack of transparency, the author would suggest that the political culture indeed plays an important role on this issue. In traditional Chinese political culture, national strategies and power are top secret, and this might include many things Western states now publically acknowledge. China has always been concerned with self-defence in its political philosophy, and “transparency” actually is crucial in guiding ideology. Though China is becoming a more “modern” state in politics and diplomacy over recent years, the process of change has not been fully accomplished, and certain “Chinese characteristics” are still evident. From the strategic viewpoint, China also distrusts Japan (which will be discussed in the next section). This means China is not that interested in promoting transparency following requests from Japan and the US. Without enough information, as well as effective high level communication, Japan cannot accurately identify China’s strategic intentions. What are the strategic goals of China? Is it what the Chinese government describes as a “peaceful rise”, or is it the unification of

Taiwan through military force, or occupying more islands in disputed areas, or even challenging the US-Japan alliance and seeking Chinese hegemony in East Asia and in the world? It is a problem that China is not transparent enough for Japan. The direct negative impact is that, due to the lack of necessary information, Japan has to make decisions based on existing empirical evidence—most of which is not from cooperative but potentially threatening actions. Therefore, Japan is trapped, again distrusting Chinese national power and strategic goals.

#### **4.3.2 China's strategic distrust on Japan**

China also distrusts Japan for strategic reasons. What is similar is that Japan wants to remain the main and strongest strategic competitor in the region. Japan possesses strong economic, military and scientific power, which is generally equivalent to China. Besides, Japan is also an outpost for restricting China in regional politics, in China's view. There is a crucial reason for China to distrust Japan, different from Japan's concern of "a lack of transparency", and that is that Japan has clearly identified its strategy of dealing with a potential threat by enhancing the US-Japan alliance. If Japan distrusts China because of "unknown" strategies, China distrusts Japan because of "already known" strategies. China might not be happy with a stronger US-Japan alliance in East Asia, because it would feel restricted developmentally in such an environment. China tends to believe that Japan's purpose of making the US closer to and more connected with the region is to balance China, rather than maintaining the peace. With no doubt, there are other detailed concerns and distrust of Japan's strategy, such as the potential revival of Japanese militarism and the expansion. However, these problems are, to some extent, moral distrust, which is discussed below. China's most direct and crucial strategic distrust of Japan is the distrust over the definition of Japanese strategy of besieging and restricting China. Japanese attempts to agitate the ASEAN states to confront China together over marine disputes are evidence on which China can base its distrust of Japan.

#### **4.3.3 China's distrust on moralistic trustworthiness of Japan**

Japan and China both evince more serious confrontation and mutual distrust in the field of moralistic trustworthiness. A country's moralistic trustworthiness refers to a

judgement of whether its actions follow the widely recognized rules and principles of international society, and therefore can be trusted (or not) as a responsible actor. It is not uncommon in the modern international relations for “moralistic trustworthiness” being an obstacles and problem between states. If one country’s moral trustworthiness is questioned, there might be specific reasons for its relationship with others. For instance, the North Korea nuclear crisis, human rights issues in Syria, and the Iran nuclear issue are all examples of states which are regarded as violating international principles and universal ethics. For Sino-Japanese relations, the moral distrust mainly lies with specific historical legacies between the two states. In terms China’s moral distrust of Japan, the core concern is how Japan treats its history of invading China in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, especially in the 1930s and 1940s. Dozens of issues in this field have become problems between the two states – including the Japanese history textbook issue, the Yasukuni Shrine issue, the apology issue, the comfort women issue and the Diaoyu/Senkaku island dispute. It could be reasonable that China is anti-Japanese in its national emotions because it was invaded by Japan. This type of moral distrust is actually comprised of two main components. The first is whether Japan would admit to and reflect on its history, and the second would be whether Japan might gradually change its attitude towards and recognition of history to realize its goals, which harm the interests of China.

A basic issue with the moralistic trustworthiness between the two states is that China believes Japan is trying to avoid its responsibilities on history, and even to deny or whitewash it. This is offensive to the dignity and emotions of the Chinese people from the perspective of the Chinese government. Therefore, Japan can hardly be trusted by China on moral issues. In fact, Japan has made several official pronouncements to express its regret for the war. However, a series of actions in Japan’s politics, such as the Prime Ministers’ visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and the modification of the history textbooks to delete many mentions of invasion from history, which China sees as a denial of history. Despite the demand of national dignity and domestic public opinion, the Chinese government is vigilant of Japan’s further steps. It has been proven that, though the two governments once tried to improve bilateral relations, the distrust grew fiercer as soon as Japan made these shifts on history, and the relationship grew worse.

On the other hand, China also distrusts Japan because it worries about the “deep meanings” of the activities of whitewashing or scrubbing its history of invasion, and its related moves. The “deep meanings” are a worry of China because of Japan’s possible intentions of changing the status quo. To be specific, China is concerned about the possibility of Japan modifying its “peace constitution”, regaining a regular army, developing nuclear weapons, reaching for the position of a global political power, and other activities to challenge the world order after World War II. China neither believes that Japan would respect history, nor thinks that Japan would restrict itself by the shadow of the war due to the empirical evidence of recent years. There has been a trend to go beyond the masochistic view of history in Japanese society, as well as efforts by the Japanese government to regain its place in the world as a “normal” state. In general, the moralistic distrust of Japan comes from not only the judgement of a lack of trustworthiness, but also the worry of an uncertain future. If not well settled, these moral issues might transform into more serious problems, and the distrust and confrontation between China and Japan would become both strategic and moralistic.

#### **4.3.4 Japan’s distrust on moralistic trustworthiness of China**

In fact, Japan has certain reasons to distrust China on moral grounds. There are two categories. The first is the objection to blamed for the historical legacies (described above), and the second is the literally-moral issues. As China has continually criticised Japan over historical issues for several decades, Japan tends to believe that China is actually playing the history card to take advantage of Japan in different areas, as opposed to being genuinely concerned with the history itself. This is why Japan does not see China as trustworthy. Japan believes that it has made enough apologies for the damage it caused China, and the two states had already achieved a normalization of bilateral relations in the 1970s. As a result, the historical disputes should be settled, and from Japan’s perspective no more apologies on the same issues are needed. China’s criticisms are therefore unreasonable, and neither correspond with its position as a global power nor are they suitable as international principles. China’s purpose is to suppress Japan worldwide, prevent Japan from playing a more important role in the world, and then to

take advantage of Japan for its own benefit. For example, China rarely directly expressed its objection on different occasions when Japan tried to compete to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2005. China's reason was that Japan had not fully reflected on its history of invading other states, and it therefore could not be responsible for the security of the world without first addressing its history in a proper way. The result of China's opposition was that Japan failed to achieve its goal in the UN, and no doubt Japan's distrust of China in relation to its moralistic trustworthiness increased.

In terms of other moral issues of distrust, there are problems in the fields of international relations non-political areas that affect bilateral trust. The issues related to international relations include China's loss of trustworthiness for cancelling scheduled activities for a variety of reasons, the ideology of communism, human rights, and other unilateral activities that offend the rights and interests of Japan. The non-political elements include food safety, environmental pollution, intellectual property rights, and crimes against immigrants, and so on. For example, the "poisoned dumplings" incident of 2008-2009 shocked the Japan's confidence in China's trustworthiness. Even though these types of issue do not directly have an impact on overall Sino-Japanese political and strategic relations, it objectively reduced the willingness to cooperate, and this spread to other fields. Therefore, both the moralistic issues of distrust in the political fields and others are inter-connected and influence interstate relations.

#### **4.3.5 The conformation of asymmetries**

China and Japan have formed a mutual distrust on both strategic and moral issues. It is not uncommon in the practice of international relations that two states distrust each other. However, the "locked relationship" between China and Japan in the author's hypothesis indeed proves that the situation between the two countries is more complicated. The source of the 'locked' status is the asymmetries in bilateral distrust, which have formed a vicious cycle. Though both states have their specific issues of distrust, they have different focuses and emphases. From the Chinese perspective, the distrust on the moralistic issues of Japan are the main concern, while strategic issues are considered secondary. For Japan, the situation is the opposite. The most significant trust crisis is the distrust over strategic

issues, while still holding on to moral distrust. Under this circumstance, the logical conclusion of the asymmetries is that both states treat their own top concern as the key issue in bilateral relations, and they could hardly trust the other for a number of reasons (caused by the other), which means the demands of their priorities have not been satisfied. Meanwhile, the main concern of the other (Country B) seems to be quite “normal” in its own perspective (Country A), which does not need to be modified to satisfy Country B’s request. Besides, the main foci of the two states are not at the same level, while the issues at the same level differ from each other. It is better understood with the table above.

It could be expected that, if the areas of distrust were at the same level and received the same attention, the two states might be more able to solve the problem of mutual distrust. However, the fact that issues are of varying importance to each country means there can be a lack of motivation to resolve them. Both countries might end up in a situation like this: Country A thinks that the requests and distrust of the other state (B) are “unreasonable”, while its own (A) “reasonable” distrust is not being paid enough attention by the other (B) – or vice versa. In this complicated model, compromise from one side is necessary to break the deadlock. This situation might result from awareness of the primary concerns of the other party and cooperating to seek a resolution in multiple areas of distrust, through a comparatively high mutual-political understanding. However, as the defender of national interests, a government would find it hard to make unilateral compromises without considering domestic pressures and public opinion. Even worse, a state might refuse to take action on the areas of distrust of others until its own distrust was eliminated by the other’s actions. If both states insist on working on the principle of “the other should act first” as a condition for action, then a “locked” relationship will be formed. A recent case might prove the seriousness of the vicious cycle. Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō visited the Yasukuni Shrine on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2013. Then, on 30<sup>th</sup> December, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang claimed in a press conference that, “Abe is not welcomed by the Chinese people and the Chinese leaders would never have communications with him in any occasions.” This incident inevitably has created more problems for the Sino-Japanese relationship. In this case, the visit to the Yasukuni Shrine by a Japanese leader is a moral issue of bilateral trust, and a top concern of China.

However, it is not unacceptable in Japan, so the protests from China did not work and instead caused serious consequences by destroying the bridge of high-level communication. Due to dissatisfaction over the distrust of historical issues, China could in turn ease the pressure on Japan's main concerns of military rise and territorial disputes. This is a way in which the vicious cycle of asymmetries works to bring about a "locked" situation in Sino-Japanese relations.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The particular characteristics of the two countries could be regarded as determinants of mutual trust and distrust, which would also have a great impact on Sino-Japanese relations. There is a fundamental issue with the research, which needs to build a connection between the theoretical analysis of trust/distrust in international relations and specific cases in Sino-Japanese relations. This chapter tries to answer the following questions:

- 1) Why has this research chosen to analyse the specific cases as typical examples of mutual distrust?
- 2) Why are these cases analysed in certain ways with certain measures? To be exact, why would the research focus on governmental documents and public opinion?
- 3) How do these determinants contribute to the formation of asymmetric mutual distrust between the two countries?

In order to explain these issues, the chapter has drawn some conclusions. Firstly, considering the characteristics of the two countries, it can't be denied that both China and Japan have special considerations in their interactions with each other. Ancient links, the traditional Chinese-centre national identity, the memories of 20<sup>th</sup> Century war, and domestic politics contribute to the two states' complex concerns. Among these determinants, the strategies of the two countries and the moral issues regarding history, ideology and values might be regarded as having the greatest influence on contemporary bilateral relations. Therefore, the choice of these issues as cases to be analysed is reasonable and persuasive.

Secondly, it has been argued that trust and distrust influence interstate relations in the foreign policy-making process, as led by governments and supplemented by public opinion. The attitudes of trust and distrust are significant when actions and the pressure to take action are observable. Hence, analysis of these materials could help identify the situations of mutual trust/distrust between China and Japan.

Thirdly, Japan's and China's different characteristics can be identified after the factors of determinants have been codified. The differences exist in the distinctive ways of understanding the disputes and differences in national interest. In this way, there are asymmetries between the two countries in terms of their levels of distrust, which informs the basic hypothesis of the research as the source of locked Sino-Japanese relations.

All three questions help to link the theoretical design to the empirical cases. If the assumptions and hypothesis can be verified, both the universality of the theories of trust/distrust and the particulars for adaptation for analysing Sino-Japanese relations can therefore come together.

## **Chapter 5: Japan's distrust on China**

### **5.1 Japan's distrust of China and bilateral relations**

#### **5.1.1 Introduction**

##### **The aim of the case study**

The primary aim of this case study of Japan's distrust of China will be to test one of the hypotheses of the thesis. The hypothesis indicates that Japan's distrust of China has both strategic and moral determinants and expressions. Strategic distrust is the predominant determinant for Japan; moral distrust is secondary and is primarily reinforcing. Therefore, explaining the status of Japan's strategic and moral trust/distrust of China and its impact on Japan-China relations is also a focus of this chapter.



### **The structure of the chapter**

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Firstly, an introduction will help explain how this chapter is constructed. It will describe the theoretical-case interactions, methodological framework, and the significance of the research questions of the case study. Then, a section of the background and description on current Japan-China relations is provided. This is to build the connection between the theoretical framework of normative vs. rationality in international relations and the current situation of Japan's view of its relations with China in terms of strategic and moral issues. Thirdly, there will be two separate sections of discussion of Japan's strategic and moral distrust of China, how Chinese strategic and moral behaviour shapes the current Japanese distrust. Finally, an evaluation and test will be constructed in terms of how this strategic and moral distrust interacts with bilateral relations. The basic hypothesis of the existence of both Japan's strategic and moral distrust prioritising strategic calculations will be verified.

### **5.1.2 An overall logic of the case study**

#### **A methodological framework**

The methodology will be applied to both case study chapters, because the chapters are equally important for explaining trust and distrust between the actors. In general, multiple methodologies with both qualitative analysis and quantitative calculation will be used in the case studies. For the qualitative portion, the basic methodology is to analyse certain content – such as official documents, the trends in public opinion, and so on – in order to figure out how these materials might reflect trust and distrust between Japan and China, and then form the asymmetries in bilateral distrust. The detailed analysis will rely on analysis of the usage of certain words, sentences, and so on, in order to judge whether they contain evidence of trust or distrust, according to the different situations in which the discourse is used. For the quantitative study, there are tasks to calculate the related data to support the qualitative research, as well as develop particular arguments. One basic quantitative method is to calculate the frequency in use of certain discourse of the nature of trust or distrust in the documents, and to analyse the information provided by the data of public opinion surveys. Therefore, the explicit and hidden trends of trust or distrust could be observed.

### **The significance of these cases on the research questions**

The thesis is intended to explain three main research questions, including: defining the concept of trust and distrust in international relations, and especially in Sino-Japanese relations; exploring why Sino-Japanese relations are locked, based on the hypothesis of asymmetries in bilateral distrust; and how to unlock the relationship by solving the trust crisis. In order to answer these questions, the first case study will try to collect data from Japanese official sources (such as the MOFA website) and public sources, in order to verify the argument that there is both Japanese strategic and moral distrust of China, and that strategic distrust is the primary focus of Japan.

Therefore, certain methods should be applied to the research. The quantitative study of the analysis of selected documents, public opinion and interviews will be the main approaches to understand the empirical evidence from the bilateral relationship. By analysing the contents, certain data outcomes can be obtained for further qualitative research. There are basic standards for analysing the data in at least two dimensions. The first is the qualitative judgment of whether the content stands for an attitude of trust or distrust. According to the discussion in the theoretical framework, Hoffman (2002) and Möllering (2006) have developed their own standards for measuring trust in international relations, which include “cooperation” and other forms of behaviour. Combining these behaviours with official documents and speeches will offer a more objective assessment of the position and attitude of the actor in terms of trust and distrust. Secondly, we should examine if the existing evidence of trust and distrust has different levels. Strong emotional discourses with trust or distrust characteristics will, to a large extent, support the effectiveness of the cases in identifying trust and distrust in bilateral relations. At the same time, an overall comparison between the data in strategic and moral distrust will prove an asymmetry within Japan, that strategic distrust is more important than moral distrust.

### **The cases based on the theoretical framework**

Conceptualizing trust and distrust in relations between countries is one of the main tasks of this thesis. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, it will be difficult to measure interstate trust in a quantitative way. To be specific, on strategic distrust issues, this thesis has identified two main sources. Firstly, countries will distrust others based on already-known intelligence, which suggest that it will damage its national interests, such as others' known national strategies. The second category is distrust caused by uncertainty due to a lack of information and transparency. It can be argued that fear and uncertainty are among the main sources of distrust between states, which could also be interpreted as the result of certain clear, damaging activities (or potential activities) and the lack of strategic transparency. Distrust in these two categories will likely be visible in the evaluations of official statements on the actions of other actors in certain fields or on certain issues. In short, the rationality of Japan's distrust of China turns out to be that strategic calculations are the primary determinants. At the same time, the normative interpretation of Japan's perspective is that China is not regarded as an accepted member of international society, which reinforces the trend of strategic distrust.

The theoretical framework of the thesis is based on the debate over the "normative relationship" and "rationality" (Amadae, 2007; Dowding, 2001; Florini, 1996; Goldsmith & Posner, 2000; Hindmoor, 2006; Hurrell, 2012; Kacowicz, 2005; Opp, 2013; Thomson, 1993). Though different approaches of International Relations Theories accept the existence of the notion of trust, they espouse different types and different explanations. There are two basic theoretical frameworks. The first, in terms of the normative relationship of trust and distrust between states, focuses on the norms in international relations. Specifically, it refers to the moral norms in the thesis, and reflects the attitudes of states towards moral trust and distrust. The other is rationality, and its influences on trust and distrust between countries. States tend to make rational choices in their interactions, which can also be interpreted as following the "incentive norms" (Boone, Declerck, & Kiyonari, 2010; Larson, 1997; Opp, 2013; Lebow, 2013). Different to moral norms, the trust and distrust status of strategic issues between states highlights the significance of rationality in foreign policy. The maritime disputes would have a directly

influence on national interests – including national security, resources and regional order. If states are regarded as rational actors, they will take actions with no doubt of facing challenges and potential threats to national interests.

Therefore, once there are threats to national interests, states will tend to protect their interests, or treating the options of trusting or distrusting others as “incentive norms”, instead of continuing to follow moral norms of trusting other actors without conditions. According to the thesis’s hypothesis, Japan should strongly distrust China on strategic issues. In this way, whether the analysis of the case study data reflects the connections between “threats to interests—strategic distrust” is a major task.

### **5.1.3 Case study—maritime disputes and ideology/being a responsible of international society: background**

#### **Why were these cases selected?**

Why these cases were selected is a fundamental issue in understanding strategic trust and distrust issues. We should first ask, what can be regarded as “strategic” issues in Sino-Japanese relations? It needs to be stressed again that the notion of strategic distrust in this thesis differs from the usage defined as “distrust according to the information owned”. It is “strategic distrust on strategic issues”, including those of national interests and strategy; national power including economic, military and political impacts; and international hierarchies and order, and so on. The maritime disputes include cases of territory, military confrontation, and natural resources – which are all typical strategic disputes between Japan and China in recent years. These cases, as the most significant issues in bilateral relations, were selected because they offer plentiful empirical materials, as well as academic discussions for further analysis.

In terms of moral distrust, the core issues might be that Japan distrusts China because China has a different ideology, which contradicts many of Japan’s core values. At the same time, China might be regarded as not being responsible in terms of its international

behaviour, especially in China-Japan relations. Therefore, these cases were selected to test how Chinese behaviour could lead to Japan's moral distrust.

### **Background of Japan-China relations and bilateral trust/distrust**

One of the most significant political realities in the international relations of East Asia post-Cold War, especially since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is that there have been great changes in comparative national power and strategic goals of the states in the region. In terms of Sino-Japanese relations, the main manifestation is a fiercer atmosphere of strategic confrontation. There are several deep-seated reasons for this trend. Firstly, the collapse of the Soviet Union significantly changed the targets of national strategies. The USSR was the primary national security threat during the Cold War period for both China and Japan. Therefore, the strategic focus of both states was to balance against the Soviet Union. After losing the USSR as a common threat, Japan and China struggled to maintain a cooperative partnership for dealing with regional strategic issues as they had between the 1970s and 1980s. As the two states are the strongest powers in this region, they might be more likely to become strategic competitors. Moreover, without another clear external threat, both Japan and China will focus on effectively realizing their own strategic goals with their growing national power, rather than surviving alongside another dominant regional threat. Japan has paid great attention to reshaping its national identity as a major political power and a "normal" state. China values its goals of securing its core national interests, including domestic stability, sovereignty and national development. As the two states lack mutual strategic trust, these goals present conflicts with the other's. Moteki (2010) has argued that,

"The biggest impact of the Senkaku Islands/East China Sea issue is a decidedly negative Japanese public perception of China. To a majority of the Japanese public, China is a country that not only causes disruption in their daily lives but also abuses its economic power and conveniently uses historical incidents to its own advantage. Such a sentiment has created an atmosphere within Japan that makes it very difficult for Japanese political leaders and government officials to pursue a pragmatic approach with China."

Zhu (2011) suggests that China's position in this region has greatly changed since the international financial crisis. The rapid change in the comparative national power between the major regional actors might be problematic.

There will be detailed qualitative and quantitative research on the status of trust and distrust over incidents in bilateral relations in the following sections. Therefore, a general introduction is provided in the background section. It has to be reemphasized that this thesis focuses on the issue of trust/distrust between Japan and China after the official reconciliation of bilateral relations in 1972. Specifically, bilateral relations and the status of bilateral trust/distrust in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are the core focus of the research. The two periods of "honeymoon" and "fluctuation" will mostly be used as background in order to ascertain the historical sources of current disputes. Based on these particular aspects, the thesis divides the research of Japan's distrust of China into four periods, including the April 2001-September 2006 Koizumi administration; September 2006-June 2009 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) administration; June 2009-December 2012 Democratic Party of Japan administration; and December 2012 to the present Abe administration. The explanation for choosing these periods is that the domestic politics of Japan have an impact on its foreign policies, and especially on its relationship with China. Although one must admit that there can hardly be substantial changes to policies during different administrations, due to the comprehensive consideration of national interests, the different political stances of the LDP and Democratic Party of Japan. Even the individual styles and personal experiences of VIPs or politicians will, to a certain extent, influence foreign policy, and then bilateral relations and the status of trust. In fact, the most significant difference would be the different choices of whether or not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. Basically, the multiple visits by Prime Minister Koizumi caused serious problems between Japan and China. Subsequent Prime Ministers, from both the LDP and Democratic Party, avoided visiting the Shrine until Shinzo Abe's visit in his second term.

The following table will briefly list the important incidents in Japan-China relations during the different periods:

Period	Date/time	incident
2001-2006 Koizumi period	13/08/2001	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine
	21/04/2002	
	01/01/2003	
	01/01/2004	
	17/10/2005	
	15/08/2006	
	10/2001	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited China, apologises for the invasion
	03/2005	Huge anti-Japanese demonstrations take place in China over history textbooks, and Japan seeking for UN permanent member status
	04/2005	President Hu Jindao met Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi during the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Asia-Africa summit in Jakarta
	15/08/2005	Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi gave a speech on the Memorial Day of Japan's surrender in the World War II, admitting the invasion and expressed apology
2006-2009		
Post-Koizumi period with LDP government	10/2006	Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited China. The trip of 'icebreaking'; Raised the notion of Japan-China

		Mutual Beneficial Relationship
	12/2007	Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda visited China
	12/2007	Japan raised the notion of 'arc of freedom and prosperity', which excludes China
	01/2008	Poisoned dumpling incident
	05/2008	President Hu Jintao visited Japan
	04/2009	Prime Minister Taro Aso visited China
2009-2012 Democratic Party period		
	10/10/2009	President Hu Jintao met Yukio Hatoyama in Beijing
	10/12/2009	Democratic Party Secretary-General Ichiro Ozawa visited China
	12/2009	Vice President Xi Jinping visited Japan
	07/09/2010	Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands boat collision incident
	21/05/2011	Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Japan
	12/2011	Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda visited China
	02/2012	Mayor Takashi Kawamura of Nagoya denied the Nanjing Massacre when meeting with officials from Nanjing, causes a series of governmental problems



	05/2012	Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda visited China
	09/2012	Japan nationalized Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, and caused great demonstrations in China
	17/10/2012	President of LDP Shinzo Abe visited Yasukuni Shrine
2012-now Shinzo Abe's second term as Prime Minister		
	01/2013	China's aircraft and vessels start to sail near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands
	30/01/2013	Incident of Chinese vessel's radar locking on Japan's battleship
	09/2013	China start regular cruising near Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands
	05/2014-06/2014	Chinese and Japanese military airplanes involved in a dangerously close incident over the East China Sea
	07/2014	The Cabinet of Japan lifted collective self-defence
	11/2014	China and Japan reached four principles of consensus on improving bilateral relations
	11/2014	President Xi and Prime Minister Abe met during the APEC summit in Beijing
	04/2015	President Xi and Prime Minister Abe met in Jakarta, Indonesia
	08/2015	Prime Minister Abe delivered the speech on the 70th

		anniversary of World War II
	08/2015	China held the parade on 70th anniversary of “anti-Japanese war and anti-fascist war”

Table 5. 1: Important incidents in Japan-China relations in the 21st century<sup>10</sup>

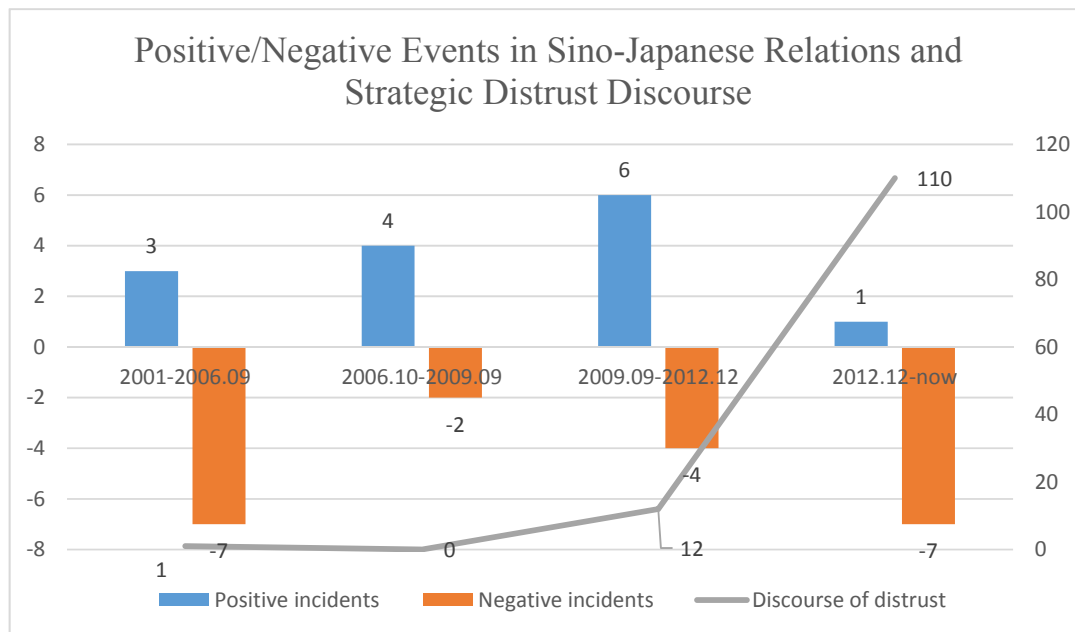


Chart 5. 1: Positive/negative events in Sino-Japanese relations and strategic distrust discourse

Above is a table outlining the relationship between the crucial events between Japan and China bilateral relations and the appearance of distrust discourse in the four periods from 2001 to now. Here is what we can observe from the data:

- 1) Firstly, bilateral relations reflect the significant events or incidents between Japan and China that have specific characteristics. In the Koizumi period, at the beginning of the 21st Century, there were many negative incidents between the two

<sup>10</sup> The standard of selected events: highest level summits of two leaderships, incidents which draw and hold attention of the two states, things which cause problems at governmental or significant civil society levels.

states—mainly related to Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. In this period, the two leaderships had some interactions, for example meetings. However, it was not frequent. At the same time, very limited amounts of distrust discourse could be observed. One reason for this could be that China, at the time, did not have the capacity or intention to challenge or threaten Japan's regional interests from the Japanese perspective. Therefore, there were fewer maritime disputes during this time.

- 2) The bilateral relationship had a trend of improvement during the post-Koizumi period. One characteristic of the LDP period, from 2006-2009, is that fewer negative incidents took place. This might be the result of more frequent visits by VIPs, which could enhance the exchange of information between the two states, and reduce distrust caused by a lack of transparency. Therefore, the level of distrust would be lower than before.
- 3) One of the major changes in modern Japanese politics is that the Democratic Party came into power in 2009. There were expectations from both Japan and China that the new government could do well in international relations with China. However, although the Democratic Party was considered to be not that conservative, Japan's relations with China still experienced ups and downs. It can be seen in the above table that the two governments took action to hold summits and other mutual events, and the number of negative events between the two states was higher than during the previous LDP administration—mainly involving the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. A trend of increased distrust discourse used in Japanese diplomatic scenes can also be observed. One explanation might be that, after the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, the Chinese strategic position in this region and the world has greatly changed. Chinese military forces, especially its navy, were also growing stronger. For example, China's first aircraft carrier was launched in 2012, a year in which the territorial disputes over the islands between Japan and China were fierce. Therefore, the appearance of distrust discourse rose in frequency.
- 4) Shinzo Abe's second term started with his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, and immediately led to problems in Japan-China relations. It wasn't until November 2014 that the two leaders met for the first time since 2011. Since 2013, the two states have had more disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, with indirect military

confrontations, and even dangerous incidents like radar lock-on incident in January 2013. From the Japanese perspective, China is trying to use its national power to challenge the existing regional order, and is seeking maritime hegemony, which would be a major problem between the two states. Therefore, it is reasonable that the frequency of distrust discourse grew considerably.

The status of trust/distrust and the status of bilateral relations have close connections. The thesis has concentrated on the fact that distrust between states has very negative influences on the relationship and might lead to a 'locked' status. Specific to this case study, the core issue of Japan's distrust of China is strategic distrust caused by maritime disputes. The logic is as follows:

- 1) How to define the related cases as being "maritime disputes between Japan and China"? This will not be a problem, as the section discussing why these cases were selected has explained the essence of the maritime disputes between the two states.
- 2) How to define the cases as being "strategic issues", as mentioned in the theoretical discussion. This is related to the definition of strategic distrust, and how to interpret these cases in terms of strategic distrust. Strategic issues in this thesis are those that are related to the states' grand strategies and goals, as well as the activities towards achieving these goals. Therefore, the maritime disputes could be regarded as one of the most crucial parts of national strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for both Japan and China would be included in the strategic calculations.
- 3) Building the connections between "cases", "strategic distrust" and "bilateral relations". Specifically, there are questions and doubts about the following:
  - i. What is the current status of Japan-China relations, especially at the strategic level; why are there disputes?
  - ii. According to the theoretical framework, what are the strategic behaviours that cause the deterioration of bilateral relations?
  - iii. How does the status of strategic distrust connect strategic behaviours and bilateral relations? Or to be specific, how would certain strategic behaviour lead to strategic distrust and then cause a deterioration in

relations?

Japan's moral distrust of China will be analysed in a similar way. In general, the aim is to confirm the existence of Japan's moral distrust of China, and figure out what moral behaviours are the source of distrust that lead to moral distrust, and then to negative bilateral relations.

- 4) The last step is testing the hypothesis, mentioned above – that is, that Japan's distrust of China has both strategic and moral determinants and expressions. Strategic distrust is currently predominant in Japan-China relations, and moral distrust is secondary.

### **Strategic calculations**

The current status of Japan-China relations could be described as being in a negative situation, and may be on course to deteriorate further in the future. In terms of strategic calculations, Japan's primary concerns are the potential strategic challenges to Japanese national interests and the existing international order brought about by China's growing national power. Among the strategic issues, the most representative cases of the status quo are the maritime disputes between the two states, including the disputes over territory, resources, military expansion, and so on. Both the Japanese government and the civil society have expressed their distrust in their discourse.

According to the rationality of states, Japan's strategic consideration of China should focus on the doubts about what Chinese maritime strategies actually are. It could be argued that, from the Japanese perspective, the main reason for the deterioration of Japan-China relations at the strategic level originate from the fact that China is acting more and more aggressively in international relations (Bhattacharya, 2007; Swaine, 2011). Chinese activities might threaten Japan's national security, territorial integrity and other national interests. Based on the rational considerations of strategic calculations, Japan will have strategic distrust of China.

There are several detailed cases of the Japan-China maritime disputes, which clearly show a series of problems of Japan's strategic distrust on China. To be specific, the disputes include the contradictions over territorial issues (especially the disputes over islands such as the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands), and the impact on Japan of Chinese attempts to develop a blue sea navy (Zhu J. , 2011). It is necessary to understand the deep roots of these disputes, and why they have become the most important component of Japanese strategic distrust of China. From a geopolitical viewpoint, the islands around the two states have great strategic significance to both Japan and China. Whether for Japan, which has very limited resources on its mainland territory, or for China, which is eager to acquire any new resource to satisfy the demands of its economic boom, these islands are extremely important. Despite the concerns over territory and resources, military and national grand strategy factors also have an impact (Austin & Harris, 1999; Sasaki, 2010; Zhu F. , An emerging trend in East Asia: military budget increases and their impact, 2009). It is a fact that China has never been a strong maritime power, and does not conduct consistent ocean activities. China has not acquired a navy strong enough to match its rising national power. The scope of its maritime actions are limited to a certain extent—generally only covering seas immediately offshore, such as parts of the South and East China Sea. In this area, surrounded by Japan and other South East Asian states, there is a chain of islands, and it could be argued that the projection of Chinese strategic power has been restricted by this natural chain. The reason why the maritime disputes have become a hot spot in recent years is that, on the one hand, Japan's maritime force (Maritime Self-Defense Force, or MSDF) is also limited due to the restrictions of the Japanese constitution. Japan would rely more on the US-Japan alliance to maintain its national security; on the other hand, China is developing its maritime forces in order to protect its growing marine interests outside its offshore area. From the Japanese perspective, the Chinese strategy challenges the status quo, and could even contribute to the China threat theories (Ross, 2005; Roy, 1996). Therefore, Japan would have to take it seriously on a strategic level. For example, Japan has been continually flagged the issues of the Chinese military in its *Defense of Japan* white papers (Callahan, 2005, p. 702).

Besides, another detailed focus of Sino-Japanese maritime disputes is the growth of Chinese naval forces, which have become a concern for many countries (Chen & Feffer, 2009; Glaser & Szerlip, 2011; Ross, 2009). Despite the continued upgrade of military equipment, one of the most conspicuous actions of China in recent years was building its first aircraft carrier, *Liaoning*, which entered active service on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Though this aircraft carrier is reconstructed from the incomplete body of a Kuznetsov Marshal aircraft carrier, bought from Ukraine, rather than an original design, it still has great strategic influence on the Chinese navy. There have been official Chinese statements that express the attitude of the People's Liberation Army, that the *Liaoning* is a training and experimental ship and not one to be deployed for battle. China has never owned an aircraft carrier, so the new training platform will have a great impact on its future capacity and battle capabilities. For Japan, the fact that China owns one aircraft carrier (and might have more in the future) is without doubt a regional strategic challenge. The significance of the aircraft carrier is not only in strengthening offshore defence, but also providing a way to step forward and project global power. As the geographic neighbour of China, Japan will be within the operational radius of the Chinese aircraft carrier. This has never happened before. The existence of Chinese aircraft carriers (both the *Liaoning* and new ones in the planning stage) is without doubt a strategic threat to Japan. At the same time, considering the cases in recent years of Chinese battleships and submarines entering the Pacific Ocean through the waterways near Japan, it is reasonable that Japan is worried about the development of Chinese maritime forces.

## **Moral issues**

At the same time, Japan's moral distrust of China offers another interpretation for the deterioration of Japan-China relations. The thesis hypothesis would suggest that Japan's strategic distrust is a more important concern compared to moral distrust. Therefore, there are two main tasks when discussing Japan's moral distrust: to discover the status of Japan's moral distrust of China, and to understand how important it is to Japan-China relations. Though moral distrust does not hold a dominant position in Japan's overall distrust of China, it could hardly be denied that it is observable in the affairs between the

two countries, and that it has a significant impact on strategic distrust as well as the overall Japan-China relationship.

Broadly speaking, moral distrust stands for the distrust towards another actor over its “nature of being a state”. In terms of the conception of moral norms, mentioned in the theoretical discussions, it is a kind of “good will” or “oughtness” in interstate behaviour (Uslaner, 2002; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 891). If a certain country acts in a way that follows international norms or rules, the other actor might tend to trust that both might benefit from norm-following activities. However, if one actor is believed not to follow the moral norms of international relations, it might not be trusted by other states. Compared with strategic distrust, which is based on judgements of information or predictions because of a lack of intelligence, moral distrust seems to be more irrational. However, it reflects the sources of distrust apart from those of strategic issues.

As a result of China’s actions, Japan treats China as not being a responsible actor in the international community. In fact, the moral distrust includes the following aspects: firstly, Japan distrusts China because of its communist ideology and non-democratic, single-party political system; secondly, Japan distrusts China due to its irresponsible behaviours and activities in interactions related to the bilateral relationship; thirdly, Japan might distrust China on moral issues due to of the concern that China would use historical legacies as a tool to achieve its own goals by taking advantage of Japan.

Some may doubt the suggestion that Japan’s moral distrust of China’s ideology and political system would have a negative impact on bilateral relations. Some might argue that this kind of Cold War legacy should have vanished in the practice of international relations, especially because China consciously has tried to dilute its communist influences after the end of Cold War. However, there are explanations for how this could happen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although there might be debates and criticism, both democratic peace theory and Fukuyama’s argument regarding the “end of history” have significant influence on the practice of international relations. Therefore, as China remains a one-party system, which is different from the Western mainstream liberal



democracy (including Japan), it is questioned by Japan. The main reasons Japan distrusts China in this field include, but are not limited to the following:

- i. Whether the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) represents the will of the Chinese people. One possible argument is that the authoritarian Chinese government could harm Japanese national interests through foreign policies designed to maintain its domestic legitimacy.
- ii. China does not agree with the “universal values”, which are generally based on Western traditions. The universal values include, for example, democracy and human rights which have become sensitive issues in Chinese politics. If China does not accept the basic norms that Japan follows, it is reasonable that Japan would distrust China on these moral issues.

Besides, whether China is a responsible actor in international society, in a way that would match its national power is doubted by Japan. Any offence to international laws or principles would deepen Japan’s existing doubts that China might become a trouble-maker due to its growing power, rather than a partner. For instance, there are cases when negative incidents have taken place in the Japan-China relations, China might unilaterally postpone or halt normal bilateral events—possibly as punishments (such as the events of 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Normalization in 2012).<sup>11</sup>

Another core moral issue would be the long-term disputes between Japan and China over historical legacies. China has always requested that Japan face up to its responsibilities for war crimes. However, Japan doubts China’s purpose for continually focusing on history. First, Japan believes it has expressed apologies, so there should be no reason for China to stick with the history issues. Second, China might try to direct the domestic dissatisfaction of civil society into strong nationalism directed at Japan. This type of argument arose in 2005 and 2012, when large-scale anti-Japan protests took place in China. Third, China could use history issues as a barrier to Japan’s revival as a critical political power in international relations. The successful Chinese attempt to block Japan

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<sup>11</sup> See Press Conference of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People’s Republic of China on 28/09/12.

from becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council due to Japan's lack of introspection over its war history, is a typical incident.

There is direct and indirect empirical evidence, and academic discussions with which one can test and verify these categories of Japan's moral distrust of China, which is articulated in the following section of this chapter. A general description and an evaluation of the tendencies is also provided. This thesis argues that Japan's current distrust of China on moral issues can be regarded as one crucial source of and component to the overall level of distrust. However, moral distrust is the secondary part, as opposed to the current priority of strategic issues in bilateral distrust. For these moral issues, Japan is indeed concerned and might use discourse from official channels or foreign policies to react to or deal with the incidents. Yet, compared to strategic issues, Japan has paid less attention to moral issues in bilateral relations. Besides, when expressing its concerns over moral issues, Japan tends to take indirect actions, including statements that do not name a specific state, using more moderate wording, or claiming that activities such as military exercises would not focus on a specific country. Therefore, moral distrust is treated as an important part in Japan's distrust of China, but is not the core concern.

In terms of Japan's moral distrust of China, one could predict that moral issues might become more important in bilateral relations, but will not surpass strategic distrust as the main concentration, in the foreseeable future. The reason for reinforcing its importance is that doubts of China's morals would grow alongside continued disputes over strategic issues. Moreover, there might even be critics who argue that Japan distrusts China because China does not belong to the Western moral group that shares universal values. This might be regarded as a method to balance against China's aggressive activities with strategic calculations. However, it has to be mentioned again that strategic distrust remains its dominant focus as the strategic disputes with China are the direct threats to Japanese national interests based on theories of state rationality. This overall situation will set the context for the Japan-China bilateral relationship in the long term. If there would be a prediction of when both the strategic and moral distrust could be eased, a

possible answer might be that it could only be achieved alongside with a reconciliation between the two states.

## 5.2 The tests of strategic and moral distrust

### 5.2.1 Japan's strategic distrust of China

The core question to answer is how to define the Chinese strategic doctrines which shape Japan's current strategic distrust. The case analysis combines the empirical evidence of Chinese strategic behaviour and Japanese reactions with an interpretation of strategic distrust in the form of both discourse and foreign policy.

#### At the governmental level:

Content	Type	Trust or distrust	Frequency
Topple/change/challenge the status quo/ existing order (by force)	Description of China's activity	distrust	31
Escalation/escalate	Description of China's activity	distrust	21
(profoundly/extremely) dangerous	Description of China's activity	distrust	18
Unilateral/unilaterally	Description of China's activity	distrust	17
(extremely) provocative actions	Description of China's activity	distrust	14
(extremely) regrettable	Description of China's activity	distrust	9
(unduly) infringe the freedom	Description of China's activity	distrust	5
have serious impacts/ serious problem	Description of China's activity	distrust	3
cause unintended consequences	Description of China's activity	distrust	3

Not transparent/ lacking transparency	Description of China's activity	distrust	3
have no validity	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
does not follow the instructed procedures	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
intrusions	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
extremely damaging	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
lead to an unexpected occurrence of accidents	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
deeply deplorable	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
incorrect and entirely irrelevant	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
Added up	Description of China's activity	distrust	134
		trust	0
Cannot/could not accept/ unacceptable	Japan's attitude/ Description of China's activity	distrust	18
Added up	Japan's attitude/ Description of China's activity	distrust	18
		trust	0
(strong) protest	Japan's attitude	distrust	28
(deep) concern	Japan's attitude	distrust	22
enhance this relationship	Japan's attitude	trust	7
Urge China to revoke	Japan's attitude	distrust	9
Request China to fulfill its	Japan's attitude	distrust	5

responsibility/ request a sincere response			
one of the most important bilateral relationships	Japan's attitude	trust	4
(strongly) demand the prevention	Japan's attitude	distrust	4
will not tolerate	Japan's attitude	distrust	1
Have strong doubts	Japan's attitude	distrust	1
we would like China to provide thorough explanations	Japan's attitude	distrust	1
cannot at all accept China's assertion	Japan's attitude	distrust	1
overreaction	Japan's attitude	distrust	1
Japan is ready to maintain close communications with China in an effort to ease tensions.	Japan's attitude	trust	1
Added up	Japan's attitude	distrust	73
		trust	12
Total		distrust	225
		trust	12

Table 5. 2: Frequency of trust/distrust discourse of Japanese government on strategic issues

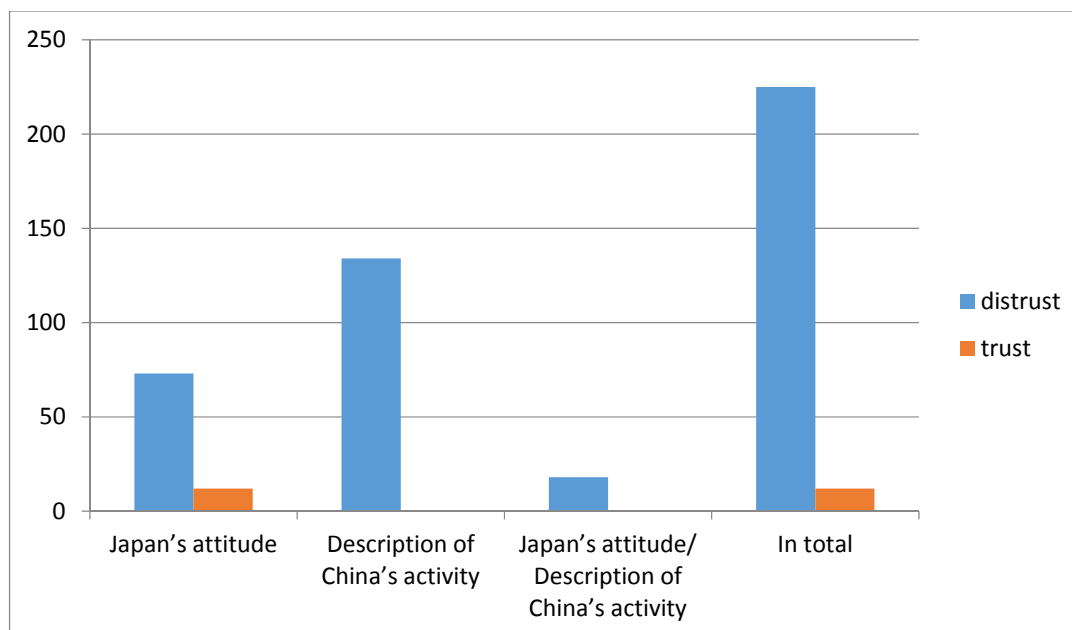


Chart 5. 2: Bar chart of Table 5.2

In the case of Japan-China maritime disputes, five specific issues are identified as significant examples, including: Air defence identification zone, Chinese defence spending, Chinese aircraft incidents, Chinese naval vessel's weapon-guiding radar lock-on incident, and the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands disputes. A search of files published on the website of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), uncovers about 26 files<sup>12</sup> (some of these files could be re-used in different specific issues). As shown in the above table, words/sentences that show Japanese distrust of China are found 225 times in these files and documents. At the same time, the words or sentences showing an attitude of relative trust appear only about 12 times. Linguistically, the words and sentences are divided into three categories of "Japan's attitude", "Description of China's activity", and a combination of the two. The significance of this division is that the difference between "how could one actor judge the essence of the activities of another" (description of China's activity) and "how would one actor view the issues and react under these circumstances" (Japan's attitude) can be identified.

<sup>12</sup> For the list of files, see appendix at the end of the thesis.

In terms of the overall statistics, the 225 appearances of “distrustful” discourse consisted of 134 “descriptions of China’s activity”, 73 of “Japan’s attitude”, and 18 combinations of the two. The 12 appearances of “trusting” words and sentences are all 12 about “Japan’s attitude”. In general, Japan’s overall strategic trust/distrust of China from the official Japanese government perspective has the following characteristics:

1. The appearance of “distrust” is much more than of “trust”. (225-12)
2. “Description of China’s activity” is more present than its own attitude (“Japan’s attitude”). (134-73)
3. No evidence of trust could be identified within the “description of China’s activity”. On the contrary, most of the appearances of “trust” discourse exist regarding “Japan’s attitude”.
4. However, even within the “Japan’s attitude” category, distrust still remains dominant compared to trust. (73-12)

The first characteristics concluded from the statistics would fit the hypothesis that Japan has a strong distrust of China on strategic issues. Even though the case of Japan-China maritime disputes cannot cover all strategic disputes between the two countries, it has proven to be the hottest topic and attracted the most strategic attention from Japan and China in this region in recent years. According to the statistics, the most commonly used discourse to show Japan’s attitude of distrust is: “Topple/change/challenge the status quo/existing order (by force)” (31 times), “Escalation/escalate” (21 times), “(profoundly/extremely) dangerous” (18 times), “Unilateral/unilaterally” (17 times), “(extremely) provocative actions” (14 times) in the category of “description of China’s activity”; “(strong) protest” (28 times), “deep concerns” (22 times), “(Urge China to) revoke” (6 times), “Request China to fulfill its responsibility/request a sincere response” (5 times), and “(strongly) demand the prevention” (4 times) in the category of “Japanese attitude”; and “Cannot/could not accept/ unacceptable” (18 times) in the combination of the two categories.

One could conclude from the statistics that “description of China’s activity” is more about showing Japan’s own attitude (134-73). It is important to understand why there is such a gap between the two approaches and how it contributes to the hypothesis. The description of the activities of another actor will directly show how “unacceptable” the actions are, from a “fair” or “neutral” position. Therefore, distrust of the other actor might be regarded as reasonable. On the other hand, a direct expression of Japan’s own attitude would have been a better approach to show distrust of China. However, in terms of the strategic issues in this region, Japan insists that it is China which is challenging the status quo. Therefore, a description of China’s actions would work better than a unilateral claim.

At the same time, little evidence of trust of China could be discovered in the descriptions of China’s activities, most of which could be found in “Japan’s attitude”. There is an explanation that, to a certain extent, Japan still wants to maintain a constructive bilateral relationship with China so that it can argue that “Japan has made every effort to further develop the bilateral relations with China”. On the other hand, it might also be explained as pointing out China’s responsibilities rather than Japan’s regarding the disputes; that Japan has made an effort to ease tensions, while China has taken different actions that have escalated them.

However, it cannot be ignored that even within the scale of “Japan’s attitude”, distrust still holds the dominant position compared to trust (48-12). This shows that the mainstream trend in Sino-Japanese relations is undoubtedly that of distrust. Though directly indicating its own attitude could be regarded as a gentler and softer approach on certain occasions, Japan still clearly shows its distrust of China. In this way, it is reasonable that no discourse of trust is identified in the description of China’s activities.



**At the public level:**

In terms of public opinion between Japan and China, the “Japan-China Public Opinion Survey”,<sup>13</sup> which is organised by the Public Opinion Research Institute Corporation (Japan) and China Daily, Horizon Research Consultancy Group (China) is an authoritative survey to analyse. The significance of the survey for researching trust and distrust between Japan and China is as follows: First, there might be survey questions directly related to the status of trust between the two countries. Second, the status of trust and distrust could be analysed through indirect data, such as national images, positive/negative images, and so on. Third, specific to strategic issues, the survey questions related to bilateral cooperation/disputes would help discover which of the issues resulted in strategic trust and distrust.

Both the qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied to the analysis, as with the previous section on the governmental level. However, there is a different arrangement to the structure of the analysis, with a more mixed analysis.

**Question 1: Barriers to Development of Bilateral Relations**

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<sup>13</sup> Available at: <http://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/archives/5217.html>, accessed 10/04/16

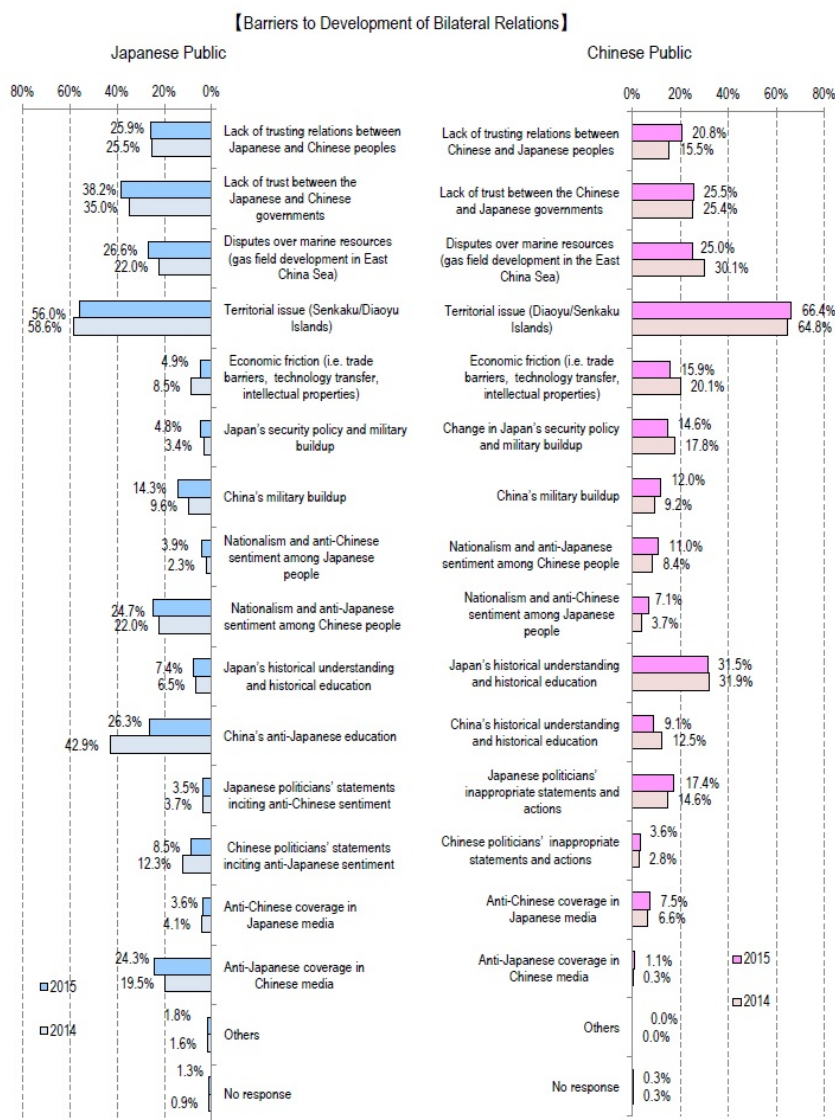


Figure 5. 1: Barriers to Development of Bilateral Relations

Despite the specific cases which could show bilateral disputes, there are some data that directly reflects the trust and distrust issue between Japan and China, both at the governmental and civil society levels. According to the survey, 25.9% of the Japanese public in the survey thinks the “lack of trustful relations between Japanese and Chinese peoples” is a barrier to the development of bilateral relations. At the same time, 38.2% think the “lack of trust between Japanese and Chinese governments” is a barrier. There

are two conclusions one can draw from these data. Firstly, the Japanese public has clearly recognised that the lack of mutual trust has become one of the most important issues between Japan and China, despite of the problems in the detailed cases. To be accurate, distrust has become a crucial barrier to the bilateral relations. Secondly, the lack of trust at both governmental and civil society levels has been identified. An overall trend is that both categories of distrust are at a comparatively high level, or at least should have received enough attention to be well dealt with. The fact that 25.9% focused on the “lack of trust between peoples” and 38.2% focused on the “lack of trust between governments” means that a large portion of the public has pointed out the problems of distrust, no matter on what level. Another fact is that the data shows that more interviewees believed there is a trust crisis between the governments, more so than between the people. Therefore, the two governments should take more responsibility for the problems of distrust.

More specific options arose, related to strategic concerns: “Territorial issue (Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands)” (56.0%), “Disputes over marine resources (gas field development in East China Sea)” (26.6%) and “China’s military buildup” (14.3%). These answers stress the existence of Chinese distrust, especially over the maritime disputes.

## Question 2: Impressions of Each Other’s Country

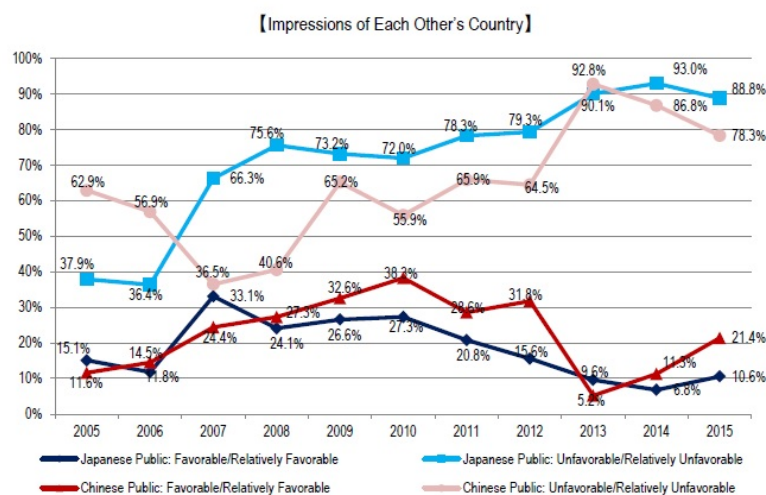


Figure 5. 2: Impressions of Each Other's Country

There is a clear trend in Japanese public opinion that the percentage of those who hold a favourable or relatively-favourable impression of China is in decline over recent years, while unfavourable or relatively-unfavourable opinions are on the rise. In the data from 2015, the favourable/relatively-favourable accounted for only 10.6%. At the same time, 88.8% of the interviewees indicated an unfavourable or relatively-unfavourable attitude. It is difficult to imagine that Japanese civil society would trust China with such a low level of favourable attitudes. While it cannot be directly concluded from these statistics, distrust is a better interpretation of the current status between the two countries. Moreover, the conclusion is not accidental, as the data of the most recent decade in the table has shown a clear trend of rise in the percentage of “unfavourable” and a declining trend in “favourable” options.

### **Question 3: Countries and Regions That Are Military Threats**

According to the survey, 68.1% of Japanese interviewees indicated that they regard China as a military threat. China is second in this category to North Korea (at 75.0%), but it is still a clear symbol that the Japanese public seriously considers China to be a security and strategic problem. Hence, the mixed emotions of worry, uncertainty and fear could reflect distrust from the Japanese perspective.

### **Question 4: Sources of Information on Each Other's Country**

It is important to understand why the civil society of a country might have certain impressions of other states. Despite the detailed affairs between countries, the sources of information for the public are a crucial determinant. The data show that the main sources of information on China for the Japanese public are domestic Japanese news media (95.8%). A large majority (75.8%) cite TV as their main source of information. It is reasonable and understandable that most ordinary citizens would not actively seek external sources of information to understand the bilateral relations with another country. However, it is inevitable that a lack of direct civil interactions might lead to different types of misunderstanding, which might weaken the trust of another country. It is not

absolute, however, that the influence of the mass media would be a determinant of trust and distrust. Under the circumstance of comparatively bad bilateral relations, most citizens would receive negative information from the media (and other sources) about the other state. Therefore, there is the potential for greater distrust of the other country.

### **The correspondence between incidents and discourse/foreign policies**

This section will try to interpret the evidence of strategic trust/distrust in each of the chosen cases, in order to find out how different issues between the two countries lead to reactions which have great impact on bilateral relations. It could highlight which incidents have led to more serious mutual distrust than others, as well as the contrary.

In terms of the Japan-China maritime disputes, the most significant incidents are related to the problem caused by the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. There are specific, individual incidents as well as continual, existing problems. The 2010 Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands collision, the 2013 incident when China's Weapons-Guiding Radar locked incident, and the Chinese government's establishment of the East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone in 2013 are the cases that will be analysed. The analysis will focus on Chinese strategic behaviour in these instances; Japan's reactions – including discourse, related foreign policies, as well as voices from public opinion; and try to interpret how these strategic doctrines lead to Japan's distrust.

#### **1) 2010 Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands boat collision incident**

This incident took place on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. A Chinese fishing trawler collided with a Japanese Coast Guard boat near the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The Chinese captain was detained and was followed by a series of disputes between Japan and China.

The Chinese strategic behaviour in this case: the Chinese government repeatedly claimed its sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands, and argued that it was illegal for Japan to take administrative actions in the area; after the collision, China started regular cruises by official ocean surveillance ships and sometimes flybys with their aircraft, which they had never done before. In general, the Chinese actions included both territorial claims on

paper and actual strategic behaviour of securing some kind of territorial claim through the use of national power.

The Japanese reactions: The thesis will collect and examine the discourse of the Japanese government and public opinion, and foreign policies to deal with the disputes. It should be mentioned that the official documents include not only the ones related to the collision itself, but also those discussing the issues of cruises – excluding the incident over the radar lock, which will be analysed separately.

The main Japanese reactions and policies:

The main reaction by the Japanese government was that, on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Seiji Maehara met with United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. It was reported by the Japanese media that the US would confirm that the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan should cover the Senkaku Islands. Japan and the US also reemphasised the significance of the US-Japan alliance for regional peace.

Japanese official discourse:

Through official statements, position papers and other sources from the Japanese government, a variety of different discourse can be discovered. A table of general statistics of the discourse and the interpretation is provided as follows.

<b>Words or sentences</b>	<b>Nature</b>	<b>Trust or distrust</b>	<b>Times of appearance</b>
Provocative (actions)	Description of China's activity	distrust	8
(extremely) regrettable	Description of China's activity	distrust	4
protest	Japan's attitude	Distrust	4
Strongly urge	Japan's attitude	Distrust	2
(deep) concern	Japan's attitude	Distrust	11

Escalation/escalate	Description of China's activity	distrust	7
unilateral	Description of China's activity	distrust	6
Topple/change/challenge the status quo/ existing order	Description of China's activity	distrust	11
Use force	Description of China's activity	distrust	5
unacceptable	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
Japan attaches great importance to its relationship with neighboring China.	Japan's attitude	trust	1
Japan has continuously and consistently supported the reform and door-opening policies that China has undertaken and has offered cooperation so that China can play a significant role in the international community.	Japan's attitude	trust	1
Japan has made every effort to further develop the bilateral relations with China.	Japan's attitude	trust	1
overreaction	Japan's attitude	Distrust	1
incorrect and entirely irrelevant	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
(extremely) dangerous	Description of China's activity	distrust	3
Japan's relationship with neighboring China represents one of Japan's	Japan's attitude	trust	1

most important bilateral relationships. The government of Japan hopes to enhance its relations with China's new leadership.			
We will continue to promote the "mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests" between Japan and China from a broad perspective.	Japan's attitude	trust	1
Added up		distrust	64
	Japan's attitude		18
	Description of China's activity		46
		trust	5
	Japan's attitude		5

Table 5. 3: Frequency of trust/distrust discourse on 2010 Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands boat collision incident<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For the list of files on every specific incident, see the appendix at the end of the thesis



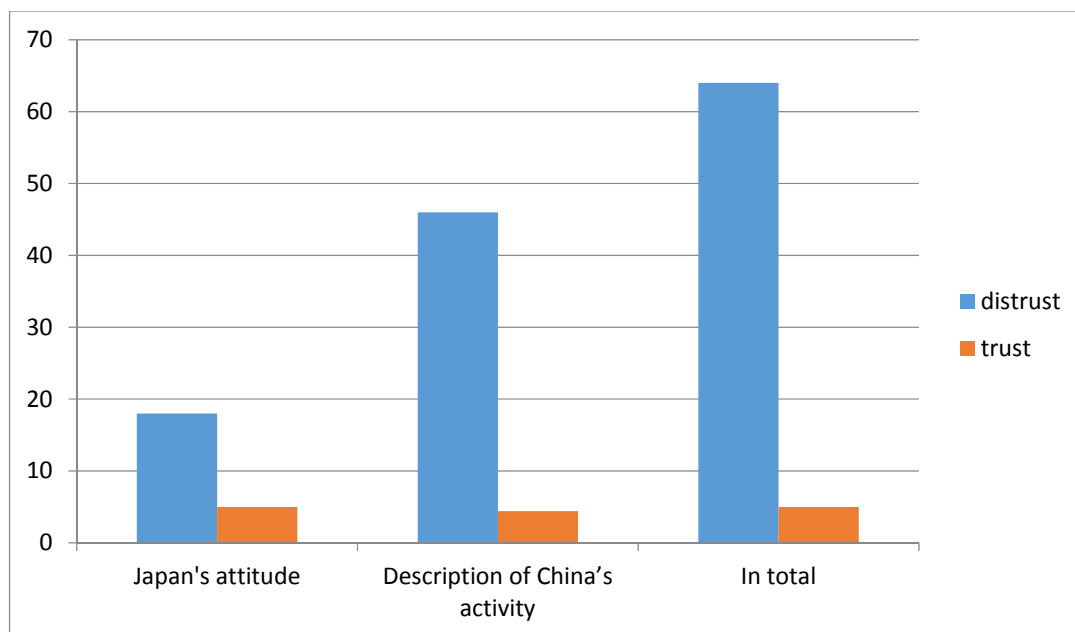


Chart 5. 3: Bar chart of Table 5.3

## 2) 2013 Chinese vessel's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on incident

Japan claimed that, on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013, a Chinese military ship directed its weapons-guiding radar to lock on to a Japanese naval ship near the disputed area in the East China Sea. From the Japanese description, it can be observed that Japan treated the incident as very serious and dangerous, that the Japanese military force was directly threatened, and might lead to open conflict if things were not effectively controlled immediately. The reason why this case is analysed separately is that, although there have been other cases regarding territorial issues around the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, they have been controlled by the two governments and did not lead to serious problems. Even in the cases when “aircraft engaged abnormally”, there was comparatively little chance that direct military actions would be taken. However, this case of a Chinese vessel's weapon-guiding radar lock is essentially different. In general, this kind of incident is obviously more dangerous and might directly lead to military activities between the two forces.

Japanese reactions and foreign policies:

One of the significant pieces of evidence for Japan's reaction to deal with the potential military threat from China was the growth of its defence budget. The 2013 budget grew from ¥46.453 billion in 2012 to ¥46.8 billion.<sup>15</sup> It was the first time that the defence budget of Japan rose since 2002, and the main growth was in its air and naval forces.

Japanese official discourse:

Content	Type	Trust or distrust	Frequency
protest	Japan's attitude	Distrust	7
Cannot/could not accept/unacceptable	Japan's attitude/ Description of China's activity	distrust	6
extremely damaging	Description of China's activity	distrust	1
Request China to fulfill its responsibility/request a sincere response	Japan's attitude	Distrust	5
intrusions	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
It is our recognition that Japan-China relations are one of the most important bilateral relations, and that Japan-China relations are of the utmost importance not merely for the people of both countries but also for the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. We must return to our original point of mutually beneficial	Japan's attitude	trust	1

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d\\_budget/pdf/250516.pdf](http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_budget/pdf/250516.pdf)

relationship based on common strategic interests and address Japan-China relations calmly and based on a broad perspective.			
an (extremely) provocative act	Description of China's activity	distrust	6
(extremely) regrettable	Description of China's activity	distrust	5
unilateral	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
attempting to change the existing order/ topple the status quo (through coercion and intimidation)	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
Escalating (the situation)	Description of China's activity	distrust	3
Deeply concerned	Japan's attitude	Distrust	2
Urges China to exercise self-restraint	Japan's attitude	Distrust	1
Japan is ready to maintain close communications with China in an effort to ease tensions.	Japan's attitude	trust	1
Added up		distrust	42
	Japan's attitude		15
	Description of China's activity		21
	Japan's attitude/ Description of China's activity		6
		trust	2
	Japan's attitude		2

Table 5. 4: Frequency of trust/distrust discourse on 2013 Chinese vessel's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on incident

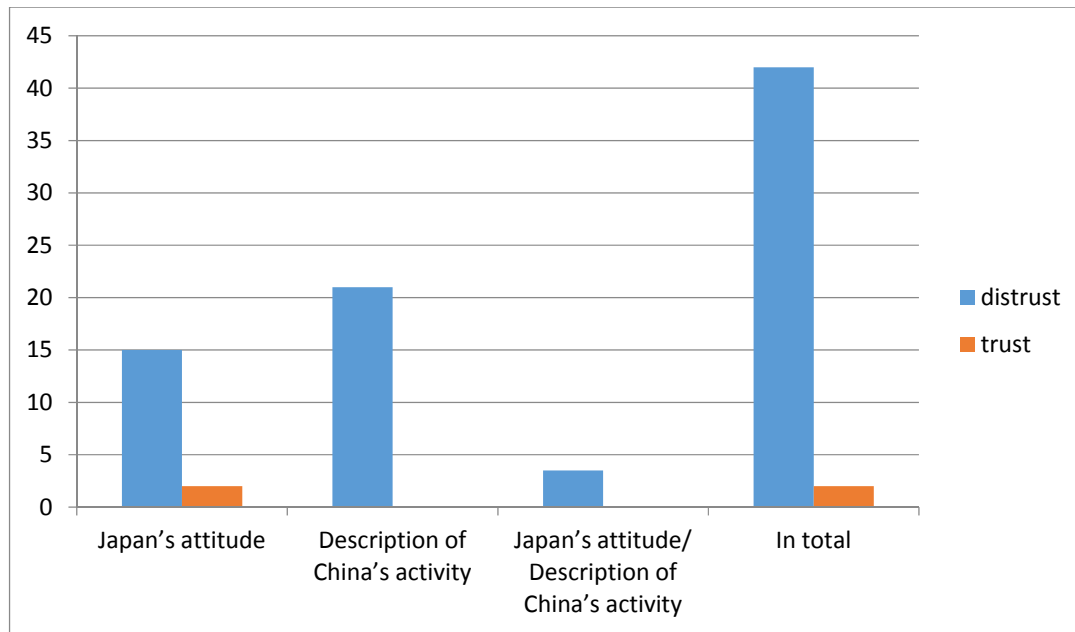


Chart 5. 4: Bar chart of Table 5.4

### 3) The establishment of East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone by the Chinese government in 2013

On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, China announced the establishment of its East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). The Chinese ADIZ covered the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku area, and overlapped in areas with the Japanese ADIZ. The ADIZ requests that aircraft from other states report their flying plans, otherwise they might be monitored (or more) by the Chinese authorities. As soon as the Chinese ADIZ announcement was published, it was greatly criticised and rejected by some of the regional powers, including Japan and its ally, the US.

#### Japanese reactions and foreign policies:

Despite the growth of its defence budget, Japan took different actions to balance the establishment of a Chinese AIDZ. The Japanese government refused to acknowledge the

Chinese ADIZ, and persuaded its commercial airlines to not submit their flight plans to China. In addition, Japanese military jets entered the Chinese ADIZ near the disputed areas to monitor the Chinese aircrafts entering ‘Japanese airspace’.

Japanese official discourse:

<b>Content</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Trust or distrust</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Deep concern	Japan’s attitude	distrust	5
Profoundly/extremely dangerous	Description of China’s activity	distrust	8
Unilaterally (change the status quo/ unilaterally alter the status quo)/ unilateral action/ unilateral establishment	Description of China’s activity	distrust	9
Escalate the situation	Description of China’s activity	distrust	4
does not follow the instructed procedures	Description of China’s activity	distrust	2
(unduly) infringe the freedom	Description of China’s activity	distrust	5
have serious impacts/ serious problem	Description of China’s activity	distrust	3
have no validity	Description of China’s activity	distrust	2
cannot accept	Japan’s attitude	distrust	2
could not be accepted at all/ totally unacceptable	Description of China’s activity	distrust	2
(Urge China to) revoke	Japan’s attitude	distrust	6
Protest	Japan’s attitude	distrust	10
lead to an unexpected occurrence of accidents	Description of China’s activity	distrust	1
one of the most important	Japan’s attitude	trust	1

bilateral relationships			
enhance this relationship	Japan's attitude	trust	1
will not tolerate	Japan's attitude	distrust	1
Change the status quo by force	Description of China's activity	distrust	2
cause unintended consequences	Description of China's activity	distrust	3
Added up		distrust	65
	Description of China's activity		41
	Japan's attitude		24
		trust	2
	Japan's attitude		2

Table 5. 5: Frequency of trust/distrust discourse on the establishment of East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone by the Chinese government in 2013

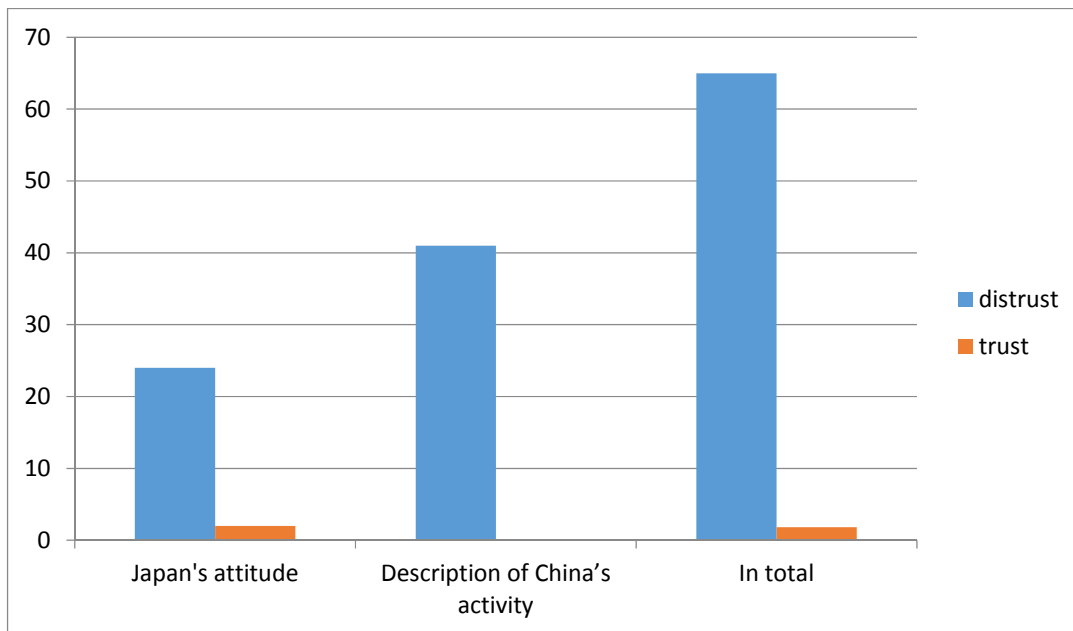


Chart 5. 5: Bar chart of Table 5.5

### **Qualitative analysis as interpretation**

The quantitative calculation of the appearances of trust/distrust discourse will help verify the existence of trust and distrust in the selected cases, with the view that the discourse was not accidental. At the same time, it is also necessary to verify whether the discourse had the essence of trust or distrust. Considering the characteristics of strategic issues, the standards are whether certain discourse reflects the acknowledgement or lack of information, which is the source of trust and distrust. Hence, it is possible that the impact of trust and distrust on bilateral relations could also be verified by interpreting these incidents.

#### **1) 2010 Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands boat collision incident**

##### *Japan's reactions and policies*

The basic dispute between Japan and China is an overlapping claim on the territory. From the Japanese perspective, the Chinese claim is part of its strategic planning. Japan insists that China had kept silent until the last decades in the 20<sup>th</sup> century about the Diaoyu/Senkaku sovereignty. There are at least two reasons for why the Chinese might concentrate on this issue. Firstly, Chinese national power has grown to a certain level which makes it strong enough to support Chinese overseas strategies. Secondly, there were reports that rich oil resources were discovered near the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (Pan, 2007; Maincom, 2008). Based on state rationality, Japan would distrust China's strategies, either because of opaque goals as long-term blueprints or the clear goal of acquiring the sovereignty of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. At the same time, the national interests of territory and resources of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, which are currently under Japanese control, might be harmed (Valencia, 2007). Therefore, the Japanese reactions could be interpreted as a policy to address Chinese strategic behaviour, which reflects its distrust.

One of the main policies was strengthening the US-Japan alliance (Garrett & Glaser, 1997; Vogel, 2002; Zhang, 2006; 2012). The logic was that Japan believes the having the US as a strategic partner could help secure its national interests and regional order, while

China could not be trusted. Considering that China's national power is greater than ever before, it is a rational choice for Japan to cooperate with the US to confront/address the distrusted nation.

#### *Japanese official discourse*

This is a definite dispute which includes issues of territory, natural resources, military engagement and national dignity. In this way, most significant trends of Japanese strategic distrust of China can be identified in the facts. The dominance of distrust discourse, more description of China's activities than Japan's own attitudes, the considerable usage of "strong-distrust" combinations, and the trust-discourse of strengthening the importance of the Sino-Japanese relationship instead of any essential cooperative interactions could all be evidence of Japan's strategic distrust of China, which is a serious problem.

#### *Japanese public opinion*

Although civil society is not the main executor of international affairs, it has the potential to greatly influence the overall level of trust and distrust between countries. At the same time, the attitudes of the public are affected by a wide range of factors. Theoretically, the uncertainty caused by a lack of information, the fear of interests being harmed based on predictions of already-known information, and a lack of confidence of other actors' nature are regarded as the general sources. In order to discern trust and distrust, the analysis of the indirect questions and the detailed questions of strategic issues are based on the "standard of measuring distrust", mentioned above. Therefore, the qualitative framework could be interpreted as--whether the question and the given options could reflect uncertainties, a lack of confidence, and a fear which might lead to distrust.

For the quantitative portion, the data should be analysed in order to judge whether certain options could be representative of the public's attitudes. Since most questions received different majorities and minorities, a comparatively accurate conclusion could be reached.



In terms of the detailed sections and data, the overall trend is that there is a clear strategic distrust of China among the Japanese public. The one-sided results directly reflect a universal distrust of China among the Japanese public. Secondly, in terms of “the barriers to development of bilateral relations”, the Japanese public clearly recognises that distrust between the two governments and the peoples has become an obstacle between Japan and China.

The trend of distrust among the Japanese public can also be seen in the questions about China’s national image, the future of bilateral relations, Japan-China cooperation issues, sources of information, and so on. In fact, the impressions of China and the related questions reflect the attitudes on whether to trust China or not. The overall negative impression (88.8% unfavourable or comparatively unfavourable) shows that, due to certain issues (whether uncertainties, lack of confidence, or fear), the Japanese public holds a very negative attitude towards China. Therefore, it is reasonable to interpret the data as showing distrust.

There are survey questions which show the specific strategic issues of Japan’s distrust of China. The data on “reasons of negative impression” indicate that Chinese activities including “securing the resources”, “military build-up without transparency”, “being hegemonic” and “being incompatible with International rules” are considered the main reasons for negative impressions. The situation is similar when the Japanese public are asked about possible Chinese military threats, and other detailed reasons that are barriers to the development of bilateral relations, such as the Senkaku/Diaoyu disputes. The data shows that the Japanese public lacks confidence in a long-term constructive relationship with China, with fears of non-transparency as well as already-available information on existing confrontations. Therefore, these issues could be regarded as the sources of Japan’s strategic distrust of China at the public level.

## 2) 2013 Chinese vessel’s Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on incident

### *Japanese reactions and policies*

Considering the fact that the Japanese defence budget had been dropping for about ten years before 2013, the reversal could show that the strong strategic distrust was directly reflected in Japanese policies. As has been mentioned, the weapons-guiding radar lock incident was regarded as extremely dangerous by Japan, so based on rational calculations, Japan would have to use its defence budget to deal with potential threats. In a peaceful era, increasing military expenditure would bring more costs and burdens for a state. In this instance, Japan increased its defence budget because it distrusted its strategic future with China to very large degree. Therefore, Japan's strategic distrust of China is not only real, but becoming an emergency for Japan.

#### *Japanese official discourse*

From official Japanese discourse, much evidence of distrust is observable. This thesis has examined 26 official documents, which are listed on the MOFA website by specific issue. (A list of these documents can be found in the reference list.) A primary task for analysing the documents was to define whether Japan's trust or distrust of China on strategic issues was reflected in the texts. This section takes an analysis of the document "Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands – In response to China's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on"<sup>16</sup> as an example to explore how Chinese behaviour has led to Japanese distrust.

The position paper is an official explanation of the maritime disputes between Japan and China, focusing on the specific incident of the radar lock, which is a typical case in Sino-Japanese bilateral relations in recent years. The document includes four sections: an introduction of the incident; an analysis of the further development of the incident; a claim of Japanese official response and attitude to the incident, as well as to overall bilateral relations; and the "facts" of the incident as a reference.

In the introduction to the incident, the Japanese official attitude is to define it as a provocative action by China, which might cause further escalation in the future.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position\\_paper3\\_en.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper3_en.html), accessed 30/12/14

According to the theoretical discussion of the notion of distrust and the standard for measuring distrust, this type of description could be classified as distrust. One reason is that the phrase *provocative act* has the subtext that it was the national interest of Japan that might have been damaged by this Chinese provocation. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that China damaging Japan's national interests would lead to distrust.

In terms of the Japanese analysis of the further development of the incident, such a provocative action by China could possibly take place again. It is understandable that, according to theoretical rationality of countries in international relations, governments should be prepared for the worst. The judgement that the Chinese are continuing to pursue unilateral, aggressive manoeuvres shows a lack of confidence in China's attitude towards cooperative relations for this dispute, which is a basic source of distrust in theory. At the same time, Japan emphasised that China's activities could be regarded as an attempt to challenge the status quo (which could be interpreted as Japanese control of the seas). In this way, facing a strategic future with further aggression, Japan would with no doubt distrust China.

Japan also mentioned its position as a peace-keeping actor in international relations. To strengthen itself as a responsible, norm-following actor in international affairs, Japan's discourse tries to surreptitiously indicate that China does not respect basic international norms. As it has argued, an actor who does not follow widely accepted international norms would be regarded as being untrustworthy by other actors—which is another source of distrust aside from characteristics of state rationality.

Therefore, there is a large amount of empirical evidence from the Japanese government's official discourse in relation to certain cases of maritime disputes with China. The frequently-appearing words and sentences clearly identify Japan's strategic distrust of China originates from different sources. At the same time, the frequency of distrust-related discourse in the documents should also be analysed. To identify distrust in the documents, it is necessary to prove that the use of distrust discourse is not

*occasional but inevitable*, with specific intentions. In this way, the qualitative research of the theoretical definition and quantitative data analysis should uncover the distrust hidden in the discourse of Japanese official documents.

### 3) The establishment of East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone by the Chinese government in 2013

#### *Japanese reactions and policies*

The establishment of the East China Sea ADIZ was regarded by many regional powers, including Japan, as a symbol of China trying to challenge the current regional order through the use of hard power (Hsu, 2014). If increasing ones defence budget is a method for address distrusted Chinese strategic behaviours, directly sending military aircrafts over the Chinese ADIZ is evidence that shows Japan distrusts China, because Japan's national interests do not benefit from Chinese strategic doctrines – in fact, they are harmed. The Chinese ADIZ is different from other incidents, and could be regarded as a great change in international system or order. Hence, stronger reactions can be explained as the reflection of strategic distrust.

#### *Japanese official discourse*

The overall statistics show a clear division in the comparison between distrust and trust (65-2). The Chinese Air Defense Identification Zone is closely related to Japan's air security. Therefore, Japan uses lots of discourse both on the description of China's activities (41) and its own attitudes (26). Within its descriptive section, Japan uses different discourse, including "unilateral", "escalation" and "dangerous" to indicate China's responsibility for worsening the existing regional order. For the Japanese attitude, the most significant part is the official protest against the Chinese government, which shows a clear attitude of distrust (protesting because of certain available information, which shows a potential threat to Japan's national interests). Though there are examples of "trust" discourse used in this case, they are generally of an attitude of common claims of willingness to strengthen bilateral relations because Japan and China are the most important regional powers.

### **A sectional conclusion**

In terms of the debate between normative relations and the rationality of states, strategic trust and distrust are present in rational choice and the following foreign policies and actions. As rational actors, countries have to consider existing political realities and make predictions in response to its national interests, including national security (Opp, 2013). Therefore, if there is a lack of transparency, or clear rivalry, or other related elements from the other actor, uncertainty would lead to distrust and resultant reactions. On the other hand, it is necessary that states pursue actions with lower risks and costs to solve the problems and disputes. Even if a country values normative actions in international relations, the other actors' norm-breaking would lead to judgments of distrust. Therefore, the trend of trust and distrust is identified in official and governmental documents, including statements, records of press meetings, speeches, and so on, because they reflect the open stance of a country.

There are several questions that need to be answered: Whether there is Japanese strategic distrust of China; how to identify this distrust; and whether Japanese strategic distrust of China is its core concern. Despite the latter, which will be addressed in other sections, the first two questions are core issues under discussion in this part. In terms of whether Japanese strategic distrust of China exists, certain evidence in support of the theoretical judgments is needed. The statistics show that the use of distrust discourse in the selected cases has an absolute dominant position compared to trusting discourse. Therefore, a significant attitude of distrust of China can be identified in the Japanese official documents.

How to identify trust and distrust in these cases would be a methodological question. It is extremely difficult to identify the content and procedures behind-the-scenes of the foreign policy-making processes. Therefore, analysing both the explicit attitudes and behaviour of countries is the way to ascertain the level of trust and distrust. The discourse—whether governmental statements or VIP speeches—is meaningful as the official position of and guidance for foreign policy. The question is what the standards

are for identifying trust and distrust in the discourse. There have been debates on the relationship between cooperation and trust, and while it has been proven that one does not always equal the other, in many cases cooperation can still be regarded as an important sign of trust (Das & Teng, 1998; Kydd, 2001; 2000; 2005; McGillivray & Smith, 2000). In terms of distrust between states, most negative discourse and behaviours can be regarded as distrust between states. What should be carefully taken into consideration is the difference between “not to trust” and “distrust”. There is a significant difference: distrust refers to a prediction of potential damage to national interest or dignity. At the same time, not to trust might have not reached such a negative level that actors have *no* positive interactions, and neither trust nor distrust defines the relationship. Therefore, a qualitative judgment of trust and distrust would rely on the discourse with certain attributes. On the other hand, there are strong or weak levels trust and distrust. Whether certain discourse is emotionally strong or weak will without doubt help us to understand the levels of trust and distrust between states.

The appearance of examples of “distrust” terminology is far more than of “trust” terminology (225-12). “Description of China’s activity” is more common than Japan’s own attitude (“Japan’s attitude”) (134-73), which shows that Japan insists that China’s strategic actions are the main causes of a worse bilateral relationship and increase in distrust. No evidence of trust could be identified within the “description of China’s activity” category. In contrast, most of the appearances of “trust” discourse exists in “Japan’s attitude”. However, even within “Japan’s attitude”, distrust still remains in a dominant position compared to trust (73-12). It is a negative sign of bilateral interactions that Japan might have less motivation to build trust than manage risk. Without doubt, Japan has a strong strategic distrust of China at the governmental level.

### **5.2.2 Japan’s moral distrust of China**

The hypothesis of the thesis would indicate that Japan’s strategic distrust is a more important concern compared to moral distrust. Therefore, there are two main tasks in the discussion of Japan’s moral distrust: to discover the status of Japan’s moral distrust of China, and to understand how important it is in Japan-China relations. Although moral

distrust does not hold a dominant position in Japan's overall distrust of China, it can't be denied that it is evident in the affairs between the two countries, and has significant impact on strategic distrust, as well as overall Japan-China relations.

Broadly speaking, moral distrust stands for a distrust towards another actor based on its "nature of being a state". In terms of the conception of moral norms mentioned in the theoretical discussion, it is a kind of "good will" or "oughtness" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998) of interstate behaviour. If a certain country acts in a way that follows grand international norms or rules, the other actor would be inclined to trust that both actors might benefit from norm-following activities. In contrast, if one actor is viewed as not following moral norms in international relations, it might not be trusted by other states. Compared to strategic distrust, which is based on judgements on information or predictions due to a lack of intelligence, moral distrust seems to be more irrational. However, it will reflect the sources of distrust apart from those on strategic issues. In terms of Japan's moral distrust of China, it can be concluded that it is a kind of distrust based on two assumptions: that, on one hand, China is building (or rebuilding) a moral hierarchy over Japan; while on the other hand, Japan continues to distrust China because of its one-party ruled political system and human rights issues, which could be referred to as issues of ideology and values. Therefore, this case study is research of a general case, rather than a specific incident.

The structure of the analysis of Japan's moral distrust of China will, to a certain extent, be similar to the previous section on strategic distrust. The selected cases are analysed in two categories—at the governmental level and the civil society level. There are also differences in the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the cases. According to the primary hypothesis of the thesis, Japan's core concern is a focus on strategic distrust, rather than moral distrust. The analysis of the official Japanese government documents is based mainly on qualitative research, and the quantitative methods will be applied to section on public opinion.

A comparative study must also be conducted of Japan's strategic and moral distrust of China. The aim of the comparative study is to explain the hypothesis that Japan's strategic distrust of China is a core concern, and that moral distrust is comparatively less significant.

### **Background and the theoretical framework**

One of the basic characteristics of Japan's moral distrust of China at the governmental level is that, although there are moral issues in bilateral relationship which might even garner much attention, the Japanese government does not issue many official comments or criticisms of China in its statements and documents, compared to strategic issues. This is understandable for multiple reasons. Firstly, moral issues might not have significant impact on the most important national interests, including national security and defence. Secondly, the influence of some moral issues – such as ideological debates – have been weakening in international relations since the end of the Cold War. Thirdly, considering the negative influence of potential Chinese reactions, Japan might choose not to touch this field, which is extremely sensitive to China. Fourthly, the characteristics of geopolitics and other factors, including the political culture determine that Japan will not address many of the moral issues as priorities in its interactions with China.

The definition of moral trust and distrust in international relations is somewhat similar to that of strategic trust and distrust. The basic principle is the same that some interests are regarded as potentially harmful or might face potential threats if distrust is identified in certain cases. As discussed in the theoretical framework, moral trust and distrust are based on whether moral norms are respected. Moral norms in international relations represent the good will of interstate behaviour. According to Kacowicz (2005, p. 18), citing McElroy (1992, p. 31), “a moral norm can be defined as a behavioural prescription that is universal in the claims it makes and that involves a view of the actors' own interest, but from the point of view of the others' interests.” Therefore, if the expectation of one actor is that its moral interests will be respected is not met, or threatened, or damaged, then moral distrust is generated. Based on this theoretical framework, the standard for



judging moralistic trust and distrust is clear that certain discourse should be interpreted in terms of the principles of international moral norms.

### **At the governmental level**

A qualitative analysis of official documents

This analysis will take two sub-topics as examples to conduct research on whether such documents reflect Japan's moral distrust of China, and to what extent they are significant to Japan-China relations. The selected sub-topics are the value issues (regarding Tibet in 2008) and the poisoned dumpling incident of 2008. The two cases represent different focuses within the moral distrust issues between Japan and China. The Tibet issue in 2008 is actually a problem of international moral norms of human rights, freedom and democracy, from Japan's perspective. On the other hand, the poisoned dumpling incident refers to a debate about whether China can be trusted as a responsible actor (as a country) and that basic principles are being respected.

In terms of moral values, highlighting the Tibet riots in 2008 between Japan and China, the documents sampled are the six records of press conferences by Japanese Foreign Ministers in 2008. There are also supporting documents, including one speech by and one interview with former Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso (see Appendix 1). There is the basic background that China is not considered to be an actor who accepts Western democracy, and remains a communist regime from the perspective of many Western states, including Japan. Democracy, human rights and freedom are regarded as basic international principles, values, and norms by these actors. While China does not totally accept these values in its domestic politics, it is criticised by Western countries. The Tibet riot in 2008 is considered to be a collision over these different values. After the riot, Japan expressed its official attitude on a number of the occasions, including the press conferences.

The first press conference was on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, just four days after the Tibet riot began. The Japanese Foreign Minister indicated that, although the Tibet issue was a Chinese domestic issue, it is also a concern of the international community to secure

human rights. At the same time, he also asked for more transparency from China on the incident. Therefore Japan would disagree with China's claims whenever 'the situation is not made open'.<sup>17</sup> It could be regarded as a typical example of distrust, because the lack of transparency from China might lead to a judgement on China according to existing evidence, which actually would be negative for the Chinese image. The use of discourse that "there are some people who cannot come to the conclusion that 'Yes, that's true'" could be regarded as Japan's attitude that the Japanese government distrusts China unless convincing evidence is provided.

The next document is the record of the Foreign Minister's press conference on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008. When asked about whether he would mention the Tibet issue to Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi during his visit to Japan, the Japanese Foreign Minister replied, "This is necessary due to the fact that in the world at large, there is concern regarding human rights and at the same time, it is in the interests of China itself to do so." Although the discourse does not clearly state that Japan urges China to address human rights, the subtext is that, while the human rights have been widely accepted in the world, China fails to do so. As China does not follow this international moral norm, Japan has reason to distrust China on this issue. However, it must be pointed out that Japan's official discourse does not express strong emotions or criticisms, which has weakened the possible level of moral distrust.

The third press conference in which distrust discourse is evident is the one on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The Japanese Foreign Minister again asked for more transparency from China on the incident. Different from the previous descriptive discourse indicating the importance of transparency, the Minister made it clear that although the Chinese government might have acted in some way, "I do not think that it can be described as sufficient." This kind of expression could be interpreted as distrust of Chinese activities related to moral issues, and that the Chinese government might not follow norms in this case.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm\\_press/2008/3/0318.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm_press/2008/3/0318.html), accessed 04/01/15

The final press conference with a record of distrust discourse is from April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Despite strongly indicating again the international community's concerns about human rights and asking for more transparency from China, the Japanese Foreign Minister also suggested that "China should, for its own good, lend an ear to those opinions."<sup>18</sup> After a month, Japanese official attitude was still trying to persuade China to listen to the opinions of the Western states, which might mean that Chinese actions did not satisfy the other actors, including Japan, which would lead to distrust of China as an irresponsible actor in the international community.

Meanwhile, there were also two press conference (on April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008) during which little evidence of distrust was observed through the discourse. When asked about the knock-on effect of the Tibet riot on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay, the Minister clearly denied the possibility of an official boycott of the Olympics. This attitude could be interpreted as an attempt to reduce the negative impact on bilateral relations caused by the distrust discourse or Japan's call for more progress on human rights in other areas. However, no significant evidence of trust could be identified in the discourse.

In conclusion, the moral distrust of China at the governmental level has several crucial characteristics. Firstly, moral distrust indeed exists at the governmental level. The moral distrust issues include those concerning international moral norms such as human rights, democracy and political freedom. The discourse used by the Japanese Foreign Minister during the press conferences shows that the Chinese government is not regarded as a responsible actor in terms of these norms, from the view of many Western states including Japan, to a certain extent. The two existing theoretical pillars of information (transparency) and trust, as well as norm-following and trust, clearly present a link between certain discourse and attitudes of distrust.

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm\\_press/2008/4/0418.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm_press/2008/4/0418.html), accessed 04/01/15

Secondly, compared to the distrust over strategic issues, Japan's moral distrust of China at the governmental level is regarded as weaker, through both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Regarding issues of strategic distrust, Japan uses clearly defined distrust discourse, and even very strong emotional expressions such as "extremely dangerous", "unilaterally challenge to the status quo" and "provocative actions". However, similar discourse was not observed in relation to moral issues. The most common use of distrust discourse in moral issues is to mention to China the concerns of other actors in the international community about human rights in relation to Tibet. One interpretation is that Japan tries not to directly challenge China on the sensitive topic, although the failure to follow norms does not fit with Japan's values, and indeed leads to distrust. On the other hand, the frequency that strategic distrust discourse appeared in official documents is much higher than that of moral distrust. According to the quantitative calculation in the previous analysis, more than 200 pieces of distrust discourse were identified in the 26 related documents. In comparison, fewer documents and less discourse could be found in the case of moral issues.

The overall logic and interpretation of Japan's moral distrust of China at the governmental level is as follows: based on the theoretical framework of following international norms as the standard for judging whether an actor can be trusted, it would be reasonable for Japan to distrust China. There is empirical evidence in governmental documents which show an official attitude of distrust from the Japanese government. In the case of human rights and the Tibet riot in 2008, Chinese actions did not totally satisfy Japan's concerns over following the international moral norm of respecting human rights, due to the lack of transparency and information. Therefore, the discourse of pushing for human rights and transparency reflects that Japan distrusts China because of China's failure to meet these conditions. However, the expressions of moral distrust are not as strong as those of strategic distrust. A reason for this might be that moral distrust is not considered to be important enough to be raised to comparably high level at the cost of bilateral relations (while strategic distrust shows the opposite trend). Both the qualitative and quantitative evidence reflects less-frequent and weaker discourse is discovered related to moral issues than to strategic issues. This situation fits the basic hypothesis of

the thesis, that in terms of Japan's distrust of China, the main concern is strategic distrust. Although moral distrust does indeed exist in the bilateral relationship, it is not the main focus of Japan at the governmental level.

### At the public level

In order to compare with the analysis of strategic distrust at the governmental level, the research at the public level will rely on the data from the same public opinion survey (the 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-China Public Opinion Poll). One contradiction of moral distrust at the governmental level might be that, due to the high cost of negative influences on bilateral relations, governments might have reservations about expressing moral distrust through official channels, including in the case of Japan's moral distrust of China. Whether public opinion reflects different levels of moral distrust is an expectable outcome of the analysis. In terms of the methods that have been applied, the quantitative calculation and the qualitative interpretation are determinants.

### Question 1: Reasons for Unfavourable Impression

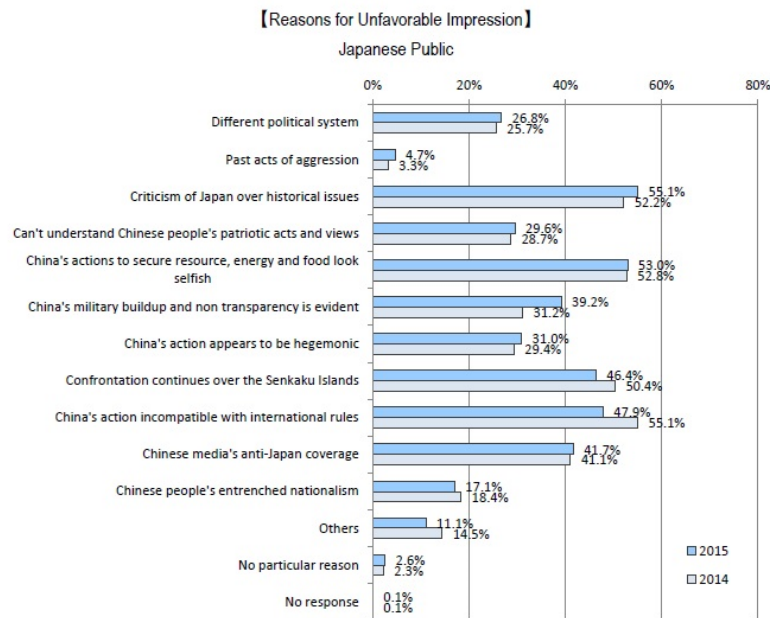


Figure 5. 3: Reasons for Unfavourable Impression

Despite the choices mentioned in the section about strategic distrust issues, there are also some relevant responses related to moral issues in Japan-China moral relations: “China’s action incompatible with international rules” (47.9%), “Criticism of Japan over historical issues” (55.1%), “Chinese media’s anti-Japan coverage” (41.7%), “Can’t understand Chinese people’s patriotic acts and views” (29.6%), “Different Political System” (26.8%) and “Chinese people’s entrenched nationalism” (17.1%).

It has been argued that the negative impression of another actor in public opinion are highly connected, with negative impressions of distrust are the results of failing to satisfy the expectation of the civil society, so that confidence that another actor would be in a cooperative relationship would be low. According to the results of the public opinion survey, there are several different categories of moral issues with distrust in Japanese public opinion. The first is the concern for international rules and norms, which can be seen in the expression that “China’s action incompatible with international rules” option. The fact that more than half of the interviewees think that China fails to follow international rules could lead to the judgment that China does not respect international moral norms, so it could not be trusted by the Japanese. Moreover, nationalism and anti-Japan emotions in China are another problematic issue. This kind of moral issue could be interpreted easily, that the Japanese public distrust China because the Chinese (both at the governmental and civil society levels) have strong anti-Japanese emotions, so China cannot be an actor in favour of building a positive, mutually trusting relationship with Japan. Besides, the traditional ideological issue remains as a component of moral distrust issues, so 25.7% still regard the communist political system in China as a source of negative impressions. Since democratic peace theory indicates that wars seldom break out between democracies, and because China is an authoritarian state, it is reasonable that the Japanese public generally accepts the theory, at least in part, which therefore determines the comparatively dangerous and untrustworthy image of China.

## **Question 2: Historical Disputes That Should Be Resolved**

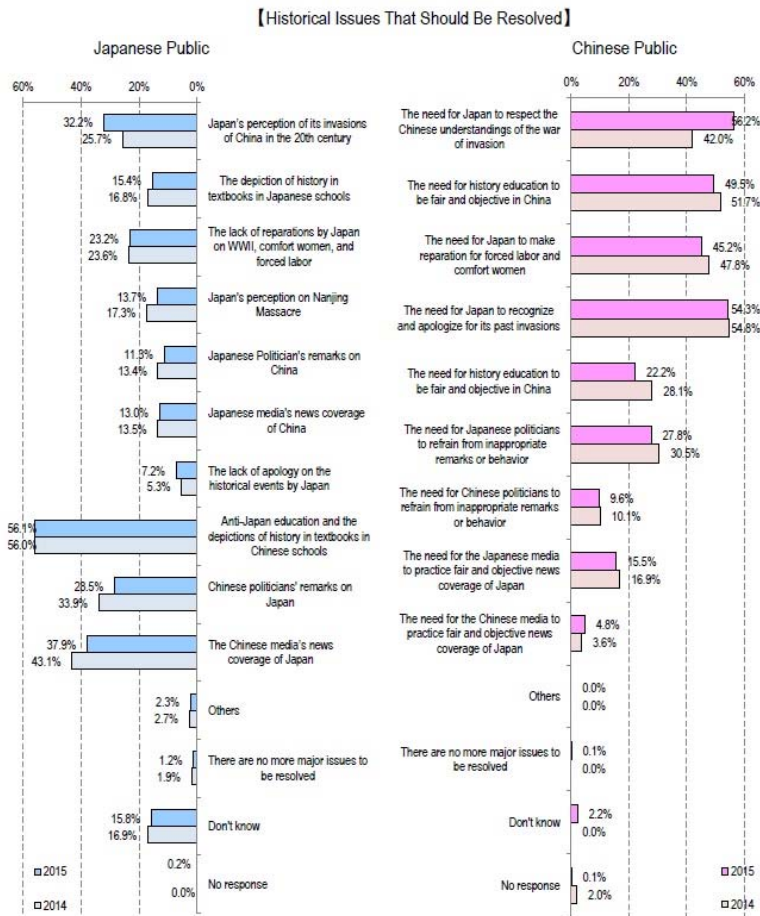


Figure 5. 4: Historical Disputes that should be resolved

This question is similar to the previous one, that both strategy-related answers and moral concerns were mentioned as answers. The most significant expressions of the Japanese public on moral issues are: “Anti-Japan education and the depictions of history in textbooks in Chinese schools” (56.1%), “The Chinese media’s news coverage of Japan” (37.9%) and “Chinese politicians’ remarks on Japan” (28.5%).

It is interesting, but not surprising, that these answers arose. The significance of these answers is that, when discussing the resolution of historical disputes, Japanese interviewees concentrate more on issues related to current bilateral relations instead of the historical disputes themselves. Compared to the answers such as “Japan’s perception

of its invasions of China in the 20th century” (32.2%) and “the lack of reparations by Japan on WWII, comfort women, and forced labour” (23.2%), the former attracted more attention. Hence, it could be interpreted that the Japanese are indirectly indicating that China’s use of history, rather than historical disputes, is the main problem. Japan distrusts China on these moral issues because it does not believe they actually matter so much.

### **‘Political correctness’ issue as an evaluation of Japan’s moral distrust**

The notion of political correctness could be adapted to explain moral distrust between Japan and China. Firstly, the notion of political correctness has to be discussed as it has different significance in different occasions. The typical academic explanations for political correctness are as follows: Norman Fairclough (2003) indicates the significance of values and identities in the notion of political correctness. Peter Augustine Lawler strengthens the connection between political correctness and the argument of “the end of history” (Lawler, 1996):

“History comes to an end when human beings reach definitive, rational agreement on true political principles or justice, and, therefore, no further revolutions in thought or deed seem possible. The politically correct believe that they know the truth about justice, and that their knowledge is the whole of higher, liberating education.”

Stephen Morris (2001) cites Glenn Loury (1994, p. 437), who summarizes political correctness in a syllogism that:

- (a) within a given community, the people who are most faithful to communal values are, by-and-large, also those who want most to remain in good standing with their fellows and;
- (b) the practice is well established in this community that those speaking in ways that offend community values are excluded from good standing. Then,
- (c) when a speaker is observed to express himself offensively the odds that the speaker is not in fact faithful to communal values, as estimated by a listener otherwise uninformed about his views, are increased.



There are arguments of political correctness from different academic sources. A widely accepted example for this definition is that political correctness can be interpreted as, one actor accepts and follows the values which are accepted by other actors in a certain community (Loury, 1994; Lawler, 1996; Fairclough, 2003; Hillman, 1998; Butterbaugh, Jackson, & Branner, 1994; Burch, 1994; Morris S. , 2001). To conclude, the notion of political correctness as used in domestic politics has similarities as well as differences to the situation in international politics. The division generally comes from the topics of political correctness. A current domestic political agenda related to political correctness in international society would include issues like gender equality, racial equality, and so on. It is a judgement that, within a certain group or community, a certain value holds absolute moral correctness, or occupies the high ground, so that any rejection to this value might be criticised or even have serious consequences. However, it would not be normal to observe political correctness in international relations, as states might be concerned with their own interests. If the affairs of other states do not affect one's own interests, there is less chance that one state is going to have a say on the actions of others. That is to say, the existence of issues related to political correctness would absolutely verify their significance in certain interstate relations.

From the Japanese perspective, political correctness is an issue about the so-called universal values. We have already argued that political correctness is a kind of value in certain communities or relations. In Japan-China relations, Japan's values of democracy, human rights, freedom, and other similar issues, are the ones Japan believes China does not accept. Some might argue that this does not make sense, because ideological and political system issues seem to be out of date, because the end of the Cold War basically ended these debates. There are reasons for why political correctness issues remain important for Japan in its relations with China.

Firstly, the reality is that China maintains its communist political system even after the end of the Cold War. Some mainstream Western ideologies see Communism as a nondemocratic system, characterised by a lack of human rights and freedom. There are

also arguments like Professor Fukuyama's End of History that suggest that universal values are actually the only choice for human rights in the future. While China insists on keeping its own system, Japan feels strong doubts about China's identity as a responsible actor in international society. Democratic peace theory is another reason, as it suggests that no wars could break out between democracies. Therefore, it is reasonable for Japan to consider it politically wrong to keep an undemocratic state as a partner. Secondly, there are arguments that interpret this issue from a different perspective. In 2007, Japan launched a program named "The Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" (Hosoya, 2011) in Asia Pacific, including most of the regional actors, except for China and Russia. If we only concern ourselves with the theme of prosperity, there is no reason to exclude the second largest economy in the world. Therefore, the problem is freedom. It is reasonable to argue that Japan strengthened the notion of freedom in this program because the two states excluded, China and Russia, are not regarded by Japan as 'free' states. Also, when China was preparing the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, Japan refused to join the program, explaining that Japan was uncertain about whether this institution would be transparent and reasonable under the leadership of China. In this way, it is possible that others would argue the essential reason for Japan's actions was its concern for and distrust of the rise of China as a potential threat. Therefore, political correctness on ideology and other universal value issues are a kind of judgement of distrust of China.

There is also empirical evidence to verify Japan's political correctness issues. Governmental expressions on the arc of freedom and prosperity and AIIB have been mentioned. Therefore, we again examine public opinion data on Japan's political correctness. One direct answer to this question is that, in response to "Reasons for negative images", 26.8% said that the "different political system" was a reason. This verifies the hypothesis that Japan is still concerned with ideological issue, even after the long-ago end of the Cold War. In addition, anti-Japanese education and nationalism controlled by the Chinese government was also a frequent response from interviewees to the question of "barriers to development of bilateral relations" (26.3% and 24.7%). For Japan, political correctness might either be a concern for its own national interests and values, or it might be used as an excuse to develop the rhetoric of potential threat from

China. As China keeps its own system and values, Japan would have its explanation for any uncooperative activities in bilateral relations. As political correctness on values has become a controversy between Japan and China, it would be reasonable to observe that bilateral relations are affected by these issues. When China continues to respect certain values, Japan's distrust of China deepens.

### **An interpretation of how China's moral behaviours shape Japan's moral distrust**

Two cases typify how China's moral behaviour is connected to Japan's existing moral distrust. As a state, Japan concentrates on the possibility that China might not be a responsible member of the international community, who holds different values to other members. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso introduced the concept of "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" in November 2006, which excludes China. Japan has claimed that, "In particular, Japan will strengthen its cooperation with the Republic of Korea and Australia, which are allies of the United States and share basic values..."<sup>19</sup> This kind of value-oriented diplomacy could be interpreted as a symbol that Japan is trying to alienate China from the other states in the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (Hosoya, 2011). Due to the fact that China rejects universal values, including Western democracy and human rights, Japan morally distrusts China and makes value-based judgements in its foreign policy strategies.

In terms of the consideration of China not following international norms and principles, which could lead to Japan's moral distrust, there is empirical evidence to support the Japanese conclusion. Taking the 2010 boat collision incident as an example, while the incident was regarded as a strategic issue between Japan and China, there were components which reflected the connections between moral behaviour and distrust. The most controversial aspect of the incident was that China arrested four Japanese citizens in China and accused them of entering a military zone without authorization, on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010—not long after the collision incident, and Japan's arrest of the Chinese captain. Although China would insist that it was an unrelated case, there were doubts about

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<sup>19</sup> The Cabinet Secretariat, National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2011 and beyond (provisional translation), available at [http://www.tr.emb-japan.go.jp/T\\_06/files/National\\_Defense\\_Program\\_FY2011.PDF](http://www.tr.emb-japan.go.jp/T_06/files/National_Defense_Program_FY2011.PDF), accessed 12/04/15.

whether this was a retaliation or threat against the Japanese government to produce the release of the Chinese captain. It is difficult to ascertain whether it was a simple case of “entering a military zone”. However, it would be reasonable for the Japanese government to doubt the reason for the arrest, as the occasion was extremely sensitive, not to mention conveniently coincidental. Without doubt, threatening another state by arresting its citizens is not an international principle. Therefore, Japan would distrust China for not following international norms.

### **A sectional conclusion**

There are three trends identified through the Japan’s public opinion data regarding moral trust or distrust of China. Firstly, moral distrust can be observed at the civil society level by analysing the public opinion data. The Japanese public has identified different kinds of moral issues between Japan and China – including nationalism, following international rules, and ideological problems – as obstacles to improving bilateral relations.

Secondly, compared to the expressions of the Japanese government, the Japanese public offers a clearer voice on expressing attitudes of distrust on moral issues. This situation is reasonable, as the government has more concerns over the overall bilateral relationship when trying to express distrust through official channels. As most moral issues are quite sensitive in Japan-China relations, the Japanese government must carefully consider negative responses from China, and therefore control the situation within certain parameters. This is also the result of the hypothesis that moral distrust issues are not a core concern for Japan, so that comparatively weaker actions can be observed at the governmental level. However, the Japanese public have fewer restrictions, as public opinion should be free to reflect the true attitudes of common citizens, and should not directly inspire negative reactions from the Chinese government. In fact, negative impressions of moral distrust at the Japanese public level might even force China to reconsider its policies, as a result of Japanese public demands. Therefore, stronger moral distrust can be found at the Japanese public level, as opposed to the governmental level.

The third characteristic is that, although the distrust discourse and data is clearly defined at the public level in Japan, it is still not the core focus compared to strategic distrust. One significant piece of evidence is that only two of the questions generally discuss the content and influence of moral distrust issues in bilateral relations. Comparing the results of moral distrust with the four questions on strategic distrust issues, as well as the most popular responses for each question, it could be interpreted that the Japanese public still considers threats from strategic distrust as a main focus in recent years.

### **5.3 A comparative study between Japan's strategic and moral distrust of China**

One of the hypotheses of the thesis is that both strategic distrust and moralistic distrust exists between Japan and China. For the Japanese, strategic distrust is the *a priori* focus, and moral distrust is comparatively less of a concern. In contrast, China treats moral distrust as more crucial in bilateral relations. Therefore, this asymmetry leads to a locked relationship. The case study of Japan's distrust of China supports the basic asymmetry within Japan's attitude that strategic distrust is the core focus rather than moral distrust.

The primary task is to define the division between strategic and moral distrust in Japan-China relations, as well as in the discourse and data of the cases. The thesis has explicitly defined the notion of strategic trust/distrust and moral trust/distrust. According to the different fields of affairs in bilateral relations, states pay different levels of attention, because the core focuses of their national interests might not be the same. In the case of Japan-China relations, the two states are experiencing this dilemma, because both actors cannot satisfy the other because their core concerns are not the same.

There have been certain standards or criteria for judging trust and distrust in the discourse at both the governmental and the public levels. At the governmental level—mostly shown through documents like VIP speeches, press conferences, diplomatic policy documents, and so on—the basic standard is whether the discourse reflects the attitude of distrust

caused by a lack of information, predictions of external threats, or clearly damaging actions from other actors. At the civil society level, the discourse of common citizens is discovered by interpreting data in public opinion surveys. As the public opinion does not face the risk of negative impacts on bilateral relationship between the actors when expressing concerns, more explicit and direct opinions of trust and distrust on different issues can be found in their responses.

On the other hand, the theoretical framework provided different potential sources of trust and distrust on strategic and moral issues between countries. The significant evidence is the debate between rationality of states and moral norms following actions in relations. In terms of strategic distrust, as countries face potential threats to their national interests, they tend to distrust other actors for rational reasons. Therefore, the result of distrust might originate from rational choice. For moral issues between states, which mainly cover the moral norms accepted by many actors in the international community, such as certain international rules and international laws, whether they are followed and respected by an actor is the standard for judging if a country could be trusted. The two basic standards do not conflict with each other, and can co-exist in international relations. Both strategic-rationality and moral-normative relations comprise part of the concerns of an actor, which might differ in terms of the focus for different countries.

For Japan's specific distrust of China in Japan-China relations, Japan's core concern is strategic issues, because how to survive and secure its national interests in relation to the rise of China has become its top priority. At the same time, moral distrust exists as well in relation to certain issues. For strategic distrust (specifically, regarding Japan-China maritime disputes), more than 20 related documents were found on the official website of MOFA, and therein 225 appearances of distrust discourse were discovered compared to only 12 instances of trust discourse. For moral distrust at the governmental level, only a few official documents, with a minimal amount of distrust discourse were found on the MOFA website. Therefore, the quantitative calculation has, to a certain extent, shown the focus on strategic distrust at the governmental level.

There is also qualitative evidence to support the asymmetry between strategic distrust and moral distrust. Although the discourse of distrust can be identified in both strategic and moral distrust from Japanese official channels, the discourse is presented in very different forms. When discussing the strategic issues of maritime disputes between the two states, the Japanese government uses very explicit terms to describe China's activities as offensive to Japan's national interests, or to indicate Japan's dissatisfaction. For example, the Japanese government uses the term "(extremely) provocative actions" 14 times in the selected documents to describe China's actions, which can be interpreted as distrust discourse through two approaches. First, for the essence of the phrase, the provocative actions might threaten Japan's national interests so that the rationality of the Japanese government would drive itself to distrust China. Secondly, the use of words like "extremely" could also reflect distrust. Due to the sensitivity of diplomatic manners in the official documents, countries tend not to use strong negative emotional expressions, when it is not necessary. However, the existing usage of such discourse would in turn prove that Japan strongly distrusts China on specific issues, so it directly expresses its worry and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, few pieces of "strongly emotional distrusting" discourse could be found in the Japanese official publicities. The Japanese government tends to use weaker discourse to discuss moral issues with China, and tries to express its concerns through the lens of the whole international community (for example, on human rights issues) instead of directly stating its own objections. At the same time, Japan seldom uses any strongly emotional words or phrases in such distrust-related discourse. The significant difference between official Japanese discourse on strategic and moral issues shows that moral distrust is not as important as strategic distrust, from the perspective that Japan would not risk worsening Japan-China relations over moral issues. Therefore, an asymmetry of stronger strategic distrust and weaker moral distrust is observable.

For distrust at the public level, it can be observed that the Japanese public expresses their distrust of China without the restrictions of cost to bilateral relations, which does exist at the governmental level. However, comparing moral distrust at the governmental and public levels shows a similar outcome – that strategic distrust remains of primary concern

to the Japanese public. Despite the indirect data on trust and distrust between the two states in the public opinion survey, the responses show that strategic issues receive more attention and discussion from the Japanese interviewees. A simple calculation shows that, in the same survey, there are four direct questions discussing trust and distrust in terms of strategic issues (two common ones with moral issues, and two independent ones on strategic issues), while there are only two questions on moral issues (and they are the common ones with strategic issues). For a detailed outcome of the survey, strategic distrust is still of great concern to the Japanese public. For example, in the survey question about “Barriers to Development of Bilateral Relations”, 56.0% of Japanese interviewees choose “Territorial Issue (Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands)” as their main concern, which could be interpreted as a part of strategic distrust, while the largest percentage on moral distrust is the 26.3% who chose “China’s anti-Japanese education”.

In conclusion, one of the basic hypothesis of the thesis can be observed through this case study, that Japan has both strategic and moral distrust of China, and that strategic distrust is the main concern for Japan both at the governmental and the public levels. The influence of Japan’s strategic distrust on China is that Japan’s reactions to facing the pressure of a rising China might turn into strategic preparations affecting regional affairs. Since Japan distrusts China strategically, there are two potential approaches for Japan to deal with the problems. On the one hand, Japan could take steps to address the possible challenges and threats to Japanese national strategic interests, including territorial disputes, regional order, securing resources, and so on. Therefore, Japan is seeking domestic arrangements, including a revision of its constitution for collective security, as well as external agenda like strengthening the US-Japan alliance, and developing new relationships with other regional actors. On the other hand, Japan urges China to explain certain issues, and take other actions such as increasing transparency to eliminate the sources of distrust. It is reasonable that, due to the fact that the Japanese regard certain strategic issues as top concerns, Japan expects China to act in certain ways to solve the problems, and therefore to improve bilateral relations. However, there is a dilemma that is at the core of the hypothesis, that there are asymmetries between the core concerns of Japan and China. While Japan prioritises the resolution of strategic distrust problems,



China expects the moral distrust issues in Sino-Japanese relations to be dealt with properly. The current status of the two states represents the fact that both are not satisfied with the other's agenda, and as a result a "locked" relationship between Japan and China exists.

## **Chapter 6: China's distrust of Japan**

The second case study will analyse China's moral and strategic distrust of Japan. The fundamental aim of this case study is similar to that of the previous one on Japan's distrust of China. Based on the analysis of the selected cases, the chapter explores whether China's strategic and moral distrust can be identified in the empirical evidence. At the same time, the chapter will address the hypothesis that the asymmetric distrust of China concentrated on moral distrust, rather than strategic distrust, which will be verified through both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The chapter is divided into three sections, on China's moral and strategic distrust of Japan and a comparative study of the two. The first two sections analyse the governmental and public levels as empirical sources, which have different origins and might reflect different situations of trust/distrust in different areas. As has been mentioned, the methodological structure is similar to the case study of Japan's distrust of China – qualitative research of the government documents and records, media, as well as academic literature. The quantitative analysis is based on the calculation of appearances of distrust discourse and the data from a public opinion survey. Further, an overall combination of different data/tables of the status of trust/distrust, bilateral relations and certain incidents between the two states will be compiled in order to show whether the hypothesis works in this case. Hence, it will be possible to conduct a comparative study in the third section, looking at the status of moral and strategic trust/distrust, which could help verify another hypothesis, on the existence of an asymmetric structure.

### **6.1 China's moral distrust of Japan**

#### **6.1.1 Introduction**

One of the thesis hypotheses is that asymmetries in mutual distrust between Japan and China have led to a “locked” bilateral relationship. While Japan's core concern is reflected in its strategic distrust of China, moral issues are the most important factor for China. According to the theoretical framework, one state's moral distrust of another is explained as distrusting that another state is a responsible actor. Alternatively, to be more

accurate, moral trust and distrust focus on the issues of moral and normative values, which are related to political trustworthiness, basic principles of acting in international relations, international ethics, and so on. Strategic trust and distrust are considered to be the results of certain strategic issues or incidents. They might lead to fierce debates and even confrontation, and also might receive less attention due to the shifts in strategic hotspots in international relations. Moral trust and distrust issues are to some extent different, as this kind of trust and distrust is not only closely connected to specific hotspots, but also are long-lasting in international relations – working just like credibility in risk management and other disciplines (Wiener & Mowen, 1986; Peters, Covello, & McCallum, 1997; Renn & Levine, 1991). Distrusting one state's nature is not easily eliminated, even when certain disputes are resolved. The accumulated influences have considerable, long-term impacts on public opinion, civil relations, and also overall interstate relations.

To be specific, in terms of China's moral distrust of Japan, generally distrust is based on the Japanese government's attitudes over historical issues, especially that of the legacies of the Japanese invasions of China, from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century to World War II. On the one hand, China believes that Japan is trying to avoid its responsibilities and guilt over the war (Motofumi, 2005; Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations: A case study in political decision-making*, 1998). This assumption no doubt makes China angry, because it regards "gaining international reputation" as an important goal for its revival. At the same time, there is also pressure from the Chinese public, urging stronger reactions to Japan. (Rose, 1998; Bhattacharya, 2007) From China's perspective, Japan's activities are dangerous when compared to what it did in the 1970s for the normalization of bilateral relations. Avoiding the international moral responsibility, which is evident in the words and activities Japanese politicians like Shinzo Abe (Hu & Gao, 2015), leads to moral distrust. On the other hand, China also distrusts Japan's "hidden" agenda of eliminating the influential legacies of World War II. From Japan's perspective, the attempt to get rid of the burden of history is a method for become a normal state (Hagström, 2014; Inoguchi, 2003; Soeya, Tadokoro, & Welch, 2011; Johnson, 1992; Tadokoro, 2011), because World War II is long over. However, these related activities

could be interpreted as different goals by China: that they go beyond the aim of easing the historical burden. The revision of basic education and the reinterpretation of the constitution would have such long-term effects on future generations of Japanese that a lack of historical responsibility would lead to the possibility of a revival of Japanese militarism. This concerns the Chinese government, and has become the source of China's moral distrust on Japan.

At the same time, it must be mentioned that, according to the basic hypothesis of the thesis, moral distrust is China's core concern, as opposed to strategic distrust. There is plenty of empirical evidence that China tends to understand and interpret many of the disputes between the two states as problems caused by Japan's attitude to history. For the Chinese, most of the existing disputes have roots in historical problems left unresolved. While the Japanese do not think the historical legacies should be continually referred to, China's moral distrust of Japan cannot be easily resolved.

### **6.1.2 Background**

In fact, the historical issues have always been determinant factors in bilateral relations, and have been reflected in different issues and at different levels. There are multiple reasons for these disputes, and one of the most significant elements is the wars between Japan and China since the rise of Japan and the decline of China, in the late-19<sup>th</sup> Century; including the war between Japan and the Chinese Qing Dynasty in 1895, and the invasion and occupation of China in 1930s until the end of World War II. The former has led to a negative legacy in Sino-Japanese relations, due to a series of "unequal treaties", which have extended territorial (for example, over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands) and other disputes to the present day. The latter directly created a moral shock in China, and it strongly believes that Japan should be held responsible for the war and sincerely express an apology. Many of the existing disputes were created by the war legacy and the apology disputes, the Yasukuni Shrine issue, the history textbook issue, and the constitution issue. At the same time, these disputes bring even more difficulties to resolving the problems due to the legacies that cannot be easily resolved when new problems continually emerge.

Among these disputes, the Yasukuni Shrine issue could be regarded as a typical case of China's moral distrust of Japan, as it can be regarded as a "spiritual stimulus" by Japan, from the Chinese perspective (Rose, 2005; Zhu, 2014a; Zhu, 2014b). This dispute reflects the confrontations between the two countries over historical issues and the deep root of Chinese moral distrust. Expressing respect to the dead is almost a universal value. Worshipping souls at shrines is part of Japanese tradition and culture. However, there are special characteristics for memorialising the dead, which make this common phenomenon become a flashpoint in Sino-Japanese relations. On the one hand, the Shrine was built in 1869 by the Meiji government. It could be argued that the essence of the Yasukuni Shrine is as the official memorial for the Japanese soldiers who died in both domestic and foreign wars. Its official and overseas-relevant nature are the sources of the problems. The official nature is weakened by the increased secularism after World War II. However, it remains a symbolic place in Japanese domestic politics. The fact that it is connected with foreign-relations means one cannot avoid that the memorial of soldiers as national heroes might be unacceptable to a formerly-hostile country. One determinant in the Yasukuni case is that Class A war criminals including Hideki Tojo were registered at the Yasukuni Shrine after 1978 for memorialisation. As the Yasukuni Shrine has always been closely connected with the Japanese government and domestic politics, it has received great opposition from China and other states. The Japanese government denies that the aim was to memorialise war criminals, but rather to pray for long-lasting peace (Lu, 2005). China obviously distrusts this claim.

The basic logic of this kind of distrust is that the Chinese government thinks that war criminals should not be regarded as the same as common soldiers—they were criminals judged by international tribunals under international law to have caused horrors and damage to their victims. As many of Japanese politicians, including the Prime Ministers, continue to visit the Shrine in their official capacity, a source of moral distrust is formed.

### **6.1.3 Case Analysis: the origins of moral distrust from historical disputes**

#### **Why were these cases selected?**

The basic rule for choosing suitable cases is how can they reflect the international relations practices defined by normative relations as moral trust/distrust, and rational calculations as strategic trust/distrust. In terms of morals, the logic is that a state tends to trust another if it follows international norms and principles and/or it has trustworthy moral values. Separate opinions from academic discussions might argue that moral trust/distrust is “rational” or “irrational”. However, no matter whether there are incentives for moral trust/distrust, failing to accept norms and values might lead to concern and distrust from the perspective of another actor. In Sino-Japanese relations, it could be seen that China continually focuses on historical issues, which mainly include the war legacies between the two states. China argues that Japan fails to face up to its history and tries to get avoid its responsibility for war crimes. Based on a widely accepted value that states should take responsibility for their actions, especially in relation to war, China believes that Japan does not follow normative principles in international relations. Therefore, China distrusts Japan over moral issues, including the disputes about historical issues. China would indicate that Japan has a “right-deviation tendency” (Soeya, Tadokoro, & Welch, 2011; Inoguchi, 2003; Yang, 2007; Ding, 2006) in its politics. Through the efforts of a right wing faction, Japan is moving in a direction opposed to its “introspection way” (Samuels, 1990). The Japanese right-wing politicians mainly focus on three topics: visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, reversing historical facts, and actively promoting a history textbook that denies Japan’s history of invasion. (Shi Y. , 2013b) To be specific, one of the most suitable cases is the Yasukuni Shrine issue. The essence of the Yasukuni Shrine is controversial and typical to Sino-Japanese relations. Showing respect for dead soldiers is not a serious problem in international relations. However, it is reasonable to protest and criticise the governmental memorialisation of war criminals who launched a war and committed heinous crimes, which is why China calls for a German-style approach to apology. From China’s perspective, Japan cannot be trusted due to the gap between its rhetoric (apologizing for the war) and actions (VIPs visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, the textbook issue, and so on). Therefore, China distrusts Japan on moral issues.

For the strategic trust/distrust of Japan, the general concern is on whether Japan could be a regional threat to China's national interests (Swaine, 2011). The detailed concerns are related to Japan's revival as a strong political and military power, which might be achieved through either Japan's attempts to reconstruct its national identity, or by reinterpreting its constitution which restricts Japan's military capacity, or by strengthening the US-Japan alliance (Hara, 1987; George Mulgan, 1997). Therefore, Japan's attempts to revise its defence laws and policies could be regarded as an origin of strategic distrust.

### **Background to China-Japan relations and bilateral trust/distrust**

One of the significant characteristics of the mutual influences between bilateral relations and the status of trust/distrust is that the moral issues of historical disputes have formed the political foundations, from the Chinese perspective. At the same time, strategic concerns are important to Sino-Japanese relations.

Taking the period between 1972 and 2000 – between the successful normalization of bilateral relations and the tremendous rise in Chinese national power – as an example, there are several turning points that led to the deterioration of relations. The most significant ones include the disputes over the history textbook issue, the Nanjing Massacre, the Yasukuni Shrine, and the apology issue. A similarity between these cases is that they are all issues related to moral trust/distrust instead of strategic calculations. The territorial dispute over the Diaoyu / Senkaku Islands also exists, but is not regarded as a priority in bilateral relations. It might be argued that the two governments have intentionally controlled the dispute within certain boundaries in order to clear obstacles for improving bilateral relations in the wake of the Cold War. However, even if people admit that there are concessions for leaving this disputes to one side, China clearly showed its opposition to Japan over historical disputes, while strategic concerns did not draw more attention.

After 2000, with a growing trend of more disputes in Sino-Japanese than during the honeymoon period, moral and strategic problems started to play a more important role in

bilateral relations. China's core focus remains the normative values of the Japanese attitude towards history, and Japan's motivations/activities that could potentially lead to a revival of militarism, which are continually monitored by the Chinese government (Lu & Tian, 2014; Bhattacharya, 2007). On one hand, the disputes in bilateral relations could reflect problems of distrust at the moral and strategic levels. On the other hand, the moral and strategic distrust could in turn lead to problematic bilateral relations. One possible argument is that China tends to view many of the problems in bilateral relations through the lens of normative values and historical legacies.

### **Moral distrust**

The two main tasks of this section in discussing current Sino-Japanese relations and moral concerns is similar to those in Japan's distrust of China: firstly, it is necessary to discover the existence of moral distrust issues in bilateral relations; secondly, it is crucial to understand how moral distrust could influence bilateral relations. A significant difference between the Chinese situation from that of Japan is that moral distrust is dominant, and strategic calculations are less important.

It has been argued that moral trust in international relations can be interpreted as trusting another actor because the normative principles (or values/standards) of one actor are accepted or followed by another one. It might be argued that this kind of "good will" or "oughtness" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 891) in international relations cannot always be satisfied, because the normative values in different backgrounds cannot be judged as being absolutely right or wrong. Therefore, moral distrust could be a common phenomenon considering different cultures, ideologies, and other factors. It is reasonable that some academics would indicate that strategic trust/distrust is comparatively more rational, as it would generally be based on calculations of power and interests, while moral trust/distrust in normative activities/relations are comparatively "irrational" (Gralnick, 1988; Amadae, 2007).

Japan's activities and attitudes are a source of China's moral distrust. To be specific, respecting history – especially the history of Japanese invasion – is a basic normative



value in international relations. Since China believes Japan has failed to do so, suspicion (Calder, 2006) and moral distrust is created (Yang, 2007). China worries about Japan's attitudes toward the historical issues, with the assumption that Japan is intentionally avoiding them and the Japanese government's rhetoric on historical responsibility is becoming ever-more ambiguous. Although Japan has repeatedly expressed its introspection on many occasions, its actions contradict the sentiment in China's eyes. As it has been argued, China might understand that Japan's friendly attitude during the "honeymoon" period might only have been a combination of guilt, fear, and other feelings (Rose, 1998, pp. 22-23). On the one hand, the actions of politicians, including Prime Ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and the possibility of abandoning the past Murayama Statement will increase Chinese worries that Japan is trying to regain its former Imperial "glory" (Liang, 2014; Bhattacharya, 2007). It is reasonable that this possibility is unacceptable, because China has always treated itself as a victim in the war. On the other hand, despite concerns about the Japanese government, the influences of civil society are also crucial. The key issue is that future generations might not have a clear understanding of the history of the war. This concern comes from the Chinese perspective of Japan's attempts at "cleaning" history, including the history textbook issue. This could cause strong doubts in China, and that Japan's actions are an attempt to expand its international influence by denying its history of invasion (Liang, 2014; Lu & Tian, 2014), which would call into question Japan's trustworthiness as an international actor. Therefore, China's moral distrust of Japan can be understood as a distrust of Japan's claims of introspection and a possible future in which Japan revives its militarism with no memory of its historical responsibility. By weakening bilateral relations through history issues, Japan could possibly expand its military forces with enough legitimacy in domestic politics. (Li B. , 2015)

There has been evidence that could prove that Sino-Japanese relations have always been influenced by bilateral distrust and related issues. For China, its moral distrust of Japan is reflected in the historical disputes. The bilateral relationship between China and Japan suffers great damage every time the two states get stuck on historical disputes. At the same time, this process is accompanied by the following characteristics:

- 1) Distrust is a crucial cause of deterioration in bilateral relations. Distrust leads the countries to interpret or understand only the worst assumptions about incidents. For example, in terms of China's moral distrust of Japan, the history textbook issue is a major concern. The history textbook dispute, which has a very limited audience (Rose, 1998), might not directly have an impacts on the values of entire future Japanese generations. However, with its moral distrust of Japan, China takes this incident very seriously as a problem, focusing on why the Japanese government adopted this version of history textbook draft. Therefore, the possibility that the Japanese government might try to cover up its history of invasion would be a shock to China's normative values. Considering the fact that China treats history issues as a priority in its current relations with Japan, a deterioration of bilateral relations is inevitable and might be instantaneous (Dreyer, 2006, p. 540).
- 2) At the same time, worsening bilateral relations would in turn enhance the existing distrust. With negative bilateral relations caused by distrust, the related disputes would be extremely difficult to resolve in a quick and smooth manner. (As discussed in the previous chapters, based on the framework of the thesis hypothesis, China and Japan would have their own *a priori* concerns. The asymmetric structure leads to a situation in which both states cannot compromise on concerns of the other state without first resolving its own concerns. The actions of resolving problems are based on the other state taking a first step towards resolving its own concern.) Under this circumstance, the situation would get worse in bilateral relations if the other does not take action. Therefore, the interactions between 'distrust' and 'relations' are also bilateral rather than unilateral. Distrust is reflected in the disputes between states, and it is a source for deterioration in bilateral relations. At the same time, worsening bilateral relations lead to deeper distrust, which remains difficult to resolve.

### **Strategic distrust**

There are also explanations of the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations from the perspective of China's strategic distrust of Japan. In the thesis hypothesis, strategic

distrust is currently not China's priority. Therefore, exploring its significance in bilateral relations and verifying why it is China's secondary concern should be examined. In terms of how strategic issues and distrust about strategic issues affect interstate relations, there have been discussions under the theoretical framework. To be specific, China's strategic calculations related to Japan are based on assumptions of whether Japan is reviving its military power and/or will balance against China with the US-Japan alliance. (Christensen, China, the US- Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia, 1999; Garrett & Glaser, 1997; Zhang, 2006; Zhang, 2012) For instance, in terms of the idea of a "Proactive Contribution to Peace", raised by Japan, the Chinese interpret it as having the essence of military expansion and preparation for potential wars. (Hu & Gao, 2015)

For a long time after the normalization of bilateral relations in 1972, especially from the 1970s to 1990s, the strategic concerns were not a core focus of China in its relationship with Japan. Although the Cold War caused tensions between the two former rivalries, the common external threat posed by the Soviet Union was regarded as the main problem in regional affairs. Therefore, the two states have experienced a 'honeymoon' and stable periods in bilateral relations. At the same time, based on the rationality of states, strategic trust/distrust relies upon the rational calculation of whether another state could be a strategic threat to its one's national interests. In this way, it is reasonable for China to have few strategic disputes with Japan during that period, because there were fewer conflicts over national interests due to the considerable gap between the states' comprehensive national power and goals.

However, the situation has been quite different in recent years. Firstly, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are no common threats to China and Japan, so they might pay more attention to each other—as they are the two most powerful regional actors (Yahuda, 2014). Moreover, the rise of China has greatly changed the comparative national powers in the region. China will settle the strategic goals that match its national power, while Japan will modify its foreign policies to deal with the rise of China. In this way, the main strategies of Japan, include seeking the status of a normal state and strengthening its

alliance with the US, which Japan thinks will provide security for itself (Oros, 2008), could cause distrust from China. (Li C. , 2014; Zhang, 2012)

In fact, similar to the situation with moral distrust, the distrust on strategic issues is also connect to bilateral relations. The cases of strategic distrust are reflected in Sino-Japanese relations: as Japan's strategies have become China's concern, the Chinese believe they might threaten national interests or grand strategies. It is widely recognised that the rise of China has become one of the most significant characteristics of regional strategic concern. With the growth of its economy, China has to secure its expanding national interests, including the territorial integrity and the maritime security. As Japan inevitably occupies a geographic position which is between China and the oceans, its strategic activities would directly affect China's national strategies. The reality is that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Japan distrusts China's strategic goals and actions. Because Japan has calculated that China's strategies might damage Japan's interests, it has to take action. On the other hand, in order to avoid offering unilateral explanations for Japan's motivations, another possibility of Japan's plans to become a normal state should also be explained. Japan's attempts to modify its constitution for the right of collective defence is a typical example. Therefore, both the passive reactions to the rise of China and the active calculations for itself would lead to Japan's strategies of strengthening the US-Japan alliance, which is fundamental "in all sectors including balance of power, economy, paradigms, domestic politics, media, international organizations, finance, technology" (Vogel, 2002; Garrett & Glaser, 1997; Zhang, 2006; 2012) and being tougher in its strategic disputes with China. Japan's strategic movements have drawn China's attention because, from their perspective, Japan has two potential strategic goals, including: reviving itself as a military power, and blocking China's rise. China is concerns about Japan's continuing activities to get over the barriers of the post-war system. Although the core concern is based on Japan's attitudes towards history, the potential possibility that Japan might remilitarise would lead to other doubts over whether Japan would invade again. China also believes that the existence of the US-Japan alliance in the region is an obstacle for China: if the US-Japan alliance actively erects barriers against the rise of China at strategic levels, or regards China as an imaginary

enemy (Lian, 2011), China would no doubt be angry with Japan's intension of restricting China. Even if the US-Japan alliance stays comparatively passive, China would still doubt whether Japan and the US would remain passive in the future. In this way, strategic distrust is generated (Yuan, 2003).

How strategic distrust affects the China-Japan relations is also a question of three parts: bilateral relations—trust/distrust—incidents. When issues/incidents at the strategic level take place, the two states have to make judgements about the essence of these incidents. If the incidents are proven to be harmful to national interests, distrust will be a problem. With deepening distrust, the states would tend to understand and interpret upcoming incidents in a more negative way, so relations might worsen. At the same time, worsening bilateral relations might lead to more negative incidents between the two states – such as confrontations between ships, and so on. The maritime disputes verify this structure of distrust and interstate relations.

## **6.2 The test on China's strategic and moral distrust on Japan**

### **6.2.1 China's moral distrust on Japan**

There are two hypotheses to be verified in this section: that both moral and strategic distrust exist from China's perspective. The case studies include qualitative analysis of governmental documents, VIP speeches, academic resources, and other related content, and the quantitative calculation of the appearances of related trust/distrust discourse.

#### **The quantitative analysis on official discourse**

The case selected to study China's moral distrust of Japan is the Yasukuni Shrine issue. The last time Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Yasukuni Shrine was on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013. From then until May 2014, there have been at least 14 documents recording the speeches of high-level Chinese politicians (including Foreign Minister, Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Ambassador to Japan, and so on) and a great number of other documents from lower levels discussing the Yasukuni Shrine issue. According to the quantitative analysis, the Chinese have expressed their distrust of Japan through the use of diplomatic discourse, with strongly emotional language. The 89 times distrust

discourse appeared proves that the Yasukuni Shrine issue remains a core concern for China. Among these words and sentences, “Deny and even whitewash the history of invading others” (ten times), “Challenge international/post-war order” (nine times), “Wrong words and deeds” (seven times), “Create obstacles” (six times), “Strongly condemn/protest” (five times), “Challenge the historical conclusions” (four times), “cause vigilance” (four times), “firmly oppose” (four times), “Damage bilateral relations” (four times) were the most frequently used discourse.

There are significant characteristics showing that the discourse from high-level Chinese channels could explain attitudes towards the Japanese in relation to historical disputes. Firstly, the essence of the historical disputes could be interpreted as a judgement that Japan does not follow normative values of respecting history. Secondly, the frequency of appearances was considerable. Thirdly, much of the discourse is strongly emotional, which is unusual in diplomatic discourse, when no serious problems or consequences exist. With these characteristics, distrust could be observed.

<b>Content</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Trust or distrust</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Strongly condemn / protest	China’s attitude	distrust	5
firmly oppose	China’s attitude	distrust	4
Cannot accept / be accepted	China’s attitude	distrust	2
Japanese leaders have to correct the errors	China’s attitude	distrust	2
Chinese people do not welcome him (Shinzo Abe)	China’s attitude	distrust	1
Added up		distrust	14
		trust	0
Deny and even	Description of	distrust	10

whitewash the history of invading others	Japan's activities		
Challenge international / post-war order	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	9
Wrong words and deeds	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	7
Create obstacles	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	6
Challenge the historical conclusions	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	4
Cause vigilance	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	4
Damage bilateral relations	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	4
create provocation / tension	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	3
Dangerous trend	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	3
Harm the feelings (of Chinese people)	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	3
Wrong value on history	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	3
Abandon the principle	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	2
falseness	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	2
Lead to dangerous consequences / a wrong way	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	2
Trample on the human conscience and arrogantly challenge justice	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	2

The Japanese side must take all the responsibilities	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	2
Intentionally obstruct and sabotage	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Harm the mutual trust	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Cannot be the excuse	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Pay homage to the fascist war criminals	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Request Japanese leaders to admit the wrong activities	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Repeatedly make mistakes	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Avoid (mentioning) the history of militarism	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Will be abandoned by history	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
He (Shinzo Abe) lacks the sincerity to face the history	Description of Japan's activities	distrust	1
Added up		distrust	75
		trust	0
Total		distrust	89
		trust	0

Table 6. 1: Frequency of trust/distrust discourse of Chinese government on moral issues

By assessing this quantitative data on the discourse, several characteristics are visible. Firstly, it verifies the existence of a large amount of distrust discourse. Shinzo Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2013 (as the selected case) was only one of many visits to the



Shrine that all Prime Ministers have made. As a single case, it led to the 14 documents and 89 appearances of distrust discourse. Therefore, it could be assumed that the larger issue of the Yasukuni dispute could be regarded as a serious problem, generating and reflecting distrust between China and Japan. Secondly, the seriousness of the Yasukuni issue can be seen through the different types of discourse in the documents. In the previous chapter on Japan's strategic distrust (as the main concern), both trust and distrust discourse were identified in the documents. Although the appearances of distrust discourse dominate in comparison to trust (225-12), the existing signs for a more positive possibility cannot be ignored. However, in the case of China's moral distrust of Japan over the Yasukuni disputes, the documents collected from the Chinese Foreign Ministry's official channel show a different situation: that of 14 documents filled with negative and distrust discourse, and no discernible discourse of trust. This reflects China's dissatisfaction on this issue, and the fact that existing distrust is at a very negative level.

### **China's public opinion**

In addition to governmental channels, distrust over history issues as a serious problem in Sino-Japanese relations is also identifiable in Chinese public opinion. One of the images that Chinese people present to the world is that they care much about the history of Western and (especially) Japanese invasion. As a result, the answers from Chinese people in a public opinion survey on related issues would be meaningful for verifying the hypothesis. The significance of China's public opinion is that it is so strong that the Chinese leadership might try to downplay nationalism in its interactions with Japan. (Forrest, 2009)

### **Related question 1: Reasons behind the Negative Impressions between the Two Countries**

The obvious negative impressions of Japan are reasonable in recent years. The Chinese interviewees offered some explanations for their answers. Among the answers, there were several options related to history issues: Japan's lack of a proper apology and remorse over its history of invading China (70.5%); some Japanese politicians' careless remarks (33.4%); Japanese entrenched nationalism (19.8%). The Chinese public believe that

rising nationalism in Japan is a problem which has been reflected in both the Japanese government and Japanese civil society. By avoiding mentions of history, or even glorifying the invasion would lead to strong reactions in Chinese society. As they have information that Japan's activities do not respect history and their feelings, distrust is generated.

### **Related question 2: Name Recognition of Politicians in One Another's Countries**

This question is more indirect in its connection to moral distrust over history issues. The core findings in this question are that the two most distinctive answers of 'Shinzo Abe (83.6%)' and 'Junichiro Koizumi (53.3%)' have a crucial similarity, because these two Japanese Prime Ministers are the ones who have visited the Yasukuni Shrine in recent years (since Koizumi came into power, in 2001). To ensure that the Yasukuni Shrine is indeed a significant factor, one must compare another answer to this question—"Yukio Hatoyama" (23.8%)—which is far less popular as a response than the previous two. Of these important Japanese politicians, the two most recent Prime Ministers who visited Yasukuni Shrine became the most famous in China. This shows that the Yasukuni Shrine, as a typical case, has a great (negative) impact on Chinese society and bilateral relations.

### **Related question 3: Barriers to Development of Bilateral Relations**

This question identifies the problems in Sino-Japanese relations more directly. As a result, it would be reasonable that there were answers such as "Japan's historical understanding and historical education" (31.5%) and "Japanese politicians' inappropriate statements and actions" (17.4%). As with the problems in bilateral relations, the Chinese public does not trust Japan on related issues (of which a large amount remain unsettled since World War II).

### **Related question 4: Views on Japanese Prime Ministers' Visits to Yasukuni Shrine**

Chinese public attitudes towards the Prime Ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine could directly test the acceptance of the Yasukuni issue in bilateral relations. It is not surprising that the Chinese public answered as follows: No problem with visit as a Prime Minister (5.6%), No problem if the visit is made as a private citizen (20.1%), Not

acceptable even if the visit is made as a private citizen (60.2%), Don't know (13.6%), No response (0.6%). The results show that a considerable majority of the interviewees do not accept any form of visit to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese Prime Ministers. Therefore, the previous visits by Prime Minister Koizumi and Abe would damage bilateral relations and create distrust between the two states.

There is another important and interesting factor to this question of the answers from the Japanese public, as follows: No problem with visit as a Prime Minister (33.5%), No problem if the visit is made as a private citizen (32.5%), Not acceptable even if the visit is made as a private citizen (15.7%), Don't know (18.2%), No response (0.1%). The fundamental difference between the Japanese and Chinese results are that 66% of Japanese interviewees believed that their Prime Minister could visit the Shrine (in different capacities). This would fit the hypothesis that, on the issue of distrust between China and Japan, the problem might originate from the asymmetric structure, that one state regards some of the issues as core concerns, while the other state sees them as mundane. In this way, distrust will increase between states if the concerns cannot be resolved due to a lack of motivation.

### **The qualitative analysis of the Yasukuni Shrine issue**

The quantitative data can provide empirical evidence for the existence and significance of China's moral distrust of Japan. At the same time, the qualitative analysis of typical discourse and/or activities at governmental, public and academic levels will be helpful in proving the reliability of judgements of distrust.

### **China's policies on and reactions to the Yasukuni Shrine issue**

After Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, the Chinese government immediately had different kinds of reactions. One of the most important action was stopping the highest-level mutual interactions. It was not until late 2014 when the two leaders finally met in Beijing, during the APEC summit – and the facial expressions of Chinese President Xi Jinping showed that it was not be a very pleasant meeting. The significance of this was that, for the two geographic neighbours and the two most powerful and

important regional or even global actors, it is unusual and problematic that no high-level summits were conducted. It is reasonable to regard China's refusal to talk with Abe as a kind of punishment for his visit to the Shrine.

### **China's official discourse**

As has been mentioned, there have been dozens of instances of distrust discourse from the Chinese. The two key questions are: how does the discourse reflect China's moral distrust of Japan? And, does distrust discourse reflect/have an impact on Sino-Japanese relations?

In the qualitative analysis of Japan's distrust of China, discourse of distrust is evident. They are identified as "distrust" because, first, they could reflect Japan's worry about the issues in its relationship with China; second, much of the discourse is strongly emotional and negative, which is not normal in diplomatic situations. For example, "Deny and even whitewash the history of invading others" is the most frequently used language (ten times) in these documents. It could be argued that the Chinese government has already linked the issue of the "Japanese Prime Minister visiting Yasukuni Shrine" with the judgement that "Japan is trying to get rid of its historical responsibility". On the one hand, it reflects that China distrusts Japan for its activities based on normative values, as the visits to the Shrine damage China's dignity, as a part of its national interests. On the other hand, the deepening distrust reflected by the growing amount of negative discourse damages the bilateral relationship. It works in a three-stage structure of incidents—distrust—relations. When the negative incidents took place in interstate relations, distrust was created and evident, and therefore had negative impacts on the bilateral relationship. At the same time, a bad bilateral relationship might in turn strengthen mutual distrust. When new incidents take place between the states, they might interpret the incident in a more negative way, and therefore distrust would be further enhanced. This vicious cycle in China's moral distrust of Japan is clear when the Japanese Prime Minister visits the Yasukuni Shrine, which leads to increased Chinese distrust and a long-time refusal to meet with Prime Minister Abe. Therefore, it is reasonable to see a worsening Sino-Japanese relationship caused by distrust resulting from negative confrontations and without reconciliation at the

VIP level. The comparatively bad relationship in recent years has created an atmosphere that exacerbates the problems, disputes and debates, because of China's and Japan's priorities. The status of mutual distrust has brought problems for the two countries in different areas—and they might even have nothing to do with the disputes.

At the same time, the nature of discourse should be analysed. It has been argued that the discourse might be either 'trust-positive' or 'distrust-negative' (or neutral, but this is not collected for analysis), and the expression of the discourse either 'emotionally strong', 'emotionally weak', or 'neutral'. In the previous analysis of Japan's discourse on strategic distrust of China, many of the emotionally strong and negative distrust discourse verify the existence of distrust in the cases. In the case of China's moral distrust of Japan, more aggressive discourse was evident in the documents. For example, there are frequent appearances of discourse like "wrong words/deeds/values", "Trample on the human conscience and arrogantly challenge justice", "lacks the sincerity to face the history", and even "Chinese people do not welcome him (Shinzo Abe)". This is more serious than the Japanese responses, because the Chinese government does not hide its disgust of a specific foreign politician who is the head of Japanese government. As this activity would weaken China's position in future communications with Japan, one possible explanation is that the Chinese government is concerned about the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, and seriously distrusts Japan.

### **China's public opinion**

Public opinion has a great impact on the interstate relationship, by affecting foreign policies. It might be argued that, in democracies like Japan, citizens could use elections to affect the strategies of the state (Hao & Hou, 2009) and to show their influences on foreign policies (Hughes, 2005). While China is not a Western democratic state, there are voices that doubt the autonomy or independence of Chinese civil society (Rose, 2005; Bhattacharya, 2007). Considering its history in the Cold War, many critics still regard Chinese civil society as under the surveillance or even control of the Chinese government. As some of the government-owned media has considerable influence over the Chinese public, nationalism in China is seen by some Western (and Japanese) observers as a kind

of strategy of the Chinese Communist Party to direct internal pressure against external competitors such as Japan, to secure its own legitimacy.

However, the reality is that having influence over society does not mean that public opinion is fully under control. (Forrest, 2009) With the growth of different types of social media and social networks such as Weibo, Weixin and Renren in China, the Chinese public are receiving more information than ever before. Although some other global platforms – including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube – are blocked, it is not possible to hide every incident that takes place. Another argument for the reliability of Chinese public opinion is that there were cases showing that the Chinese public opinion is not independent, because during 1970s and 1980s China and Japan experienced a honeymoon period, during which no significant incidents damaged the bilateral relationship, even though historical issues remained unresolved. If the Chinese people were so concerned about history, there would be no reason for them to hold protests only in recent years. The counter argument to this judgement is that the background is different. Firstly, during the Cold War, China was still a traditional communist country, with an absolutely dominant central government. Current Chinese society is different in that the government is withdrawing from many sectors of society so that the civil society has gained more independent power. Secondly, it was not until the end of the honeymoon period that the historical legacies changed. For example, regarding the Yasukuni Shrine issue, it was not until 1978 that the World War II Class-A War Criminals were moved into the Shrine and Japanese government VIPs started to visit, that the Chinese (the government and civil society) got angry. Therefore, Chinese public opinion still needs to be analysed.

It would not be surprising to find that, through different questions, the Chinese public believe that history is a crucial problem between the two states. The detailed analysis of each related question has been discussed in previous sections. One conclusive characteristic of the Chinese public is that they care much more about the history issues than does the Japanese public. At the same time, denying its history of invading China might even be connected to the assumption that the Japanese right wing seeks the revival of militarism. Considering the recent attempts to modify the Japanese constitution for

collective defence, it is reasonable that the Chinese public distrusts Japan on these moral issues.

### **A selection of China's semi-official discourse**

It could be argued that China's politics are different to many others' based on its systems and institutional settings. Although others might also have institutions or organizations with governmental connections, the normal behaviour of semi-official actors taking part in crafting China's foreign policy agenda is still a characteristic of this country. For example, the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) is a typical example of these semi-official organizations. While it is not a part of the government system, it is a think tank under the leadership of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, the opinions and words from the CIIS are to certain extent representative of the Chinese government and, in some cases, can deliver more direct and radical ideas which could hardly be issued through diplomatic channels. There are many other institutions and organizations like this, such as the *People's Daily*, and so on. In this way, discourse by semi-official organizations is valuable for identifying the Chinese government's status of trust/distrust.

In terms of the moral distrust issues between China and Japan, there has been a collection of various academic documents and editorials related to certain incidents. Taking the Yasukuni Shrine issue as an example, three typical 'research outcomes' are provided by the official website of the CIIS, entitled "The impact of right-deviation of Japanese politics on Sino-Japanese relations" (Ding, 2006; Shi Y. , 2013b), "Japan cannot separate history from the realities" (Jia, 2015), and "The impact of Japan's strategic orientation on Sino-Japanese relations" (Shi Y. , 2013a) (It needs to be mentioned that these documents are originally in Chinese and have been translated by the author of this thesis.) Within these articles, there are arguments that might indicate how China views this moral issue, and how it affects Sino-Japanese relations. The main arguments include:

- Japan' right-wing politics is becoming stronger, which is shown in the history issues.

- The history issues are comprised of three main topics: visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, reversing historical facts, and actively promoting the history textbook that denies the history of invasion. (Shi Y. , 2013b)
- The logic of Japan's activities on history issues is that by "whitewashing" history issues, Japan can revive itself as a major power. (Ibid.)
- Abe's ultimate goal is to bring Japan back to a "normal" state by separating history and the current realities in its relations with China. (Jia, 2015)

In short, the arguments from this think tank leave the audience with the impression that the history disputes originate from attempts by Japan to sever ties with the darker aspects of its past. This tendency harms China's current and future interests. For the status quo, the Chinese government's prestige and public opinion in the Chinese society could be shocked by Japan's attitude towards history, because of a lack of a social foundation for reconciliation. Chinese public opinion towards Japan cannot be fully controlled (Harnzawi, 2013), and might in turn urge China to emphasise issues of reputation. China also worries that future Japanese generations will not have knowledge of its wartime invasions, which could be a potential threat to China if a similar conflict takes place. Therefore, China's moral distrust of Japan plays a very big part in current Sino-Japanese relations.

### **A brief discussion of Chinese academic debates on moral issues**

Chinese academic discussions and debates also provide interpretations of how Chinese scholars understand the current moral issues between the two countries. It would not be surprising if the Yasukuni Shrine issue was regarded as a typical example of Japan's 'wrong' understanding of history (He C. , 2015; Hu J. , 2014), and China's impression of the rightward shift of Abe's Cabinet (Ding, 2006; Liang, 2014). The seriousness of the Yasukuni Shrine case is that the problem seems to get more dangerous since Abe's 2013 visit, with at least two new factors that enhance China's moral distrust. First, the previous Prime Ministers would always visit the Shrine as a private citizen, to weaken the political impact. However, Abe visited the Shrine as the Prime Minister, and emphasised that he would report his work from the second term of the Cabinet of Japan to the 'souls' in the



Shrine. Secondly, the visits by former Prime Ministers were followed by speeches including introspection about invasion wars. However, Abe's 2013 visit bore no signs of this, except his self-defence. (Zhu, 2014) Therefore, the information China got from the visit was that Japan might be more active in reversing history to become a normal state (Lu & Tian, 2014). In this way, both sources of uncertainty and clear information contributed to the empirical evidence, and lead to a deepening moral distrust.

### **Political correctness issues in China's moral distrust of Japan**

The notion of political correctness can be interpreted as one actor accepting and following values that are accepted by other actors within a certain community (Morris, 2001). As was mentioned in the previous chapter about Japan's distrust of China, political correctness remains significant in international relations especially for the two most important actors in the region, China and Japan.

For China, the political correctness issue is connected to history issues. Political correctness would respect the history of war, and have appropriate attitudes towards the victims—as well as prevent a future war of invasion. There are reasons why the history disputes still exist as a problem, decades after the war ended. Firstly, the reality is that Japan should be responsible for its war crimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It is undeniable that Japan launched a war on China, and there were a great number of victims. In this way, the request of Japan to take responsibility is reasonable. Secondly, especially in relations with Japan, successful diplomacy is directly related to the legitimacy or domestic support from the Chinese civil society. Relying on good performance, every government should focus on balancing public opinion and national interests. As the mainstream opinion in the Chinese civil society still regards Japan as irresponsible about its history, the Chinese government should take action. Thirdly, Japan's actions related to history can be interpreted as an obstacle to political correctness; including Prime Ministers visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, the textbook issues, and so on. These existing facts are significant in bilateral relations, so China considers the history issues as serious problems in Sino-Japanese relations.

In short, it would be politically correct for the Japanese government to stay away from controversial historical issues, and maintain a sincere attitude of introspection about history—this is what the Chinese government always argues as a ‘basic principle’ in international society, and what is called ‘learning from the past, facing the future’. It would be politically wrong for the Japanese to exhibit an dismissive attitude toward the history of war between Japan and China, or to take any actions that the Chinese deem sensitive.

There is evidence to verify the argument that the Chinese treat the issues of historical disputes as problems of political correctness. Let’s take the Yasukuni Shrine case as an example. At the governmental level, the last time Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the Yasukuni Shrine was on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013. From then until May 2014, there were at least 14 records of speeches given by Chinese high level politicians (including Foreign Minister, Foreign Ministry Spokesman, and Ambassador to Japan, and more), and a great number of other documents from lower levels discussing the Yasukuni Shrine issue. According to a quantitative calculation, the Chinese expressed its distrust of Japan through its diplomatic discourse with very strong, emotional expressions. Very negative discourse appeared 79 times, which proves that the Yasukuni Shrine issue remains a core concern for China. Among these words and sentences, “Deny and even whitewash the history of invading others” (ten times), “Challenge international/post-war order” (nine times), “Wrong words and deeds” (six times), “Create obstacles” (five times), “Strongly condemn/protest” (five times), “Challenge the historical conclusions” (four times), “Cause vigilance” (four times), “firmly oppose” (four times), “Damage bilateral relations” (four times) were the most frequently used discourse. There is significant evidence that shows that discourse from high-level Chinese channels can explain the attitudes towards the Japanese side over historical disputes. Firstly, the history disputes could be interpreted as China’s judgement that Japan will not follow the normative value of respecting history. Secondly, the frequency of appearances was considerable. Thirdly, much of the discourse is emotionally strong, which is unusual in diplomatic communications, when no serious problems exist. Therefore, we can clearly see that the Chinese government views the actions not respecting history as politically wrong.

At the civil society level, the Chinese citizens also express their understanding of political correctness. I use the data from the 11th Japan-China Public Opinion Poll Analysis Report to verify this. According to this public opinion survey, there is a question about the “Reasons for negative impression”. For the Chinese people who took this survey, the answer “Japan’s lack of a proper apology and remorse over the history of invasion of China” received 70.5%, and for the question regarding “Barriers to development of bilateral relations”, the answer “Japan’s historical understanding and historical education” received 31.5%. These two facts verify that the historical issues between Japan and China have become issues of political correctness, as they are factors at both the governmental and civil society levels, which would greatly affect Sino-Japanese relations.

The significance of understanding political correctness for the Chinese related to historical issues is that we can understand why China would distrust and be angry at Japan when related incidents take place. These are questions of political right or wrong—they affect China’s national interests, reputation and its judgement of whether Japan is a state which can be trusted. We can also predict future trends of bilateral relations: when historical disputes occur, they would have a negative impact on bilateral relations.

### **A Sectional Conclusion**

The theoretical discussions related to the hypothesis that China holds a strong moral distrust of Japan is based on the existing empirical evidence that the bilateral relationship has always been greatly affected by moral issues between the two states in a negative way. There are arguments that moral trust has hardly any value to prove significant. The core reason is that moral issues in international relations might not be regarded as rational factors in international relations, so countries are not directed in certain ways of behaving, with normative values as the main standard for making judgements. However, this kind of argument does not fundamentally conflict with this research. Firstly, moral values could indeed be a source of trust and distrust. One typical example would be on issues

between different ideologies. Since the confrontations between the communist camp and capitalist camp throughout the Cold War period has left significant impressions on the people from different states, there might still be beliefs that other states from the opposite camp might damage their national interests. Democratic peace theory also verifies this assumption, that the states and people would treat normative values and moral issues as a kind of standard for making judgements in international relation. The claim of democratic peace theory, that wars would be less likely to take place between democracies and promotion of democracy by some states is reasonable under this circumstance. On the other hand, this thesis specifically focuses on the hypothesis that distrust is a problem between China and Japan. Therefore, although there are debates over the significance of moral trust, the negative influences of moral distrust cannot be denied.

In terms of the case study of Japanese Prime Minister Abe's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, the logic is constructed in the following way:

- Firstly, it has been hypothesised that China's moral distrust of Japan needs to be confirmed in the Sino-Japanese relations. In addition, it needs to be proven that moral distrust is China's primary concern in the bilateral relationship (compared to strategic distrust).
- Secondly, qualitative work in this section will verify the hypotheses. It will be done by analysing the existing empirical evidence, including policies/actions in reaction to visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, official discourse from Chinese governmental channels, Chinese public opinion, and academic discussions from Chinese institutions. According to the existing materials, it is reasonable to regard moral distrust of Japan as the crucial concern of China; because the evidence clearly shows that the Chinese use every methods to firmly oppose the visits at very high diplomatic cost.
- Thirdly, there are quantitative calculations based on the data collected from the appearances of distrust discourse discovered in official documents and public opinion. The results from data collection show that, on the one hand, a large amount of distrust discourse appeared when the Yasukuni dispute took place. On the other hand, much of the discourse proved to be emotionally strong and negative, with distrust caused either by a lack of information or already known incidents.

- Moreover, a different approach to the analysis of political correctness will also be provided. Similar to the Japanese case, China also has a political correctness problem when dealing with its relationship with Japan. To be specific, political correctness would ensure that Japan had an attitude of deep introspection towards the history issues. Whenever Japan fails to follow or meet China's demands, moral distrust is generated. Therefore, it is reasonable that the Yasukuni issue could easily lead to distrust, as it has gone beyond political correctness in China.

In general, it needs to be mentioned that the Yasukuni Shrine is only one part of the historical disputes between China and Japan. For this issue, China expresses strong protest at the governmental level, halting bilateral interactions and even encourages its ambassadors in other states around the world to have their voices heard in local societies to express its serious concerns. If the research case studies could be extended to more historical disputes between the two states, more empirical evidence could be observed as supporting materials to verify China's moral distrust of Japan.

### **6.2.2 China's strategic distrust of Japan**

#### **An introduction and theoretical framework of China's strategic distrust**

There are also explanations for the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations from the perspective of China's strategic distrust of Japan. Although strategic distrust is not China's priority, it "remains as a problem" (Yahuda, 2014). To be specific, China's strategic concerns about Japan are assumptions about whether Japan is reviving as a military power and/or will balance against China via the US-Japan alliance (He C. , 2015; Wan, 2006; Bhattacharya, 2007). The typical argument is, "although Japan cannot name its military force as the army, it is still one of the most powerful forces in Asia." (Chu, 2014)

For a long time after the normalization of bilateral relations in 1972, especially before the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, potential strategic confrontations were not China's core focus in its relationship with Japan. Although the Cold War might have caused tensions between the two former rivals, the common external threat of the Soviet Union was regarded as the

main problem in regional relations. Therefore, the two states experienced a stable, “honeymoon” period in bilateral relations. At the same time, based on the rationality of states, strategic trust/distrust relies on the rational calculation of whether another state could be a strategic threat to one’s national interests (Amadae, 2007; Dowding, 2001; Hindmoor, 2006; Opp, 2013). Hence, it is reasonable that China had fewer strategic disputes with Japan in this period because there were fewer conflicts over national interests, considering the huge gap between the comprehensive national power and goals of the two states. Although there are predictions for the dominant role between Japan and China in Asia in the post-Cold War era, there is not much evidences from the 1980s and 1990s in academic discussions. (Hayes, 2001)

However, the situation is quite different in the recent years. Firstly, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are no common threats for China and Japan, so they might pay more attention to each other—as they are the two most powerful regional actors. Moreover, the rise of China has greatly changed comparative national powers in this region. China has settled its strategic goals to match its national power, while Japan modified its foreign policy to address the rise of China. In this way, the main strategies of Japan, including seeking stronger political influences/military capacity and strengthening its alliance with the US, could cause distrust in China (Yahuda, 2014).

There is also empirical evidence showing that strategic distrust is China’s secondary concern. On one hand, there is China’s discourse and activities showing distrust, such as refusing to accept Japan as a permanent member of UN Security Council in 2005. On the other hand, it has to be admitted that the direct and indirect discourse from the Chinese is less than for moral distrust.

Before analysing the empirical evidence, it is important to explain the theoretical framework for strategic trust/distrust in international relations, to justify the case study through the connection between theories and empirical content. It has to be re-emphasised that the notion of ‘strategic trust/distrust’ is not the same as what Uslaner and Rathbun (Rathbun B. C., 2012; 2009; Uslaner, 2000; 2001; 2002;2013) have

described as “trust/distrust based on already owned information”, but rather as “strategic and moral trust/distrust on strategic issues”. The significance of the research of strategic trust/distrust in this thesis, from the perspective of International Relations theories, is that the arguments and claims of state rationality fits the assumption that both strategic trust and distrust play a role in interstate relations. As states are regarded as rational actors, they have to consider whether their national interests could be harmed or not by others when making foreign policy. Therefore, if the activities of one state could damage or even have the potential to damage the national interests of other states, distrust is generated due to states’ rational need to secure themselves.

Typical cases of China distrusting Japan over strategic issues include issues such as Japan’s attempts to strengthen the US-Japan alliance, promoting stronger military or strategic relationships with other regional actors, attempts to circumvent the existing restrictions of its peace constitution to become a ‘normal state’ (Ding, 2006; Hughes, 2005; Inoguchi, 2003), and the activities to enhance its global status, such as trying to become a permanent member of the UN security council. To conduct the case study, some work needs to be done, including specifying the related incidents/issues in the cases, collecting Chinese reactions to the incidents, giving a qualitative interpretation of the activities/discourse, and a quantitative calculation of the data of appearances of distrust discourse.

Nine documents have been collected on the topic of China’s strategic distrust of Japan. These documents are related to the issue of Japan’s attempts to become a normal state and expanding its international influence. These documents include records of the Foreign Ministry’s Press Meetings, important speeches by Chinese officials responsible for China-Japan relations, and other statements.

#### **The quantitative analysis:**

Discourse	Type	Trust or distrust	Frequency
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Japan should not damage (the interests/regional stability)	China's attitude	Distrust	7
Have (serious) concerns on Japan	China's attitude	Distrust	7
Japan should respect the security concerns of its neighbouring Asian states.	China's attitude	Distrust	3
doubt	China's attitude	Distrust	2
(firmly) oppose	China's attitude	Distrust	2
China has expressed its solemn stance	China's attitude	Distrust	2
Should be alert on Japan's activities	China's attitude	Distrust	2
Hope Japan be cautious on security issues	China's attitude	Distrust	1
Solemnly urging Japan (to remain the peaceful development)	China's attitude	Distrust	1
(Japan's activities) should not be against the third party (China)	China's attitude	Distrust	1
Added up		Distrust	28
		Trust	0
Deliberately creating China Threats for domestic political agenda	Description of Japan's activities	Distrust	4



Deviating from the direction of development of China-Japan relations	Description of Japan's activities	Distrust	1
Shaking the foundation of Japan's post war peaceful development	Description of Japan's activities	Distrust	1
Might cause dangerous consequences	Description of Japan's activities	Distrust	1
Do not fit the current trend of the world	Description of Japan's activities	Distrust	1
Added up		Distrust	8
		Trust	0
Total		Distrust	36
		Trust	0

Table 6. 2: Frequency of trust/distrust discourse of Chinese government on strategic issues

Qualitative methods are used to verify two kinds of questions. Firstly, the fundamental questions is whether there is evidence of Chinese distrust of Japan. Moreover, it is necessary to provide interpretations of how trust/distrust can be reflected. At the same time, quantitative methods are needed. For example, distrust might not be identified even if there is qualitative evidence—a certain amount of discourse and activities could help exclude unexpected issues, or at least minimize the possibility of making mistakes.

In the nine documents collected from the official website, 36 instances of distrust discourse were identified. This could be regarded as a high amount, considering the fact that the documents recorded on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's website are not complete. Contrary to the case of Japan's strategic distrust of China, the evidence of discourse with trust can barely be found in official Chinese documents. In this way, there

is no need to produce a table for a comparison of trust and distrust discourse—basically, it would be 36-0.

As has been mentioned above, there are two types of discourse: that stating China's own attitudes (as reactions or active voices), and that describing Japan's activities. The significance of having these two categories of discourse is that they can help analyse the origins of trust/distrust reflected in the documents. In terms of China's strategic distrust of Japan, the comparison of appearances between "China's attitudes" and "Description of Japan's activities" is 8-8. There are only eight instances of "Description of Japan's activities". The reason for there be less might be that there is less empirical evidence, or fewer instances of strategic issues for China to voice objections. Or, put a different way, these activities are within the scope of Japan's sovereignty. China could not interfere unless it is directly related to China's national interests. At the same time, there is more discourse related to "China's attitudes" (twenty-eight pieces). Although there is not enough evidence, China still has many concerns about strategic issues in its relationship with Japan. Due to a lack of information for the future, China tends to keep repeating words as reminders or alerts, in case Japan goes further on strategic issues.

### **China's public opinion**

The source and significance of Chinese public opinion has already been discussed in previous sections, and that Chinese public opinion is necessary for case analysis. Therefore, this thesis picks several questions related to strategic issues, as follows.

### **Question 1: Barriers to Development of Bilateral Relations**

It has to be mentioned that this question is mentioned and used in other cases. However, this question also provides answers from Chinese interviewees about whether distrust is a barrier to the development of bilateral relations. Specifically, 20.8% of Chinese interviewees claim that a "lack of trustful relationships between Chinese and Japanese peoples" is a barrier to development of bilateral relations. At the same time, 25.5% claim that a "lack of trust between Chinese and Japanese government" is a barrier. As has been argued, the results show that, on one hand, the Chinese public understands that a lack of

trust is a problem in Sino-Japanese relations. On the other hand, the interviewees mention both a lack of trust at both the civil society and governmental levels. To understand the significance of the data, there are more-detailed options, in terms of specific incidents between China and Japan, as opposed to these two more-abstract conclusions; these might be more 'attractive' to the public rather than researchers. That being said, there are only three options (from 17 in total) which got higher than 25.5%, including "territorial issue", "Japan's historical understanding and historical education" and "disputes over marine resources".

There are several other questions related to potential strategic issues between China and Japan, including "Disputes over marine resources (gas field development in the East China Sea)" (25.0%), "Territorial Issue (Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands)" (66.4%), "Change in Japan's security policy and military build-up" (14.6%). The significance of these questions is that the 'barriers' to bilateral relations should be past incidents, or at least have some empirical evidence to back up assumptions. Therefore, as these existing problems have left damaging impressions on the interstate relationship, they can be regarded as a source of distrust from the Chinese public's perspective. In fact, the disputes in the East China Sea, Japanese security policy, and the territorial disputes indeed exist to verify the hypothesis of strategic distrust.

### **Question 2: Reasons for Unfavourable Impression**

This question is significant for both states, for strategic and moral trust/distrust issues, because the negative impressions are created by either the negative incidents caused by a lack of transparency (Hook, Gilson, Hughes, & Dobson, 2005, p. 198) or clear evidence. They are more likely to transform into distrust in an easy way. There are options such as "Japan's attempt to besiege China on military, economic and ideological fronts in cooperation with the United States" (41.1%) and "Japanese purchase of the Diaoyu Islands for the nation and fuelling the confrontation" (68.1%). Although there were not many different answers, the focused choices still show that the Chinese people recognize the existence of strategic challenges from Japan. In other words, the Chinese public might interpret issues or actions of Japan as strategic threats. It would be reasonable for the

Chinese public to have this kind of negative interpretation, because distrust has become the dominant impression when they talk about Sino-Japanese relations.

### **Question 3: Social/Political systems of One Another's Countries**

This question is mentioned for the first time in the two cases studies. The question is one with comparatively neutral answers; however, the results from the Chinese public are interesting, and are significant for explaining the Chinese public's strategic distrust. Among the answers to this question, the Chinese public picked the following factors: "Nationalism" (25.6%), "Militarism" (46.0%), "Great Power Favouritism" (12.2%) and "Hegemonism" (40.1%). According to the answers, the Chinese public seem to see Japan as a regional military threat. While the peaceful constitution restricts Japan, these answers might only be the assumptions and worries of people who do not have the most up-to-date information about bilateral relations. As Japan tries to overcome obstacles, the Chinese public have enough reasons to believe that their assumptions are closer to reality. Therefore, they tend to interpret Japan's actions as strategic threats of "militarism", "hegemonism", and so on, with serious distrust.

### **Question 4: Countries and Regions That Pose a Military Threat**

It is not surprising that the Chinese interviewees choose the US (73.8%) and Japan (81.8%) as military threats. Therefore, it is easy to imagine how the Chinese public views Japan and the US-Japan alliance in this region. If one state is regarded as a military threat by another actor, it could hardly be trusted.

### **Question 5: Answers to the Question, "Will there be a Military Conflict between Japan and China in the Future?"**

Here, 10.2% Chinese interviewees believe that there will be conflict within a few years, and 31.1% believe that there will be conflict in the future. Therefore, 41.3% of Chinese interviewees were pessimistic about future peace between China and Japan. Considering that only a very small number of Chinese think that the origins of bilateral disputes are China's fault, Japan could easily be treated as an untrustworthy state.

### **The qualitative analysis**

These official documents were collected from the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. At the same time, it needs to be mentioned that these nine documents are the most recent, and the only ones to be found on the website, from 2013-2015. There are not many new strategic issues from the Japanese in recent years. Meanwhile, the long-lasting issue of attempts to change its peace constitution has experienced some breakthroughs in 2014-2015, and the newly-approved security act might enable Japan to play a more significant role in collective security. From the Chinese perspective, this change might be threatening, due to doubts over whether Japan is attempting to revive its military power. Therefore, qualitative analysis of the existing evidence is needed, including the reactions and policies of the Chinese government, official discourse and public opinion.

### **China's reactions and foreign policies**

The strategic issues between states, especially those issues which have not become immediate problems, might not lead to direct responses because of the rationality of states. If the strategic issues were proven to be purely assumptions rather than reflections of reality, the states would have to pay a cost, and might suffer losses on positive activities in bilateral relations, and also damage to their national images. Under this circumstance, the reactions and foreign policies can be viewed in a conservative way, unless the problems have already caused disputes between states. In the case of China's strategic distrust of Japan, there are similar consequences. Many of the related issues take place without direct confrontations. When Japan continually strengthens its alliance with the US, conducts joint military exercises or organises/constructs regional organisations, it can easily explain that these activities are not aimed at any third party. Due to the basic diplomatic principle of respecting the sovereignty of other states, China has no reason to directly oppose these activities through governmental channels.

However, countries do not wait for their assumption to become reality. China, as a state with growing national comprehensive power, would take actions to prepare counter-actions. In China's Military Strategy document, published on China's Ministry of National Defence website, it has been stated that,

“As the economic and strategic focus of the world transfer to the region of Pacific Asia, the US would continually promote its rebalancing strategy, strengthening its military presence and the system of military alliance. Japan has been active on seeking for getting rid of the post war system with the substantial adjustment on its military and security policies. Its national development direction has drawn great attentions of the regional actors.”<sup>20</sup>

So the Chinese government has already identified the potential strategic challenge from Japan, and produced policies to deal with these issues. Specifically, it could be argued that the rise of China as a military force is partly aimed at addressing the potential revival of Japanese military force (Lu & Tian, 2014). Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, China has greatly increased its military force to protect its growing national interests, especially in relation to maritime issues: including building its first aircraft carrier, *Liaoning*, and setting up the air defence identification zone in the East China Sea—which overlaps with Japan, and China also sends its navy and air force to cruise near disputed areas.

All the policies and activities could be interpreted as the result of growing strategic distrust because, first, China does not have enough information to make a judgement of whether Japan’s activities – such as removing the limitation of collective defence – could ultimately turn into direct threats to China’s national security. On the other hand, according to the existing evidence of Japan strengthening its alliance with the US, expanding its influence on the Southeast Asian states by offering economic and military assistance, China judges that Japan’s strategies could threaten China as an imaginary enemy. The reality is that no other state in the region could prevent Japan from taking these actions—a comparatively pessimistic opinion.

### **China’s official discourse**

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2015-05/26/content\\_4588132.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2015-05/26/content_4588132.htm), accessed 18/08/2015, originally Chinese and translated by the author.

This part of analysis focuses on the discourse collected from the nine documents, on the words and sentences themselves, rather than the quantitative calculation. There are different kinds of discourse in the documents. The standard for judging whether discourse is “trusting” or “distrusting” has been discussed in the previous chapter and sections. Basically, it has to be identified if the discourse reflects an attitude of distrust caused by a lack of information, predictions of external threats, or clearly damaging activities from other actors.

For the first kind of discourse, showing a lack of information, there are examples; for example, “doubt”, “should be alert on Japan’s activities”, and so on. In this discourse, China obviously has doubts about whether Japan has the strategic goal of rivalling China, or protecting its own interests by harming China’s. However, the existing evidence is not enough to verify these assumptions. Therefore, China can only express its doubts and distrust by using this language. There is another kind of discourse showing that China distrusts Japan, as there is evidence that shows existing damage to China’s interests. This discourse can also be observed in the selected documents, through phrases like “firmly oppose”, “shaking the foundation of Japan’s post war peaceful development”, and so on. Since Japan has already taken essential steps towards modifying its domestic law for collective defence and becoming a normal state with more influence on this region and globally, potential threats become more immediate. Therefore, it is reasonable that China expresses its distrust in these diplomatic documents.

Moreover, the combination of emotional qualifiers and essential contents could also verify the existence of distrust in the discourse. As has been argued, rational actors would not freely use emotionally charged and negative discourse on the diplomatic stage. Otherwise, it would contradict that actors act rationally. Therefore, the explanation for this kind of discourse is that the state would be extremely dissatisfied, worried or angry about another actor. Consequently, distrust would be generated. In the documents collected, there are examples of this, including “firmly oppose”, “serious concerns”, “dangerous consequences”, and so on.

### **The interpretation on how Japan's strategic behaviours shape China's strategic distrust**

The previous sections show how strategic distrust can be interpreted from discourse, policies and public opinion in China. At the same time, it should be remembered that it is Japan's strategic behaviour that shapes China's trust and distrust. To be specific, whether there has been behaviour that damages or could damage China's national interests is the core question. This thesis would like to provide analysis of a typical case of strategic issues: the Talisman Sabre 2015 Military Exercise. The Talisman Sabre military exercise is a US-Australia joint military exercise. However, Japan took part in the 2015 exercise. According to the principles after the World War II, Japan can only maintain a Self-Defence Force, rather than a regular military force—this brings a sense of security to China. When Japan takes part in any military exercise, China experiences doubts, based on three factors. First, participating in any military exercise is itself a problem for China. With Japan's history invasion, and China's history of being nationally weak for a long period of time, China has reason to doubt whether Japan's militarism might be revived – this generates distrust. Second, the reality is that many of Japan's military exercises are conducted with the US. The US-Japan alliance is dominant in this region due to its economic, political and military influences. China might assume that the US and Japan intend to restrict China's growth and, therefore, Japan's behaviour could be regarded as a potential challenge to China's strategic interests. Moreover, the Talisman Sabre exercises in 2015 went beyond the US-Japan alliance. The original US-Australia military exercises, with Japan and other members' participation, could present China with an impression of multiple countries uniting—that they could unite against China is a potential threat.

In conclusion, Japanese behaviour on strategic issues might lead to possible Chinese doubts about whether Japan is trying to seek to revive itself as a great power, and acquire external assistance in order to balance against China. There are academic arguments from China that indicate Japan's attempts include goals such as seeking an equal position in the US-Japan alliance, getting rid of the restrictions from World War II, and changing the political agenda and order in the region. (He X. , 2013, p.95) These doubts strongly drive



China's strategic concerns to be more conservative towards Japan, and could lead to strategic distrust.

### **A sectional conclusion**

It has to be admitted that there have been fewer strategic confrontations, compared to moral disputes, from the Chinese perspective. Although there have been issues and incidents between the two states, China does not interpret most of the problems as strategic distrust, as does Japan. Therefore, compared to moral distrust, far less evidence can be identified on strategic distrust. However, it cannot be denied that strategic distrust issues still exist, even though states in most cases would tend not to directly blame others if issues would not damage their interests. The overall logic of this section of China's strategic distrust on Japan is as follows:

- First, there is the hypothesis that China has strategic distrust of Japan. At the same time, as argued above, it has to be understood that the hypothesis also indicates that strategic distrust is secondary compared to moral distrust.
- Secondly, the qualitative research to verify the hypothesis focuses on the essence of the strategic issues. There are key questions on how to identify strategic disputes between China and Japan, how to identify distrust in these issues, and how Japanese strategic behaviour shapes China's strategic distrust. According to the materials, the selected case studies of strategic issues between the two states leads to worries in China about whether Japan will rise again as a military power and damage China's strategic interests. With these uncertainties and Japan's more active expansion of its strategic and military influence, strategic distrust is deeper than ever before. Similar to other sections, public opinion questions also contribute to the analysis that the opinions from civil society could explain the possible reasons for foreign policies to be affected by the public. It is not surprising that the Chinese public holds an attitude of distrust according to the survey questions.
- Third, the quantitative study could help support the qualitative findings. According to the quantitative calculation, there have been 36 instances of distrust discourse regarding strategic issues in the nine official documents examined. Moreover, a comparison between distrust and trust turns up an absolute dominance of distrust

(36-0). At the same time, discourse showing “China’s attitudes” are more prominent than “descriptions of Japan’s activities” (28-8), indicating a possible trend that, although empirical evidence is not plentiful, China still feels threatened. In conclusion, a large amount of discourse, with the essence of distrust caused either by a lack of information or empirical evidence of causing damage to interests, as well as strongly emotional and negative expressions, could help verify the hypothesis of China’s strategic distrust.

In general, the strategic distrust of Japan reflects many issues, so the selected case studies offer only a select impression. Considering past incidents, Japan’s more active defence policy, and so on, China’s strategic distrust of Japan may become even more important in the bilateral relationship in the future.

As has been argued in the previous sections, the hypotheses include different questions. On one hand, the existence of China’s moral and strategic distrust needs to be verified, and this has been done in the previous two sections. On the other hand, another key issue here is that China’s moral distrust is a priori, and strategic distrust is a secondary concern. This forms an asymmetric structure of mutual distrust between China and Japan, which is the theme of this thesis.

### **6.3 A comparative study between China’s moral distrust and strategic distrust of Japan**

As mentioned above, the level of importance given to moral distrust and strategic distrust are relative and dynamic, depending on the development of the two states and their bilateral relations. Based on current Sino-Japanese relations, this thesis suggests that moral distrust is the a priori issue for China, and strategic distrust remains secondary, though it does suggest a rising trend. Therefore, an internal asymmetry can be observed in China’s overall distrust of Japan.

As theoretical support, the definition of moral and strategic trust/distrust and the distinction between them is provided. This is significant as these notions might lead to

debates under different circumstances. It has been argued that this research does not follow Rathbun's and Uslaner's definitions, who defined strategic trust as trusting with information, and moral trust as trusting others to follow positive values. This thesis focuses on specific issues in international relations including the strategic and moral fields. Moral trust and distrust are different to strategic trust and distrust. Despite the different origins of issues, moral trust/distrust might have a longer term influence on the mutual trust and bilateral relations, compared to strategic trust/distrust, as it might identify other states as "not trustworthy". By comparison, strategic trust and distrust might vary with changes in regional strategic situations, national power, and other factors. Therefore, China's level of moral distrust and strategic distrust of Japan is different.

This research uses multiple methods for judging whether trust/distrust exists in China-Japan relations, and how positive/negative is the situation. The general methodology is based on characteristic difficulty of identifying trust/distrust in international relations, and so they need to be analysed by interpreting discourse or state activities. Therefore, collecting documents on certain issues and cases, to discover the pieces of discourse reflecting trust/distrust is the first step to identifying trust/distrust. It has to be mentioned that there are two aspects to this method. First, qualitative analysis of the discourse is important to confirm the nature of distrust as it reflects a judgement that there is certain information that harms or might harm one's interests. At the same time, quantitative analysis is helpful to understand whether the trust/distrust is strong or weak between the two states. The repeated appearance of certain discourse can be treated as evidence of trust/distrust.

Another key reason for the case study is because strategic/moral trust and distrust can be interpreted as state rationality and normative values in international relations. The strategic issues between states might lead to trust/distrust when judged through the rationality of states. In other words, the judgement of whether another actor is trustworthy is based on certain information or incidents that have happened in interstate relations, instead of on impressions of whether another state is trustworthy or not. In short, it cannot be denied that strategic trust and distrust have some similar characteristics to the

realistic approach in international relations theory, that acting rationally by securing national interests is one of the basic rules for state actors. On the other hand, normative values emphasizes a different type of trust/distrust, focusing on the nature of another country. Moral norms and values in international relations might suggest that, in an ideal situation, states should tend to trust others. However, the real world is not ideal. Normative values of moral trust/distrust judge whether another actor is trustworthy in nature. As opposed to strategic trust/distrust, this kind of moral trust/distrust not only relies on every independent event in the relationship. It is also generated by the long term interactions and, therefore, moral trust and distrust concern both categories of issues.

There is a basic hypothesis which could form the structure of the whole thesis, that China has both moral and strategic distrust of Japan, that moral distrust is dominant, and strategic distrust is secondary. This is a three-stage argument, and the following assumptions need to be verified. First, both moral and strategic distrust should exist from China's perspective of Japan. Second, compared to moral trust and strategic trust, distrust can be identified as more significant in Sino-Japanese relations today. Third, within the status of China's distrust of Japan, moral distrust is asymmetrically more crucial than strategic distrust, and clear through certain quantitative and empirical evidence. The existence of both moral and strategic distrust is verifiable by examining discourse and activities of distrust, and shows that China is worried that its national interests will be harmed. Moreover, the other two assumptions can be verified through detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis.

### **6.3.1 The comparative study by qualitative analysis**

The qualitative analysis is mainly helpful for the first two stages of verifying the assumptions mentioned above. On one hand, empirical evidence (discourse, activities, policies, and so on) indicate the existence of China's moral and strategic distrust of Japan. For example, Chinese respondents provided the answer of "Deny and even whitewash the history of invading others" when asked about the moral issues related to Abe's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Distrust identifiable, because China has accurate information that the Japanese government will continue with these activities, which damages China's

reputation (related to national interest of legitimacy, and so on), and the uncertainty about whether Japan will take further actions on moral issues. On the strategic front, there is plenty of evidence of Chinese distrust discourse, such as “Japan should respect the security concerns of its neighbouring Asian states”. As China doubts that Japan’s activities have negative effects on its own security arrangements, it could be argued that China distrusts Japan on these strategic issues.

Moreover, it can be verified that the qualitative essence of the evidence of moral distrust issues is more significant from the Chinese perspective than are strategic distrust issues. As argued in previous chapters, the discourse of trust and distrust is composed of two parts – “emotional expression” and “positive/negative essence”. For the emotional expression, there might be strongly emotionally as well as weak examples depending on the incident. The “positive/negative essence” is the key standard for judging whether it could be evidence of trust or distrust. Therefore, there are different combinations of discourse, within which the level of trust/distrust will no doubt be different. In terms of the discourse on moral distrust issues, China tends to use more emotionally strong and negative language. For example, the Chinese government used phrases such as “Will be abandoned by history”, “He (Shinzo Abe) lacks the sincerity to face the history” and “Chinese people do not welcome him (Shinzo Abe)”, issued through diplomatic channels. It is unusual for countries to actively create problems by directly criticising another state’s head of government if there are no serious problems or disputes between them. In this case, it cannot be denied that this emotionally strong and essentially negative discourse is evidence of very strong moral distrust.

By comparison, the discourse on strategic issues has both similarities and differences. There is existing discourse describing Japan’s actions in a negative way, such as “Shaking the foundation of Japan's post war peaceful development”. However, the level of emotion in the expressions is not as strong as those for moral distrust issues. Besides, China focuses more on expressing its own attitudes, such as “firmly oppose”, “cannot accept”. There is a gap between the two ways of describing the other’s activities, and expressing one’s own attitude: the latter is comparatively weaker on many occasions. Expressing one’s attitude causes fewer problems at the diplomatic level, and so it is the

right of sovereign countries to do so—no matter if it is positive or negative. However, describing the activities or policies of other states might lead to suspicion of interfering, or even libel, which have higher risks of damaging bilateral relations. Moreover, expressing one's own attitudes might only be based on uncertainties and concerns from predictions, instead of empirical evidence. For instance, what China stressed on strategic issues is that "Japan should not damage (the interests/regional stability)". As far as it was concerned, Japan has not caused a serious regional security crisis. However, China has its worries, rather than information, that Japan could possibly become a threat in the future, so that discourse is expressed and distrust is identifiable. Therefore, the qualitative analysis of official discourse verifies the assumptions that both moral and strategic distrust exist, and moral distrust is currently dominant for the Chinese.

The public opinion survey offers a different way to verify the assumption. The public opinion survey can help in different ways. Firstly, there are direct questions asking whether the interviewees feel distrust towards another state. Secondly, by asking questions about the reasons for current negative bilateral relations, it is possible that the public would offer answers that link with the assumptions of strategic and moral trust/distrust. This could be interpreted as qualitative evidence. At the same time, the detailed results of the survey could provide quantitative resources for the research that, for instance, if the public opinion recognises the Yasukuni Shrine as a major problem between the two states, a qualitative judgement of China's moral distrust could then be verified. It would not only be a question of whether there is a certain source of trust/distrust, but if a certain issue is important to bilateral trust/distrust or not.

For the detailed results of the qualitative analysis, Chinese public opinion clearly suggests both moral issues and strategic issues lead to the problem of distrust between the two countries. In terms of the reasons for negative impressions towards Japan, the Chinese public offer "Japan's lack of a proper apology and remorse over the history of invasion of China", "Some Japanese politicians' careless remarks" and "Japanese people's entrenched nationalism", which are generally moral issues. Besides, there are also answers including "Japan's attempt to besiege China on military, economic and

ideological fronts in cooperation with the United States”, and “Japanese purchase of the Diaoyu Islands for the nation and fuelling the confrontation”, which are strategic issues. The results are quite similar in many other survey questions. Moreover, as has been argued, the gap between distrust and so-called negative issues/incidents is based on whether these issues could lead to worries and concerns of further damage to national interests, based on either accurate information or just uncertainty.

### **6.3.2 The comparative study by quantitative analysis**

The logic of using quantitative analysis to verify the assumption of China’s moral distrust remaining dominant rather than strategic distrust generally includes the following two parts. First, the quantitative calculation of appearances of discourse on moral and strategic distrust issues is used for comparison. This is straightforward for analysing which one could possibly stand for the more significant concern. Second, another approach within the two sections of moral distrust and strategic distrust is crucial. As has been mentioned, the thesis has labelled the different pieces of discourse as “description of Japan’s activities” and “China’s own attitudes”. While the descriptions could be more strongly emotional, and have certain accurate sources, expressions of its own attitude might be weaker for assessing levels of distrust. This is not absolute, but still has significance. Therefore, the quantitative calculation of the composition of distrust discourse could help verify which part—moral or strategic—is stronger.

In terms of the first quantitative approach mentioned above, the appearances of certain discourse and activities of distrust are key factors in the asymmetric structure of China’s distrust of Japan. Whether trust or distrust stands for a mainstream level is easier to identify because no significant evidence of trust could be identified in the selected cases. Therefore, as has been mentioned in the case of Abe’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013, the Chinese government published 14 documents (at the level of Foreign Ministry or higher), and many more speeches by its diplomats worldwide, over five months. According to the quantitative calculation, distrust discourse appears at least 89 times. Among the language used, “Deny and even whitewash the history of invading others” (ten times), “Challenge international/post-war order” (nine times), “Wrong words

and deeds” (six times), “Create obstacles” (five times), “Strongly condemn/protest” (five times), “Challenge the historical conclusions” (four times), “cause vigilance” (four times), “firmly oppose” (four times), “Damage bilateral relations” (four times), were the most frequently used expressions. This situation could be regarded as exhibiting a very high level of moral distrust.

At the same time, the thesis also tries to collect the evidence of strategic distrust in a similar way. By comparison, only nine documents could be found on the official website of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the topic of China’s strategic distrust of Japan – on Japan’s attempt to expand its military and political influence, and strengthening the US-Japan alliance. In these nine documents, 36 pieces of discourse expressing distrust were found. “Japan should not damage (the interests/regional stability)” (seven times), “have (serious) concerns on Japan” (seven times) and “Deliberately creating China Threats for domestic political agenda” (four times) were the most-frequently used expressions. It has to be mentioned that these nine documents are the only ones that could be found on the official website. In this way, it could be argued that the quantitative calculation suggests that China is more concerned with moral issues between the two countries. At the governmental level, a single case of moral distrust (Abe’s 2013 visit to the Yasukuni Shrine) generated much more empirical evidence (89 pieces of discourse) of distrust than broader topics of strategic issues for several years (39, by comparison). Therefore, the quantitative data suggests that moral distrust is the main concern for China out of the two categories.

In terms of the ‘internal’ comparison between moral distrust and strategic distrust, different outcomes can be observed. For moral distrust, the comparison between “description of Japan’s activities” and “China’s attitude” is 75-14. This is evidence that China pays more attention to existing moral issues. In fact, the discourse is based on evaluating Shinzo Abe’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine. As China has directly used many pieces of emotionally-charged and essentially negative discourse to describe or even criticise Japan’s activities, it can’t be denied that significant moral distrust exists from the Chinese perspective. The attitudes of simply opposing or protesting are less effective



without pointing to certain facts. Meanwhile, strategic issues appeared at 8-28, in terms of “description of Japan’s activities” and “China’s attitudes”. It could be argued that China’s expressions on strategic issues are “weaker” than those on moral issues. This might be the result of a weaker level of distrust, with less empirical evidence in terms of strategic issues. Therefore, it can be seen that the Chinese opinion seems to be less active or intended on strategic issues than the moral ones.

Considering the evidence from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the three stages of the assumptions are verifiable. China distrusts Japan over moral as well as strategic issues. Moreover, moral distrust is the current dominant issue of the two, while strategic distrust is secondary, but also possibly rising in importance. Concerning this, the asymmetric structure of moral and strategic distrust has significant influence on China’s foreign policies towards Japan, and might therefore affect Sino-Japanese relations. To be specific, as China distrusts Japan over strategic issues – including its attempts to strengthen the US-Japan alliance and to seek collective security – China might take actions, such as setting up obstacles in the UN against Japan’s rising political and military presence in the regional and global arenas. China might also strengthen its own military influence to deal with Japan’s strategic issues. On moral issues, China’s distrust might lead to a continued demand that Japan behave in an “appropriate” way, from China’s perspective. However, considering the political realities in recent years, it is not very good that Japan tends to solve problems by taking unilateral concessions. Therefore, relations between China and Japan might suffer more from moral distrust in the future. If Japan takes any controversial actions, such as VIPs visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, promoting a “whitewashed” history, or denying its past invasions, the Chinese could react strongly as happened in 2012, when the disputes between the two states led to the cancellation of a series of celebrations marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

It has to be emphasised that moral distrust issues and strategic distrust issues from the Chinese perspective have certain connections. One simple explanation is that China could have interpreted some of the strategic issues as moral ones. For example, in normal cases

the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands territorial disputes should be regarded as strategic issues. However, from the Chinese perspective, these issues are not only strategic but also the moral. The main reason is that China believes that a very large part of the Sino-Japanese disputes is the result of the legacies of a history of war, which have been left unresolved. China might argue that it was a problem of post-war arrangements (led by the US) that prevented China from taking over its former territories, including the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In this way, moral distrust of Japan, or of Japan's behaviour and rightward-shift are also an inevitable result of Japan's rising concerns and change in approach (Shi Y. , 2014) to strategic issues between the two states. This characteristic does not mean that there is no explicit line between moral and strategic issues of trust/distrust. The basic standards of identifying these issues still exist. The significance of the phenomenon proves from a different angle how important moral issues and moral trust/distrust are in China-Japan relations, from the Chinese perspective.

Under these circumstances, a dilemma is identified considering the status of Japan's distrust of China. As the hypothesis indicates, there are asymmetries in the structures of distrust for both China and Japan. They have to face the problem of having different priorities in distrust problems to be resolved. Basically, China insists that moral issues should be dealt with properly through negotiations. However, Japan does not think there is a problem of history between the two states, which makes China angry, and moral distrust is deepened. While Japan is very worried about China's strategic plans, China believes that its activities do not break any international laws, nor do they need to seek Japan's consent. Many of the issues might even need to be discussed after its moral concerns are responded to, from the Chinese perspective. Otherwise, China treats Japan as an untrustworthy actor, so there is no foundation for cooperation on other issues. Therefore, it could be argued that the status quo sees an unsatisfactory bilateral situation, in terms of mutual distrust. Sino-Japanese relations could be locked in this situation. A detailed interstate asymmetric structure of distrust is discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 7: The locked Sino-Japanese relations and the unlocking process through trust building**

### **7.1 Asymmetric mutual distrust and the locked Sino-Japanese relations**

As has been articulated, this thesis is constructed around several hypotheses:

- Japan has both moral and strategic distrust of China. Strategic distrust is dominant and moral distrust is secondary.
- China has both moral and strategic distrust of Japan. Moral distrust is dominant and strategic distrust is secondary.
- The asymmetric structure of moral distrust and strategic distrust between China and Japan leads to a 'locked' bilateral relationship.
- Rebuilding mutual trust through structural improvements as well as dealing with specific issues is important to help unlock bilateral relations.

The previous two case-study chapters discussed the first two hypotheses of the existence of Japan's distrust of China, and China's distrust of Japan. At the same time, the fact that Japan focuses more on strategic issues and China focuses more on moral issues leads to a dilemma in which each actor wants its a priori concerns to be dealt with first, as opposed to working on compromises, which could be explained by rational choice (Amadae, 2007; Dowding, 2001; Hindmoor, 2006) and other approaches, such as "working trust" (Kelman, 2005, p. 639). In this way, it is extremely difficult to make progress in Sino-Japanese relations.

The way in which distrust affects international relations has to be re-emphasised. There are two theoretical categories of distrust: when certain information or intelligence indicates that another actor could harm one's national interests (Rathbun, 2009; Uslander, 2002; Uslander, 2001); or lacking explicit empirical evidence, one actor nevertheless is worried that its interests are threatened by another (Ibid). In terms of strategic and moral distrust per this thesis, the incidents/issues between actors on strategic topics and moral

topics are the detailed research targets. Therefore, there are two IR theoretical interpretations to examine the essence of the issues. Firstly, countries as actors in international relations are considered to be rational actors instead of traditional, emotion-based actors (Mercer, 2010). It can't be denied that, when national interests are in danger, states take action to protect them, and this generates negative opinions towards the other actor. Trust can be defined as putting one's national interests under another's control (Hoffman, *Building trust : overcoming suspicion in international conflict*, 2006, p. 4). This kind of negative attitude is distrust, which has a great impact on reactions and foreign policy making processes. On the other hand, countries also have their normative values (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Florini, 1996; Kacowicz, 2005; Opp, 2013) about whether another is trustworthy in nature. This judgement is generated through long-lasting interstate activities, as described by Hoffman as "strategic trust" (Hoffman, 2002), and influences the guiding values of one state in dealing with issues related to another. If one state is regarded as untrustworthy in nature, other actors might be more conservative and careful in the interactions.

#### **7.1.1 How does each part of mutual distrust affect the bilateral relationship?**

If strategic and military cooperation between countries is positive, then the overall relationship and level of trust might also be good (Swanström & Kokubun, 2008). Japan strongly distrusts the growth in China's comprehensive national power; and especially its military capabilities, with a 9.7% growth in military spending in 2014 (Perlo-Freeman, Fleurant, Wezeman, & Wezeman, 2015, p. 7). This distrust could come from existing empirical evidence, such as China's naval modernization and construction of its first aircraft carrier and "artificial islands". The impact of Japan's strategic distrust is evident in different ways. First, when incidents happen between the two states, or as China continues its military modernization, Japan might interpret issues as potential strategic threat to its national security. Under these more negative assumptions, it is more difficult for the two countries to deal with bilateral disputes. On the other hand, Japan takes actions, such as seeking to revise its constitution (Yellen, 2014), to prepare for or to counter the potential danger, strengthening its own forces as well as the US-Japan alliance (Reilly, *China's History Activism and Sino-Japanese Relations*, 2006), and so on.

The different influences on Japan's strategic distrust of China are discussed in later sections.

It is clear that Japan also distrusts China on moral issues—mainly its ideological and political values (Wei, 2010). The weaker level of trustworthiness resulting from their differences over moral values also reduces the possibility and willingness (Hoffman, 2006) to cooperate and interact in a more positive way. Japan's moral distrust of China currently draws less attention. Japan's focus is discernible through official and civil discourse, that strategic issues are the priority. However, the existence of moral distrust could still lead to new barriers in bilateral relations. For instance, when China wants to deal with its moral concerns with Japan, Japan might wonder if China has an ulterior motive, to harm Japan's national interests instead of caring about the moral issues themselves (Yang D. , 2003, p. 68). In this way, Japan's moral distrust of China could also affect bilateral relations.

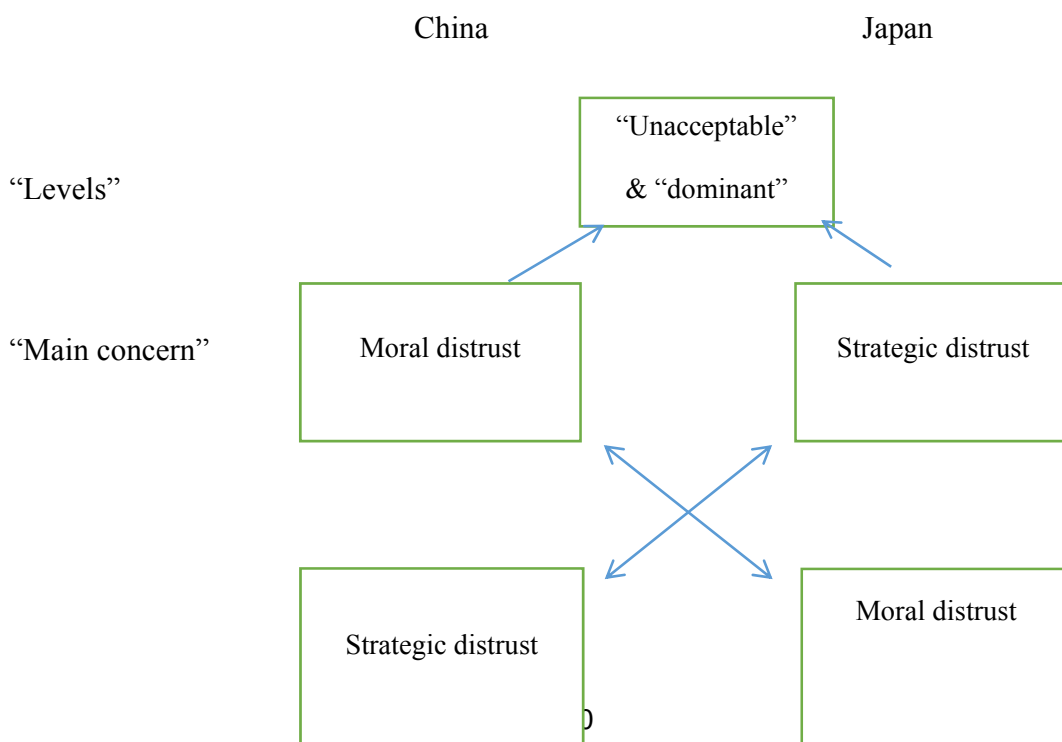
For China, the a priori concerns are moral issues, which are reflected in many history issues. The significance of history in Sino-Japanese relations is that it shapes China's foreign policy, to a certain extent. For example, when the Japanese Mayor of Nagoya, Takashi Kawamura, denied the "Nanjing Massacre" when he met visitors from Nanjing's city government, the official interactions and communications between the two cities were paused immediately. Currently, Japan believes there are no historical disputes, and so distrust of Japan deepens due to the assumption that Japan clearly does not respect China's demands. Therefore, both diplomatic disasters and frictions at different levels can lead to worsened Sino-Japanese relations.

China is also concerned by the rise in Japan's military capabilities, seen through the lens of historical invasion and the "century of humiliation" (Callahan, 2004; Wang, 2008). For a long time following the normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations, worry about Japan's strategic and military threat was comparatively low (Sutter, 2012). There are two key factors which explain this. Firstly, the common strategic threat of Soviet Union was the main regional problem (Yoshihide, 2002; Sutter, 2012). Both China and Japan judged

that the other was not be a priori issue to deal with under the circumstances of the Cold War. Secondly, Japan was strictly restricted militarily by its constitution (Hagström, 2014; Inoguchi, 2003; Soeya, Tadokoro, & Welch, 2011). However, these two factors have changed significantly, today. On one hand, the Soviet Union collapsed, so there is no such a common regional threat for China and Japan. As the two strongest regional powers, it is possible that potential threat, including traditional threat and “non-traditional security” (Friedrichs, 2012, p. 770), and mutual distrust of each other rises again (Yahuda, 2014). On the other hand, there has been a trend in Japanese politics of attempting to remove the limitations of its defence policy, by modifying laws or even the constitution (Hagström, 2014; Inoguchi, 2003; Soeya, Tadokoro, & Welch, 2011). In general, although these activities have not resulted in direct conflicts between the two countries, the fact that the Japanese military forces are already one of the most powerful in Asia and in the world, as well as the strengthening the US-Japan alliance, leads to greater distrust of Japan from the Chinese perspective (Li, 2014; Zhang, 2012).

### 7.1.2 How the asymmetric structure is constructed?

It can be concluded that there are asymmetric structures of mutual distrust between Japan and China, as follows:



“Secondary concern”

Despite independent influences from each side, the overall asymmetric structure makes bilateral relations even more complicated. The fundamental argument is that, in many cases, strategic distrust and moral distrust are internally connected. At the same time, the sources and activities of, and influences on distrust from one actor have an impact on those of another state, in the following manner.

**Component one of asymmetric structure:**

For Japan’s strategic distrust of China, it has been argued that the rise of China’s strategic concentration on regional order and national power have been the major focuses of Japan. This causes the following chain-reactions:

- From the Chinese perspective, Japan’s strategic concerns do not make sense. On one hand, China thinks that military modernization should be an inherent right of a sovereignty state. To secure its growing economic interests and territorial integrity, China is trying to upgrade its antiquated weaponry. However, according to China’s explanation, defence spending per capita and as a percentage of GDP are both comparatively very low, compared to many other major global powers. Therefore, China has reason to see its strategic goals and the activities as being appropriate. Japan’s distrust and worry will not directly change China’s ongoing strategies.
- To respond to the continually growing regional strategic impacts, Japan might act to prepare for potential threats. A possible result is that, if Japan increases military expenditure in the future (although it currently remains stable), or changes its defence policies for collective defence (Langdon, 2001; Onoda, 2004), it could in turn lead to Chinese strategic distrust of Japan. When there are concerns about a revival of Japanese militarism, China’s strategies might be even more aggressive in dealing with a potential threat from Japan. Therefore, a vicious cycle of mutual distrust is formed.

- At the same time, it has been argued in the previous chapter that, from China's perspective, Japan's activities on whitewashing history are the tool for providing the environment in civil society to reinvent itself as a normal military power (Inoguchi, 2003). Therefore, Japan's reactions based on strategic distrust of China could strengthen both China's strategic and moral distrust. In this way, the vicious cycle is strengthened.
- In conclusion, while Japan treats strategic issues as its primary concerns and the *a priori* problems that need to be dealt with first, China will not change its agenda. This leads to deepening strategic distrust of Japan. Moreover, Japan's reactions, due to its strategic distrust, could lead to both strategic and moral distrust from China.

#### **Component two of asymmetric structure:**

Although Japan's moral distrust of China is regarded as being secondary, it still exists as an issue between the two countries. Basically, if China still holds different moral values and acts without considering certain norms accepted by Japan, then moral distrust is generated. Similar to Japan's strategic distrust, moral distrust also presents a problem of being asymmetric in structure:

- While Japan worries about moral issues, China might have even stronger moral distrust of Japan. China's trustworthiness is damaged if China keeps pushing Japan over history issues, because Japan does not think there are problems.
- Japan's moral distrust in turn strengthens China's moral distrust. China might insist that Japan is not in a position to criticise China over moral issues, because Japan avoids its historical responsibilities (Motofumi, 2005). Therefore, there is a low possibility that Japan's moral distrust will be dealt with by China.

#### **Component three of asymmetric structure:**

For the Chinese, the problem of asymmetric distrust is also serious. The moral distrust shown by historical issues between the countries has resulted in crucial, significant policies in Sino-Japanese relations. The asymmetries are shown in the following ways:

- China views moral issues as predominant in terms of bilateral relations. It has



continued to issue official statements indicating that Japan's attitude towards history is a barrier to a better bilateral relationship. However, for Japan, there are no existing historical disputes between the two countries. This huge discrepancy between the two countries' positions leads to completely different attitudes and an unwillingness to deal with problems. Because Japan will not satisfy China's requirements, for example by moving the Class A war criminals out of the Yasukuni Shrine, China firmly believes that Japan is creating problems to harm the national interests of China.

- When China strongly believes that Japan is untrustworthy on moral issues, it acts to deal with the potential negative influences. For example, China might use its international influence to organise propaganda attacks all around the world, on different international stages. On one hand, China gives the impression that Japan is not a responsible global actor, which could erect barriers to Japan's global activities. On the other hand, some less-influential countries might follow China's lead, due to their economic interests tied to China. Moreover, China itself could pause or halt its political interactions with Japan at certain levels, so that Japan finds itself in a dilemma. Japan could suffer either through lack of information from China, or from pressure to make concessions. Therefore, bilateral relations would suffer from different kinds of counter measures, as well as a lack of mutual communication.
- China's moral distrust would in turn cause stronger distrust from Japan. Japan distrusts China on whether it can be a responsible actor in international politics. When China acts to deal with its moral distrust, Japan might interpret differently, that China is using moral issues as a tool to direct the domestic pressure of political and economic issues towards foreign relations with Japan. This would lead to Japan's distrust of China deepening.

#### **Component four of asymmetric structure:**

China's strategic distrust keeps a complex position because strategic concerns are sometimes closely connected to moral distrust. In general, it is currently China's

secondary concern with much less specific and direct evidence. However, it could also form a part of the overall asymmetric mutual distrust.

- China has strategic concerns about Japan's potential military revival, and strengthening the US-Japan alliance to interfere with China's regional affairs (Christensen, 2003; Langdon, 2001). However, from the Japanese perspective, a stronger US-Japan alliance is a fundamental and consistent aspect of security policies (Garrett & Glaser, 1997; Vogel, 2002; Zhu F. , 2009). Therefore, China does not receive the expected answers from Japan, considering the current situation. This problem remains unresolved.
- At the same time, as Japan has information that China could oppose the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance, and Japan's stronger political and military presence, it considers what the reasons behind China's concerns are. It cannot be denied that Japan might assume that China seeks its own military expansion and changes to the existing regional order. Therefore, Japan's strategic distrust of China is strengthened as a result. It is possible that Japan, in turn, acts even more radically; for example, to pass new bills and policies on national defence.<sup>21</sup> This again has great impact on China's attitudes, and so strategic distrust deepens.

#### **A sectional conclusion on the asymmetric structures:**

The asymmetric structure of mutual distrust between Japan and China is present in all four aspects of moral and strategic arenas of the two countries. It has the following characteristics, which lead to locked bilateral relations.

- The elements of asymmetric structures exist in all parts of mutual strategic and moral distrust. Although both countries distrust each other in the two general categories, they have completely different priorities. The impact of these different priorities is that both countries cannot be satisfied, because their main concern of distrust will not be dealt with as they expect. For example, although Japan keeps expressing its concern over the possibility that China might challenge regional status quo with its national power, China will not retreat nor make concessions

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<sup>21</sup> Japanese Diet has passed the related security bills unlocking collective self-defence in 2015.

because of Japan's "concerns". It could be expected that China's military modernization and presence in more regional and global affairs will continue. The situation is similar for the other side, when the Japanese government won't remove the Class A war criminals from the Yasukuni Shrine, nor give orders to government officials banning them from visiting the Shrine under Chinese pressure.

- It is easy to understand that, on one hand, they do not trust each other so that neither state will unilaterally make concessions to secure their own national interests. On the other hand, the two countries have to consider their own public's opinions. If the governments experience diplomatic failures in this special relationship, they will have great problems in domestic politics. However, Sino-Japanese relations would suffer from this kind of diplomatic confrontation because there would be fewer possibilities for one's own concerns to be dealt with by the other nation, because there will be less will to deal with the concerns of the other state. Mutual distrust will deepen, and Sino-Japanese relations will be locked.
- There is another argument about whether the two states could solve the problem of mutual distrust by focusing on the common fields of strategic issues and moral issues. One significant claim is that, although the issues are divided into the two general categories of "strategic distrust" and "moral distrust", the detailed and specific issues/incidents are different for China and Japan. For instance, although they are categorised as "moral distrust issues", China's focus is on the history of war, while Japan concentrates more on political values and ideologies. This means that even though they have similar categories of issues, it is still extremely difficult for the two countries to act jointly to resolve the problems which they both view as crucial.
- One even more problematic issue of mutual distrust is that every single part of distrust (Japan's strategic, Japan's moral, China's moral, and China's strategic distrust) could lead to reactions from the other country that would show deterioration of the level of trust in the other country. Moreover, the worsening distrust and the reactions of the other country would again have negative impacts.

The vicious cycle in the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust between Japan and China will cause negative Sino-Japanese relations.

## **7.2 Interview of both Japanese and Chinese scholars: several concerning questions**

### **7.2.1 The methodology and background of the interview**

While the thesis collects different kinds of information, including materials from books, academic articles and governmental documents, it must be indicated that these documents are mostly secondary sources to support certain arguments. Therefore, it is important to ask direct questions to ascertain opinions on mutual trust and distrust between Japan and China. The author has conducted interviews with six scholars: Akio Takahara (Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Tokyo), Yin Jiwu (Associate Professor, School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University), Zhao Luoxi (Lecture, China Foreign Affairs University), Liang Yunxiang (Professor, School of International Studies, Peking University), Huang Dahui (Professor, School of International Studies, Renmin University of China) and Wang Xingyu (Associate professor, School of International Studies, Renmin University of China).

### **7.2.2 The question design of the interview**

The following questions were asked of the interviewees:

1. Do you think the status of mutual distrust has improved or deteriorated since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
2. What are the issues that lead to the improvement or deterioration of bilateral trust?
3. Are the two states, Japan and China, having problems or doing well on dealing with the issues of bilateral trust/distrust?
4. What is the prospect of the development of Japan-China mutual trust? Will the two states take actions, and what might be the possible actions to deal with these issues?

The interview questions are designed for several purposes. Firstly, the questions expect answers from scholars in both Japan and China about their opinions on the status of trust/distrust. This is significant because direct qualitative judgements cannot easily be found through other sources. Secondly, it is important to verify the hypothesis of the existence of mutual distrust and the asymmetric structure between the two countries. The interviews could help to identify whether scholars from the two states have different views on the same topics and issues, or whether they see different priorities as the core concerns between the two countries. Thirdly, the scholars answer the question of what they see for the future of mutual trust/distrust, and suggest how to solve the problems. This is not only a case of “measures to deal with distrust”, but also trends in how the scholars from different countries understand where the problems lie. For example, if the hypothesis is correct, that Japan distrusts China based on strategic issues, then scholars might suggest that China should take action mainly on these issues to solve the problem. Therefore, the main hypotheses of this thesis would be proven to be reasonable.

### **7.2.3 The questions and answers**

#### **1. Do you think the status of mutual trust/distrust has improved or deteriorated since the beginning of the 21st century?**

**Takahara:** Once there were many fans of China in Japan. However, they are disappointed right now because of the activities of China. So distrust exists in Japan-China relations.

**Yin:** The distrust between China and Japan is a status verified by much empirical evidence, according to public opinion surveys and the discourse and interactions between the governments.

**Zhao:** Worsening.

**Liang:** Worsening. A lack of trust. The deep root lies in the changes in the comparison of national power.

**Huang:** Worsening.

**Wang:** In the late 1990s, the two countries were experiencing fluctuation. The beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> Century witnessed a comparatively good situation in bilateral relations and trust. For example, when former Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Japan in 2007, he gave a speech admitting that Japan maintains its way of peaceful development after the World War II. However, the 2010 boat collision and the 2012 Japan purchase of the islands led to stronger distrust.

## **2. What are the issues that lead to the improvement or deterioration of bilateral trust?**

**Takahara:** Japan supports the rise of China, but how is China going to use its national power? That's the question that we cannot answer for sure. If China is going to use its national power not only for itself but also for others, that's fine. That's how responsible powers should behave. Up to now, China has given the impression that China would use its national power for its own interests but not much for others. This is the main source of distrust.

The moral issues (ideology, democracy, and so on) still have influence. This concern is important for those who raise these issues (like foreign policy-makers) as they need some kind of identity in Japan's foreign policies. The identity includes democracy, human rights, and so on. From their point of view, China will be a target. For others, China's political system has a different meaning. It's about how the Communist Party will unite the nation to fight against Japan on the revisionism, history, and revival of militarism. We think that it is necessary because the Chinese Communist Party is losing its legitimacy.

**Yin:** China has the following sources of distrusting Japan: In terms of strategic issues, China worries about Japan's strategic motivations, and whether it is going to expand and

compete with China in this region. At the same time, China is also concerned about the US factors, and its alliance with Japan, and the strategic situation as China rises when confronting Japan. In terms of moral issues, Japan's attitude towards the history issues, the cultural differences between the two countries over the apology issue, and the construction of political emotion in China towards Japan are the main reasons for the existing distrust.

**Zhao:** Security issues. One of the major issues is the strategic judgements of both sides. China and Japan doubt whether the other is becoming a country which would threaten regional security. The significant reason for the contradictions in security issues is that China's recognition of the disputes is based on history; that is, considering what Japan had done in the past, China distrusts its activities now and in the future. At the same time, Japan's doubts about China are based on the Chinese system. As China is not a democracy, there is the possibility that China spreads its domestic non-democracy to international non-democracy. I am personally pessimistic on the problem, as the two countries seem to find no solutions. In terms of strategic issues, Japan cannot give up its leadership in Asia. From the Chinese perspective, Japan's leadership is of the past. This is a problem of leadership.

**Liang:** There are territorial disputes. However, the territorial disputes reflect the issues of national power, and which country leads in this region. The reason why China always talks about the history is that, firstly, the Chinese have the long-lasting perspective that China is strong and Japan is a comparatively weaker actor in this region, who learns from China. This situation changed in the recent century, so the shock in China created the stronger attention on history. Secondly, what Chinese people accept is to regain China's leading position in the world. The government has to consider the public, so that legitimacy can be kept. The question is "whether Japan can accept a rising China". Japan cannot easily accept it because it has been leading for more than a century. It is only the Chinese GDP that surpasses Japan, not the overall situation.

The Western countries view China as changing the status quo with its power. However, the Chinese theory is about history. China was a great country with many rights in the past, which were lost in the colonial era, including the issues of the East China Sea and South China Sea. Therefore, it is reasonable that China wants it back. The Chinese people have been educated in this way, while the Western countries do not think so. This is the fundamental contradiction. It is not possible that the Chinese government gives up the long-held belief in order to avoid confrontations with Western countries.

The Chinese government has to pick history as an issue between China and Japan. Actually, it has a negative effect on younger Japanese generations. They believe that, no matter what kind of history the two countries have, it should have ended a long time ago. Turning back to history is not accepted by them.

**Huang:** China has mixed history issues with strategic and reality issues. While Japan separates these two fields. China doubts when considering what Japan did in the past, where Japan might go in the future as a problem. This is distrust. While Japan believes that the past is past. It could not affect the future.

**Wang:** Except for the issues between China and Japan, the US strategies also have significant impact on trust/distrust. Japan considers its position as based on the US-Japan alliance, as the lens through which it views other regional issues.

### **3. Are the two states, Japan and China having problems or doing well on dealing with the issues of bilateral trust/distrust?**

**Takahara:** The Japanese suggest that it is primarily military enhancement. We don't have any particular historical problem. Many Japanese have been disappointed in China for the past few years. What the Chinese keep saying and what they are doing seems to be very different. In other words, the problems come from China's military enhancement and political propaganda about history. This leads to distrust in Japanese society.



**Yin:** The two states are dealing with issues of mutual trust in a comparatively bad way. Japan's distrust of China comes from the competition for leadership of East Asia, cultural differences, ideologies, and so on. The situation has continued to worsen for a long time. Sometimes the problems are just not recognised or covered by other issues.

**Zhao:** There are diplomatic interactions. Both sides have the intention to improve. They acknowledge that distrust damages the two countries. The diplomacy during the whole of 2014 was about when and how to make compromises. It is a matter of expediency instead of providing essential solutions.

**Liang:** If there are actions, they are based on the demands of interests, not trust. They remain at the lowest level, which is avoiding direct conflicts. This is the common interest of the two countries.

**Huang:** What the two countries do would be the "blur". They create the space for both sides to avoid conflicts. They can explain the blur with their own words, but avoiding conflicts is the bottom line. It is a kind of risk management rather than actions to solve the problems of distrust.

**Wang:** From the Chinese perspective, it does not abandon communication with Japan. Both sides understand there are common interests, and the necessity to avoid conflicts.

**4. What is the prospect of the development of Japan-China mutual trust? Will the two states take actions and what might be the possible actions to deal with these issues?**

**Takahara:** It will depend on China. If China does not continually strengthen its focus on history issues through propaganda, the two countries will not confront as many problems on moral issues. China's growth in national power is not a threat. However, transparency is needed for other countries to understand how China will use its power. Japan is happy to cooperate.

**Yin:** The problem will not be solved in the short term. With the realities of existing issues, the mutual trust between the two countries might be damaged and bilateral relations are locked or frozen. Over a longer period, it might be possible that the situation improves temporarily with some unilateral or bilateral good will and activities. However, the problem will not be completely resolved based only on these things.

**Zhao:** If China achieves what is described by the Western countries as strategic transparency, distrust between the two countries would ease a lot. However, China has a very different understanding of the notion of strategic transparency. China thinks that its strategies are transparent, as it claims to rise peacefully. However, the Western countries think that this is not transparent, which comes from doubts of China's system/ideology and the uncertainty over China's growth.

The reason why I am pessimistic is that, in the short term, Japan has identified China as an opponent/rival. The current competitions or confrontations between the two countries over economic and military issues make it less possible to solve the problems of distrust.

**Liang:** In the short term, the situation could hardly be changed, as the interests would remain stable. Further in the future, there are other elements that affect the situation, such as whether there are more serious issues, e.g. external threats. There is a possibility that trust improves between the two countries

**Huang:** In the near future, things won't change much, as the comparison of national power and structural disputes will remain much the same. In the longer term, if China's national power essentially surpasses Japan's, Japan and other Western countries might finally accept the rise of China. The current status is that they view China as a country with quantity and without quality. The three major factors of China's rise, Japan becoming a normal state, and American strategies in the Asia-Pacific region affect the future. Distrust would not disappear if the current factors do not change. The civil societies also distrust each other.

**Wang:** In the longer term, the two countries will have to stay at the same platform to achieve negotiations. The two countries might gradually turn from fluctuation to a more mature situation. The two governments might try to narrow down the disputes within certain issues themselves, without bringing stronger influences of the grand bilateral relationship, because the space between governments is greater than public opinion. Another possibility is that the two governments could coordinate with each other to face common problems and issues, such as the economy

#### **7.2.4 The interpretation of the answers**

1. The first question “do you think the status of mutual trust/distrust has been improved or deteriorating since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” aims to help verify the basic hypothesis of whether distrust exists as a problem between Japan and China. Although there is empirical evidence in public opinion suggesting that the people from both countries have recognised it, one might need to seek out more supporting arguments.

According to the scholars’ answers, they have very similar opinions that the current level of mutual trust/distrust is deteriorating. There is empirical evidence showing that distrust is currently problematic. Therefore, the hypothesis of mutual distrust is supported by academic debates, to a certain extent.

2. The second question of “what are the issues which lead to the improvement or deterioration of bilateral trust” is aimed at verifying the other hypotheses of the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust. If the hypotheses make sense, it is possible that the answers from the two scholars might have different interpretations of the same topic of Sino-Japanese distrust.

The answers fit the assumption mentioned above. Professor Takahara (Japanese) clearly expressed that there is a primary concern for Japan about China’s use of its national power. It is the main reason for Japan’s distrust. At the same time, Japan does not think that history is a problem. The reason why history remains a hot-spot in Sino-Japanese

relations is that the Chinese government uses its propaganda methods to further its own interests, using history as a tool. In addition, Professor Takahara also indicates that Japanese moral distrust of China about ideology and other issues indeed exists. However, it is not a major concern for Japan. Therefore, the answers from a Japanese scholar actually fit the assumptions of the hypothesis, that Japan distrusts China on both strategic and moral issues, and that strategic distrust is predominant.

From the perspective of Chinese scholars, the answer to the same question is quite different. The fact is that they have raised multiple concerns, including issues of both strategic status and moral disputes. However, there is a significant argument rooted in their answers that a connection exists between history and the status quo. For example, Zhao indicated that China's logic is,

“the significant reason for the contradictions on the security issues would be that China's recognition on the disputes is based on the history, that is, considering what Japan had done in the history, China would distrust its activities for now and in the future.”

Moreover, Yin suggested that, despite both Japan's strategic motivation in this region and its attitude towards history, the cultural differences and the political emotions between the two countries exist as different sources of mutual distrust, the latter as the moral component in interstate relations are identified as the 'main reasons'. In this way, China has both moral and strategic distrust of Japan, with moral distrust being the a priori concern, which also fits the hypothesis in the case studies.

3. The third question “are the two states, Japan and China having problems or doing well on dealing with the issues of bilateral trust/distrust” mainly seeks opinions of how the two states deal with the related issues of mutual trust/distrust. The significance of this question is that it might provide information on how scholars from the two countries view the responsibility of distrust. It is possible that the scholars would point out that their own countries or the other is responsible for the deteriorating situation. Hence, the main focus is paid to the different sources.

The answer suggests that Professor Takahara believes that Japan itself does not have specific problems to be criticised. China's military enhancement and political propaganda about history leads to the current status of distrust.

The Chinese scholars generally agree that, considering common interests and risks, the two countries could maintain basic interactions. However, Professor Yin suggests that the situation of mutual distrust became worse due to ongoing political realities, such as regional distrust of the rise of China (which is unreasonable from the Chinese perspective) and is not the responsibility of the Chinese. Wang agrees, and thinks that communication has not been abandoned by China.

From the answers it can be concluded that the asymmetric structure is problematic, because the two countries do not recognise mutual distrust as their responsibility. Instead, they believe that the other country should be responsible for what has transpired.

4. The fourth question, "What is the prospect of the development of Japan-China mutual trust" and "Will the two states take actions and what might be the possible actions to deal with these issues" is design with a different purpose other than verifying the existing hypotheses mentioned in the previous chapters and sections, about the asymmetric distrust between Japan and China. It focuses more on the future of mutual distrust and bilateral relations. The existence of mutual distrust, the existence of an asymmetric structure of distrust between the two countries, and the locked bilateral relations caused by asymmetric distrust, have been identified as an important explanation for negative Sino-Japanese relations. Therefore, it is important whether the level of mutual distrust improves or gets worse, because it has such a strong impact on the relationship between the two countries.

In general, both Professor Takahara and Professor Yin hold comparatively negative views of prospects for near-future bilateral distrust between Japan and China. Professor Takahara suggests that the problem lies with the Chinese, because the political

propaganda against Japan over history issues and the non-transparent strategic future caused by China's use of power will remain problems between the two countries. One core issue in this situation are the policies of the Chinese Communist Party, which might last for a long period of time.

One common characteristic of the Chinese scholars is that they are generally pessimistic about the prospect of positive changes in the short term. They also indicate that even though there might be possibilities for change in the longer term, there are many different conditions for the two countries to meet before any success can be had. Although the two countries might achieve some of the goals to ease relations, by making unilateral or bilateral arrangements, it is still generally negative for the long term relationship. In this way, unlocking Sino-Japanese relations will not be an easy task, because of the countless issues left unresolved from history and new issues arising in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### **7.2.5 A sectional conclusion**

The purpose of the interviews was to collect the opinions from scholars from the two countries, for use in analysing and verifying the hypotheses and to build a connection between the asymmetric distrust and the 'locked' Sino-Japanese relationship. In addition, the interviews also highlighted the concerns over the prospects for mutual distrust between Japan and China. Whether it is possible to unlock the bilateral relationship through improving mutual trust is another question to be answered.

The questions have certain aims in verifying different hypotheses, including the existence of distrust, the asymmetric structure of a priori concerns, and the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust. Based on the answers, the arguments from Professor Takahara (Japanese) and other scholars (Chinese) met the expected assumptions. In terms of the results, the scholars confirmed the mutual distrust between Japan and China. Additionally, they also identified the existing sources of distrust, which generally come from specific sources of strategic and moral issues. Moreover, scholars from both countries predicted a comparatively negative future for Sino-Japanese trust. These similarities indicate that

both sides agree that there are problems of mutual distrust between Japan and China and, at the same time, the two countries see more problems of mutual distrust in the future.

As it can be seen in the similarities in answers, Japan and China have only a small amount of consensus on the structure of mutual distrust. The differences in answers are more significant for identifying the sources of distrust. The first important difference is that Professor Takahara indicates China's military enhancement as the main problem between the countries; while Chinese scholars suggest that the main reason for distrust are moral issues, including Japan's attitude towards history, cultural differences over the apology issue, and the construction of political emotion between the two countries. Secondly, there is another big divide between opinions on who bears responsibility for the worsening mutual distrust. Professor Takahara believes that the problems come from China's use of its national power to challenge others, and the propaganda targeting Japan over its history. However, Chinese scholars think that the moral issues and Japan's potential expansion will be important in the future. The different primary concerns show that Japan and China are having problems with moving towards a consensus on the sources of mutual distrust, which leads to the 'locked' bilateral relationship. Failing to reach a consensus means that the two countries are seeking solutions based on their own concerns, which might be extremely difficult to achieve because the other country has its own, different priorities. This is a structural problem for the two countries. According to the interview answers from the scholars, it is possible that the two countries are expecting concessions and other activities from the other to first solve their problems, instead of taking their own actions. To solve the problem of locked Sino-Japanese relations, this asymmetric structure of distrust should be dealt with together with basic trust-building activities.

### **7.3 Unlocking Sino-Japanese relations in two ways: enhancing mutual trust and overcoming the asymmetric structure of distrust**

### **7.3.1 The significance of trust: will it help improve and unlock Sino-Japanese relations?**

#### **Theoretical verification of trust in IR**

As has been argued in previous chapters, the problem of distrust is one of the key sources for negative Sino-Japanese relations. The negative and ‘locked’ bilateral relations come from not only a lack of mutual trust, but also the structural problem of asymmetric a priori concerns. Therefore, to achieve more positive Sino-Japanese relations, both these problems should be dealt with.

It cannot be denied that there are debates over whether enhancing mutual trust could help improve interstate relations, as it could be seen as only an intermediate variable for other political factors. In this way, the significance of a trust-building process for bilateral relations is a primary question.

In terms of IR theories, most approaches have evidence supporting the existence of the notion of trust, to certain extents, because “trustpolitik” does not mean unconditional or one-sided trust without verification (Park, 2011, p. 14). For example, even the comparatively conservative approach of realism has room for trust: “why leaders would negotiate and sign agreements they have no intention of following?” (Lebow, 2013). There are also other arguments discussing the existence of trust within different types of realism, such as offensive and defensive realism (Larson, 1997; Kydd, 2005; Kacowicz, 2005). This is similar in other approaches and arguments of international relations theory, such as liberalism, constructivism, security dilemma theory (Christensen, China, the U.S.-Japan alliance, and the security dilemma in East Asia, 2003; Herz, Jan., 1950; Wheeler, 2012; Jervis, 1978; Larson, 2004), and rational choice theory (Amadae, 2007; Dowding, 2001; Hindmoor, 2006), and so on.

There is a different aspect showing the significance of trust in international relations that could build connections between many other crucial notions such as cooperation, risk and cost. It has to be claimed that there is “cooperation with trust and cooperation without trust” (Hoffman, Building trust : overcoming suspicion in international conflict, 2006, p.



6), which shows that trust is not equal to cooperation. However, it cannot be denied that cooperation is one of the most crucial symbols of the existence of trust between countries. Logically, cooperation might be regarded more likely to be a sufficient condition, rather than a necessary condition for trust. Therefore, when an actor refuses to cooperate with another, distrust is identifiable. The connection between trust and risk in interstate relations could show the significance of trust. When trust is treated as “an alternative to risk” (Uslaner, *Trust as an alternative to risk*, 2013, p. 2), it also has a recognisable role.

In general, the significance and importance of the notion of trust in international relations is verifiable. When there is strong trust between countries, it is more likely that the actors could spend less energy on the cost of risk-prevention and defence. At the same time, when incidents take place between countries, they might interpret the problems in a comparatively more-positive way than to react immediately in military or radical ways, with trust instead of distrust. In addition, enhancing trust can also help with reconciliation between countries which have long-term disputes left unresolved (Nets-Zehngut, 2007; Lederach, 1997; Montville, 1993; Shriver, 1999; Staub, 1998)—this fits the case of Sino-Japanese relations. As has been argued, “the steps that are necessary to build trusting relationships both open up and depend on the possibility of new pay-offs as well as mutual bonds.” (Ruzicka & Wheeler, 2010, p. 80)

### **Empirical verification of trust in IR**

Except for the theoretical verification of trust’s presence in international relations, there is also empirical evidence showing that trust plays a role in Sino-Japanese relations. It has to be emphasised that Sino-Japanese relations, after the normalization of diplomatic relations in the 1970s, have not only be characterised by negative interactions. For instance, the official normalization of bilateral relations itself was a typical example of mutual trust. It was debated whether this kind of normalization was a decision made as a way of dealing with the threat from the Soviet Union by “tilting towards China” (Soeya, 2002, p. 219). Although it can’t be denied that an essential reconciliation was not achieved between Japan and China, the normalization of bilateral relations during the Cold War was not accidental. As China and Japan still belonged to different ideological

camps, it was risky to cooperate with one another, or trust each other without comprehensive analysis. Therefore, the decision to normalize could be regarded as a rational choice made by the two countries, which proved that they at least believed that the other was not a major threat. Hence, cooperative bilateral relations can help deal with other issues of common concern. In this way, if trust at a certain level is achieved, interstate relations might improve.

### **7.3.2 Approach one: dealing with the asymmetric structure**

#### ***The asymmetric structure and the vicious cycle***

It is crucial to understand how the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust has negative impacts on Sino-Japanese relations. One of the most important influences of the asymmetries is that it could lead to locked bilateral relations. There is a dilemma for the two countries, which is the lack of motivation or incentives (Boone, Declerck, & Kiyonari, 2010) to respond to the concerns of the other country, comes from and leads to a lack of motivation of the other actor. If both states refuse to take actions on those concerns, the mutual distrust is worsened and bilateral relations suffer in future interactions.

The vicious cycle actually has two general categories of issues. Firstly, the willingness to deal with the other's concerns is damaged while the other side has the same problem. In this way, the problem of distrust keeps worsening. In turn, the deeper mutual distrust reduces the willingness of the two countries to positively respond to the concerns of the other. Secondly, the locked bilateral relations keep worsening due to mutual distrust. Therefore, the two components of the vicious cycle caused by the asymmetric mutual distrust continually have negative impacts on bilateral relations, which should be dealt with.

#### ***How to deal with the problem of asymmetric structure of mutual distrust***

We can therefore estimate the kinds of changes that would be necessary to deal with the asymmetric structure of distrust:

1. There is a key argument that, in the case of Sino-Japanese relations, both countries are not “not aware of” and “do not understand” the concerns of the other. This is not reasonable, as the two actors have already made countless claims in bilateral and international occasions. Therefore, it is interpreted as “disagreeing with” or “not accepting” the concerns of distrust from the other. In order to persuade the other country to accept the need to deal with one’s concern, efficient measures should be taken by the two countries to reactivate the motivation of the other.

2. The motivation of a country might come from different sources. As the executor of policies to secure national interests, states have to consider whether interactions with other actors might benefit or damage its interests. This is one of the most important sources of motivation in interstate interactions, if positive outcomes can be expected. Another source of motivation for the countries are the normative values in international relations (Florini, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Kacowicz, 2005). If one actor tends to follow normative values which are accepted by the other, the motivation to cooperate or even trust might grow. Therefore, it is important to take actions in these two ways to ‘persuade’ the other country to be more active in solving the problems of distrust.

3. In terms of the first approach, it can be achieved by letting another actor know that solving the problem of distrust will not damage its national interests, or interests could be gained in deals between the two countries. It means that, instead of waiting for the other to take the first step as a condition for its own actions, the two countries could launch negotiations to produce a package of solutions to their concerns. It is easier because unilateral concessions from the other can hardly be expected. In fact, this kind of approach would help to break the vicious cycle and asymmetric structure of mutual distrust, because the two countries might bring all their concerns to the negotiating table, rather than focusing on independent incidents or issues in the same categories (which are not at the same level of concern).

4. To conduct this kind of large-scale negotiation, it is of great importance that leadership of Japan and China use their political wisdom and courage (Zhu, 2013).

Official Chinese governmental channels have stated that the current Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is not “welcomed” by the Chinese people, and they refuse to meet with him.<sup>22</sup> Although it is difficult for the public to know what happened behind the scenes, a lack of mutual interactions between the highest levels of government worsen mutual distrust due to a more serious lack of information. The fact is that both sides understand that it is unreasonable that interactions have been paused for a very long time between the two most important regional actors. Therefore, meetings between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe were organized on different occasions in recent years.<sup>23</sup> However, the “symbolic meetings” are not enough to resolve the problems. If the two leaders can overcome the barriers of potential worries, emergency incidents and domestic pressures then it is possible to move towards essential negotiations. At the same time, the shape of domestic political emotion and atmosphere should also be considered in terms of the methods used and aims of bilateral positive interactions, when it is needed. With a successful example in the normalization of bilateral relations during the Cold War, efficient measures could be expected between the two interdependent powers.

5. To be specific, persuading the other that its strategic concerns will not turn into strategic threats, and seeking common moral values or at least issuing memorandums of understanding on specific moral issues, should be the tasks for the two countries.

### ***The weakness and troubles of this approach***

We should also evaluate the limits and obstacles behind the above proposals:

1. The vicious circle caused by the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust is a dilemma for both sides. Japan and China face the problem of risking potential damage to their own national interests, if they decide to cooperate to solve problems. If one’s own distrust issues cannot be dealt with in an appropriate way, while the other’s distrust issues are

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<sup>22</sup> See [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt\\_674879/fyrbt\\_674889/t1113124.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/fyrbt_674889/t1113124.shtml), accessed 13/05/16.

<sup>23</sup> Such meetings include: meeting in Beijing during APEC on 10/11/2014, meeting in Jakarta during 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bandung Conference on 22/04/2015, and the “greetings” on G20 summit on 15/11/2015.

resolved due to concessions, a nation would suffer from great domestic pressure resulting from diplomatic failure, and deepen distrust towards the other. Therefore, unlocking the asymmetric structure needs great patience and political determination from the beginning.

2. At the same time, the status of mutual trust and distrust is always changing, due to different factors. These factors – including emergent incidents, media influences, and comparisons between national power, domestic political competition and external elements such as the US factors – would affect the recommendations to deal with the asymmetric structure in a dynamic process. Therefore, the two countries have to face the potential problem of unexpected developments in mutual trust and distrust.

3. There is the potential risk of instability, even if the problem of asymmetric structure is resolved. As Professor Yin and Lecturer Zhao indicated in their interviews,<sup>24</sup> the two countries might reach agreements through bilateral interactions and concessions in order to realize a better situation of mutual trust. However, it is not the same as reconciliation between the two states. The problems might occur anytime, over a longer period. This is similar to the overall status of Sino-Japanese relations: that problems left unresolved after the normalization of diplomatic relations in the 1970s have become the main disputes and threats today. In this way, other methods are also needed to deal with the problems beyond the structural issue of mutual distrust.

### **7.3.3 Approach two: enhancing mutual trust**

#### ***The difference between the two approaches***

The previous approach for dealing with the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust between Japan and China might be regarded as a part of “enhancing mutual trust”. It cannot be denied that there are internal connections between the two that, when constructing mutual trust, some structural problems of mutual distrust can be dealt with. At the same time, solving asymmetric distrust need trust-building activities as methods. Therefore, clarifying the gap between the two approaches is not the main task. However,

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<sup>24</sup> See 7.2.3, question 4.

it must be emphasised that this approach specifically focuses more on basic trust-building activities in terms of the “content of trust”, instead of the “structural problem” in the previous one.

***The significance of enhancing mutual trust in Sino-Japanese relations***

Enhancing trust is significant to improving interstate relations and reducing costs of preparing for potential risks, and so on (Sztompka, 1999, p. 25). These effects and outcomes are the result of both strategic trust and moralistic trust; for example, the “alternative to risk” (Uslaner, 2013). In common sense, countries with stronger mutual trust might enjoy more positive interactions. The vicious cycle of distrust suggests that stronger mutual distrust might lead to more negative bilateral relations; and negative bilateral relations between countries would in turn lead to an even worse level of mutual distrust. In contrast, a positive situation would be when the two countries have comparatively stronger mutual trust, they might benefit from it and create better bilateral relations. Hence, a positive relationship between countries is helpful for the improvement of mutual trust.

In terms of the case of Sino-Japanese relations, the specific aim of “essential reconciliation” between the two countries emphasizes the significance of mutual trust (Shin, 2010; Chen, 2010). Reconciliation is not only to put an end to conflicts and wars between states, but also to help overcome hostility in national emotions and generate forgiveness (Kriesberg, 2007) of the states, both at the governmental and civic levels. Reconciliation is a milestone for peace building (Lerche, 2000) and trust for those states with lower levels of trust, as well as the basis for further progress in trusting relationships. As has been argued, the reconciliation between China and Japan after the 1972 normalization was neither complete nor wholly successful (Ijiri, 1990; Johnson, *How China and Japan See Each Other*, 1972; Rose, *Sino-Japanese relations: facing the past, looking to the future?*, 2005). Therefore, enhancing mutual trust between the two countries could create an environment for further bilateral interactions. If comparatively successful reconciliation could be achieved, China’s and Japan’s governments and civil societies

would have fewer barriers to more positive mutual understanding, and therefore better relations.

### ***How to enhance mutual trust***

These arguments can be summarised as:

1. One argument in terms of how to enhance the trust of sovereignty states is to consider the characteristics of states in international relations; these activities are not taken based on unilateral concessions to national interests, as they would produce policies based on information (Rathbun, 2012; 2009). For normative values (Florini, 1996; Kacowicz, 2005; Opp, 2013), it also needs to be recognised that countries might not easily give up their own moral values.
2. Based on this assumption, at the governmental level, the two countries might not enhance mutual trust by following the requirements of the other. For example, stopping government officials from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine could help build trust between the two countries. However, the Japanese government would treat it as an issue of sovereignty, and would not act in this way. Therefore, at the governmental level, the two countries should at least keep communications open – VIPs at the highest levels of the leadership, as well as local government officials should try to maintain an efficient exchange of information between the two countries. This is crucial, because without adequate communication, emergent incidents could lead to a worse situation of distrust and more negative relationship. At the same time, state-led bilateral events, such as planned student-exchanges, should be promoted because these kinds of activities need the two governments as backups.
3. In terms of the two countries' civil societies, one of the main issues is that their emotions can be affected by many factors, including emergent incidents, continuously broadcast information by media, the speeches of politicians, and so on. In this way, when the two countries are enjoying comparatively positive interactions, the publics might feel more positively about civil exchanges and communications. However, when problems

and disputes occur, the public might have negative opinions towards each other, which might strongly damage trust so that communications would not be as flexible as during a positive situation. In this way, how to enhance mutual trust in civil society and how to reduce negative influences from external factors is a concern. To improve civil mutual trust, it is necessary to have greater communication on cultural, academic and areas of dispute, aside from traditional exchanges on economic and tourism issues. At the same time, it is important that these interactions are not only designed to be the “icing on the cake”. Civil communications should continue even when the two countries are experiencing troubles from disputes, which helps reduce misunderstandings beyond the incidents themselves, as distrust could come from suspicion and a lack of information (Rathbun, 2012; 2009), especially a lack of information on the other’s public opinion. In order to overcome the risks of abandoning communications, existing mechanisms and organisations instead of occasional events are helpful, such as the exchange of students in universities and the joint research projects. Efficient information exchange could lead to fewer worries about each other.

### ***The weakness and troubles of this approach***

The limitations of this approach would be:

1. There might be a fundamental problem with this approach to enhancing mutual trust, in that it is a long-term task. As the two countries did not achieve complete reconciliation in the past, they have much work to do on the disputes left unresolved. Therefore, it cannot be expected that outstanding results will be achieved in a short time. The effects might not be seen unless the two governments and civil societies pay continued, patient attention to the trust-building process. Moreover, given the current vicious cycle between Japan and China, the two countries cannot start with a fresh slate, but also need to overcome the barriers of existing distrust. In this way, this is not a shortcut of Sino-Japanese trust.
2. To be frank building trust is much more difficult, considering the argument that “trust is not, at its root, self-interested; much less is it selfish” (Solomon, 2003, p. 57),



and especially in the case of Sino-Japanese relations that have already experienced dozens of problems of mutual distrust in different fields. Trust needs to be verified either by acquiring enough information on the security of national interests, or through common normative values. Both countries need more positive empirical evidence that could prove the credibility and trustworthiness of the other in bilateral interactions. If there is evidence showing the opposite trend, distrust between Japan and China would grow much stronger, due to the vicious cycle caused by the asymmetric structure. It is undeniable that there could be many internal and external factors between the two countries which have great impact on the relationship, such as emergencies, media effects, and US influences in this region (Lim, 2013), and so on. These sources could be destabilising factors in Sino-Japanese relations, which could easily result in negative influences on the trust-building process.

3. One guiding argument for this approach is that trust-building activities between the two countries should cover all fields of disputed issues, instead of avoiding any existing problems between Japan and China. They have proved that the strategy of “shelving disputes”<sup>25</sup> does not always prevent confrontations over the issues. For example, the disputes over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands seemed not to be very serious for several decades after 1970s. However, the dispute has become one of the most problematic hotspots between the two countries. The strategy of “shelving disputes and seeking joint development”,<sup>26</sup> as expressed by Deng Xiaoping, cannot maintain permanent stability. Addressing core disputes between the countries is accompanied by risks. It is a question of whether the two countries would like to take these risks, and find a balance between risk and reward.

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<sup>25</sup> The Chinese side believes that this strategy was raised by Deng Xiaoping when he met with Japanese visitors on 31/05/1979 when they discussed the Diaoyu/Senkaku issues. See [http://news.ifeng.com/history/zhongguojindaishi/special/diaoyudao/detail\\_2012\\_07/24/16266038\\_0.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/history/zhongguojindaishi/special/diaoyudao/detail_2012_07/24/16266038_0.shtml).

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/xsb/wjzs/t8958.htm>

## 7.4 Conclusion

The two-stage hypotheses of asymmetric mutual distrust between China and Japan leading to 'locked' Sino-Japanese relations can be verified in different aspects. Basically, the asymmetric structure of Sino-Japanese mutual distrust is formed by the two countries' different a priori concerns. Although both countries have strategic and moral distrust towards each other, Japan's a priori concern is based on strategic issues, while China is focused on moral issues. The different concerns of distrust form a vicious cycle that both countries want their top concerns dealt with properly by the other. Therefore, the two countries feel it is difficult to resolve disputes through cooperative interactions, because distrust prevents them from making unilateral, rational concessions (Amadae, 2007; Dowding, 2001; Hindmoor, 2006; Opp, 2013), and their different normative concerns (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Florini, 1996; Kacowicz, 2005). With deeper mutual distrust, bilateral relations suffer from disputes being difficult to resolve, which could be interpreted as 'locked' relations. Moreover, the 'locked' bilateral relationship would in turn lead to a deepening of mutual distrust, because reduced information exchange and more conservative activities are sources of distrust.

The verification of these hypotheses is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of sources including governmental documents and public opinion surveys. In addition, it was necessary to interview scholars from the two countries, in order to provide the thesis with more information at the academic level. In fact, the results of the interviews match the expectations of the hypotheses. The answers show that the scholars do not only claim that Japan and China have distrust towards each other, but also provide different opinions about the major concerns and sources of distrust. The asymmetric structure was verified, as Professor Takahara emphasises the strategic challenges from China, while Chinese scholars suggest that moral issues are most important to China. Furthermore, the scholars expressed a comparatively pessimistic view of the future of mutual trust. Both China and Japan tend to believe that the problem of mutual distrust needs to be dealt with first by the other country. However, there is no significant evidence that the two countries would take efficient actions on these issues.

In terms of solving the problems of asymmetric mutual distrust between Japan and China, in order to unlock Sino-Japanese relations, at least two approaches could be adopted. The structural problem of mutual distrust should be dealt with, as it could lead to a vicious cycle between the two countries – because mutual distrust and negative bilateral relations would interact and worsen the situation. One of the core issues in this approach is that the two countries should create an environment and motivation (Griffiths & Luck, 2003) for the two countries to pursue joint activities, such as negotiations, instead of waiting for unilateral concessions from the other. The expected result would be that the two countries could overcome the barriers of a lack of will to resolve the problems of concern for the other. Therefore, the vicious cycle could turn into a more positive one, in which distrust can be dealt with.

Despite the approach focusing more on the specific asymmetric structure in Sino-Japanese mutual distrust, there is another one concerning enhancing mutual trust between the countries. As has been argued, breaking the vicious cycle resulting from asymmetric mutual distrust would be helpful. However, it also has limitations, including the potential danger of generating new vicious cycles with new problems of distrust after a period of time. Therefore, seeking essential reconciliation as an aim of the trust-building process between China and Japan is fundamental. Enhancing bilateral trust requires that the two governments and civil societies keep communicating, to exchange information and clarify their positions. There should be institutional settings or mechanisms arranged beyond the purely economic and tourism-related.

These two approaches would work together with the same goal of reconstructing Sino-Japanese mutual trust, and easing the current tensions of distrust. However, their characteristics might lead to different difficulties. For instance, the first approach, dealing with the structural problem in mutual distrust, might achieve success through attempts by both governments; while the trust-building process could only see its impact in the longer-term. In this way, the two approaches are interdependent. It is not likely that the achievements of a single approach would lead to overall success.

It could be expected that the task of unlocking Sino-Japanese relations by rebuilding trust between the two countries would face other problems. Despite the issues of time, potential emergencies in the areas of distrust, influences from media and external factors, such as the US, would greatly affect the status of bilateral trust/distrust, as well as the locked Sino-Japanese relations. Therefore, the two countries should treat all these factors seriously with great political wisdom, courage and continued efforts under certain mechanisms.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### 8.1 Basic judgements and questions constructing the thesis

The research set out to explore the significance and impacts of trust and distrust in Sino-Japanese relations. The research design was inspired by several factors, including the historical legacy of long-lasting disputes between China and Japan, the application of the notion of trust in international relations, and the discourse between the two countries at both the governmental and civil society levels. Most of these topics are hotly debated and contested in the research fields, generating many discussions and debates. Therefore, this thesis attempted to figure out whether it is possible to build connections between these factors—to be specific, whether trust can explain the “locked” status of Sino-Japanese relations. Particularly, it is not only problems of trust/distrust on interdependent issues that contribute to the current status of Sino-Japanese relations. The definition of different categories of distrust operating at different levels so that they constitute a structural problem in relations could be the enlightening contribution of this thesis.

The thesis is established around the following judgments:

1. The notion of trust has a place in international relations. It is doubted, especially by realists, whether trust exists in interstate relationships. However, the fact is that the thesis focuses on the “dynamic levels” of trust/distrust instead of the “absolute existence” of trust. For example, the status of trust between the US and Canada might be regarded as better than that between North Korea and South Korea. This argument introduces an issue of cost. It could be interpreted as, based on the level of trust, one actor’s cost of strategic preparation against another could be expected (as being higher or lower compared with different models). Therefore, even the staunchest realists might not completely deny the connections between the notion of trust and promotion of national interests.
2. Trust might act as a bridge in interstate relations. One simple model is that, when two actors have a comparatively high level of trust, their relationship is less affected

when negative incidents happen. If the two countries distrust each other, negative incidents would have a significant impact on bilateral relations. From another viewpoint, the different status of interstate relations also affects the emergence of positive/negative incidents as influenced by trust/distrust.

3. It is the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust that leads to the locked Sino-Japanese relations. The thesis argues that building trust between countries is achieved in the background with comparatively good bilateral relations. At the same time, achieving a better relationship between countries also needs mutual trust. On the other hand, a worsening level of trust and a deteriorating relationship could easily drive each other. Therefore, this is a vicious cycle. Secondly, China and Japan lack the motivation to resolve their problems of distrust, because their major concerns are not at the same level. As rational actors, there is hardly a possibility for the two countries to make unilateral compromises to deal with their concerns about the other, instead of focusing on their own priorities. The situation becomes even more difficult to handle as current Sino-Japanese relations remain negative, and the different fields of strategic and moral issues are extremely difficult to integrate into a grand negotiation.

Beyond these basic judgements the thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How can the problem of trust be identified and understood in terms of International Relations (IR)? How will trust – or distrust - affect international relations between states?
2. Why are Sino-Japanese relations ‘locked’ in terms of distrust? What is the nature of this structural dilemma and what are the asymmetries in the status of trust?
3. Is it possible to ‘unlock’ the problem of trust between the two countries and improve general relations? If yes, how can this be achieved? If no, why not?

The research questions contain several key arguments for discussion. Question one focuses on two issues: whether the notion of trust/distrust exists in International Relations

and how trust can shape relations between states. This includes consideration of how we should measure trust. Question two raises three issues: firstly, it shows that mutual distrust in China-Japan relations might have two general categories, in strategic and moral fields. Secondly, it shows that there is an asymmetric structure in mutual distrust between the two countries. Thirdly, the asymmetric structure of mutual distrust leads to “locked” Sino-Japanese relations. Question three asks for an examination of possible approaches to “unlocking” bilateral relations, by dealing with the sources of distrust. By raising, defining and verifying these factors, the judgements of the thesis are constructed.

## **8.2 Theoretical implication**

### **8.2.1 The existence of trust**

There are two main categories of theoretical discussion in this research. Firstly, it has to be verified that the notion of trust could have an impact on interstate relations, so that the framework could be built. Secondly, how the basic theoretical elements of state rationality, moral norms, strategic trust, and moral trust fit Sino-Japanese relations is another major concern.

It could be argued that the notion of trust owes its significance in international relations to certain academic assumptions. This research does not demonstrate that countries will “fully” trust others without reservations. Instead, trust has certain scopes and conditions, described as “trust, but verify” (Lebow, 2013, p. 18). There is literature about verifying the existence of trust in international relations in different IR theory approaches. As noted in this thesis, trust plays a role to a certain extent, even in a comparatively complex and dangerous environment such as the Cold War. Besides, the more-positive interactions in Sino-Japanese relations after the normalization of diplomatic relations also verify the arguments in other theories, such as liberalism and constructivism, that trust can be identified and measured in international relations—although with some limitations.

Besides, this research also focuses on distrust as a problem in the current status between China and Japan. It has to be mentioned that distrust does not equal a lack of trust under all circumstances (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Hoffman, Building trust : overcoming

suspicion in international conflict, 2006). The conception of “distrust” is not the same as “lacking trust”, because there is also the possibility that a condition of “not to trust and not to distrust” could also exist. Therefore, there is the task of defining how to measure the status of trust and distrust between countries. As “trust” is an abstract concept in international relations, empirical evidence is needed in order to understand what the status of trust is in a certain relationship. In practice, the approach of measuring trust/distrust between countries is based on the analysis of certain materials including governmental documents, public opinion and interviews on scholars. The “behaviours” of trust and distrust are also included in the analysis, because this evidence is better for verifying the level of trust/distrust.

### **8.2.2 The significance of trust**

The existence of the notion of trust is only one part of the theoretical framework. How “trust” affects its impact on Sino-Japanese relations is vital to the other research questions. In terms of the issue of significance, the aim and the way trust plays a role is the explanation. Trust could act as a bridge between “interactions” and “relationships” in international relations. A positive situation might be described as when interactions and incidents between countries can be interpreted in a more positive way with trust, and could lead to a better relationship. In turn, a better relationship between countries with stronger trust could possibly generate more positive interactions. A negative situation shows the opposite influences. It could also be described as “positive” or “vicious” cycles. There is an argument that better relations between countries need to be supported by mutual trust. However, trust could hardly be generated with negative bilateral relations. If there is a vicious cycle, the actors have to face the dilemma that both trust and better relations are extremely difficult to achieve while distrust and tensions deepen. Therefore, “trust” has an important presence in interstate relations.

Moreover, the application of the concepts in specific Sino-Japanese relations is a further issue. It has been argued that, despite the universalities of trust and distrust in international relations, the characteristics of China and Japan bring certain particularities, which could connect trust and bilateral relations. The characteristics include their specific



political cultures. For example, the legitimacy of the CCP requires the Chinese government to be stronger and more conservative in Sino-Japanese relations, to avoid history repeating itself. Japan's unique political status as an "abnormal" state makes Japan even more concerned about the rise of China because Japan's defence is restricted by its constitution and heavily relies on the US-Japan alliance. The importance of these characteristics is that, when there are incidents and disputes between the two countries, the characteristics have great impact on the issues as "determinants" of consideration. These characteristics could be observed through certain methodologies. The most important ways are in the foreign policy-making processes of the two countries, the academic debates, and public opinion. Hence, it is fundamentally important to analyse the status of trust and distrust by examining these determinants.

There is another way to understand the status of trust and distrust in Sino-Japanese relations: by establishing different categories for issues. Considering the determinants in Sino-Japanese relations and the political realities, "strategic trust" and "moral trust" are raised as key concepts. There are two arguments over the two categories. Firstly, the two notions focus on the "essences of the issues", which indicates the status of trust and distrust. It is reasonable to apply the notions of rationality and normative perception of countries to strategic and moral trust. It is reasonable to understand that countries are trying to be rational when dealing with international affairs. At the same time, trust could also be identified as a kind of international norm—whether based on the values of behaviours, or the judgements of national interests. Therefore, although the existing literature includes very similar phrases of strategic and moralistic distrust, their emphases are on the "theoretical sources of generating trust", which are specific to this research.

From this basis the thesis proposes several hypotheses about the asymmetric structure in Sino-Japanese mutual distrust. These aim to verify the assumption that it is the mutual distrust and the asymmetric structure that leads to the "locked" Sino-Japanese relations. The verification of the hypotheses has three parts. Japan distrusts China over strategic and moral issues, and strategic issues are predominant. China also has issues in the moral and strategic fields, and the moral ones are currently *a priori*. Moreover, there is another

dilemma, or vicious cycle, between China and Japan. The common form of vicious circle suggested that distrust leads to negative relations, and negative relations could generate more distrust rather than trust. In Sino-Japanese relations, the dilemma of asymmetric structure is that the primary concerns of the two countries are at different levels. When Japan wants its strategic concerns to be dealt with as a priority, China is more concerned with moral issues such as history. As both countries will not make unilateral concessions, the situation could be described as another vicious circle, in which distrust towards the other leads to distrust from the other.

When reviewing the first two research questions in relation to the theoretical implications mentioned above, the notion of “trust” (or, to be more exact, distrust in the case of Sino-Japanese relations) would seem to play a vital role in Sino-Japanese relations. The way “trust” shows its significance is the concern of research question three, by forming two vicious cycles and connecting the characteristics of the two countries and the universalities of trust in international relations. When referring to the status of “locked” status of bilateral relations, the more difficult situation that goes beyond “negative” status resulting from the vicious cycles and dilemmas should be the essence of the problem. A general answer to the question is that it is the mutual distrust and its asymmetric structure caused by the different characteristics that leads to the “locked” status of Sino-Japanese relations.

### **8.2.3 Trust and the “locked” Sino-Japanese relations**

In order to solve the problem of the “locked” Sino-Japanese relationship, the research focuses on whether it is possible to reach breakthroughs on the issues of mutual trust and distrust (addressing research question three). It can’t be argued that distrust is the only reasons that leads to negative or even locked Sino-Japanese relations. However, as distrust has been proven to contribute significantly to the current situation, dealing with the problem of Sino-Japanese distrust would help unlock the relationship. According to the findings regarding sources of distrust, the main problems are that the two countries have many concerns of distrust towards each other, and distrust issues have two vicious cycles. In this way, there are at least two approaches to solving the problems:

- 1) Improving mutual trust through continual communication and positive interactions, in all the fields including those with disputes. If cooperation and positive interactions between countries are easily interrupted as incidents, the communications cannot be regarded as effective. Therefore, more mature mechanisms of communication are expected. This approach might be a long-term project.
- 2) At the same time, the two countries might take steps in the near future to break the vicious cycles, and deal with the asymmetric structure. This depends on the political strategies and wisdom of the two countries, that areas of dispute can be addressed. If this approach can be executed effectively, the status of distrust could be improved quickly.

The basic logic and theoretical framework is that, as the vicious cycles and asymmetries of distrust lead to “locked” Sino-Japanese relations, it is crucial to replace the determinant factors in the vicious cycles to turn them into positive cycles. At the same time, trust-building processes in the longer term would help secure the potential progress and avoid reversals caused by new incidents. In this way, unlocking Sino-Japanese relations by dealing with distrust problems could be expected to be an effective method in changing the pattern of relations.

### **8.3 Empirical evidence**

The main empirical findings are in the literature review and the two case study chapters. The literature review is based on existing literature discussing Sino-Japanese relations, and the characteristics of the relationship. The chapter is constructed in the form of a chronology, offering a comparatively clear trend of interactions between China and Japan, mainly after the normalization process. It provides evidence that Sino-Japanese relations have experienced at least three different periods after the 1972 normalization: the “honeymoon”, from 1972 to the end of the Cold War; “Frictions” from the 1990s to the beginning of 21st Century; and “the New Era” with more disputes, from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century until now. The three periods have these labels for the following reasons. On the one hand, there are symbolic events or trends in the different periods, such as the

collapse of the Soviet Union as a turning point between the first and second period. These vital changes reflect great changes in the international environment, which have impacts on relations between countries. On the other hand, the empirical evidence of interactions could indicate the status of Sino-Japanese relations. For instance, among the 33 important mutual interactions between the two countries, only 13 were positive or cooperative. This shows an explicit trend of deterioration, compared to the previous two periods. The significance of this is that Sino-Japanese relations have been negative in their interactions, which could be interpreted as distrust issues.

Hence, the connection between “trust” and “Sino-Japanese” relations is built for the first time in the research, by figuring out what was the status of trust/distrust in certain positive/negative periods. The preliminary finding is that the performance of trust is stronger in a positive relationship, while distrust shows a stronger presence in a negative relationship.

In terms of research question two, “is it the asymmetric mutual distrust between Japan and China on strategic and moral issues which leads to the ‘locked’ Sino-Japanese relations?” the two case study chapters try to synthesize the materials on certain selected, typical cases and the three hypotheses of the research question.

- Hypothesis one: Japan distrusts China on strategic and moral issues. Strategic distrust is predominant and moral distrust is secondary. This could be verified according to the findings that, first, the evidence and materials of “distrust discourse and activities” are more plentiful than those of “trust” on the same issues at governmental, academic and civil society levels. In terms of the quantitative calculation, the research has observed a result of 225-12 appearances of distrust-trust discourse identified in the governmental documents about Japan’s strategic distrust. Secondly, when incidents take place between the two countries, Japan tends to interpret them in a way of strategic distrust, instead of trusting China to cooperate without hesitation.

Thirdly, there is more evidence related to strategic issues than moral issues, showing a tendency towards strategic distrust. For example, the public opinion survey indicated two issues that, on one hand, distrust and negative impressions are the mainstream images in Japanese society when directly asked about opinions towards China: 88.8% of interviewees chose “unfavourable/relatively unfavourable” options. On the other hand, strategic issues have drawn more attention among civil society, in terms of the general image of China, and the disputes and incidents are regarded as the main source of problems between the two countries. For instance, 68.1% of Japanese see China as a regional military threat, increasing from 64.3% in 2014. The two aspects show that the existence of Japanese distrust of China, especially distrust over strategic issues, has been recognized as a crucial topic, which fits the hypothesis.

The interviews of scholars could also verify the argument that, from the Japanese perspective, the problems between the two countries mainly come from the strategic rise of China instead of historical legacies. The typical arguments are, “Japan does not have a problem on the history”, “Japanese concerns of China’s purposes for gaining stronger national power”, and so on. The significance of these attitudes of distrust is that the tendencies of Japan’s foreign policy-making could reflect the distrust behaviour and discourse.

- Hypothesis two: China distrusts Japan on moral and strategic issues. Moral distrust is predominant and strategic distrust is rising. Similar to Japan’s case in the analysis methods, the empirical findings suggest that China has an asymmetric distrust of Japan. For the Chinese case, the comparison in frequency of distrust and trust discourse is 89-0 on its moral concerns from the 14 documents, which shows distrust’s dominant position. The strategic issues exhibit a similar trend that a quantitative comparison in frequency of distrust and trust of 36-0 can verify the existence of strategic distrust. Moreover, the frequency and expressions of words of the used discourse as well as opinions from public opinion poll and scholars can also verify that China concentrate more on the moral distrust issues.

- Hypothesis three: Except for the internal asymmetric structure of distrust between the two countries, there is another structural asymmetry that, while the problem of strategic and moral distrust exists in both countries, they have different a priori concerns. Mutual and asymmetric distrust means that the two countries face a dilemma. On one hand, the two countries need positive interactions to build trust. However, constructing a positive relationship needs bilateral trust. As the two countries tend not to make unilateral concessions to break the vicious cycle, the mutual asymmetric distrust could be a vital problem in Sino-Japanese relationship in a “locked” status.

Therefore the hypotheses are supported by the data and materials achieved by the collection and analysis of discourse content. The relationship between the research questions, theoretical framework and empirical evidence is as follows. On the one hand, the empirical information directly verifies some of the arguments in the research questions. For instance, the dozens of examples of distrust behaviour and discourse could directly verify the existence of distrust between China and Japan. This distrust evidence could also verify the significance of the concept of “trust” and “distrust” in Sino-Japanese relations, because they could be regarded as evidence of a trend of future foreign policies. On the other hand, the empirical evidence could indirectly answer the research questions, by supporting the hypotheses raised in the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework raised the concept of rationality-versus-normative activities, measuring trust and distrust through certain discourses and behaviours. This in turn suggested the hypotheses of examining mutual distrust by means of the asymmetric structure. Hence, the empirical evidences should have provided to help verify the arguments and hypotheses. The fact is that the empirical material collected could fit the main assumptions, that the existing documents, interviews and foreign policies lead to the conclusion that the judgements are interconnected. With the very rich content of Japanese attention to China’s military rise and comparatively weaker expressions over moral issues, and the similar-but-opposite case from the Chinese perspective, could build an asymmetric distrust and its connection with “locked” Sino-Japanese relations. While the

existing distrust discourse, attitudes and behaviour remain as the structural sources of problems between the two countries, it is extremely hard to achieve essential reconciliation over their targeted concerns.

In conclusion, the empirical findings answer the research questions in the following ways:

1. In terms of the existence and significance of “trust” and “distrust” in Sino-Japanese relations, the qualitative analysis of the materials could identify the discourse and behaviours with the essence of “trust” and “distrust”. Regarding the distrust between the two countries, the two sources of the potential for damaged national interests and uncertainty over potential dangers have occupied the major portion of the content. Therefore, distrust has its place in bilateral relations. Moreover, the attitudes of distrust could also inform a country’s policies, so it is vital to Sino-Japanese relations.
2. The second question is on the asymmetric structure and the locked Sino-Japanese relations. What could be surmised from the empirical evidence is that there are distinct expressions on the issues of the two fields from the two countries. While the two countries have different predominant concerns between strategic and moral issues, which are not at the same levels as the concerns of the other actor, the two vicious cycles cause the “locked” status of Sino-Japanese relations.
3. Although the prediction of the approaches for solving the problems of distrust and unlocking relations cannot be purely dependent on the incidents that have already happened, the existing experiences are still helpful for future developments. Considering the interactions between China and Japan since the normalization of bilateral relations, the status of trust and distrust is strongly affected by a series of factors, showing a fluctuating trend. With the current background of the rise of China and Japan becoming more conservative on the China issues, it could be predicted that the two countries will meet difficulties in the near future when rebuilding trust. As the research tried to track the previous settlement of mutual disputes, it can be observed that the political wisdom between the two leaderships could bring positive effects. However, in the longer term, if the two countries want to reach a more stable

relationship with trust, trust-building projects require more patience and hard work. This kind of reconciliation has not been achieved yet, and should be the goal.

#### **8.4 Limitations of the current research and suggestions for the further research**

The research offers several perspectives for looking at the question of trust/distrust in Sino-Japanese relations, including “describing” or “explaining” the definitions of trust in certain interstate relations; “evaluating” how good or bad the situation is currently; and even “predicting” the future of bilateral relationship and mutual trust. To answer the research questions, these perspectives are based on certain methods such as the qualitative analysis of literature, the quantitative calculation of the pieces of discourse, interviews, and so on. The research has tried to detail and cover as much material as possible. However, it encountered some limitations, which need to be paid attention to:

- 1) The research has raised two general categories of issues on distrust, interpreted as “strategic” and “moral” trust. To take a detailed analysis, the thesis selected several specific cases for study. The cases include “maritime disputes” for Japan’s strategic distrust of China, “ideologies and trustworthiness to be a responsible actor” for Japan’s moral distrust of China, the “Yasukuni Shrine dispute” for China’s moral distrust of Japan, and “Japan’s potential military rise and the US-Japan alliance” for China’s strategic distrust of Japan. These issues are representative and vital in the fields of strategic and moral issues. However, it still needs to be considered whether there are other issues that have great impact on the status of trust/distrust between the two countries. Due to the limitation of the words and research window, this thesis focused on the selected issues. However, the dynamic interstate relations require further research, expanding the research scope in the future.
- 2) “Inequality” of materials should be mentioned, because the two countries have different characteristics. It has been recognised that the research could not collect the same amount of materials from the two countries at the same level. For example, the amount of governmental documents from the official MOFA (Japan) website covering its top a priori issue of strategic distrust was more than China’s



governmental documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website covering its core concern of moral distrust. This is reasonable, because countries have different styles of political behaviour, especially for those who have totally different political systems. It could be understood that China might not always express all of its opinions through fully-authorised institutions, and could allow semi-authorised ones to take over this job. Although this kind of issue would not challenge the arguments of the thesis, future research should still pay more attention to the balance of materials from the two countries.

- 3) Aside from the “inequality” issue, the sources of information are still limited. At the governmental level, the current research could only focus on the selected cases, and the related documents published on the websites of foreign affairs authorities. This could be expanded in two ways. Firstly, it is reasonable that more cases could be included in the two categories of strategic and moral trust/distrust. Although the representative cases offered the most efficient ways to understand the status of Sino-Japanese trust/distrust, analysis of more cases would help improve the credibility of the research. Secondly, if future research could also collect empirical materials from other governmental channels than the website of foreign affairs authorities, the content would be enriched as well. A similar issues exists at other levels, such as that public opinion data comes from an existing survey instead of one conducted by the researcher. The interviews of scholars are restricted by the number of interviewees and questions. Future research should also improve these issues.
- 4) Another issue is the impact of the research topic. Although it could be proven that “trust” plays an important role in Sino-Japanese relations, whether the leadership tends to accept its significance is another issue. A longer period of time is needed to continuously verify the research, because the Sino-Japanese relationship is in a state of continued flux. To increase the impact of the research, analysis of future incidents and interactions in Sino-Japanese relations should be carried out.

## **8.5 Final Conclusions**

The title of the thesis indicates several key elements of the research: distrust, asymmetric structure, and “locked” Sino-Japanese relations. In short, the core issue is to interpret

Sino-Japanese relations by understanding the issue of trust and distrust between the two countries. This is a different approach to explaining why the Sino-Japanese relationship keeps deteriorating rather than focusing on every single incident or event. The concept of trust and distrust is used as both a criteria to measure bilateral relations and a source of both positive and negative status.

The typical and classic way to study Sino-Japanese relations is to take a specific case and analyse why it occurred, and what was its impact. By introducing the notions of trust and distrust, this research builds a three-stage logic of “incident-trust-relationship” to realise a broader picture of Sino-Japanese relations. This logic works with different conditions. If a status of “trust” is negative, the incidents between the two countries might be interpreted in a more negative way and through distrust, which leads to a negative relationship. Moreover, the three factors have other ways to influence each other, so that a bad relationship could cause stronger distrust and unpredictable, damaging incidents; while the worst incidents could also deepen mutual distrust. In a similar way, a positive status could also witness a beneficial influences among the factors. Therefore, the interdependent elements are in a dynamic process, showing that Sino-Japanese relations are not simply peer-to-peer cases.

The research was initially inspired by the history between the two countries and the existing literature. To be specific, it is strange that China and Japan are still struggling with disputes that have historical roots. The literature and the calculation of important mutual events indicates that there are different periods in the relationship that have been either quite positive or disappointing. The bilateral relations could be described as both being stable and unstable. Stable, because the general trend has kept moving towards deterioration. However, it is also unstable, because exceptions might bring different results in a particular political environment, such as the textbook issues during a comparatively positive period, and the ice-breaking visits during the stressful years. The worsening and chaotic relationship between two former World War II opponents can't be explained purely as a result of historical memories, because, on one hand, most other previous rivalries – such as the Germany-France relationship – have managed to move

forward and their problems have been dealt with. On the other hand, China and Japan achieved official reconciliation of their diplomatic relationship in the 1970s. Therefore, it is reasonable to have doubts over the origins of the disputes and negative bilateral relations.

Under this circumstance, it is considered that there could be two types of issues. Firstly, reconciliation has not been fully achieved, so that while the diplomatic relationship is normalized, the two states still show attitudes of distrust towards each other in certain cases. Secondly, there are new issues which could cause disputes between the two countries and deepen mutual distrust. The reason why the research tried to introduce the concept of trust and distrust in interstate relations is because the previously-mentioned two types of issues have essential differences which require a link between them, in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the overall image of Sino-Japanese relations. Hence, as a “bridge” between “incidents/cases” and “bilateral relations”, trust and distrust have an impact, as both sources and intermediate signals.

It is possible to use “distrust” to describe the current status of China-Japan relations. This means that there are tasks of clearing the past and facing the future. Therefore, research should be continually updated with any upcoming affairs between the two countries, because the mutual interactions could help interpret the status of trust and distrust, and then explain how the bilateral relationship works. There should not be any absolute judgement, even when there are breakthroughs in the near future, because the foundation of mutual trust is still weak. If the trust-building process between the two countries does not bring significant achievements over a longer period, efforts should also not be ignored or terminated. The “locked” Sino-Japanese relationship needs both short term and long term measures to be unlocked. In this way, the effectiveness and contribution of this research would be more significant if it could be continued, observing the on-going changes in the relationship.

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## **Appendix 1: governmental documents used in different sections of Chapter 5**

### **Strategic part:**

#### **2010 Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands boat collision incident**

Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands -  
In response to China's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on -,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position\\_paper3\\_en.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper3_en.html)

Trends in Chinese Government and Other Vessels in the Waters Surrounding the  
Senkaku Islands, and Japan's Response - Records of Intrusions of Chinese Government  
and Other Vessels into Japan's Territorial Sea -,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e\\_000021.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page23e_000021.html)

Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position\\_paper\\_en.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper_en.html)

Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands -  
In response to China's Airspace Incursion -,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position\\_paper2\\_en.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper2_en.html)

#### **2013 Chinese vessel's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on incident**

Press Conference by Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm\\_press/2013/2/0208\\_01.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm_press/2013/2/0208_01.html)

Protest lodged by Mr. Chikao Kawai, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, to H.E. Cheng  
Yonghua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Japan,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2013/2/0208\\_02.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2013/2/0208_02.html)

Press Conference by Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida,

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/pv0704/joint.html>

Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands -  
In response to China's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on -,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position\\_paper3\\_en.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper3_en.html)

**The establishment of East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone by the Chinese government in 2013**

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the announcement on the “East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone” by the Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000098.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000098.html)

Mr. Akitaka Saiki, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs lodges protest against Mr. Cheng Yonghua, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Japan,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000102.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000102.html)

China’s Establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone in the East China Sea  
(Protest by Mr. Junichi Ihara, Director-General of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, MOFA, to Mr. Han Zhigiang, Minister of the Chinese Embassy in Japan),

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000100.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000100.html)

Telephone Conference between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page4e\\_000049.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page4e_000049.html)

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[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page4e\\_000050.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/page4e_000050.html)

Telephone Conference between Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Fumio Kishida and US Ambassador to Japan Ms. Caroline Kennedy,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_000111.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_000111.html)

**China defence spending (which is not shown as an independent case in this thesis)**

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[http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm\\_press/2011/3/0304\\_01.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm_press/2011/3/0304_01.html)

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Mr. Akitaka Saiki, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, lodges protest against Mr. Cheng Yonghua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Japan,

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Japan-China Consultations on the East China Sea and Other Matters,

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/consult0509.html>

Press Conference by Minister for Foreign Affairs Katsuya Okada,

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm\\_press/2010/7/0727\\_01.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm_press/2010/7/0727_01.html)

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<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/pv0704/joint.html>

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[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/pdfs/ih121121\\_en.pdf](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/pdfs/ih121121_en.pdf)

Statements made by H.E. Mr. Kazuo Kodama, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN in exercise of the right of reply, following the statement made by H.E. Mr. Yang Jiechi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China at the General Debate of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly on 27 September, 2012,

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Leaflet: The Senkaku Islands, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000018519.pdf>

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### **Moral part:**

Japan Welcomes China's Democratic Future: Contribution by Minister for Foreign Affairs Taro Aso to the Asian Wall Street Journal,

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/contribute0603.html>

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<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0611.html>

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Japan's expanding diplomatic horizons, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/pillar/horizons.pdf>

## **Appendix 2: governmental documents used in different sections of Chapter 6**

### **Moral Part:**

Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua Delivers Speech at Genron NPO of Japan,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjb\\_663304/zwjg\\_665342/zwbd\\_665378/t1148677.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1148677.shtml).

Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua Delivers Speech at Chinese Embassy●

Japan-China Friendship Groups' New Year Banquet 2014,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/dszlsjt\\_602260/t1128672.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/dszlsjt_602260/t1128672.shtml).

Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua Writes to Japan's Mainichi Shimbun on the Issue of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Visit to the Yasukuni Shrine,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjb\\_663304/zwjg\\_665342/zwbd\\_665378/t1114404.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1114404.shtml).

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[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/dszlsjt\\_602260/t1124791.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/dszlsjt_602260/t1124791.shtml).

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[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/fyrbt\\_602243/t1119124.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/fyrbt_602243/t1119124.shtml).

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Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman answers questions from media in terms of the issue of Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications visiting the Yasukuni Shrine,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/fyrbt\\_602243/dhdw\\_602249/t1113745.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/fyrbt_602243/dhdw_602249/t1113745.shtml).

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[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/fyrbt\\_602243/t1113124.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/fyrbt_602243/t1113124.shtml).

Yang Jiechi gives a speech on Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/zyxw\\_602251/t1112727.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1112727.shtml).

Wang Yi summoned Japanese Ambassador to China to raise a strong protest against Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/zyxw\\_602251/t1112220.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1112220.shtml).

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[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_chn/zyxw\\_602251/t1112078.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1112078.shtml).

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Press Conference by Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hong Lei,  
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Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua attended the meeting of Japan-China Friendship Association,

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[http://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/docs/151020\\_en.pdf](http://www.genron-npo.net/en/pp/docs/151020_en.pdf) and

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