Village Loudspeakers to Virtual Chatrooms:

Mass Media and Multigenerational Memory in Sino-Japanese Relations

Bowdoin College, 2014

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I. INTRODUCTION

“82 years ago today, September 18, 1931, the "September 18 Incident" broke out. Never forget the Japanese knife, the 35 million compatriots casualties; we must never forget China’s countless martyrs’ blood spilled across the land; it is impossible to forget. When we were backwards, we were bullied; when we are developed we are strong. Do not forget national humiliation, and strive for self-improvement! Today, and every day!”

On September 18, 2013, the official account of the People’s Daily (renmin ribao 人民日报) posted this stirring commemorative on Sina Weibo (xinlang weibo 新浪微博), China’s Twitter-like micro-blogging platform. Within hours, #NeverForgetNationalHumiliation (#wuwangguochi #勿忘国耻) and #NeverForget918 (#wuwangjiuyiba #勿忘九一八) were the top two trending hashtags on Weibo’s “Hot List,” and the post had received well over 100,000 re-tweets. This demonstration of nationalist fervor by a ubiquitous Communist Party news organ, and the outpouring of popular support it received from China’s active netizens, clearly shows that when it comes to Japan, history has been neither forgiven nor forgotten by many Chinese citizens.

However, in the wake of the catastrophic earthquake-tsunami-nuclear reactor meltdown triple disaster that hit Japan in March 2011, Chinese netizens voiced their sympathy and condolences. In one online poll, the overwhelming majority of respondents—over 23,000 people—expressed grief and sadness for the Japanese people, while less than 10% responded that they were happy about the earthquake. Furthermore, netizen commentary quickly swerved into criticism of the Chinese government, drawing unfavorable comparisons to the official crisis

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management efforts that took place in the aftermath of the Wenchuan earthquake that shook southwestern China in 2008. Thousands of bloggers posted comments about how impressed they were with how efficient and synchronized the Japanese response was in the wake of the disaster. This surge in empathy for the Japanese in a time of crisis suggests that perhaps not all Chinese citizens hate Japan.

Indeed, from the Mukden Incident and Japanese aggression that set World War II in motion, to today’s territorial dispute raging in the East China Sea, Sino-Japanese relations in the modern era have been dictated by a lengthy, largely antagonistic, and incredibly complicated history. Considered “the most emotional issue” by many Chinese, public opinion towards Japan has fluctuated dramatically over the past half-century. Contemporaneously, China’s media landscape has decentralized and fragmented—evolving from the monolithic Communist Party mouthpiece of the Mao era, to fledgling commercialization and privatization under Deng, to the vast communities of young netizens and micro-bloggers that have proliferated in the new millennium. This paper will argue that as China’s media landscape has diversified, so has public opinion towards Japan. Once a simple reflection of the Party line, Chinese sentiment towards Japan today is not uniformly negative, but rather possesses significant gradations between and amongst generations.

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3 The first recorded conflict between China and Japan occurred in AD 663 over the ancient Korean kingdom, Baekje. The First Sino-Japanese War was fought between Qing Dynasty China and Meiji Japan in 1884-5. The history of Sino-Japanese relations goes back millennia, but for the purpose of this project, I will be considering Sino-Japanese in the modern era (1949-present).

In order to capture the evolution of the media landscape and resultant changes in public opinion, this paper will use a cohort approach\(^5\) to examine the triangular relationship between media, nationalist public opinion, and Sino-Japanese relations during the Mao, the Deng, and Post-Deng Eras. The Mao cohort, or the “older generation,” is defined as those who grew up in the time period between the official installation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949 to Mao’s death in 1976. The Deng cohort, or “middle-aged generation,” are those who grew up during the era beginning with Deng’s rise to prominence in the mid-1970s and ending in 1989 with the Tiananmen student protests. Finally, the Post-Deng cohort, or the “millennial generation,” is composed of those who came of age during the Jiang era through to the present. While I realize that this is an enormous time span to cover, I hope that a comprehensive narrative look at history will lead to a fuller, more nuanced understanding of Sino-Japanese relations and China’s changing media and political landscapes.

The primary questions this paper seeks to answer are: 1) How and why have the changes in China’s media landscape influenced levels of anti-Japanese feeling between and among generations? 2) How has the Chinese government manipulated the media and anti-Japanese nationalism to support the regime? 3) Are anti-Japanese nationalism and the Internet getting out of the CCP’s control and becoming threats to their sustained rule? Before beginning to answer these questions, I will provide a literature review and theoretical framework addressing relevant topics.

\(^5\) Here, a “cohort” is defined as a group of people who share a common experience within a distinct period. In this study, the “cohort approach” is applied in order to examine Sino-Japanese relations and media diversification through the lens of the Mao, Deng, and Post-Deng cohorts.
**Historical Memory and Anti-Japanese Nationalism in China**

In *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* Anthony D. Smith argued “no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation.” This idea of a collective memory of the past is what holds a group of people together and creates a cohesive sense of society. Social psychologist Pennebaker asserts that powerful collective memories can often be found at the root of prejudice, nationalism, and wars. Modern Chinese historical consciousness is shaped by the “century of humiliation,” the period from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s—from the Opium War to the Rape of Nanjing—during which China was bullied and exploited by Japanese and Western imperialists. China experts in all fields agree that China’s experience throughout, and memory of the century of humiliation has indelibly influenced their collective consciousness. Political scientist Peter Hays Gries contends that “it is certainly undeniable that in China the past lives in the present to a degree unmatched in most other countries…Chinese often, however, seem to be slaves to their history.”

Likewise, sociologist Jonathan Unger argues that in China “more than in most other countries, history was and is considered a mirror through which ethical standards and moral transgressions pertinent to the present day could be viewed.” Furthermore national psychologist Anne Thurston tells us “the traumas so many Chinese have suffered in the past dozen, 30, 50, 100, 150 years are both exceptionally painful and exceedingly difficult to overcome.” As a result, the

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phrase “Never Forget National Humiliation” (wuwang guochi 勿忘国耻) has been the cornerstone of modern Chinese identity. This mindset has permeated every facet of society, from education to popular culture to foreign policy decisions.\(^\text{11}\) Notably, this paper strives to complicate some of these notions. While Gries and others suggest that the Chinese are “slaves” to their history, it is also clear that history is a source of national pride. To a great extent, the Chinese have taken the pain and humiliation of the last century and turned it into a triumph.

Nationalism, and anti-Japanese nationalism in particular, emerged as a product of this mentality. Scholars struggle to define “nationalism,” with Zheng Wang asserting that Chinese nationalism “is centered on ethnic identity and on the attachment to historical territorial boundaries.”\(^\text{12}\) In terms of nationalist sentiment, political scientists Dekker, Malova and Hoogendoorn agree. In *Nationalism and Its Explanations*, they contend that:

> In general national emotions, coupled with rudimentary beliefs, are often developed early in life. It can be said that what is learned first influences what is learned later; the first step is highly crucial...National socialization usually start at an early age, with it catches the child with experiences of positive emotions during national rituals—in reality or via television. Positive emotions are then linked to national symbols...this socialization continues when the school, other mass media, peers, people at the workplace, social networks, social movements, and politics serve as other sources of emotions and information.\(^\text{13}\)

In accordance with Dekker, Malova, and Hoogendoorn’s theoretical framework, my argument assumes that the dominant media paradigm in each of these periods shaped the attitudes of the generation towards Japan during their formative years. This way of thinking about nationalist

\(^{11}\) Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 83.


socialization is commonly accepted in the academic community. Nationalism experts Zheng Wang and Francis Fukuyama agree that “nationalism is directly related to generational change.” Therefore, in accordance with experts’ theories regarding political and nationalist socialization, for the purpose of this study, I will assume that people maintain the opinions and levels of nationalism they form during adolescence. That is to say, for example, a person that grew up during the 1960s, reading newspaper editorials hailing the latest CCP victory, expounding on Mao’s greatness in overcoming the Japanese will continue to consume anti-Japanese media and hold on to high levels of anti-Japanese sentiment today.

Stoked by collective memory, media portrayals, and the opportunistic CCP, anti-Japanese nationalism has undergone multiple transformations since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China under Mao Zedong in 1949. Attitudes towards Japan in the post-War period have been shaped by the generations of Chinese that grew up worshipping Chairman Mao and chanting revolutionary slogans from his Little Red Book, their children brought up during Deng’s era of opening up and reform, and finally their grandchildren who were born into an economically developed and powerful China. The older generation witnessed an encompassing propaganda campaign led by Mao in which China was cast as a victor, rather than the victim of Japanese aggression. Their proximity to the War, combined with this massive propaganda initiative, planted anti-Japanese sentiments in the older generation. Under China’s next preeminent leader, Deng Xiaoping, anti-Japanese rhetoric was muted in the media during this

period in order to promote economic ties and facilitate China’s unprecedented rise, thus giving rise to a generation with neutral opinions of the Japanese.

However, in recent years, as China has emerged as a world superpower and their economy has surpassed Japan’s to become second-largest in the world,¹⁵ Chinese youth possess extremely varied levels of anti-Japanese sentiment. While some describe themselves as fenqing (愤青)¹⁶—literally “angry youth”—and seek to redeem themselves, their families, and their country after a ‘century of humiliation’ (bainian guochi 百年国耻)¹⁷ by participating in protests and posting in ultra-nationalist chat rooms, others listen to Japanese pop music, watch anime and have Japanese foreign-exchange student friends. With access to an exponentially wider range of media outlets than ever before, the Chinese youth have developed polarized attitudes towards Japan. The vast majority of opinion polls do not account for age differences—this project will fill gaps in the existing scholarship by presenting a nuanced view of public opinion towards Japan by generation.¹⁸ Furthermore, where existing literature seems to assume that there is one-dimensional hatred of Japan among all Chinese, this paper challenges that notion, and instead suggests that levels of anti-Japanese nationalism in fact vary significantly between and among generations.

**Media Diversification and the Polarization of Opinion**


¹⁶ 愤青 or “FQ” is an online abbreviation for 愤怒青年, which mainly refers to Chinese youth who display high levels of Chinese nationalism

¹⁷ Wang, Never Forget National Humiliation, 7.

¹⁸ In my research, I only came across one other opinion poll of Chinese people’s feelings towards Japan that was divided by age [Ming Wan, Sino-Japanese Relations (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 160.]
This raises an interesting puzzle: why do anti-Japanese feelings vary between and among age cohorts? I argue that the lull, and then subsequent surge and splintering of anti-Japanese feeling can be largely explained by the dominant media paradigm of the era. In terms of media influence, media scholars Kuypers, Graber, and Paletz establish firm correlations between media content and the public’s priorities, and demonstrate that frequent, prominent media coverage increases public attentiveness to select issues.\textsuperscript{19} Moreover, Baum and Potter argue that:

\begin{quote}
media’s framing of elite rhetoric has an independent causal effect on public perceptions of conflict characteristics, and through this process, on foreign policy. The media relies on leaders for the supply of information, and upon the demand of the public as the ultimate consumers of this information. Mass media must walk a fine line—paying enough deference to the elite frames to maintain access, while deviating enough to generate and maintain public interest in the news.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

As China’s media landscape has diversified over the past 65 years, this has proven to be the case. However, before I go any further, it is critical to consider the relationship between the Chinese government and the media. Though China’s media landscape has evolved and commercialized dramatically since the Mao era, the two remain inextricably intertwined. As CCP officials continue to grapple with how to channel public opinion in a way that helps rather than hurts them, it is important to remember that when I speak about the media, I am also speaking about the entrenched government apparatuses that control the media. In this way, the generational oscillations in public opinion towards Japan can also often be attributed to the carefully timed and constructed policy of the Chinese government.


Indeed, the CCP has often provided their citizens with public spaces for discursive expression. In 1956, Mao encouraged citizens to express their opinions of the communist regime as part of the Hundred Flowers Campaign under the slogan of “letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend.”21 Likewise, in December 1978, Beijing democracy activists were permitted to record news and ideas on a designated Democracy Wall, in line with the party’s new policy of “seeking truth from facts.”22 Today’s expressions of nationalism and subversion take place primarily in online social media forums and publications. This serves as a “release valve” for many, a place to channel collective anger and frustration. However, government authorities at every level employ a multilayered strategy of regulation, censorship, surveillance, imprisonment, propaganda, and blockage of thousands of international websites to monitor these outlets to a stunning degree.23 By studying and responding to the public demonstrations of anger with symbolic or partial policy shifts, Chinese leaders can show responsiveness to the people’s concerns, thus alleviating potential criticism from some of the most actively mobile members of society.24

In this way, rather than being a completely repressive entity, the CCP has allowed spaces for people to vent and rage—as long as they do so at pre-determined and pre-approved targets and within circumscribed times and places. However, though Chinese authorities have arrested a growing number of online dissidents, there are simply not enough police to control the Internet. Ubiquitous chat rooms, comment boards, and news sites are undermining the government’s

21 Jonathan Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1991), 539.
24 Reilly, Strong Society, Smart State, 24-25.
monopoly on information and are complicating the responsive authoritarian tactics they have relied in the past. This diversification in news outlets has led to a polarization of opinion among China’s young netizens. Media expert Shanto Iyengar asserts that:

The fact that consumers can now choose from a vast array of media outlets makes it possible from them to be more selective in their exposure to news programs. Selective exposure means that people with limited interest in politics can bypass the news entirely, while the more attentive can tailor their news consumption to suit their political preferences…by relying on biased but favored providers, consumers will be able to wall themselves off from topics they avoid.\(^{25}\)

Indeed, media scholars agree that media diversification allows for a wider range of self-selecting new outlets, which catalyzes polarization of opinion. In China, the Internet and rapid commercialization of the media post-Tiananmen has given rise to a generation of highly-political, highly-polarized youth. However, this has only recently become the case.

During the Mao era, the CCP could draw legitimacy from Chairman Mao alone, and nationalist fervor was entirely subsumed by the cult of Mao. In the pre-reform era, journalism did not exist, just propaganda—so in this sense, mass media was synonymous with government. Indeed, the Chinese propaganda system replicated the quintessential Leninist “transmission belt,” made for mass mobilization and indoctrination.\(^{26}\) At this point, the CCP represented both the mass media machine and were the unanimous “opinion leaders,” and thus were able to dictate public opinion. As a result, Mao’s campaign to promote the successes and glories of the CCP after emerging from the dark ages of Japanese oppression gave rise to a generation with high levels of anti-Japanese sentiment. In 1979, three years after Mao’s death, on the eve of Deng’s


ascension to power, there were only 69 newspapers in the entire country, all run by the party-state.27

Under Deng, the policy took a relatively soft stance on Japan in order to court Japanese investment and cultivate a strong bilateral trade relationship. Beginning in 1979, as part of Deng’s Opening Up and Reform program, the CCP began to allow some newspapers, magazines, and television and radio stations to support themselves by selling advertisements and competing with each other.28 In 1979, they were able to sell advertising, and by 1983 they were allowed to retain the profits from the sale of ads.29 Along with gradual commercialization, journalists began to travel, study abroad, and encounter “real” journalists, causing who constituted the mass media and “opinion leaders” to open up and become more ambiguous. This era of limited commercialization birthed the first generation of investigative reporters, led by Liu Binyan and Hu Jiwei’s outspoken calls for democracy and political reform. However, due to increased economic interdependence with Japan and a thawing in political relations, there was little demand for nationalistic content during this period. In the nascent stages of commercialization, the state could still effectively control the media frame and public opinion, resulting in the interests of state and commercial media remaining relatively consistent. The inward-facing focus on rapid commercialization and economic growth that accompanied strengthened ties with Japan thus bred a generation possessing low levels of anti-Japanese nationalism.

28 Shirk, Changing Media Changing China, 1.
At present, China finds itself empowered, emerging as not only as a regional giant, but also playing a leading role on the world political and economic stage. Following a brief retrenchment after the Tiananmen student demonstrations in 1989, the commercialization of the media picked up steam in the 1990s. Introduced in 1993, China’s Internet now has an astounding 564 million users, more than any other country in the world.\(^\text{30}\) Likewise, by 2005, China was publishing more than 2000 newspapers and 9000 magazines.\(^\text{31}\) Responding to popular demand, commercial television and film companies produced over 200 anti-Japanese TV dramas and movies in 2012 alone.\(^\text{32}\) From this perspective, China’s meteoric rise has come with a price to the Communist Party, namely a rise in the importance of public opinion and popular media. This remarkable pluralization of media outlets and online forums has created a tension over just who exactly the “opinion leaders” of China are. More vulnerable than ever, Chinese leadership is now engaged a delicate balancing game with commercialization and censorship of the new mass media. As the interests of the state shift towards maintaining legitimacy and patriotic education, the commercial media has responded by producing increased amounts of nationalist content, thereby creating a feedback effect that is manifested in youth attitudes.


\(^{31}\) Shirk, Changing Media Changing China, 9.

In this way, the CCP has commodified patriotism, a seemingly perfect solution that represents the fusion of past and present. As patriotism has become a market, the Party has catered to and fed the demand for nationalist content. Thus, as a product of the cyclical relationship between the self-conscious state propagating anti-Japanese attitudes, and the Chinese commercial media churning out nationalistic content (see Fig. 1.1), many millennials have very high levels of anti-Japanese sentiment. However, of course this phenomenon is much more complicated than the figure above implies. While the state, commercial media and people often act to fuel nationalist attitudes, it should also be noted that these three are not monolithic entities, but also often interact through much less institutionalized channels. For instance, cognizant that nationalist sentiment can quickly get out of their control, the CCP intentionally represses contentious content and intimidates commercial media companies into self-censorship. For this reason, many other youths have grown skeptical of the CCP media machine, and engage in their own online discussions that center around pop culture, politics, and connecting with their friends. These young people tend to like Japan, and are avid consumers of Japanese music, television shows,
and technology. In this way, the fragmentation of the media is reflected in the vastly disparate opinions of China’s youth.

The Internet and Authoritarian Rule

Among media scholars, there is a polarizing debate over how the Internet is either destabilizing or reinforcing authoritarian regimes. As Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas point out in Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule, there is a now widespread belief in the policy world that the Internet will inevitably erode authoritarian regimes. As the Internet increasingly facilitates the globalization of communication, culture, and currency, it is simple to assume that these things—along with democracy—go together nicely.33 However, these explanations do not take into account uses of the Internet that may well support authoritarian rule. Indeed, Lawrence Lessig contends that “governments (democratic and authoritarian alike) can most certainly regulate the Internet, both by controlling its underlying code and by shaping the legal environment in which it operates.”34

Indeed, China is still a long way from having a free press. As of 2008, China stood close to the bottom of the world rankings of freedom of the press—181 out of 195 countries—as assessed by the international nongovernmental organization Freedom House. Freedom House also gives China’s Internet freedom a low score—78 on a scale of 1 to 100, 100 being the worst.35 In recent years, Beijing has created a massive system to regulate and control Internet media through direct and indirect channels. Because no one in the country can access the web

34 Kalathil and Boas, Open Networks, 3.
except through a handful of state-controlled Internet service providers, the CCP can use sophisticated software colloquially know as “Great Fire Wall of China” (fanghuo changcheng 防火长城) to filter and block sensitive content. Furthermore, an unofficial source of persuasion comes in the form of China’s “50-cent Party” (wumao dang 五毛党)—thousands of bloggers commissioned by provincial and local authorities to eliminate and spin online opinions that are critical of the government. These under-the-radar commentators are paid fifty cents for every negative post they spin and every positive remark they post. It is clear that the CCP is doing everything they can to keep a handle on the Internet—but is it enough? This paper seeks to draw on case studies from Sino-Japanese relations to examine how the Internet is causing CCP to lose their control over public opinion towards Japan.

A similar conversation exists among China scholars regarding how the pluralization of China’s media landscape is affecting public opinion and the CCP’s continued rule. On one side is Anne-Marie Brady, and her authoritative work Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China. She asserts that the evolution from the stale propaganda methods of old to deliberate absorption of political public relations, mass communications, and mass persuasion has allowed the CCP to not lose, but gain influence in the post-Deng period—the media is one of the key means for guaranteeing the CCP’s ongoing legitimacy and hold on

power.\(^{38}\) In the moderate camp, China media expert Xiao Qiang is more ambivalent, contending that “the rise of online public opinion shows that the CCP and government can no longer maintain absolute control of the mass media and information…the result is a power shift in Chinese society.”\(^{39}\) On the other hand, however she acknowledges that the media and Internet provide information on problems that allow national leaders to address them before they cause crises.\(^{40}\) Similarly, Daniela Stockmann concludes that “media does not necessarily have the power to bring about regime transition on its own, but can serve as a catalyst for the breakdown of the authoritarian state.”\(^{41}\)

At the opposite end of the spectrum, popular political commentator and international affairs expert Nicholas Kristof believes that “it's the Chinese leadership itself that is digging the Communist Party's grave, by giving the Chinese people broadband.”\(^{42}\) In his op-ed piece *Death by a Thousand Blogs*, he argues that “all this underscores how the Internet is beginning to play the watchdog role in China that the press plays in the West. The Internet is also eroding the leadership's monopoly on information… the Internet is hastening China along the same path that South Korea, Chile and especially Taiwan pioneered.”\(^{43}\) By exploring how the mainstream media is affecting public opinion towards Japan—one of China’s most personal and controversial...

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43 Ibid.
issues—I hope to reveal how these factors are converging to shape the attitudes and policies of China’s next generation of leaders.

**Primary Sources, Methodology, and Terminology**

The evidence presented in this project draws from a diverse range of quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to capture China’s development of media marketization, disparity in political news reporting, and public opinion towards Japan. In the following chapter, I share the results of a study I conducted in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai in the winter of 2013-2014 in which I surveyed over 100 people spanning the three age cohorts. Throughout this project, I will also cite many of 20+ personal interviews I recorded during fieldwork in the fall of 2012 in Beijing, and continued in the winter of 2013-2014 in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai.

For primary source material, I use several major Chinese news outlets and websites, as well as official speeches and documents. As a reflection of the official Party line, I look at the *People’s Daily*, which is the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the CCP. The *People’s Daily*, founded in 1948, is China’s most circulated newspaper. Similarly, Xinhua News Agency (Xinhua tongxun she 新华通讯社) is official press agency of the People’s Republic of China, and the biggest center for gathering information and holding press conferences. Since many newspapers in China cannot afford to station correspondents abroad, or even in every Chinese province, they rely on Xinhua for many of their stories. Furthermore, I look at official speeches and diplomatic documents (often published by Xinhua or in the

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People’s Daily) as CCP media. On the other end of the spectrum, commercial media sources include smaller evening papers, movies, and television shows. In the online domain, my main source is Sina Weibo, one of China’s largest social media platforms with over 60 million active users per day.45 Given the scope of this project, there are of course, a plethora of media channels I am not taking into account, however, for the purposes of this study I am considering only the largest, most widely circulated, and relevant outlets.

Following this chapter of introduction is a statistical chapter in which I report the empirical results of my fieldwork. Thereafter, this essay is organized chronologically—chapter 3 details the Mao Era, chapter 4 the Deng, and chapter 5 the Post-Deng. Each chapter will begin with a brief overview of the period to provide historical and political context. I will then provide a summary and analysis of the dominant media paradigm during that time. “Dominant media paradigm” can be taken to mean the primary forms of mass media during the respective time periods. That is to say, party propaganda in the Mao era, a gradual privatization during the Deng, and the explosion of online and commercial media in the present era. Next, using specific case studies from Sino-Japanese relations, I will evaluate how the state-run, commercial, and social (if applicable) media framed these issues. Finally, at the end of each chapter I will draw conclusions attempting to explain why the issues were framed the way that they were, and how that in turn influenced public opinion and levels of nationalism among the respective age cohort. The sixth and final chapter will summarize the major findings of the study and discuss the future implications of a having a very political, very polarized youth cohort with continued CCP rule.

II. STATISTICS

To give this study a quantitative dimension, this chapter contains the results of a study I conducted in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai in the winter of 2013-2014. The survey was
distributed to 104 participants, of which 42 were between 18-25 years old, 33 were between 36-59 year olds, and 29 were 60+ year olds. While a handful of the participants were family, friends, and former classmates, the majority were people I approached on the street, college campuses, trains, and in hair salons, malls, and parks. In this way, I hoped to capture a random sample of Chinese opinion. The survey consisted of eight major questions designed to gauge media consumption and opinions towards Japan. In this chapter, I will present the results to each question and analyze the findings.

![Figure 2.1](image)

**Figure 2.1.** What is your level of education?

**Table 2.1. What is your level of education?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>9 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>41 (39%)</td>
<td>9 (22%)</td>
<td>17 (52%)</td>
<td>15 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>46 (44%)</td>
<td>27 (64%)</td>
<td>14 (42%)</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Degree</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (12%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the purposes of this study, the major finding of this question is fairly straightforward: in general, younger Chinese are better educated than older Chinese. Indeed, while only 17% of the 60+ generation is college educated, 42% of the middle aged generation attended college, and 64% of the younger generation either currently is studying at, or graduated from a four-year college. Given the lack of formal education and information to formulate opinions of their own, those in the oldest age cohort were more likely to internalize the messages they received in Mao’s encompassing propaganda campaign and hold on to negative views of the Japanese. In the middle-aged generation, higher levels of education combined with more access to news led to more positive attitudes towards Japan. Today, it is not as simple of a correlation. Educated millennials have the exposure to a diverse range of media and news sources that results in polarized opinions towards the Japanese.

*Figure 2.2. What is your primary source of news?*
Table 2.2. What is your primary source of news?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>16 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>9 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>47 (45%)</td>
<td>12 (29%)</td>
<td>17 (52%)</td>
<td>18 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>38 (37%)</td>
<td>29 (69%)</td>
<td>9 (27%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results to this question indicate that although the Internet is the main source of news for the millennial generation, television is still the dominant news source for other generations. While newspapers remain a major source of news for the middle-aged and older generations, hardly any young Chinese are picking up the papers. Instead, young people—and a fair amount of middle aged Chinese—are going online for news. Predictably, older people are sticking with traditional news sources that tend to adhere closely to the party line, resulting in the older generation maintaining their attitudes. Young people are consuming online media, which presents an incredible wide range of self-selecting outlets, which catalyzes polarization of opinion.

Figure 2.3. Do you use social media (Weibo, Renren, etc)?
Table 2.3. Do you use social media (Weibo, Renren, etc)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46 (44%)</td>
<td>36 (86%)</td>
<td>10 (30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>58 (56%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>23 (70%)</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question three measures social media engagement among the three age cohorts.

Predictably perhaps, none of the elderly participants have social media accounts. While the middle-aged generation is starting to transition onto social media, the majority still are not active users. 86% of millennial generation is wired-in and regularly sign-in to social media. For the purposes of this study, then, “social media users” and “netizens” will be synonymous with the youngest age cohort.

Figure 2.4. Do you watch anti-Japanese movies/TV shows?
Table 2.4. Do you watch anti-Japanese movies/TV shows?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>12 (11%)</td>
<td>8 (19%)</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>32 (31%)</td>
<td>17 (41%)</td>
<td>11 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>32 (31%)</td>
<td>11 (26%)</td>
<td>9 (27.5%)</td>
<td>12 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>28 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>9 (27.5%)</td>
<td>13 (45%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question four is designed to gauge consumption of anti-Japanese movies and television series among the three generations. Members of the 60+ generation are by far the most avid consumers, with zero respondents reporting that they “never” watch these programs, and 86% responding that they either “sometimes” or “often” tune in. As the older generation that holds monolithically negative views of Japan, the 60+ generation’s consumption patterns stimulate demand for anti-Japanese content while feeding into and reinforcing their attitudes. The middle-aged generation consumes a fair amount of anti-Japanese movies and TV shows, though it is not really reflected in their attitudes towards Tokyo, which are mostly neutral. Most millennials do
not watch anti-Japanese movies and TV shows, with only 6% reporting that they tune in “often,” and most responding that they “rarely” do (41%). In a very basic sense, this is likely a symptom of spending more time on the computer than watching TV.

Figure 2.5. What is your attitude towards Japanese people?

![Bar Chart]

Table 2.5. What is your attitude towards Japanese people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>30 (29%)</td>
<td>16 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>13 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>34 (33%)</td>
<td>7 (17%)</td>
<td>11 (33%)</td>
<td>16 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19 (18%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>15 (46%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>21 (20%)</td>
<td>15 (36%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth question of the survey actually polls Chinese opinion towards the Japanese people (separate from the Japanese government). Each generation has a distinct trend line. The
oldest generation’s line shows little variation. Indeed, every single respondent answered that they view Japanese either “very negatively” or “negatively,” indicating homogenous negative sentiment. The middle-aged generation responded much more favorably, with the majority of respondents (46%) reporting “neutral” opinions, and 18% even having positive feelings. The millennial generation showed a much more diverse range than the two older generations. In fact, opinions were very polarized, with 38% reporting “very negative feelings” but 36% reporting “positive” feelings. Millennials were very divided on their opinions of Japanese, with only 9% of respondents reporting “neutral” feelings. Interestingly, though unsurprisingly, zero of the 104 participants admitted to having “very positive” attitudes towards the Japanese. Most importantly perhaps, the answers to this question reveal that Chinese opinion towards Japan is not monolithic as many perceive it to be, but rather multidimensional. The overall results indicate that 38% of Chinese of all ages have neutral or positive feelings towards the Japanese. While the majority (62%) still hold “negative” or “very negative” attitudes towards Japanese people, it is clear that attitudes are changing between and among generations.

*Figure 2.6. What is your attitude towards the Japanese government?*
Table 2.6. What is your attitude towards the Japanese government?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>58 (56%)</td>
<td>24 (57%)</td>
<td>10 (30%)</td>
<td>24 (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>32 (31%)</td>
<td>10 (24%)</td>
<td>17 (52%)</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13 (12%)</td>
<td>8 (19%)</td>
<td>5 (15%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to question six are less nuanced than those of question five. This question measures Chinese peoples’ opinions towards the Japanese government. Recent events—Japan’s 2012 re-election of notoriously right-wing nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands dispute, controversial visits by prominent Japanese cabinet members to Yasukuni Shrine, and Japanese politician’s incendiary remarks denying the Nanjing Massacre and the existence of comfort women, just to name a few issues—have catalyzed negative
feelings towards the Japanese government. The results are apparent: 87% of Chinese people have “negative” or “very negative” feelings towards the Japanese government.

Figure 2.7. How important are issues like the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands dispute, the Air Defense Identification Zone, and Japanese leaders visiting Yasukuni Shrine in your life?

Table 2.7. How important are issues like the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands dispute, the Air Defense Identification Zone, and Japanese leaders visiting Yasukuni Shrine in your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>44 (42%)</td>
<td>21 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>21 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>36 (35%)</td>
<td>9 (21%)</td>
<td>19 (58%)</td>
<td>8 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>24 (23%)</td>
<td>12 (29%)</td>
<td>12 (36%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question seven attempts to measure how personal and important respondents think issues with Japan are in their own lives. The results show that the oldest age cohort feels the most personally connected to these issues. 72% of participants answered that these disputes are “very important” in their lives, while no respondents deemed them “not important.” The middle-aged generation’s neutrality towards Japan was apparent in their responses: the majority of
respondents (58%) find the issues to be “somewhat important,” and a mere 6% think they are “very important.” Reflective of their polarized attitudes, millennial responses were split between “very important” (50%) and “not important” (29%). This question demonstrates the correlation between attitude towards Japanese people and how important contemporary Sino-Japanese issues are perceived on a personal level.

Figure 2.8. Should China and Japan go to war?

![Bar chart showing the number of respondents by age cohort and whether they think China and Japan should go to war.]

Table 2.8. Should China and Japan go to war?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18-35</th>
<th>36-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9 (8.5%)</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>95 (91.5%)</td>
<td>28 (90%)</td>
<td>32 (97%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final question on the survey was by far the most extreme. Despite protests, sensationalist commercial media, saber-rattling Internet forums and ubiquitous anti-Japanese movies and TV shows, the overwhelming majority (92%) of Chinese people do not think Beijing and Tokyo should go to war. Within the cohorts, a not insignificant 14% of elderly Chinese
believe China and Japan should go to war, while only one respondent in the middle-aged generation thought taking up arms was the best choice. 10% of millennials advocated for a military conflict, but they were far outnumbered by their more pragmatic peers (90%).

Generally speaking, only the most extreme extremists in each age group want to wage war with Japan. However, it is also telling that in the 60+ and millennial generations, the choice is not as unanimous. While 14% and 10%, respectively, are not huge numbers, they are loud voices that cannot be totally discounted either.

It should be noted that this study has certain limitations due to constraints on time, scope, and travel. Significantly, the study was completely in major urban centers: Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai. As approximately half of China’s population is rural, this urban sample is not entirely representative of the Chinese populace as a whole. Moreover, though I attempted to poll young adults that were not attending university, many of my contacts and their friends that participated in the survey and interviews were students. As a result, the mean level of education for 18-35 year olds is likely disproportionately high. Finally, in calculating results of the surveys, it is important to remember that the relatively small number of people polled creates greater variation in percentages than if the study had more participants.

This statistics chapter is intended to introduce readers to the format and result of this study. Throughout this project, I will frequently reference and elaborate on the data presented in this section. In the following chapter, the narrative will pick up in 1949 with the founding of the People’s Republic of China by the Great Helmsman, Mao Zedong.

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III. MAO ERA

On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the victory of the Communist Party over the Nationalist Army after the brutal, divisive four-year war: “Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up.”

For nearly two decades, China had been ravaged by war. The full scale Japanese invasion of China began in 1937, escalating quickly and violently. In December 1937, in what Iris Chang describes as “a forgotten holocaust,” Nanjing fell to Japanese troops. In the weeks that followed, Japanese soldiers laid waste to the city, indiscriminately killing and raping, plundering and burning homes, shops, and government buildings. The estimated number of deaths varies dramatically, ranging from 40,000 in some Japanese reports to over 300,000 in most Chinese sources.

China historian Jonathan Spence characterizes the atrocity that has become widely known as the Rape of Nanjing as “a period of terror and destruction that must rank among the worst in the history of modern warfare.” Undoubtedly, to this day, the Rape of Nanjing stands out in Chinese memory as an unforgettable—and unforgivable—keystone in the construction of the modern national identity.

In aggregate, the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) was the most destructive war in Asia during the twentieth century. Chinese official history textbooks report the total number of

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47 Wang, Never Forget National Humiliation, 84.
50 Wang, Never Forget National Humiliation, 58.
Chinese military and nonmilitary casualties to be 35 million. The Japanese estimate stands at 4.3 million troops, 1.5 million were killed or injured in battle.\(^{51}\)

Yet these staggering statistics cannot even begin to capture the deeply imbedded anguish and outrage many Chinese still harbor towards the Japanese. Mr. Wang, an 81 year-old retired railway worker in Beijing described his impression of Japan with striking clarity\(^{52}\):

To understand Sino-Japanese relations today, you need to understand history. During World War II, the Japanese forcefully invaded China, raped our women, and murdered civilians. I was only a child, but I still remember everything. How can the Chinese not hate the Japanese? What makes it even worse is that they have not even apologized. Look at what Germany did after World War II—Japan should have done that. But instead Japanese leaders are going to Yasukuni Shrine to worship war criminals and are stealing our land. So tell me, how can I not hate the Japanese?\(^{53}\)

As an eyewitness to wartime atrocities, Mr. Wang’s sentiments are representative of many Chinese octogenarians.\(^{54}\) When Chairman Mao became leader, he used the Party controlled media to harness public opinion and create an encompassing propaganda centered on a new, strong China rising from trauma of war against Japan. Indeed, the war played a key role in the narrative of the communist revolution propagated in the newly established People’s Republic of China. The war years were depicted as a pivotal time in the revolutionary movement that allowed the CCP to emerge as a legitimate candidate for political hegemony. Furthermore, because Mao

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\(^{51}\) Ibid, 60.

\(^{52}\) Many of my interviewees spoke in the depersonalized, generic manner that Mr. Wang uses here. When asked more specifically about their personal experiences, many interviewees evaded the question by saying it was “not important,” and quickly returned to a more generalized overview. Furthermore, given my time constraints, it was difficult to establish rapport with my interviewees and to get to know them on a deeply personal level.


\(^{54}\) Interviewees 10, 12, 13, and 19 shared similar sentiments.
wrote most of his theoretical works during the war, the period has also been presented as the sacred beginning of Maoist Thought, which ideologically dominated the PRC from its founding in 1949 to the Chairman’s death in 1976. During the war itself, the rhetoric of resistance against Japan gave the CCP legitimacy in its struggle for political control with the Nationalist Party. In the post-revolutionary period, the war occupied a critical place in CCP narratives of modern Chinese history. Finally, as the result of close proximity to Japanese aggression in World War II, and being the targeted recipients of Mao’s anti-Japan/pro-Party rhetoric, most Chinese that grew up during this period have uniformly negative views of Japan.

During the 1950s and 60s, Mao engineered a great shift in national narrative. Under his guidance, China evolved from the “victim,” the raped woman during the war, to the strong, Communist “victor” in the new, rising China that emerged after Japan’s defeat. Peter Hays Gries describes the “War of Resistance” as a “chosen glory” under Mao, that “for the first three decades of the People’s Republic...China’s self-image, aggressively projected to the world, was that of a ‘victor’.” Rather than continuing the “national humiliation” narrative that characterized the civil war period between World War II and the establishment of the CCP, Mao brilliantly spun the national suffering at the hands of the Japanese to represent the emergence of a new and powerful China. To the people with traumatic memories of a country bowing to imperialist

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55 On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism (December 17, 1935); The Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party in the Period of Resistance to Japan (May 3, 1937); Win the Masses in the Millions for the Anti-Japanese National United Front (May 7, 1937)


57 Peter Hays Gries, China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 70.
invasion, Mao’s call for self-reliance (zili gengsheng 自力更生) and nativist self-strengthening movements had inherent appeal.\textsuperscript{58}

During the Mao era, the media served as a mouthpiece for the Communist Party. Newspapers, radio, and public bulletin boards were particularly important transmitters of government information. If the CCP did not endorse a message, the people would not see or hear it. China scholar David Shambaugh characterizes the methods and scope of Mao’s media machine well:

[Propaganda and indoctrination were a hallmark of the Maoist state. Mao was a master propagandist in his own right, and he and his regime used a variety of “thought control” techniques throughout their rule. These included mass mobilization campaigns; the construction of “models” to be emulated; the creation of study groups and ideological monitors throughout society; incarceration for the purpose of “brain washing”; the promulgation of a steady stream of documents to be memorized; control of the subject matter to be taught throughout the education system; control of the content of newspaper articles and editorials; development of a nationwide system of loudspeakers that reached into every neighborhood and village; domination of the broadcast media; the use of propaganda teams (xuanchuandui 宣传队) to indoctrinate specific segments of the population; and other methods.\textsuperscript{59}]

Furthermore, after he came to power, Mao overhauled the Central Propaganda Department (CPD). Various new bodies were set up to oversee personnel in the state culture and education systems, such as the Writer’s Association, the Artist’s Association, and Journalist’s Association, that were designed to monitor those specific groups. Legal and administrative matters in the propaganda system were further subdivided, and became the responsibility of the various State Council offices such as the Central Broadcasting Administration, the Central Film

Administration Bureau, and the Ministry of Culture. Xinhua News Service, the official news service of “New China,” took charge of transmitting the CCP’s propaganda message on the national and international scales.\textsuperscript{60}

Moreover, the CCP ensured their dominance of the media by increasing staffing and enforcing stricter ideological guidance. The expanded CPD installed a system of cadres within the cultural and education system that were required to make regular reports on local trends. The department was responsible for issuing advice on what could and could not be published, providing the politically correct words (\textit{tifa} 提法) to describe people and events, and restricting all alternative sources of information—including rumors (\textit{yaoyan} 谣言).\textsuperscript{61} In the pre-reform era, China had no journalism, just propaganda. As of 1979, there were only 69 newspapers in the entire country, all run by the party and government.\textsuperscript{62} The CPD’s new task consisted of policymaking and overseeing the whole propaganda system, however when major propaganda movements were announced, the CCP Central Committee issued directives on the campaigns, while the CPD merely implemented them.\textsuperscript{63} In fact, Chairman Mao took a close personal interest in propaganda, and wrote many articles on how to conduct thought work. Many of the post-1949 directives from the CPD were actually written by Mao himself, though not issued under his name. Mao was determined to transform the thinking of the Chinese people and believed that this was the most essential task for creating a strong, Socialist China. Thus, the dominant media

\textsuperscript{60} Brady, \textit{Marketing Dictatorship}, 36.
\textsuperscript{61} Brady, \textit{Marketing Dictatorship}, 36.
\textsuperscript{63} Brady, \textit{Marketing Dictatorship}, 36.
paradigm during this period allowed Chairman Mao and the CCP unchallenged control over the media, and reinforced their ability to influence and manipulate public opinion.

Throughout his rule, Mao used the memory of Japanese militarism and imperialism to reaffirm his legitimacy and prop up his regime. The week after the People’s Republic of China was established, the *People’s Daily*, the official newspaper of the CCP, published an article titled “The Chinese People Have Won a Victory of Great Historical Significance.” The article uses grandiose rhetoric to endorse the “glorious Mao Zedong and the Communist Party, the liberator of the Chinese people, who have won a historic victory against the Japanese imperialists.” The CCP takes credit for the “victory” against Japan, claiming that:

> From the beginning, only Mao Zedong and the Communist Party organized the armed struggle in opposition to the Japanese imperialists. The Communist Party’s brave and reliable soldiers sacrificed themselves for the honor, freedom, and independence of the country.65

Here, Japan is presented as an abstract force of evil that could only be subdued by Mao and the Communist Party. Similar rhetoric and slogans appeared frequently in newspapers during this time, all touting Chairman Mao and his new China. In these articles, the War of Resistance Against Japan is framed as a necessary experience that had allowed the country to become stronger under the paternal leadership of Mao. As the final step in the Marxist-Leninist transformation from feudal darkness and imperialist humiliation to enlightenment and national sovereignty, the war was essential to shaping the party’s role in the liberational tale that was vital to its legitimizing mythology.66 On September 3, 1951, following a detailed editorial article

64 “中国人民有历史意义的胜利 *The Chinese People Have Won a Victory of Great Historical Significance,*” *People’s Daily* (Beijing), October 8, 1949.
65 Ibid
commemorating the anniversary of Japan’s defeat, The People’s Daily delineates a list of
mottoes that corroborates and celebrates Mao’s agenda:

We declare-
Long live the victory against Japan!
Long live the anti-Japanese national heroes!
Oppose the Japanese-American Treaty of Peace!
Oppose the rearmament of Japan!
Oppose the fascist revival of Japanese militarism!
Long live the People's Liberation Army!
Long live Chairman Mao!
Long live Sino-Soviet friendship!
Long live Stalin!67

Short, catchy slogans like these appealed to the largely rural population, and appeared in every
newspaper, on every community bulletin board, were echoed through village loudspeakers and
radio broadcasts, and were printed in every textbook. Mao masterfully integrated his Marxist-
Leninist ideas of class struggle at home with resistance to imperialism. Children’s comics, films,
television programs, and even Peking Opera all featured the war against Japan, stressing the
dangers of class enemies who would betray heroic resisters to the Japanese.68 In this way, Mao
fused recent, painful memories of Japanese aggression and his promise of a powerful China to
solidify his larger-than-life cult of personality. As the mouthpiece of the Communist Party, the
media kept memories of the War alive, giving rise to a generation of Chinese with negative
attitudes towards Japan.

67 陈其尤, “纪念抗日胜利六周年献词 A Congratulatory Message Commemorating the Sixth Anniversary
of Resisting Japan,” People's Daily (Beijing), September 3, 1951.
68  Michael B. Yahuda, Sino-Japanese Relations After the Cold War: Two Tigers Sharing a Mountain
In 1965, Communist Party military leader and close follower of Mao, Lin Biao, published a popular pamphlet entitled *Long Live the Victory of the People’s War!* In the introduction of the essay, Lin recalls Mao’s triumphs over the Japanese:

A full twenty years have elapsed since our victory in the great War of Resistance Against Japan. After a long period of heroic struggle, the Chinese people, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, won a final victory two decades ago in their war against the Japanese imperialists who had attempted to subjugate China and swallow up the whole of Asia... It was a war in which a weak semi-colonial and semi-feudal country triumphed over a strong imperialist country... In the face of the massive attacks of the aggressors and the anti-Japanese upsurge of the people throughout the country, the Kuomintang was compelled to take part in the War of Resistance, but soon afterwards it adopted the policy of passive resistance to Japan and active opposition to the Communist Party. The heavy responsibility of combating Japanese imperialism thus fell on shoulders of the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army and the people of the Liberated Areas, all led by the Communist Party. At the outbreak of the war, the Eighth Route and the New Fourth Armies had only a few tens of thousands of men and suffered from extreme inferiority in both arms and equipment, and for a long time they were under the crossfire of the Japanese imperialists on the one hand and the Kuomintang troops on the other. But they grew stronger and stronger in the course of the war and became the main force in defeating Japanese imperialism... Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s theory of and policies for people’s war have creatively enriched and developed Marxism-Leninism. The Chinese people’s victory in the anti-Japanese war was a victory for people’s war, for Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung.69

On the cusp of the Cultural Revolution and facing a rising tide of uncertainty among the people, it was timely juncture to jog the collective memory of the Chinese populace. Here again, Lin paints a picture of heroic resistance—valiant PLA soldiers under the ideological guidance of Mao triumphing over both the Japanese imperialists, and the cowardly Nationalists. Lin uses the War of Resistance Against Japan as a reminder of the efficacy of Maoist thought and the CCP victories it inspired. With potent rhetoric, Lin describes outmatched and underequipped PLA soldiers standing up to the Japanese, unlike the “passive” Nationalist army who simply rolled

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over before them. This sort of rewriting of history also concealed the fact that compared to the Guomindang, the Communists actually made little contribution to the war against Japan. During the eight-year span from 1937-1945, GMD troops suffered an immense number of casualties resisting the Japanese. Meanwhile, the Communists took refuge in the mountains of Shanxi Province, evolving from a 30,000-person militia into a full-fledged army over a million strong poised to take power after the war.\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Long Live the Victory of the People’s War!} was, therefore, very important to reaffirming Mao’s legitimacy by demonizing both the Nationalists and the Japanese to remind the Chinese people of the CCP’s glorious victories.

This theory is confirmed by data collected in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai in the winter of 2013-2014. On the spectrum from feeling “very negative” to “very positive” towards Japanese people, the attitudes of the Mao cohort range from “very negative” to “negative,” with no other variation. The data shows that all respondents feel negatively towards the Japanese, which is by far the most homogenous of the three age cohorts. I argue that this trend can be explained by the dominant media paradigm during the Mao era, as well as their proximity to the War of Resistance Against Japan.

While respondents in both the Deng and post-Deng cohorts show significant variance in their feelings towards Japan, the Mao generation’s sentiments are uniformly negative. As China’s media landscape has pluralized, different types of media with a wider range of perspectives have become more accessible, spawning a wider range of opinions. However, those in the Mao generation grew up with—and for the most part have stuck with—traditional, state-

\textsuperscript{70} Wang, \textit{Never Forget National Humiliation}, 89.
controlled media. Results show that 76% of respondents get their international news from the CCTV evening report, the predominant state television broadcaster in mainland China known for being a CCP mouthpiece. The most commonly read newspapers among this age cohort are the People’s Daily, the Guangming Daily (Guangming ribao 光明日报), and Reference News (Cankao xiaoxi 参考消息)—all pro-State, pro-CCP publications. Unsurprisingly, none of the respondents in this age group use social media, and all favor traditional media (see Figure 2.3).

The Mao cohort is however the largest consumer of anti-Japanese movies and television series, with 86% responding that they tune in “sometimes” or “often” (see Figure 2.4). Mr. Liu, a 78 year-old military retiree in Beijing tunes into these programs every afternoon. According to Mr. Liu, “the Japanese war shows are not only entertaining, but also they helps us remember the horrible things the Japanese did during the war.”\footnote{12} It makes sense then that the generation that grew up with the closest proximity to the war, and absorbed the monolithic messages of the Maoist propaganda campaign that cast China as a “victor” over the evil, imperialist Japanese, hold uniformly negative attitudes towards the Japanese.

For the first thirty years of its existence, the official Chinese view of Japan was dictated by Mao’s ideology and China’s identity as a revolutionary power.\footnote{12} However, following the spectacular domestic failures of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, the “great, glorious, and correct” Party began to encounter a profound legitimacy crisis.\footnote{12} After Mao’s death in 1976, China’s next preeminent leader, Deng Xiaoping emerged, instituting a series of drastic economic reforms—including the restructuring and privatization of the media. The next chapter

\footnote{12}{12} Liu 刘, interviewed by Viola Rothschild, Beijing, China, January 8, 2014.
\footnote{12}{12} Yahuda, Sino-Japanese Relations After the Cold War, 12.
\footnote{12}{12} Wang, Never Forget National Humiliation, 89.
will discuss how Deng’s reforms and the gradual commercialization of the media impacted attitudes towards Japan.

IV. DENG ERA

Stuck in a traffic jam on Beijing’s Third Ring Road in January 2014, I asked the 42 year-old male taxi driver, Mr. Yang, his thoughts on Japan and their relationship with China. He took a long drag on his cigarette and responded:

In the 80s, after Deng Xiaoping came to power, China and Japan had good relations, mostly having to do with their economic relationship. Look around at the brands of the cars: many of them are from Japan. Right there [points] is a Toyota, and over there is a Mitsubishi. I have no problem with Japanese people, and even though I don’t support what the Japanese government is doing, economically we are very dependent on each other. The Japanese still have a lot to apologize for, but things can’t get that bad because of the economy. Because of America’s role in the conflict, and for world stability, I hope from my heart that China and Japan can mend their relationship.74

Indeed, in 1977 Japanese began exporting automobiles to China. Demand skyrocketed, with exports increasing tenfold from 1980 to 1985. Japanese-made cars gained a strong reputation for quality and reliability, an opinion that still persists today.\textsuperscript{75} To a taxi driver, Japanese-made cars are seen as an extension of Japan. Accordingly, the perspective Mr. Yang voices here are emblematic of the middle-aged cohort.\textsuperscript{76} Coming of age in the 1980’s era of opening up and reform, most middle-aged Chinese today hold fairly neutral views of the Japanese. Embarking on Deng’s program of opening up and reform, people in this generation experienced a familiarity borne by Japanese products and consumerism that was ubiquitous in the mainstream media and day-to-day life. In order to explain this phenomenon, we must first examine China’s political and economic situation at the time.

Deng Xiaoping, a veteran leader of the Long March generation and a survivor of two purges during the Cultural Revolution, emerged as China’s preeminent political figure after Mao’s death.\textsuperscript{77} In the wake of the devastation wrought by the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, Deng inherited a country facing an alarming identity crisis. In contrast to Mao’s high-handed ideological beliefs and megalomaniacal “self-reliance,” Deng was known for his pragmatism. He quickly recognized China’s debilitating social and institutional problems and sought to remedy them with a series of unprecedented economic reforms that pursued “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” This phrase allowed leadership to rein in development when they feared it was progressing out of their control, while simultaneously departing from discredited


\textsuperscript{76} Interviewees 4, 5, 7, 11, 15, and 22 expressed similar feelings.

\textsuperscript{77} Shirk, \textit{China: Fragile Superpower}, 159.
Marxist/Leninist/Maoist thought. Introduced in 1979, Deng’s “opening up and reform” (gaige kaifang 改革开放) of the economy opened China to foreign investment, the global market, and limited private competition. The results of the reforms were remarkable—Deng kick started a 30-year period of unparalleled economic growth that transformed China from a struggling agrarian society into a world economic power.

One of Deng’s major initiatives tackled reforming China’s media system. After Deng opened the “Great Debate Concerning the Criterion of Truth,” the idea of a free press was acknowledged, sparking more diversity in news content and a higher degree of professionalism among journalists. The most significant change, however, was decentralization. Whereas media used to be strictly consolidated under CCP control, various social organizations were permitted to advertise and establish their own publications. Indeed, in the decade between 1978 and 1988, the number of officially licensed newspapers increased tenfold, from just 280 to 2,322. Furthermore, television emerged as important form of media during the late 70s and early 80s. Although the number of people that owned television sets was small in comparison to China’s overall population, ownership increased exponentially during this period. In urban areas, nearly 75% of households had a television by 1985. However, while the quantity and variety of

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81 Stockmann, Media Commercialization, 56.
television programming expanded, most importantly, it still served the three main purposes of the CCP: propaganda, education, and cultural enrichment.\textsuperscript{83} Thus, though the 1980’s certainly represented a marked increase in autonomy, all news outlets were still licensed and ideologically monitored by the CCP’s Propaganda Department (PD) and General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP).

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.1.png}
\caption{Number of Officially Licensed Newspapers 1979-1988\textsuperscript{84}}
\end{figure}

Throughout this period, Deng’s mantra was “it doesn’t matter if that cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice.”\textsuperscript{85} In respect to his program that was modernizing the countryside and raising the standard of living for tens of millions of Chinese, Deng saw the relationship with Japan as crucial to the success of his market-oriented reforms—and rightly so. After World War II, Japan’s economy grew rapidly. In the 1960s, Japan’s economy grew at a rate of over 10\% per year, and became the world’s second largest economy in 1967.\textsuperscript{86} In explaining the role of Deng

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} Huike Wen, \textit{Television and the Modernization Ideal in 1980s China: Dazzling the Eyes} (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 1.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Stockmann, \textit{Media Commercialization}, 56. Note: Statistics are inconsistent, here, the number of Party and non-official papers were added together to determine the total number of newspapers.
\item \textsuperscript{85} 不管黑猫白猫会抓老鼠的就是好猫！
\item \textsuperscript{86} “Japan’s Post-War Economic Development,” Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, \url{http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c03cont.htm} (accessed May 13, 2013).
\end{itemize}
in accelerating and opening the Chinese economy, his biographer, Ezra Vogel, frequently noted the significance of Japanese advice, management training, and the transfer of advanced technology from Japan.\(^{87}\)

Even preceding his ascension to paramount leader, Deng and then-Chairman Hua Guofeng worked to channel China’s rapid resource development into forming a mutually beneficial trade partnership with Japan in the late 1960s and early 1970s, sharply reversing Mao’s “nativism” model.\(^{88}\) During this period, China had emerged as a major oil producer, but after the abrupt deterioration of political relations with the Soviet Union, and the subsequent loss of their technical and material backing, China was in desperate need of alternative sources of foreign petroleum drilling technologies and equipment. China’s resource dependency gave rise to a fledgling trade relationship with Japan that was supported and reinforced by the 1972 normalization of diplomatic relations. The newly established Petroleum Group’s trade began with exporting 2 million tons of crude oil to Japan in 1972, and steadily increased to 10.5 million tons in 1975, and 16 million tons in 1979.\(^{89}\) As China and Japan became more and more economically interdependent, Deng continued to pursue a relatively lenient Japan policy in order to further Japanese investment in China. The CCP’s soft Japan policy was reflected in their media output, creating a generation of Chinese possessing low levels of anti-Japanese sentiment.

\(^{87}\) Yahuda, *Sino-Japanese Relations After the Cold War*, 18.


Politically, it was in the Party’s best interest to continue to downplay anti-Japanese sentiments in the news and foster good relations between Beijing and Tokyo. In light of Japan’s economic dominance during this period and a power dynamic disparity that clearly favored Tokyo, China’s leaders actively dampened anti-Japanese nationalism in the media in favor of cultivating a beneficial trade relationship. Sure enough, throughout his reign, Deng made great efforts to maintain “sensible and friendly”\textsuperscript{90} relations with Japan. In December of 1978, just before he announced the reforms, Deng made the first-ever official visit to Japan by a PRC leader. Furthermore, in the early 1980’s he invited several Japanese to serve as advisors to the China’s modernization efforts, and established the Sino-Japanese Economic Knowledge Exchange Association, an organization developed to help China learn from the Japanese experience. As Chinese politics expert Susan Shirk writes, “[i]n the 1970s and early 1980s, Japan had a positive image in China as an Asian economic and technological tiger worthy of emulation.”\textsuperscript{91} Alan Whiting notes that during this period, aspects of Japanese education, inventiveness, and society were singled out for praise. In the period following normalization, “negative media treatment of Japan of past Sino-Japanese conflict coexist[ed] with positive images of contemporary Japan that portrays the country as a role model.”\textsuperscript{92} Moreover, under Deng, China and Japan signed an eight-year trade agreement in 1978 and a Treaty of Peace and Friendship encouraging continued trade and good relations.

On August 13, 1978, the original text of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship (\textit{Zhonghua renmin gongheguo he Ribenguo heping youhao tiaoyue} 中华人民共和国和日本国和平友好条

\textsuperscript{90} Shirk, \textit{China: Fragile Superpower}, 159.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
was published in the *People’s Daily*, along with a large picture of the Chinese and Japanese delegates. The opening to the Treaty reads:

Recalling with satisfaction the joint communiqué the People’s Republic of China and Japan issued on September 29, 1972, the People's Republic of China and Japan have since seen the friendly relations between the two governments, and the two peoples, obtained on the basis of great development. This above statement has confirmed the basis for joint peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries. The joint statement indicated should strictly abide by the principles of the various consultants; fully respect the principles of the UN Charter; and contribute to Asian and world peace and stability. In order to foster peace and development of friendly relations between the two countries, they have decided to conclude a treaty of peace and friendship.\(^9\)

Harkening back to the 1972 normalization of relations and the Petroleum Group, this treaty established the groundwork for Sino-Japanese relations in the 1980s. Unlike the Mao era where China and Japan’s relationship was exclusively rooted in history, now history was neglected in favor of a symbiotic relationship created “on the basis of great development.” This marked shift in tone can be attributed to the CCP’s willingness to suspend the “history issue” in order to pursue joint economic cooperation and growth. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship launched an extended media campaign promoting strengthened ties between China and Japan. Indeed, in the following months, the *People’s Daily* churned out dozens of articles touting China and Japan’s newfound friendship. In an article titled “People of All Walks of Life Continue to Talk and Publish Articles Warmly Congratulating the Signing of the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship,” the author writes:

The Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty marks the relationship between the two countries have entered a new stage. It will not only consolidate and strengthen good-neighborly relations between the two countries and enhance the friendship between the two peoples, but also expand bilateral economic and trade

exchanges. I sincerely hope and believe that our bilateral economic and trade relationship will be able to join our hands more closely for generations to come. Likewise, editorial and “opinion” pieces were carefully crafted to reflect the Party line of reconciliation and friendship. Other such articles followed similar templates, like “Tokyo, Our Friend” and “Developing Friendly Sino-Japanese Relations is Necessary!” In Deng era’s of fledgling commercialization, today’s middle-aged cohort was inundated with positive portrayals of Japan in the media.

This period was not without controversy however. When the territorial spat over the Diaoyu-Senkaku islands flared up in 1979, Deng responded diplomatically, stating, “China and Japan have different views, we do not need to address this issue at present. Let’s talk about amicable Chinese-Japanese relations now, and not let it be a obstacle to our joint-development.” Vice-Premier Gu Mu echoed these sentiments when a Japanese reporter asked him about the island conflict in a press conference:

> Regarding the Diaoyu Islands issue, we have repeatedly expressed our attitude. Sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands issue is clear, it has always been our country’s territory. But considering the joint development of oil resources, the issue of sovereignty can temporarily be hung up for our future generations to resolve. We should first develop the oil resources in the region, which is beneficial to both sides.”

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95 “东京，友好之城 Tokyo, Our Friend,” People's Daily (Beijing), May 23, 1979.


The Party’s stance did indeed temporarily dispel these tensions—and the results were apparent in the media content. Title searches for “Japan” (riben 日本) and “Diaoyu Islands” (diaoyu dao 钓鱼岛) in the National Library of China’s digital newspaper data bases yielded only 18 results between 1976 and 1989, compared to 668 mentions between 1990 and 2013.

Similarly, in 1982 when the first Japanese textbook controversy broke out, anti-Japanese nationalism flared. While Chinese official history textbooks report the total number of Chinese nonmilitary casualties in the Rape of Nanjing to be around 300,000, many Japanese textbooks gloss over the invasion of China, using terms like “many” and “massive”99 to describe the death and destruction. Japan’s insistence on downplaying their wartime actions, and the allegation that Japan’s Ministry of Education had ordered authors to make revisions dredged up painful historical memories and provoked outrage in many Chinese.100 However, as one policy advisor put it, “Deng kept it in control, he stopped the fever quickly.”101 Finally, in September 1985 when students in several major cities across China took to the streets protesting the Japan’s “second occupation” of China, chanting “Down with the Japanese militarists!” and “Boycott Japanese goods!,” the Party quelled the demonstrations and responded by publishing an official article titled “Treasure Hard-Won China-Japan Friendly Relations” in the People's Daily.102 The article recognized the existing problems between China and Japan, but emphasized the


101 Shirk, China: Fragile Superpower, 160.

importance of maintaining and promoting friendship between the two countries. Written at the behest of the Party’s publicity and ideology overseer, Hu Qiaomu, the article was generally well received by the public.\textsuperscript{103} On the whole, the Deng era was characterized by a political focus on China and Japan’s economic relationship, with the hope that a common goal would offset their contentious past. This stance was reflected in the still primarily state-controlled media apparatus, and consequently indelibly shaped the attitudes of the middle-aged cohort.

Unofficially, China and Japan’s increased economic cooperation during this period spawned the rapid dissemination of Japanese media in China, particularly wildly popular movies and comics called \textit{manga}. Manga scholar Wang Yang contends that:

In this newly opened country where media consensus and public ideology went strictly in accordance with the government, Manga had its unique voice heard in those who were willing to hear it. It strikes the youth with entirely new perspectives to understand life with interesting stories, elaborated pictures and spectacular drawing genres, making a sharp contrast to the difficult education they received at school.\textsuperscript{104}

Sure enough, the culture vacuum that materialized in China in the wake of the Opening Up and Reform period created a high demand for foreign entertainment—and Japanese manga has inherent appeal. China’s lax intellectual property laws created an essentially unlimited market for low-priced pirated comics and videotapes. Furthermore, characters from popular mangas became ubiquitous, appearing as toys, early computer games, and were plastered on store fronts and advertisements.\textsuperscript{105} A 37-year old man I spoke with in Shanghai related that some of his

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textbooks had *jiqimao* (*Doraemon*) on the front, and that every afternoon he and his friends would watch the latest installments of their favorite anime series. He added that “Chinese cartoons were boring and low-quality, the ones from Japan were definitely the best. The animation was much better and the stories were interesting.”\(^{106}\) Indeed, Japanese mangas such as *Astro Boy* and *Doraemon* gained immense popularity during the 1980s. The stories were full of childhood dreams and imaginations and depict the daily life of children and their supernatural companions. Profound issues such as human and society, family, science are implied through the adventures of the characters.\(^{107}\) Thus, the political circumstances in the 1980s allowed an influx of Japanese media that opened channels of cultural exchange between Beijing and Tokyo that positively influenced the Deng generations’ attitudes towards Japan.

These theories are confirmed by data collected in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai in the winter of 2013-2014. On the spectrum from feeling “very negative” to “very positive” towards Japanese people, the attitudes of the middle-aged cohort form an inverted-U shaped curve. The inverted-U shape shows that the majority of respondents harbor neutral attitudes towards the Japanese, which, on average, is by far the most positive of the three age cohorts. I argue that this trend can be explained by the dominant media paradigm during the Deng era. That is, a slowly commercializing, but mostly state-orchestrated media machine.

As explained in the previous chapter, the Mao generation exhibits fairly strong anti-Japanese sentiments across the board. To reiterate, the low degree of variance and negative feelings among the older generation can be attributed largely to Chairman Mao’s encompassing


and all-powerful propaganda campaign in which China and the Communist Party are continually aggrandized for finally “standing up” to Japan. Concurrent with the media landscape starting to open up and privatize, public opinion towards Japan also became slightly more diversified during the Deng era. However, because the media was still primarily a tool of the CCP, opinions tend to closely reflect the Party line of reconciliation and cooperation.

Though the middle-aged cohort responses trend neutral-negative, there was only one respondent (3%) that said they had “very negative” views of the Japanese people, as opposed to 44% in the older generation and 38% in the millennial cohort. Indeed, members of the middle-aged cohort that were born into a rapidly globalizing and materializing society in which Tokyo was accepted as a key trading partner, had markedly less negative attitudes towards Japan. A poll conducted by the Institute of Japanese Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in September-October 2002 corroborates my study, concluding that the 41-50 year old group and the 51-60 year old group of respondents (i.e. those who came of age during the Deng period) had lower percentages of “negative feelings towards Japan” than both generations of older and younger respondents.108

In an interview with Mrs. Shi, a 38 year-old Chinese teacher, she aptly sums up the sentiment shared by many in her generation:

I don’t hate Japanese people at all. In college I had a good friend that was Japanese, she was very nice, and her Chinese was very good. She moved back to Tokyo, but we still keep in touch sometimes. I think that many Chinese people have the idea that all Japanese have very reserved personalities on the outside, but are actually very violent and mean-spirited. I don’t think this is true. There are many things that China and Japan have different points of view on, but considering

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the mutually beneficial economic relationship, if the government leaders and diplomats can find a way to put aside history and current issues, it would be best for everyone.\textsuperscript{109}

Mrs. Shi’s pragmatic words echo verbatim many of the messages that were conveyed in the media in the 1980s. She presents a measured view of Sino-Japanese relations, but dispels many common stereotypes of the Japanese people. Indeed, while the majority (64\%) of the middle-aged generation has “neutral” or “positive” feelings towards the Japanese people, 82\% feel “negatively” or “very negatively” towards the Japanese government (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Still, Mrs. Shi expresses cautious optimistic regarding the future of Sino-Japanese relations, repeating phrases like “mutually beneficial economic relationship” and “put aside history,” suggesting that her generation has internalized Deng-era thinking. Furthermore, Japan simply seems to occupy a much less significant place in the lives of middle-aged Chinese. A shockingly low number (6\%) of 36-59 year olds responded that issues in Sino-Japanese relations are “very important” to them, compared to 50\% of 18-35 year olds and 72\% of the 60+ generation (see Figure 2.7).

Deng’s economic reforms took off, launching China’s economy into a period of prolonged high-speed growth. However, his campaign to “reassess” Maoism in order to eradicate all ideological barriers to reform had unintentional consequences. As Suisheng Zhao argues, it unexpectedly resulted in the demise of the official ideology, triggering a profound “three belief crisis” (\textit{sanxin weiji}): crisis of faith in socialism (\textit{xinxin weiji}), crisis of belief in Marxism (\textit{xinyang weiji}), and crisis of trust in the party (\textit{xinren weiji}). Once the old CCP ideology lost credibility, many Chinese turned to Western liberal ideas that called for democratic reform.

Thus, the “sanxin weiji” evolved into a pro-democracy movement that eventually led to the Tiananmen student demonstrations of 1989.\textsuperscript{110} The CCP’s post-Tiananmen media crackdown and the resultant Patriotic Education Campaign merged with the continued commercialization of the media and the emergence of the Internet to shape the diverse media landscape of the present era. The post-Deng era marks a time of increased cultural and economic exchange between Beijing and Tokyo, but also the re-emergence of divisive territorial disputes and historical issues. In the next chapter I will discuss how these variables interacted to shape today’s youth attitudes towards Japan.

In the wake of the Tiananmen demonstrations, China’s elite politicians were confronted by a tumultuous reality. The student protests exposed a rift among top leaders that resulted in the in Deng stepping down in 1989, giving way to China’s third generation of leaders, with new General Secretary Jiang Zemin at the helm. As Jiang was oft described as a “flower vase”—a Chinese term for a decorative but useless person,111 and Hu Jintao’s years in power were beginning to be referred to as “the lost decade,”112 China’s new leaders reignited anti-Japanese nationalism in attempt to direct public attention away from domestic stagnation. Lacking the unassailable credentials and cult of personality of Mao and Deng, and hyper aware of the anti-Japan protests that seamlessly evolved into anti-Party demonstrations, Jiang consequently took a much tougher stance towards Tokyo in order to deemphasize domestic turmoil.

Following Deng’s decade of “friendship diplomacy”—a policy in keeping with the new cosmopolitan spirit of his reform and opening—Sino Japanese relations took a turn for the worse in the wake of Tiananmen. Tensions heightened for several reasons. In domestic affairs, the self-conscious Chinese leadership stoked nationalism in order to restore faith in CCP rule and foster a new sense of national identity. This concerted government effort was most obvious in the launching of the encompassing Patriotic Education Campaign (PEC) in 1994, which cast Japan as the ultimate symbol of rapacious imperialism, of the foreign aggression that had humiliated China from the Opium War until the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.113 Economically, after Japan’s asset price bubble burst in the early 90s, and China’s economy

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113 Yahuda, Sino-Japanese Relations After the Cold War, 31.
continued to grow and finally overtook Japan to become second-largest economy in the world in 2010, China was imbued with an overwhelming sense of confidence. This reversal marked a wider shift in regional power dynamics that led, in turn, to a new Chinese assertiveness on the international stage—particularly evident in their hardline, rhetorical attitude toward Japan. A continual stream of conflicts arose during this period that further frayed Sino-Japanese relations, notably Japan’s role in the Taiwan crisis of the mid-90s, Tokyo’s continued unapologetic stance regarding the War of Resistance Against Japan (including high-level official visits to Yasukuni Shrine, text book revisionism, and denial and euphemizing of the comfort women system), and the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands that is still raging in the East China Sea. In the Deng era, despite evidence of some tension, most Chinese believed that Japan was playing a valuable role in China’s economic development, and therefore could not be considered an enemy. However, by the 1990s, attitudes had changed. A major survey published by the China Youth Daily in December 1996 showed that only 14.6% of Chinese had a favorable impression of Japan, compared to 41.5% who had a negative view of the country. Finally in a position of power, Chinese leadership has continued to take a hard line on Japan in the post-Deng era in order to both fuel and placate public opinion.

Indeed, the CCP’s tough stance and the evolution of a new national narrative fed off each other, giving rise to a generation in which many young people possess high levels of anti-Japanese nationalist sentiment. On the other end of the spectrum, however, there is also a distinct cohort of young Chinese that consciously refuses to internalize CCP messages, and instead has

114 Yahuda, Sino-Japanese Relations After the Cold War, 55
115 Whiting, China Eyes Japan, 127-8.
116 Ming Wan, Sino-Japanese Relations, 71.
developed a much more positive opinion of the Japanese based on their own interactions and experiences with Japanese media, people, and culture. I argue that this polarization of opinions can be largely attributed to the rapid commercialization and diversification of China’s media landscape during this period.

In the post-Tiananmen era, Jiang and the new CCP leaders realized the survival of the regime depended largely on whether they could change the younger generation’s attitude toward both foreign powers and the Party itself. The Chinese government met this challenge in 1994 with the launching of a nationwide Patriotic Education Campaign (PEC) designed to:

- boost the nation’s spirit, enhance cohesion, foster national self-esteem and pride,
- consolidate and develop a patriotic united front to the broadest extent possible,
- and direct and rally the masses’ patriotic passions to the greatest cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In essence, the PEC was created to indoctrinate Chinese students with detailed information about how China suffered at the hands of the Japanese until the CCP-led revolution changed China’s fate and won national independence, thus ending national humiliation. Predictably then, given the PEC began in 1994, most participants in China’s nationalist protests in the 2000s and 2010s were college students and young people in their twenties. Zheng Wang calls these Chinese youth the “generation of patriotic education.”

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120 Ibid, 117.
However, the government did not only focus on education, but rather strived to “make entertainment a medium of education”\textsuperscript{121}—the campaign actually permeated all Chinese pop culture and media through state-run newspaper, magazines, radio, and television. Monuments, museums, and remembrance sites were constructed and popularized during this period, further contributing to the resurgence in negative feelings towards the Japanese. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum, built in 1985, was expanded in 1995, and again in 2005, perfectly marking the high points of nationalist mobilization.\textsuperscript{122} This sort of nationalist education is alive and well today. When I visited the museum in January 2014, there were several field trips from schools all over the country whose students and teachers had come to commemorate history. Tour groups solemnly posed in front of a massive memorial wall inscribed with “300000 victims” in eleven languages (not including Japanese). When students strayed from the line or were caught chatting with their friends, their teachers sternly told them to “pay attention and never forget.”

Jiang and other elite politicians made periodic pilgrimages to these sites—considered by some to be unofficial counterpoints to Japan’s Yasukuni Shrine—to pay their respects. In 1997, at the re-opening of the Chinese People’s Memorial Hall of the Anti-Japanese War, Jiang wrote an inscription that reads, “Hold high the patriotic banner, use history to educate people, promote and develop the Chinese national spirit, and rejuvenate the Chinese nation.”\textsuperscript{123} Similarly, in 1999 at the September 18 Historical Museum in Shenyang, Jiang’s words “Never forget September 18” (\textit{Wu wang 9-18 勿忘 9–18}), were inscribed on a huge marble slab.\textsuperscript{124} Following Mao, who

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 108.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Shirk, \textit{China: Fragile Superpower}, 165.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Wang, \textit{Never Forget National Humiliation}, 106.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
derived legitimacy from his larger than life cult of personality and ideology, and Deng who grounded his rule in economic success, post-Tiananmen leaders sought legitimacy through inciting nationalism and diverting popular attention away from domestic issues. Therefore, as a result of Chinese leaders stoking the flames of anti-Japanese nationalism in the PEC and state-run media, many Chinese youth today possess high levels of anti-Japanese sentiment.

During the 1990s, China accelerated the privatization that began in the Deng era, and fresh media offerings sprang up all over China. Commercialization led to a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between media and audiences, the tight grip of the propaganda apparatus notwithstanding. Readers were no longer purely targets of CCP messages, and instead could choose the media they wanted to consume. In the ten years from 1993 to 2003, Beijing Daily, the official mouth piece of municipal leaders in the capital, went from an average daily print run of 523,000 copies to just 380,000 copies—a 27% drop. Likewise, over the same ten-year period the People’s Daily, the CCP’s flagship newspaper, underwent an even more pronounced decline, its circulation plummeting 2.78 million to 1.8 million. Throughout the 1990s, to avoid crowding out state media, the central government closed down or withdrew subsidies for local and regional publications. Funding was maintained for key mouthpieces like People’s Daily and the central Xinhua News Agency. As China media experts Qian Gang and David Bandurski note, “the media now had two masters, the party and the public.”

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126 Ibid, 43.
The public’s choice was clear. A survey conducted in 2002 by the Public Opinion Research Institute of Renmin University indicates that the overwhelming majority of readers trusted non-official newspapers more than Party publications.

Indeed, according to a study of newspaper readers in Beijing in 2004, respondents who said they read one newspaper (44% of the total) overwhelmingly preferred nongovernmental sources. Only those who routinely read two to three publications picked up party newspapers. In a media environment driven increasingly by consumer choice, the news gap between party and commercial media is opening a corresponding divide between public trust and credibility, which has direct implications for the CCP’s ability to guide and shape public opinion.\(^{128}\)

Furthermore, China has invested heavily in the development of its Internet infrastructure, and consequently the country’s online population has boomed. By the end of 2008, 35.2% of the

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\(^{128}\) Gang and Bandurski, “China’s Emerging Public Sphere,” 43.
online public said they had their own blogs or personal websites that they regularly update, a level of response indicating that users are not only reading, but also participating in online discourse.129 Today, more than 200 million Chinese use Weibo to discuss politics and news. Indeed, 86% of the 18-35 cohort indicated that they regularly use social media such as Weibo, Renren, and QQ (see Figure 2.3). They spend hours each day debating issues, asking questions, and responding to other users in Weibo forums. Embedded as they are in China’s diversified media environment, alternative media sources beyond the Chinese Communist Party’s control cannot fully determine Chinese views of Japan. In the past, Chinese could only receive filtered information, ranging from anti-Japanese dramas based on World War II and textbooks emphasizing the Nanjing massacre and Japanese invasions, to hawkish news reports on territorial disputes. Now, though, Internet technologies permit more diversified voices to be heard, spread, and circulated instantly via social networks.130 Instead of consuming traditional media for news, 69% of millennials are getting their news from the Internet (see Figure 2.2). The CCP using nationalism to whip up popular sentiment and direct it at foreign targets is a time-honored tactic. While the government still frequently employs this strategy, many people have grown wise to this maneuvering and are less prone to facile manipulation. However, that is much more difficult with the proliferation of social media since the Chinese people are more inclined to be critical of the CCP for its failure to address domestic issues. Courtesy of social media, Chinese netizens (predominantly educated, urban youth) are acquiring a more holistic understanding of Japan that is positively influencing their opinions towards Japan.131

129 Gang and Bandurski, “China’s Emerging Public Sphere,” 59-60.
131 Ibid.
Thus as China’s media landscape has diversified, youth attitudes towards Japan have polarized. On September 18, 2012, I stood outside the Japanese Embassy in Beijing with a crowd of protestors gathered to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the Mukden Incident that has come to formally inaugurate the Japanese invasion of China. Police had set up loud speakers along the tree-lined street in the upscale embassy district that played a message assuring demonstrators that the government shared their feelings, but urged them not to take illegal actions. When I asked a young man next to me that sported a headband reading “Boycott Japanese Goods!” (dizhi rihuo 抵制日货) why he was at the demonstration, he replied:

The government is treating the Japan issue too softly, and it makes us lose face. The Japanese are no better than dogs. I know the government doesn’t want to go to war over the Diaoyu Islands, but hopefully these protests will make them reconsider their position. We’re all here to remember the anniversary of the Japanese invasion of China. Although my classmates and friends and I didn’t live through it, it is impossible to forget it.132

This young man’s opinion is representative of the group of Chinese youth that possess high levels of anti-Japanese sentiment.133 As Peter Gries has pointed out, beginning in the late 1990s, many of China’s young people have self-consciously adopted PEC-driven, hyper-nationalistic stances honed by the saber-rattling commercial media. However, in the new millennium, anti-Japanese nationalist sentiment threatens to spin out of control as the gap between the emotional nationalism of the young and the more pragmatic nationalism of policy-makers widens.134

Members of today’s hyper-nationalist younger generation are known as fenqing—literally “angry youth.” Patriotic, xenophobic, nationalistic and, in some cases, violent in their defense of the motherland, the fiery rhetoric and savage jingoism of these fenqing have prompted reaction

133 Interviewees 1,14,18, and 20 expressed similar sentiments
134 Yahuda, Sino-Japanese Relations After the Cold War, 32.
from both the state-run and commercial media. In recent years, the sensationalist commercial media—increasingly sensitive to burgeoning consumer appetites—has capitalized on the demand for ultra-nationalist content, churning out increasing amounts anti-Japanese television and movies. In 2004 just 15 such shows were approved for distribution. In 2011 and 2012 alone at least 177 shows and films featuring anti-Japan “resistance” were produced. These shockingly successful dramas portray unrealistic and violent action: in one famous scene, a Chinese peasant brutally “karate chops” the enemy in half with one swipe of his “iron palm.” In another, out on the battlefield, a Chinese soldier destroys an incoming fighter plane – by tossing a hand grenade into the sky. Ni Jun, associate professor at the Central Academy of Drama’s Cinema and Television Department notes that commercial producers heavily exploit the anti-Japanese and revolutionary themes because they are deemed “politically safe” and tend to draw high ratings. As these kinds of TV shows and movies attract a large audience and whip up anti-Japanese sentiment, CCTV has made a concerted effort to curb the rise of these “crude and shoddily produced” war dramas, criticizing them for being neither patriotic nor historically accurate in a prime time news feature in April of 2013. In June, China’s television regulator ordered that provincial stations send all such programs back to Beijing for more vetting before

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137 Ibid.

transmission.\textsuperscript{139} This sort of increased oversight indicates that the Chinese government is working to both contain and appease this volatile and easily mobilized section of society.

Similarly, the state controlled media has also sought to balance ultra-nationalist sentiment generated in social media forums. In response to the anti-Japanese protests in September 2012 following the Japanese government’s announcement to purchase and nationalize the Diaoyu-Senkaku islands, the official media maintained a hard line towards Tokyo, with Xinhua publishing Assistant Foreign Minister Le Yucheng’s fiery remarks regarding the situation:

\begin{quote}
[\textit{t}he decision of the Japanese government to "purchase" Chinese islands, like an atomic bomb dropped on China, has aroused the anger of all Chinese and rallied the 1.3 billion people of China closely together. I want to make it as clear as possible to Japan… If Japan insists on having its own way and lurches down on its erroneous path, then the big ship of China-Japan relations may strike a rock and sink like the Titanic.\textsuperscript{140}]
\end{quote}

Though Mr. Le’s declaration reflects the official CCP stance towards the Islands dispute, the Chinese government was all too aware of the 1985 anti-Japan riots that evolved into anti-Party protests, and worked hard to dissuade mobilization and anti-Japanese protests in online forums. On September 15, a search for "Japanese Embassy" (\textit{riben dashiguan 日本大使馆}) on Sina Weibo returned over 1 million results. The same search done the following day returned no results, just a censorship notice. On September 18, Sina Weibo began censoring all searches containing either "anti-Japanese" (\textit{fan ri 反日}) or "demonstration" (\textit{shiwei 示威}). Between


September 17 and September 20, 2012, Sina Weibo also began censoring searches for "Oppose Japan" (*kang ri* 抗日). During the height of the protests (September 15-19) Weibo censored searches for more general terms such as "Looting" (*da za qiang* 打砸抢) and "Besiege" (*weigong* 围攻). 141

Figure 5.2. Censored Weibo search for “Japanese Embassy” 142

This type of censorship on behalf of the government suggests that although they were prepared to adopt a tough stance in the official media, they were unwilling to let things get out of control on the streets. After initially stating their outrage, the official Chinese media began publishing articles like “Protests Should Not Turn to the Dark Side,” which appeared in the conservative *Global Times* (*Huanqiu shibao* 环球时报). The article first quickly recapped Japan’s crimes, and then posed rhetorical questions like “Why have some Chinese demonstrators chosen violent

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means to show their "patriotism?" Will these violent protests really help resolve the Diaoyu Islands dispute?" implying that preventing protests took precedent over bashing Japan. In this way, after stoking anti-Japanese sentiment in the 1990s and creating a group of intensely nationalist youth, the CCP and state-run media has made efforts to quell anti-Japanese sentiment in commercial and social media in recent years. However, as more media options have become available, fenqing are gravitating away from the increasingly moderate state-run media and towards anti-Japanese sensationalist commercial media and nationalistic social media forums that reinforce their opinions.

However, social media and micro-blogs are not only temperamental and incendiary instruments of the fenqing. On the opposite end of spectrum, the diversifying media landscape also offers increased exposure to Japan through non-Chinese news outlets and more liberal social media forums. In January of 2014, I spoke with Mr. Liang, a 26 year-old graduate student in Shanghai, who related a very different opinion of Japan:

In developed places like Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, people my age generally don’t have a problem with Japan. If you ask old people, or people in rural areas, their attitudes are much more negative. It’s a matter of information and education. When I take the subway every day I read the news on my iPhone…There are Japanese students studying at my university, and I like them. If their manners are good, I like them, just like I like Americans, or Europeans, or other Chinese people with good manners. Young people, for the most part, think Japan is more developed, and the quality of life is better. Here, you can’t breathe the air, the economy is slowing down, and who knows what’s happening in the government?143

143 [16] Liang 梁, interviewed by Viola Rothschild, Shanghai, China, January 10, 2014
Mr. Liang’s opinion towards the Japanese is representative of a second cohort of young people. Educated, technologically savvy, and internationally oriented, these Chinese youth have developed neutral-positive opinions of Japan as a result of selecting a very different set of commercial news sources and social media forums that focus on world news and pop culture. As the end of the interview with Mr. Liang indicates, after sharing his pragmatic view of the Japanese, he is more concerned with expressing the shortcomings of his own government. In this way, the diversification of the Chinese media landscape is giving rise to a group of globalized, open-minded youth that are using commercial and social media to press for change in the opposite direction.

Media scholars Mihoko Matsubara and Yang Yi suggests that “social media offers a powerful platform for building mutual trust and understanding; used effectively, it could help change, for the better, Japan’s image among Chinese.” During the East Japan Great Earthquake of 2011, social media platforms demonstrably contributed to changing opinions in China. In the case of the earthquake, social media served as a swift aggregator and provider of diversified grassroots news that became available almost instantaneously. Many micro-bloggers posted photos with news summaries, which allowed ordinary Chinese people to see what ordinary Japanese people were experiencing in real time. For example, micro-blogs widely circulated a story about how Japanese remained calm after the earthquake and quietly waited in train stations without rioting. This story was tweeted over 70,000 times. Furthermore, social media sparked online discussions based on a wide variety of information that made netizens

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144 Similar feelings were expressed by interviewees 2, 6, 16, 17 and 21.  
analyze Japan more comprehensively than ever before. Exchanges of opinions made some of them realize how their previous views of Japan were skewed. On one such message board, a Chinese netizen initially expressed happiness that the earthquake struck Japan, then later revised his comment after he read stories and saw pictures of the disaster on Weibo.


Figure 5.3. Blogger responses to the 3/11 earthquake

Many Chinese bloggers were moved by the Japanese response to the earthquake, and their commentary quickly swerved into criticisms of their own country, with some netizens recognizing China’s shortcomings, and arguing that an equivalent 9.0 earthquake in China would result in many more casualties, due to the poor infrastructure in the country, compared to that of Japan. Using social media, the 3/11 disaster humanized the Japanese, and created opportunities for Chinese netizens to view Japan through something other than the lens of historical and territorial issues.

Similarly, while social media was used to coordinate and organize the anti-Japanese protests of 2012, they also served as an outlet for people to express more moderate opinions. Instead of taking part in the protests, Li Zhao, a young man from Xi’an, stood by the side of the road with a cardboard sign reading “Cars being smashed ahead, if you have a Japanese car U-turn now.” A photo of Li holding the sign with the caption “he stood in his place and made this gloomy day a little brighter,” was shared on Weibo more than 100,000 times. Hailed as a hero on Weibo, Li Zhao’s case is indicative of changing public opinion towards Japan. These liberal attitudes also may be more prevalent than some Chinese youth like to let on. A Chinese college senior in Beijing confessed to me that:

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It’s complicated. Many people our age might seem to be anti-Japanese on the surface, but in their hearts they are pro-Japanese. Japanese beauties, games, technology products, anime, Japanese dramas are so good that Chinese young people can’t resist. There’s an idea that we are supposed to be anti-Japanese, and people are reluctant to come out and say that they like Japan, but they do.151

This interview suggests that although some Chinese youth feel pressured to have anti-Japanese feeling, they are being swayed by increased exposure to Japanese media and culture. This suggests that the more accessible and widespread information exchange becomes between the two countries, youth attitudes will continue to warm towards Tokyo. Thus, although China’s young people have very divergent opinions towards the Japanese, they do seem to agree on one thing: China’s government could be doing a better job. In the final chapter, I will discuss the implications of a polarized and politicized youth on prospects for continued CCP rule.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I have shown that there is no monolithic Chinese feeling towards Japan. Despite their contentious history, not all Chinese people hate Japan. Instead, Chinese attitudes towards Japan are multidimensional, with significant variation between and among generations. Furthermore, I argue that China’s changing media landscape has been a primary factor in influencing public opinion towards Japan. In the Mao era, the Party dominated media played up the CCP’s triumph over the Japanese imperialists in the War of Resistance Against Japan in order to promulgate the idea of Mao’s new, strong China. The CCP’s encompassing propaganda campaign, combined with proximity to the War, resulted in consistently negative views towards Japan among elderly Chinese today. During Deng’s age of opening up and reform, the media slowly began to privatize. However, in order to facilitate mutually beneficial economic ties with Tokyo, negative coverage was muted in the fledgling commercial media. As a result, middle-aged Chinese tend to hold considerable more favorable views of the Japanese. Finally, in the post-Deng era, youth attitudes towards Japan have
polarized as the media landscape has diversified. With an increasingly sensationalist commercial media and the proliferation of micro-blogging, youth attitudes have splintered into two distinct cohorts: hyper-nationalistic young people that loathe Japan, and a more open-minded, worldly group that are embracing Japanese as a result of more exposure. In the final chapter of this project, I will summarize major findings of this study and discuss the implications of a highly political, highly polarized, plugged-in Chinese youth on continued CCP rule.

Possessing generally lower levels of education and limited exposure to new media, many older Chinese have remained faithful consumers of official news sources. Given their proximity to the War of Resistance Against Japan, and were indoctrinated by Chairman’s comprehensive propaganda narrative in which China triumphed over the iniquitous Japanese imperialist. The Chairman was a propaganda mastermind—his famous Little Red Book still stands as one of the most printed books of all time, second only to the Bible. In the 1960s and 1970s, all radio and television programs began with a CCP anthem, entitled “The East is Red” (“Dong fang hong 东方红”). The song is simple and powerful:

The east is red, the sun is rising.
China has brought forth Mao Zedong.
He amasses fortune for the people,
Hurrah, he is the people’s great savior.
Chairman Mao loves the people,
He is our guide,
To build a new China,
Hurrah, he leads us forward!
The Communist Party is like the sun,
Whenever it shines, it is bright.
Wherever there is a Communist Party,
Hurrah, there the people are liberated!\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{152} Wang, \textit{Never Forget National Humiliation}, 84-85.
Members of the older generation internalized these messages, and were imbued with anti-Japanese sentiment that remains strong today. Indeed, the older generation of Chinese identifies with the government’s goals and ambitions; their aspirations are aligned with the Party much more so than those of their children and grandchildren.

As a result of a liberalizing political environment and increased cultural and economic ties between Beijing and Tokyo in the 1980s, many middle-aged Chinese today have much more positive attitudes towards the Japanese. Sitting around a banquet table at a restaurant next to Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing—about a mile away from where the War of Resistance Against Japan broke out—I asked one of my uncle’s friends about his feeling towards Japan. He responded with a cursory “who doesn’t hate the Japanese?” then interestingly launched into discussing more pressing matters. His restaurant is struggling because of the new austerity measures imposed by the government that cut down on banquets, his daughter’s schooling costs are spiking, and after finally being permitted to buy a car, he is only allowed to drive a few days a week because of Beijing’s traffic regulations.\textsuperscript{153} His priorities are those voiced by many middle-aged Chinese. In particular, the middle generation has weathered seismic shifts in China’s social, cultural, and political terrain. They do not have time to hate the Japanese, and instead are much more concerned with caring for their aging parents and iconoclastic children.

China’s youth are growing up in a world very different than their parents’ and grandparents’—they are plugged-in, political, and their polarized attitudes represent a huge challenge to the CCP’s continued authoritarian rule. After whipping the population into a

nationalist frenzy post-Tiananmen to divert attention to the domestic crises, the CCP now faces what James Reilly calls the “repression-concession dilemma”: anti-Japanese nationalism is a double-edged sword—a tool that may enhance popular support for the Party, but at the cost of undermining domestic stability and forcing the regime into a self-destructive foreign policy. Still heavily dependent on a strong trade relationship with Japan to sustain the growing economy, China’s leaders are unwilling and unable to quell anti-Japanese nationalism without jeopardizing their hard-won legitimacy. On one hand, popular expressions of nationalism serve as a “release valve,” channeling collective anger toward a foreign country (Japan) rather than at the CCP itself. By responding to the public demonstrations of anger with symbolic or partial policy shifts, Chinese leaders can show responsiveness to the people’s concerns, thus alleviating potential criticism from some of the most actively mobile members of society. On the other hand, however, public opinion, sensationalist media coverage, and popular activism can also influence elite discourse and policy decisions. In 2004, Peter Hays Gries asserted that “Chinese animosity towards Japan is unquestionably out of control...the political leadership is increasingly held hostage to nationalist opinion in the making of China’s Japan policy.” Indeed, fenqing often fault the Chinese government for not taking a hard enough line on Japan issues. One young man I spoke with in Nanjing accused China of being a zhilaohu (纸老虎), a paper tiger that seems threatening and “talks big,” but in reality is unable to back up their words with actions.

Domestically, Chinese leaders tolerate more citizen activism against Japan than they do in any other foreign policy area. Anti-Japanese web sites survive for years while sites attacking the United States are shut down. Likewise, while most mass gatherings are shut down quickly and unceremoniously, anti-Japan protests are handled delicately and officials praise demonstrator’s patriotism.\footnote{Shirk, \textit{China: Fragile Superpower}, 171.} However, on the foreign policy front, Chinese leaders also need to be sensitive to Japanese demands, as their economic interdependence is critical to China’s continued growth. When it comes to dealing with Japan, the government has learned to respond with a mixture of measured persuasion and repression in order to keep emotions from raging out of control or being extinguished entirely.\footnote{Reilly, \textit{Strong Society, Smart State: the Rise of Public Opinion in China’s Japan Policy}, 226.} This perpetual balancing act illustrates the extreme sensitivity of the Japan issue to the people, and its role as both a tool and an obstacle to achieving Party aims.

On the other side of the spectrum, the age of the Internet has also bred a group of liberal, worldly, and informed young Chinese that enjoy Japanese culture. While Japanese technology, music, animation, video games, and television shows have been popular in China since the 1980s, in recent years social media has opened a virtual window that has fostered a two-way flow of firsthand information between youths in Beijing and Tokyo. This increased exposure has warmed many Chinese youth attitudes towards Japan. A young Shanghaiese woman confided in me that she and many of her friends “wish China could be more like Japan.” She expressed that “China is changing quickly and the government is willing to sacrifice quality for time and growth, but Japan has been developed for a while and is safe and orderly.”\footnote{Anonymous, interviewed by Viola Rothschild, Shanghai, China, January 11, 2014.} Rather than viewing Japan as an enemy, this growing group of Chinese youth sees Japan as a model that
China can learn a lot from—and as a foil that highlights many of China’s societal shortcomings. While this cohort cannot be found protesting on the street, they are a largely unrecognized force percolating behind computer screens, voraciously skimming international news and the columns of hugely influential liberal bloggers. Though they might not seem like an imminent threat to continued CCP rule, this group of Chinese youth is testing the limits of their newfound freedom on the Internet, and are increasingly turning inward to address problems of pollution, corruption, and censorship at home.

So, what does all this mean looking forward? Public opinion is squeezing China’s leadership from both sides. Though they do not seem to share much common ground, both the nationalist youth and the worldly youth have a lot to say about how the CCP could be handling things better—and as public opinion becomes increasingly important, China’s elites had better pay attention to what the most opinionated, informed, and easily-mobilized generation ever has to say. Since the turn of the century, public opinion, Internet forums, micro-blogs, non-government media outlets, and popular activism have become increasingly salient factors in shaping China’s foreign policy. The greatest threat to the Party’s prospects for continued rule is that China’s elite politicians will lean too far to one side on the Japan issue and fall from the tightrope they have been walking for decades. Finally, in the face of a rapidly changing society in which public opinion and popular media are becoming more important every day, failing to maintain appropriate degrees of tolerance, accountability, persuasion, autonomy, and repression in dealing with a generation of youths imbued with strong political opinions will doubtlessly damage the Party’s hopes for continued rule. The future of the CCP’s one-party system in China could well depend on maintaining this delicate balance.
Appendix A. Original Survey in Chinese

请在下面的调查表画圈或填写您的答案。如不愿意，您没有义务填写。调查结果是匿名的，只用在学生的学术论文中。多谢你的参与和支持！

年龄：
- 18-35
- 36-60
- 60 以上

您的学历？
- 零
- 小学
- 中学
- 大学本科
- 研究生

你所听到或看到的新闻信息主要来源于。。。
- 报纸
- 网络
- 电视
- 收音机
- 其他

您是否是微博或人人网的用户？
- 是
- 否
您多久一次看抗日电影/电视节目？

从不看        很少看        有时看        经常看

您好对日本人的看法是什么？

非常消极        消极        中性        积极        非常积极

您对日本政府的看法是什么？

非常消极        消极        中性        积极        非常积极

您觉得目前的钓鱼岛争端/防空识别区对你来说有多么重要？

不重要        有点重要        非常重要

您觉得中日应该发生战争吗？

是        否

Appendix B. Interview Guide

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