

Univerzita Karlova Fakulta
sociálních věd
Institut politologických studií

Diploma thesis project

From competition to cooperation: Foreign aid policy as a
mirror of Sino-Japanese relations in the age of Chinese rise



Name: Daniele Crespi

Academic advisor: doc. Mgr. Michal Kolmaš, Ph.D.

Study programme: International Security Studies

Year of project submission: 2020/2021

Declaration of Ownership

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature have been properly cited
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree

Prague, 25.06.2022 

Abstract

In this thesis I explore the current trends of the Sino-Japanese bilateral relations as it appears through the lenses of the TPMC. The TPMC, short for Third-Party Market Cooperation, is a public-private-partnership initiative between China and other countries not part of the Belt and Road Initiative, and the cooperation with Japan aims at combining the relative advantages of the two economies in order to meet the infrastructure demand for a developing Southeast Asia. I hypothesise that this partnership has the potential to lead to improvement to the bilateral relations between the two parties, according to the theory proposed by Press-Barnathan in 2006 and then elaborated further in 2009, consisting of three conditions regarding the domestic support for the peace process (in this case, the TPMC), the degree of economic disparity between the actors, and the presence of a third party that can facilitate the process; I then use elements of Critical Discourse Analysis to gauge the extent of this positive effect by examining how the construction of the partner has changed in the years after the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning the partnership, by analysing how different discursive strategies in the creation of meaning are used, according to frameworks used by Lams (2017), and Hagström and Hanssen (2016). I finally compare the results to other parameters to understand whether this initiative is part of a steady trend of improvement, or not, and suggest new directions for research in the field.

Contents

Univerzita Karlova Fakulta sociálních věd	I
Declaration of Ownership	II
Abstract	III
1 - Introduction	1
1.2 - Research Target and Questions	6
1.3 - Literature Review	6
1.4 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, Research Hypothesis	9
1.5 Method and data	15
2 - Analysis.....	19
2.1 - The Belt and Road Initiative and the Third-Party Market Cooperation	19
2.1.1 - The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)	19
2.1.2 - Japanese response to the BRI	21
2.1.3 - The Third-Party Market Cooperation (TPMC).....	22
2.2 - Press-Barnathan's conditions	26
2.2.1 - Support for the TPMC in the P.R.C.	26
2.2.2 - Support for the TPMC in Japan	29
2.2.3 - Economic disparities between China and Japan	33
2.2.4 - Impact of third-party involvement.....	36
2.3 - Empirical assessment of the improvement in bilateral relations.....	40
2.3.1 - Construction of the "Other": before the TPMC	40
2.3.2 - Construction of the "Other" after the TPMC	51
2.4 - Control factors	59
3 - Conclusions	61
4 - Bibliography	68

1 - Introduction

The last few years have seen the growth of China as a global power in the international scenario, and with it a more assertive attitude vis-à-vis its neighbours, in particular in the case of territorial disputes. This has been and is still today cause of concern for the actors involved.

In the same period, another controversial policy came out of the Middle Kingdom: The Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI for short, a project with the aim of connecting China to the West (mainly Europe and Africa) via both continental and sea routes. The framework of the project includes several investments in infrastructure in foreign countries that are considered crucial to its success, and some of these projects include those that are the object of this MA thesis, the Third-Party Market Cooperation initiative. China has signed MoU with multiple countries regarding Third-Party Market Cooperation (Umirdinov, 2019), but the choice of including Japan is quite a novelty, considering the rocky political relationship between the two actors, which has already hampered cooperation, and the competition that was previously in place. This thesis will focus in particular on the cooperation between China and Japan in Southeast Asia, an important manufacturing outlet for Japan and historical neighbourhood for China. While the Third-Party Market Cooperation itself was first announced in 2015 (Su, Xue, & Xu, 2020), the tangible effects of these form of cooperation could be seen only in the last few years; it is thus a topic that lacks a great number of analyses from the perspective of International Security. The P.R.C. and Japan have alternated through phases of rocky relations, especially after the controversies surrounding sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and their territorial waters, to phases of distension, without ever coming close to a further normalisation of relations. Usually, the term

“normalisation” in the context of Sino-Japanese relations is used mostly in relation to the official reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1972, in the context of the U.S. approaching China after Sino-Soviet split, and even before that time Japan still traded with the P.R.C., while not maintaining official links with the country in order to align with the U.S., its main security provider in the critical conjuncture of the end of the Second World War and the early Cold War, when Japan was still recovering from the war; it could be argued, then, that Japan and the P.R.C. already have achieved normalisation of relations half a century ago. I, however, use “normalisation” of relations in a different way for the purpose of this thesis, and I use it to describe the situation in which armed conflict between the two countries is not just less likely to happen, as most of the liberal literature approaches this topic, but it is outright unthinkable: a situation ideally such as that of the members of the European Union, and in the case of East Asia similar to that between Japan and the Republic of Korea, where tensions between the countries are ascribable to those between two friendly countries competing (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009), albeit in presence of some unsolved issues. The P.R.C. and Japan are the most important actors in the Asia-Pacific security structure, and the consequences of normalisation would significantly affect this, considering that many of the current security issues in the region either come from one of the actors, or from the competition between the two. When tensions arise from the action of a single actor, it is usually the P.R.C. with its assertiveness (in particular under the leadership of Xi Jinping, who cut clearly from the previous doctrine codified by Deng Xiaoping as the “bide and hide”) in the South China Sea in the form of the claim of territorial waters within the Nine-Dash Line, and in Southeast Asia in the form of the dam project on the Mekong river, which would significantly affect human

security in countries depending on its waters such as Vietnam; the P.R.C. has also engaged multiple times in sabre-rattling against the Republic of China, considered by the former a breakaway province and the last step towards the goal of effective national unification, even in recent months. Japan too has caused tensions on its own, for example in recent it has in recent years adopted reforms for its security forces that have been interpreted by some (in particular China, very wary about this kind of developments in its neighbourhood, and known to use history as a diplomatic weapon when dealing with Japan) as a form of revanchism, and plans by Prime Minister Abe to amend the Japanese constitution in its parts concerning the security apparatus and the figure of the Emperor, as well as the controversial visits to the infamous Yasukuni shrine did not help in reassuring neighbours. Clearly, a rapprochement of the two in the larger frame of a “proper” normalisation between the two would be greatly beneficial to security in Eastern Asia, and although there is still a long way to go before such positive changes can be seen on an appreciable scale, these have to start at some point, and that is the objective of these thesis: establish whether the initial steps in this process have been taken.

While part of the scholarship, such as Insisa and Pugliese (2018), and Zhang (2019), argues that the relations between the P.R.C. and Japan are still that of strategic competition, marked by lack of trust and the identification of the other party fundamentally as a threat to the region, I think there is a possibility that it is in fact heading towards the opposite direction, since the agreement on the TPMC implies a shift in the usual approach the two countries have used up until now. Japan had initially tried to counter the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with its own, the Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP), along with its infrastructure-focused leg, the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI), quoting concerns about the financial sustainability of the projects

and the lack transparency on the side of the P.R.C., but later decided to engage explicitly by agreeing with the cooperation with P.R.C. in 2017, and the latter had tried multiple times to get Japan (along with other countries) on board with the BRI, with little success: the TMPC represents an alternative way for developed countries to engage with the BRI, and a way to “save face”, which is an important part of international affairs in East Asia, and surely helped Japan in approaching the project. Are the decline of the Japanese economy and the Trump presidency enough to justify this choice? As far as the former explaining factor is concerned, it is a trend that was already well in place at the time of the signature of the memorandum of understanding, and at times Japan had a confrontational stance with the P.R.C., in spite of its importance as a trade partner; the Trump presidency, on the other hand, might have intensified the pressure on Japan, in light of the initial protectionist proposals of the U.S. and the threat of abandonment that have been used against Japan as well as other allies if tangible improvements in defence spending could not be made. However, these statements were often walked back or re-elaborated later, and Japan still had other tools at its disposal to turn to, such as regional FTAs, before committing in such an endeavour with China: there must be some other factor, and I suggest that this could be an attempt to improve bilateral relations. This situation falls in line with proposals by scholarship aimed at improving bilateral relations, as for example Beckman et al. (2013) proposed joint programmes for the exploitation of seabed resources to move toward a solution for the Senkaku/Diaoyu controversy, and I hypothesise that many elements of this partnership programme could prove beneficial to the normalisation process as theorised by Press-Barnathan first in 2006 and further elaborated in 2009, respectively a journal article and a book about the neglect of positive peace development by liberal scholarship in favour of research on negative

peace (generally intended as the absence of conflict). Unfortunately, the more recent literature on the TPMC continues on this trend, understanding the TPMC as the result of the competition of the two initiatives in the face of complementary advantages, and measure the success of the TPMC mainly in terms of projects completed, without giving much consideration to the effects that the cooperation may have on the actor themselves, or the way that they view each other. Also, very few scholars apply liberal theories in the concept of improvements in the bilateral relations, often excluding the role of third party that could smooth the process, and even the literature on the TPMC sees the host countries as financiers for the project, at best, ignoring the role they could have in ensuring the success of the partnership and possibly in institutional spill overs. I thus want to test whether the relation is destined to be one of competition, or whether there are signs of this trend reversing thanks in part to this partnership.

This thesis tries to address challenges in East and Southeast Asian security from the perspective of commercial liberalism, peace studies, which I find are often underemployed in this region, and elements of constructivism, moving from the premises that economic stagnation and a more uncertain international scenario are not enough reasons to push Japan to engage with its former enemy and main rival for hegemony in the region. The consequences of a true peace process between the two would significantly change the security equilibrium and could ultimately solve many regional challenges which would have a global impact (consider for example the open rivalry with the U.S. and the role a friendlier Japan could have as a mediator). I hope with this thesis to find the first steps in this long process.

1.2 - Research Target and Questions

The topic under inspection opens up to multiple research question, of which I have selected a few:

- Is the Third-Party Market Cooperation initiative an indicator of substantial change in the patterns of Sino-Japanese relations?
- More in general, what can be the effects of economic cooperation in shaping the behaviour of a competitor superpower?

The first target will be explained in the theoretical framework section;

Generalisable conclusions up to this point can be used to answer the second question.

1.3 - Literature Review

The relation between the People's Republic of China and Japan has been often considered one of stark rivalry, still to this day: examples of this consensus in current literature are "The free and open Indo-Pacific versus the belt and road: spheres of influence and Sino-Japanese relations", by Insisa and Pugliese (Insisa & Pugliese, 2020), who argue that the current interaction between the two initiatives is marked by mutual mistrust and power politics; Sinkkonen's "The more the merrier? Sino-Japanese security relations in the context of complex interstate rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region", (Sinkkonen, 2019) which analyses Sino-Japanese rivalry as part of the one between China and the United States, considered a complex and multiparty opposition; and finally, "Anatomy of a Rivalry: China and Japan in Southeast Asia" (Boon, 2017), exploring the rivalry in the specific regional setting and its different components. I, however, argue that while there is undoubtedly an aspect of intense competition between the two actors, especially in Southeast Asia, this is part of a more complex relation that cannot be simply reduced to rivalry.

Press-Barnathan's article, "The Neglected Dimension of Commercial Liberalism: Economic Cooperation and Transition to Peace" (2006) is a major inspiration for this work: in it the author explores the "positive link" between economic interaction and improvement of relations between two former enemies. Not only that, but the article takes in consideration that much of the literature on the matter (at least at the time of writing said article) focused on the Franco-German experience, and it thus aims at a more universal applicability of the findings, employing as case studies instances of transition to peace from both the Middle East and Asia Pacific, specifically Japan. Finally, the case studies actually present more critical characteristic than the current state of Sino-Japanese relations does, so the theoretical framework can be safely applied to the case in analysis; the following section will explore this aspect more thoroughly.

Other sources that further helped in inspiring the topic for this Master thesis include Koo's "The Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute and Sino-Japanese political-economic relations: cold politics and hot economics?" (2009), an article exploring the defusing effect economic interaction and interdependence had on the relations between China and Japan with regard to the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute; Polachek et al.'s (2007) "The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on International Conflict", a quantitative study on the positive relations between FDI and peaceful relations between involved dyads. This article led to the question of whether FDI cooperation in a third country could have the same effect. Finally, "Analysis of Sino-Japan Cooperation under the framework of The Belt and Road: Development Course and Motivation" (Jialu, 2020), a brief article on the more recent cooperation under inspection and its possible prospects.

Other sources have been consulted in order to gain insight on different aspect of the economic competition and later cooperation between Japan and People's Republic of

China; for this purpose, I will recur to such sources as Hong Zhao's "China–Japan Compete for Infrastructure Investment in Southeast Asia: Geopolitical Rivalry or Healthy Competition?", which is focused on the competitive aspect of the relations and its possible consequences, interesting for noting the different approaches to financing projects by the respectively Chinese- and Japanese-led MDBs, ABD and the AIIB, approaches that seem to have complementary characteristics. Another article from the same author dealing with the cooperative aspect of the relationship (Zhao, 2018). The article, named "The Status Quo and Trends of Sino-Japanese Economic and Trade Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative" helped in inspiring one of the previously mentioned targets, specifically the strengthening of non-economic ties, by drawing a connection between Improvement of bilateral relations and influx of Chinese tourists to Japan, forms of cultural exchange and initiatives, as well as drawing one between said improvement and trade volume increase. Other important sources on the topic are Ren's "The Status Quo and Trends of Sino-Japanese Economic and Trade Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative" (Ren, 2019), and the 2013 book "Beyond Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea", edited by Beckman et al., in particular the 11th chapter "Factors conducive to joint development in Asia – lessons learned for the South China Sea", both for the idea of joint initiatives as confidence building strategies, and for its breakdown of factors that encourage States to enter such initiatives; though mostly focused on joint development of the South China Sea seabed, some factors can still be applied to the situation, such as the need for a secure investment framework and comparative advantages (Beckman, Schofield, Townsend-Gault, Davenport, & Bernard, 2013).

1.4 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, Research Hypothesis

The idea behind the thesis is that there is a positive correlation between political relations between the People's Republic of China and Japan, and their economic interaction. While bilateral trade has increased since the normalisation of diplomatic ties, some aspects of the relationship are still far from peaceful. I want to investigate whether the new phase of economic cooperation between the two countries has the potential to bring the two countries to "warmer" relations, and to do so I will recur to the tools of commercial liberalism, specifically Press-Barnathan's framework; elements of Critical Discourse Analysis will also be applied in the empirical section of the thesis, in the form of discourse analysis.

But first, some conceptual clarity is needed: the article operates the distinction between "cold" "normal", and "warm" peace: cold peace is "a condition where the main issues in conflict are mitigated but not fully resolved, where there are intergovernmental channels of communication and strong limitations on transnational activities, significant revisionist groups exist, and the possibility of return to war is present should international or domestic changes occur.", normal peace is a state in which the main issues have been resolved, and transnational ties are starting to develop, while warm peace is the state in which transnational ties are so strong that recurring to war becomes unthinkable. (Press-Barnathan, *The Neglected Dimension of Commercial Liberalism: Economic Cooperation and Transition to Peace.*, 2006). While the article also states that cold peace (referred to in the article also as stage 1) is often achieved through a peace treaty, this seems not to be the case for Sino-Japanese relations, as the two parties have signed a peace treaty, but some relevant issues are still not mitigated, such as the territorial dispute relative to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, or the differing interpretation of the events of the Sino-

Japanese war; at the same time, transnational ties have started developing some time ago, which does not fit the definition of cold peace. Japan and China can be considered as quite close to normal peace on the spectrum. Signs of achievement of warm piece would be the definitive resolution of territorial disputes, or closer cooperation outside the trade realm, although it is clearly too soon to see this kind of changes on an appreciable scale.

Furthermore, since the article links “economic cooperation” to peaceful relations, this concept too has to be defined: I define, for the purpose of this thesis, economic cooperation as any economic initiative undertaken by the two parties that benefits both of them; this is the case for infrastructure investment cooperation in Southeast Asia as well.

Gaia Press Barnathan proposes three conditions to determine whether or not economic cooperation can have positive effects on the relations between former enemies, both in her 2006 article on the Journal of Peace research, titled “The Neglected Dimension of Commercial Liberalism: Economic Cooperation and Transition to Peace”, and further elaborated in her 2009 book “The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective”; By “positive” I do not mean simply avoiding armed conflict between the two, as most of the literature on commercial liberalism already focuses on, but rather a process of normalisation of relations and past issues between the two that includes cultural and social spheres: a “warm” peace, as Press-Barnathan calls it. This is an important clarification, because while the People’s Republic of China and Japan have officially normalised relations since 1972, historical issues are still a sensitive topic, especially within Chinese society, a very different case from other case of Japanese normalisation with former enemies, such as Indonesia or the Republic of Korea, where the tensions are more typical of

global north-south relations and economic competitors respectively (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009). Is it possible to reach a similar goal for Japan and the P.R.C.?

The three factors proposed by Press-Barnathan (2009) for transition to “warm” peace are:

1. The (positive) balance of winners and losers from the peace process: this is an elaboration on the 2006 criterion of strong domestic support, to the extent that the domestic support behind the peace process is based on the domestic balance of winners and losers in the peace process
2. The impact of economic disparities between the two parties
3. The presence of a third party in the peace process, that can offer incentives in various forms to engage in the peace process.

Press Barnathan’s book is useful in this particular case, as her case study of the peace process between Japan and the Republic of Korea shares some similarities with the case at hand: in both cases, quite some time passed, at least a couple of decades, before a peace treaty (or normalisation treaty, in the case of the ROK) could be signed, after which even more time was required for a spill-over of the normalisation in the social and cultural spheres, for the ROK, while in the P.R.C. this is yet to happen; and in both cases, an alliance between governments and private sectors of both countries were instrumental in the process. Applying a similar structure to Press-Barnathan’s book, I will proceed to investigate whether the TMPC has the potential to improve relations between the participants; considering that the analysis focuses on a different segment of the history between the two countries, rather than looking for support for the peace process or the domestic balance between winners and losers deriving from

it, I will focus on the domestic support and the driving force of the domestic coalitions between businesses and governments in the P.R.C. and Japan as first factor; an additional note related to the third condition is that, while in the article it is considered to be an active party, in this case the third party is more of a passive one; the States in which the infrastructure projects are set provide gains to the two parties by themselves, if these are completed, either by strengthening Japan's productive chain or by providing opportunities for the economic growth of the P.R.C.'s peripheral regions. It should be noted, though, that the third party may still have an active role in the process, for example by providing a multilateral setting in which to settle controversies, which is a role recognised by Press-Barnathan (2009) as positive involvement by a third party.

Via qualitative comparison, I hypothesise that Sino-Japanese cooperation in Southeast Asia satisfies the conditions set by Press-Barnathan, and thus has the potential to act as a pacifying tool between the People's Republic of China and Japan.

After assessing whether the partnership has this potential or not, I gauge the effective improvement in bilateral relations between the two countries by using critical discourse analysis. I am well aware that the choice of coupling tools from traditional and post-structuralist schools of thought might seem odd, but I have my reasons to do so. Given the short timeframe in which I expect to see any results, the last premiership of Abe Shinzô, it is highly unlikely to see more tangible improvements right after the signature of the agreements; and, as I will explain better in the next section, if I were to expand the timeframe, while it would become likelier to appreciate material improvements, these would risk being the result of other variables. Therefore, what remains is critical discourse analysis (CDA), to seek for changes in the way the two parties perceive and construct the counterpart.

CDA is the result of the “linguistic turn” in social sciences, based on the premise that the use of language and structure of power are connected, in the words of Trčková, “there is a dialogic relationship between language and thought, thought and culture, and culture and language. Language influences the way we conceptualize reality and shapes cultural norms, ideas and values. At the same time, cultural heritage, norms and value system have an impact on our thoughts and language” (Trčková, 2014). According to CDA, usually language is used, not necessarily just in its verbal form, to transmit meanings that have the ultimate goal of consolidating the current power structure, often by influencing or shaping public opinion. This is the basis for my use of the theory in this thesis: if the partnership had positive effects on bilateral relations, there has to be a change in the mutual perception of the two parties involved, which will be later used to convince the rest of society to support the process (a high task in the P.R.C., where anti-Japanese sentiment is regularly stirred by institutions and the media, as it will be shown in the dedicated section of this thesis), and this change in perception will be shown in the language used to refer to the other. CDA includes different approaches and methods, all moving from the same premises; the ones I have chosen for my thesis are those used by Lutgard Lams (2017), and Hagström and Hanssen (2016), all of whom have used CDA in researching Sino-Japanese and Sino-U.S. relations. Lams describes CDA as aimed to uncover “how a polarizing discursive activity highlights the negative aspects of the Other and the positive attributes of the Self while marginalizing the positive features of the Other and the negative actions or characteristics of the Self.”, in his 2017 article “Othering in Chinese official media narratives during diplomatic standoffs with the U.S. and Japan”, and for this purpose he proposes to analyse the process of creation of meaning as it happens through five

main discursive strategies: legitimisation, reification, positioning generalisation and dramatization.

- **legitimation**, sanctions certain actions by rationalizing or constructing a chain of reasoning to defend a set of social relations
- **reification**, when a transitory or conjunctural state of affairs is framed as permanent, natural, the result of common sense.
- **Positioning**, a discourse strategy that constructs social actors or groups into certain relationships with others and constitutes their identity
- **generalisation**, embedding one particular event in a larger context, which in this case would be the national or an historical one,
- **dramatization**, which tries to involve emotionally the target audience by leveraging on narratives of grievance, loss, and victimhood. The victim, as Lams states, could be nations as well.

(Lams, 2017)

Hagström and Hanssen, on the other hand, operate a broader distinction between processes of creation of meaning in their 2016 article “War is peace: the rearticulation of ‘peace’ in Japan’s China discourse”, that between exceptionalisation and securitisation: they both consist in drawing boundaries between the self and the other, but the important difference lies in the way that these boundaries are conceived and constructed. In the case of exceptionalisation, the differences that constitute said boundaries are thought of as legitimate, while in the case of securitisation, these are illegitimate. While still based on exclusion, as the author state, being “the very condition for a delimited identity discourse”, exceptionalist strategies could “hypothetically enable integrationist policies”, while on the other hand securitising ones,

by their very nature, are more antagonistic, based on the construction on threats to the continued existence of the Self as it currently is, differences that cannot be tolerated, which ultimately are meant to justify violence. They sum up the distinction and its ramifications as “Hence, while an exceptionalising peace discourse is expected to generate pacific behaviour, it is more likely that a securitising one produce the conditions of possibility for remilitarisation.” (Hagström & Hanssen, 2016). In this thesis I will analyse documents reflecting the position of the government on certain issues regarding bilateral issues, with the gauging change in the way the Other are constructed in the official narratives both in terms of Lams’ strategies and the way in which these are used according to Hagström and Hanssen framework, i.e., if these strategies are used with a securitising or an exceptionalising intent.

1.5 Method and data

In order to test the pacifying effect of the cooperation between China and Japan, I look for change in the behaviour of the involved parties after 2018, the year in which work on the cooperation started. In particular, the time periods chosen are from 2014 to 2018 and from 2018 to 2020. These time frames coincide roughly with Abe Sinzō last terms as Prime Minister of Japan; The choice of the Abe premiership as reference comes from the fact that it has already happened that China has approached the same bilateral issue differently based on who the interlocutor was for Japan, and by operating this choice I hope to take this other explanatory variable out of the equation.

The tangible effects I am looking specifically are: decreased hedging behaviour by ASEAN, operationalised as either ASEAN dealing more with China and Japan together rather than, for example, discussing deals with Japan and deals with China separately, in the second time period rather than in the second; more homogeneity in

the ASEAN China policy, as in less instances such as the Philippines (as well as other ASEAN members) easing on the South China Sea dispute, disrupting the cohesion of the organisation's position on the issue. Another effect is simply an increased number of bilateral meetings between the leaders of the two countries or representatives of the respective governments; given that state visits have been cancelled following rise of controversies between the two countries, a decrease in cancelled state visits is another effect to consider.

Finally, the last criterion is the decrease (or increase) in discursive indicators: word such as "enemy", "caution", "unacceptable" with regards to the decrease, and words such as "peace" and "prosperity" for the increase of indicators. Clearly these are just indicative, as the proper indicators depend on the texts at hand and the context they were produced in.

Data will be gathered mainly from online repository for peer-reviewed scientific articles for data regarding ASEAN behaviour vis-à-vis China and Japan, while the institutional websites of the two parties' governments will be used for the discourse analysis section. These indicators will be searched for in official declaration and speeches where the object of the discussion is the counterpart. In the case of China, the majority of the speech acts will be constituted by newspaper articles, given the nature of information in China. As I will also explain in the analytic section, information is centrally controlled in China, and as a result personalities tied to the Chinese Communist party (or simply members of the CPP) are in control of many important newspapers, such as China Daily, the People's Daily, China.org.cn, South China Morning Post, etc. Furthermore, these news outlets often report news from Xinhua, the official news agency. Thus, I have no doubt that these sources will reflect the official discourse without much filtering from authors or editors. Where

possible, declaration and speeches will be gathered from institutional websites, namely from the websites of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, where it is more likely to find documents relating to Japan or issues related to it, and most importantly in English. In the case of Japan, on the other hand, given the pluralistic nature of media, I have decided to concentrate on institutional websites as main sources, and use news outlet when they report official statements and such, excluding elaboration from the authors as much as possible. The websites identified for Japan are those of the Ministry of Defence, which has publications in English, as well as that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Prime Minister of Japan and his cabinet, both to have institutional sources as similar as possible, as thus comparable, and because that is where relevant information is more likely to be found, and most importantly this more restrictive choice of sources ensures that what I am going to analyse is the official discourse on China and not the elaboration of public opinion, which might negatively impact the findings of the analysis, whereas in China this was not a major concern. The information must be analysed in English for obvious reasons of linguistic barrier. While surely the results would be more solid were the data to be analysed in its native language, it would require extensive training to first acquire the propriety of language needed to fully understand a text in a registry as formal as an institutional website would require, and to be able to capture the nuances and intricacies of languages such as Japanese and Chinese, where lexical choices may reflect not only in the words themselves, but in the choice of the specific characters, references to culturally significant events, phrases, metaphors, and such; For the purpose of this thesis, English will have to suffice, considering that while something might be lost in translation, it can still give a good

picture of the transformation at hand, if there is one. Finally, the pool of sources will be broadened to news articles to register the occurrence of state visits, official meetings, or cancellation or rescheduling thereof.

2 - Analysis

The analysis will be divided in three parts: the first part is the application of the positive transition to peace theory by Press Barnathan, according to which economic cooperation can not only prevent armed conflicts between the parties, a research topic to which most of the literature on commercial liberalism is devoted, but can also make the process of normalisation of relations to move forwards, to a point that war is deemed unthinkable, a condition that Press-Barnathan calls “warm peace”. If the TPMC respects the criteria set by the theory, then it has the potential to improve relations between China and Japan. To empirically assess whether or not it actually has had this effect, I then will apply critical discourse analysis, looking for change in discourse regarding the counterpart in both Chinese and Japanese institution, as well as using ASEAN behaviour as another indicator of Sino-Japanese relations, as the competition between the two has been historically met by the organisation with hedging. A brief contextualisation of the TPMC in the broader scope of the regional and global economic initiatives involving the two parties will introduce the analysis, to present the importance of the TPMC and its success for the actors involved.

2.1 - The Belt and Road Initiative and the Third-Party Market Cooperation

2.1.1 - The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Before moving on to the proper analysis section, it is useful to introduce the object of the analysis itself. This section will (briefly) present the cooperation project between the two countries in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (or BRI).

The TPMC is a part of the BRI, and the importance of the former, at least as far as the P.R.C. is concerned, cannot be fully understood without understanding the importance of the former. The BRI is the synthesis of the “going out” strategy, inaugurated by the

presidency of Xi Jinping, with which China will make its bid for the status of global superpower; a clear cut from the past doctrine of “bide and wait”, formulated by Deng Xiaoping, which rather focused on building the domestic capabilities of the P.R.C. and avoiding unnecessary external involvement. (Anwar, 2020) The initiative itself is crucial for China not only for its global rise, but also for its domestic implications, on which ultimately the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party and its leadership for China depend upon; focusing on infrastructure investment on both a land (the “belt”) and a sea route (the “road”), the BRI will allow China not only to better secure energy sources, avoiding the notorious chokepoint of the strait of Malacca, for example through the gas and oil pipes it has financed in Central Asia, but will also provide economic opportunities and thus prosperity to both north-western regions through the land belt and southwestern ones through the sea routes. This would constitute a much-needed relief from the slowing Chinese economy and the overcapacity it suffered from around the period of the announcement of the initiative in 2013 (Umirdinov, 2019). from which the CPP will gain strengthened support from the population and credibility, and in turn will weaken the centrifugal pushes in the peripheral regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet. Infrastructure development might have even more direct consequences, as it would allow swifter movement of resources, including manpower, to such regions. The Trans-Himalayan railway, connecting the P.R.C. to Nepal via Tibet, is an example of this possibility (Anwar, 2020).

The response to the BRI was varied; participating countries in Asia either had a relatively positive image of the P.R.C., since the financial crisis that hit the region in the 1997-1998 it was perceived as an actual helping hand in a trying time, compared to what was perceived as a Japan more aligned with the U.S.A. and the more fiscally rigid international institutions such as the I.M.F. (Boon, 2017), even though some

scholars argue that Japan actually provided more aid in that instance, such as Singh (Singh, 2021). Developed countries, on the other hand, have been much more sceptical, and in particular after events such as the lease by the national governments Pakistan leasing the port of Gwadar for 40 years (The Guardian, 2021), Sri Lanka Hambantota port for 99 years, or Tajikistan leasing to China mining rights for gold and silver, have dubbed the initiative part of a debt-trap diplomacy (Umirdinov, 2019), with such fears looming particularly close to the E.U. after Montenegro found itself in a similar situation (Hosokawa & Takeuchi, 2021). Japan is another party that was not interested in the BRI, worrying specifically about aspects such as:

- The potential for the initiative to be a geostrategic tool for the P.R.C. to strengthen its regional position in Southeast Asia, weakening Japan's
- The obvious adverse effects on the Japanese economy the additional Chinese market shares would have
- Concerns over the lack of transparency, experience in international infrastructure development on the Chinese side, and the concerns over the sustainability of debt for the BRI-related projects

(Jialu, 2020)

2.1.2 - Japanese response to the BRI

This attitude of Japan towards the BRI resulted in it not participating in the founding agreement for the Asian Infrastructure Development Bank (AIIB) in 2015, the main international institution financing BRI-related projects, mainly for the abovementioned reasons: it could have been a tool in the hands of the P.R.C., and it is a direct competitor to the Asian Development Bank (ADB); in turn, it responded with its own strategy and investment initiative, respectively the Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision

and the Partnership for Quality infrastructure. The FOIP has been launched in 2014, with the clear intent of proposing a competitor project to the BRI, with emphasis on the core values of a rule-based order, free market, freedom of navigation, and rule of law, while also promising to the participants economic prosperity, peace and stability; the PQI, launched in 2015, is the infrastructure development initiative that, like the BRI, aims at promoting economic development in participating countries, with the notable difference that it makes its selling points the long Japanese experience in international infrastructure aid, as well as the vital principles of transparency, accountability, and debt sustainability (Umirdinov, 2019). The fact that the “arc of freedom and prosperity” envisioned by the FOIP happens to encircle the P.R.C. might have fed fears of cordoning, and provided an incentive to find another way to engage with Japan.

2.1.3 - The Third-Party Market Cooperation (TPMC)

The Third-Party Market Cooperation was announced in 2015, and is open to several countries; the number of partners has reached 14, and includes (obviously) Japan as well as other developed economies such as France, Germany, the U.K., Canada, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea (Umirdinov, 2019). With this project, China and Japan would, as it was originally intended, combine their respective competitive advantages in infrastructure development projects located in Southeast Asia, achieving a 1+1+1>3 effect. More specifically, it consists of, according to Zhang, cooperation between Chinese (mostly State-owned) companies and multinational companies (often based in developed countries) on projects located in countries that participate in the Belt and Road Initiative. Zhao reports that ideas of cooperation in third markets between Chinese and Japanese enterprises dates back as far as 2008 when, on the occasion of then President Hu Jintao, two important business associations on either side, the Chinese

Chamber of Commerce for the Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products and Japan's Association for the Promotion of International Trade, signed a Memorandum of Understanding focusing and promoting this very type of cooperation. From this period until the announcement of the BRI project in 2013, several joint bids have been presented, but it was after that year that greater focus was given to this instrument: in 2015 the P.R.C. signed several Memoranda of Understanding, in 2019 Chinese official documents mention for the first time the Third-Party Market Cooperation for the first time, and later documents that year set the guidelines for the project. For the P.R.C., the cooperation has both the short-term objective of providing more financing channels for the latter and the long-term one of leading to the development of a high-quality Belt and Road (Zhao, 2018). Furthermore, the TPMC is used by China as a way to ease participation of developed economies in the BRI, as the latter is a sensitive topic in many domestic arenas, and even the term itself is thus carefully avoided when interacting with these actors (Zhang M. , 2021). On the Japanese side, on the other hand, this cooperation is mainly seen as a way to participate in the BRI project, with the opportunities that come with it for the declining Japanese economy, while avoiding engagements with the People's Republic of China which could be met with attrition by the broader Japanese society (Zhang M. , 2021) endanger Japanese autonomy in the region citation needed. Not only that, but the project's outcome would prove beneficial to the Japanese economy to the extent that the Southeast Asian link of supply chains of Japanese companies would be better integrated in the global economy, as is the case for the EEC, the Eastern Economic Corridor, which would have resulted in a better infrastructural connection between the eastern production base via high-speed railways, highways, airports and ports (Zhang M. , 2021). This also is a clear example of how southeast Asian nations themselves

stand to gain from this project, as they need the infrastructure to complement their industrialisation process, but lack the necessary capital and know-how to achieve it, while avoiding some issues that might arise from unmoderated competition between the two regional powers, such as the use of different industrial standards in infrastructures and the lack of compatibility that would come with it.

Initially, Japan was not interested in the partnership, opting for a competing stance and announcing two partnership programmes with Southeast Asian nations in quick succession, first the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI) in 2015, and then the Partnership for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (PFOIP) check. The Sino-Japanese cooperation took important steps in 2018, when the two countries established the working mechanism for the partnership, and China–Japan Third-Party Market Cooperation Forum. The original scope of the cooperation was rather vast, going from generally defined “infrastructure”, including transport and energy, to environmental protection, sciences, technology, and finance, which have been discussed in the first of these fora. However, since the signature of the MoUs, not much progress has been made, and some scholar consider the project not much more than a way for then Prime Minister Abe to engage with the P.R.C. in a way that would not entail any concrete commitment by the country, dictated more by political convenience than by genuine belief in the potential of the project; some scholars believe that the TPMC was more used as way to show goodwill, as Prime Minister Abe would have done prior to his visit to China in 2018, and that showed in the far less enthusiastic Japanese planning, compared to the P.R.C. (Zhang M. , 2021), despite the interest showed by the private sector in the initiative, at least initially. Even under the new premiership of Mr. Kishida, news of the partnership seems lacking, even those regarding the projects in the host countries. Among the reason for this halt, ...citation needed suggests the fact that,

despite the complementarities between the two countries' business sector, most importantly the vast amount of capital and qualified workforce on the Chinese side, and the vast experience in international infrastructure projects, the image of reliability and quality of both products and firms on the Japanese side, Japanese companies find working with their Chinese colleagues rather difficult for their lack of transparency, different attitude to risk and profitability of projects, since Chinese companies have the financial backing of the state (contrary to Japanese companies) (Zhang M. , 2021), as well as the different industrial standards operated by the two parties (find some more reasons for the falling-off of the process, please). These reasons have led some of the interested parties in Japan to actually retire from certain project; for example, the Thai high-speed railway project, which was supposed to be the flagship project of the EEC, itself an important project for the First China-Japan Third-Party Market Cooperation Forum, was eventually taken up by the P.R.C. alone (Zhang M. , 2021). As former Japanese ambassador to the P.R.C. Niwa put it, the third-market cooperation consisted of "mere rhetoric" (Insisa & Pugliese, 2020).

2.2 - Press-Barnathan's conditions

Despite being short-lived, or at the very least appearing to be so, has this cooperation had appreciable effects on the relations between the People's Republic of China and Japan? More in general, can it be considered a viable tool for improving relations between former enemies? I will now go through Peace-Barnathan's conditions to assess whether this is the case

2.2.1 - Support for the TMPC in the P.R.C.

As far as the Chinese support for the TMPC is concerned, the only relevant actors are the Chinese government itself and Chinese business firms. Because of the form of the State in the P.R.C., the public opinion and the electorate do not have the same powers as they do in modern liberal democracies, such as the ability to put pressure on members of the government, or that of participating in the creation of governments through elections.

The support of the government for the TMPC is expected, on the other hand, being the party that has proposed it in the first place. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the TPMC is closely tied to the BRI, and the Chinese government stands a lot to gain from the success of both: the success of the BRI entails new markets for the Chinese economy, more economic resources for its peripheral regions, pushing for autonomy, and the delivery of the promise of prosperity and success for China to the domestic audience, ultimately the very basis of the CCP legitimacy.

What about the Chinese business firms? It can be assumed their support is quite solid, at least for economic reasons as well as their internal structure; as far as economic

reasons are concerned, many Chinese firms stand to gain substantially from the partnership, as the TPMC covers various sectors and the most important ones are infrastructures, meaning that Chinese contractors will have a substantial role in them, as they often are for BRI-related projects. Furthermore, Chinese firms also have another incentive in participating in the TPMC in the form of the financial backing of the state, which makes the risk of financial losses in the investment minimal, for practical purposes. The other reasons for their support to the initiative is to be found in the fact that a substantial part of businesses in the P.R.C. are under the control of the CCP, or are closely linked to it; in general, the bigger the firm and the more influence the party has on them. Zhu has studied the relations between government and businesses in the P.R.C. in his “International Context and China’s Government-Business Relations” (2015); he explains that, on the one hand, the private sector has actually grown in size in the country thanks to the season of reforms inaugurated by Deng Xiaoping’s government, which among other things introduced economic decentralisation and the debut in the domestic market of township and village enterprises (TVEs), and at the end of 2012 the private sector in China contributed to more than 60% of the GDP (Zhu, 2015). Not only that, but Zhu cites also other official statistics that paint the picture of a vibrant private sector: the growth rate in 2013’s added value of industrial output was of 12,4%, and the open-door policy invited foreign capital, with foreign invested enterprises (FIE) producing 40% of the Chinese GDP and almost 55% of the total trade in the country in 2010. The “FIE-led” private sector is described as counting for half of the Chinese economy and being its most efficient component. Given the economic strength of the private sector and the partial erosion of the monopoly of the state in the economic life, one would assume that companies in China can have some power in forming policies, but this is not the case, and the

relations between government and businesses are still “very much dominated by the former” (Zhu, 2015). This in itself is due to a few reasons:

Lack of collective action: Zhu reports that, since entrepreneurs don’t generally share a particularly similar backgrounds or social networks, they seldom share visions and goals as well; they can hardly be considered a middle class. Even when sectoral association do exist, they either do not effectively represent it, or are directly created by the government, at multiple levels as well. This is part of the CCP strategy of “fragmenting” the voices of the business sector, in order to weaken considerably the weight it can have on policy making.

Ties of private entrepreneurs to the Communist Party: private entrepreneurs develop ties with the CCP, as it provides them with resources and political favours. Party membership can even help in securing legal assistance and access to loans, among others, according to studies cited by Zhu’s article. All of this contributes to the alignment of the entrepreneurs’ strategies with that of the party, and thus the government, hampering the power that the private sector may have in furthering its own interests.

Private businesses are controlled at different levels by a hierarchically structured government, going from the central to the township or village one, which can exert its power on firms in different ways, from imposing administrative fees to providing guidance (Zhu, 2015). According to Zhu, the larger enterprises groups are the only that could stand as equal to the government, but they too are controlled by the party, who controls their appointments and the career of the managers through cadres transfers and rotation in government or party agencies, which again has the effect of assimilating the perspectives of the businesses to that of the party.

2.2.2 - Support for the TPMC in Japan

Gauging the support for the initiative in Japan, is, on the other hand, a little more complicated, given its different form of state. Here, while the state apparatus has some influence on the industrial sector, the inverse is true as well. Furthermore, public opinion in Japan is not controlled as it is in the P.R.C..

In Japan, government and industry have one way to interact and negotiate their interest, which in turn reflect on policymaking: economic associations which include representatives from different segments of the economy, as well as past members of cabinet or from the public administration more at large. These associations can be divided in two types: *zaikai* and *gyōkai*. The difference between the two is that, while *zaikai* consist more of business federation, more in general associations wider in scope, and are the primary channel for relaying the interest of businesses to the government at large; they are more influential on macroeconomic and national issues. *Gyōkai* on the other hand are more specific, representing the interest of a single productive sector in the economy, are in contact with the relevant bureaus and government agencies. Examples of *zaikai* are the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Japan Federation of Employers' Association, the Japanese Association of Business Executive, and the Keidanren, the longest standing one, and the Japan External Trade Organisation (or JETRO). *Zaikai* can influence the government in different ways, but the main one is through formal recommendations in the form of independent research reports, which are submitted to the relevant ministries. They also appoint members to ministerial advisory councils, which are meant to reflect societal positions on the issue at hand. In the case of councils whose deliberation have considerable impact on the Japanese economy, it is not uncommon for *zaikai* to be consulted on the proper appointment of its members; finally, *zaikai* also exert their

influence through informal contacts with the public administration, and for the duration of the Cold War, they have financially supported the LDP, with the purpose of ensuring a pro-business environment domestically and pro-business policies.

Gyôkai have a more practical function, on the other hand, relaying information between the government or public administration and the businesses of a specific sector, while also promoting the interest of said sector through market surveys, for example. They have members participate in (sector-specific) advisory councils like the *zaikai*, and just like them they submit policy papers to the government, as well as a relation of give-and-take with relevant bureaus and agencies in the public administration. However, having a closer tie with the bureaucracy compared to the *zaikai*, they have additional instruments to exert their influence onto the relevant sections of the bureaucracy. For example, their relay of information is of great importance to the bureaucracy since, not being able to legally enforce administrative guidance, the opinion of businesses is very important to successfully apply it. Not only that, but they have engaged in policy formation, according to Yosimatu, by drafting reports to the Ministry of Internal Trade and Industry (in 2001 renamed to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, or METI) (Yosimatu, 1997). One more channel of influence for *gyôkai* is the practice of *amakudari*, in which a former member of the cabinet or of the public administration retires to a position in such organisations, in a similar fashion to the former ambassador to China, Mr. Niwa, who went on to chair *Itôtyû*.

Zaikais, and businesses more in general, have had a part in Japan agreeing to the TMPC; one could argue that they, in fact, have been the force mostly pushing for the cooperation. The Keidanren itself, JETRO, and the Japan-China economic association have all co-organised the first Third Party Market Cooperation Forum, together with

the Japanese METI, MoFA, and Chinese counterparts (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, Japan, 2018). Not only that, but according to scholars, large and medium businesses in Japan understood that, were Japan to opt out of the BRI, its competitiveness on the global market would be negatively affected (Ren, 2019), and they have noticed the complementary advantages between them and their Chinese counterparts (Zhang M. , 2021). Japan has already fruitfully cooperated with private businesses in Southeast Asia in the past, specifically in the official development aid (ODA) and infrastructure investment sector (Sato, 2021), and this is another factor that surely did not alienate support from businesses, at least initially. Furthermore, giants of the industrial sector, such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Toyota, and even Nintendo have already invested with a profit in Southeast Asia, and already know how to conduct business in the area (Zhao, 2018). Many of these groups are signatories to TPMC-related MoUs. This is not the first time the industrial sector pushes the government to engage more internationally (Barclay & Koh, 2008).

The government, on the other hand, initially had a much more lukewarm, if not hostile, response. As I mentioned earlier, the Japanese government was initially very sceptical of the BRI, worrying that the drawbacks for Japan could outweigh the benefits, and rather proposed its own initiative, the FOIP, accompanied by its infrastructure investment programme, the PQI, with a timing that led many scholars to understand it as an act of balancing (Pascha, 2020). However, the initial support from the business coupled with additional factors helped shape the Japanese stance on the matter, leading first to an opening in 2017, the first China-Japan Third Party Market Cooperation Forum in 2018, and in 2019 the 10-point consensus between the two countries. The additional factors that have had a role in changing the government's stance on the cooperation with China were substantially economic: the Japanese

economy has been receding for a long time, and although it recovered in the late years it still was not enough to keep up with the competition. This, coupled with the fact that China surpassed Japan as source of foreign aid and as trade partner for Asia, and the consequent fact that the Japanese budget for ODA has been declining for years (in 2017 it was less than half that of 1997; Zhao, 2018) meant that there was little room for competition for Japan. The ADB too, the multilateral development bank founded by Japan and its main tool of spreading its influence in its developing neighbourhood, lacks the necessary funding to keep up with demand in Southeast Asia (Zhao, 2018), much less with competition with China, which can mobilise vast amounts of capital relatively quick. Not only that, but the years leading up to the TPMC were the same as Trump's presidency of the United States, marked by a scaling back U.S. commitment in the Indo-Pacific and protectionist policies that hit both China and Japan. The only logical choice was to cooperate with China, and the documents show this realisation in the cabinet, as Hu (2019) has reported. Both Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kono reported to the Japanese House of Representatives stating the willingness to cooperate with China, explaining the benefit that this would entail for the country (Hu, 2019). Prime Minister Abe also stated that the BRI meets international standards, the condition for Japan to cooperate with China. Japanese policymakers understood the necessity to engage with China to ensure the Japanese growth (Boon, 2017), and it showed; in 2017 Mr. Abe did not participate himself to the first Belt and Road Forum, but sent Iida, a prominent leader in the LDP and a pro-China lawmaker. After the change in stance, the Japanese government actively promoted the cooperation, for example issuing guidelines on the cooperation in 2017, still insisting on the criteria of openness and sustainability, and according to Iida's article there is will to improve the relationship between the two.

Even the media has had initially its reserves, emphasising first the negative sides of the BRI, but with time they too had come to a more accommodating perspective, as Zhao quoting the Japan times holds “Japanese news media has suggested, Japan and China may inch toward a possible reconciliation as they recognize the altered dynamics around the Pacific Rim”.

Unfortunately, as it was mentioned in the introductory section, doubts over the actual feasibility of the project have caused some businesses to lose interest, but this has happened later in the project life than investigated in this thesis (the positive effects are sought within Abe premiership) and hopefully the initial momentum had led to some positive consequences. Let us now move forward to the economic disparities between the two countries.

2.2.3 - Economic disparities between China and Japan

The next step is gauging whether there is a significant economic disparity between the parties in the process. According to Press-Barnathan (2009), economic disparities can be detrimental to a transition to “warm peace” to the extent that it could be leverage upon by one party to influence the future behaviour of the other, usually the stronger on the weaker. Usually, the weaker party in the process would attribute the economic successes of the other on imperialistic designs, rather than on other factors. Economic disparities, on the other hand, may also influence the perception of what either party considers to be “fair” cooperation: for example, in the case of the peace transition between the Republic of Korea and Japan, the most similar to the one I have taken in exam in this thesis, the weaker party, the ROK, expected more substantial assistance from Japan in virtue of their imbalanced relation and their turbulent recent past. In the words of Press-Barnathan, “[...] there is also an argument suggesting that by playing up the aggressor-victim memory of the past, South Koreans are able to take the moral

high ground and instead of simply saying, «Japan is strong and Korea is still weak, so we would appreciate your help», they insist that Japan owes Korea a great deal of assistance” (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009). This behaviour in turn frustrated Japan, who felt that Korea was acting ungratefully in the face of the Japanese role in revitalising the country’s economy, undermining goodwill towards a peace transition.

How are these disparities measured? Press-Barnathan, in her chapter dedicated to the Japan-ROK peace transition, mainly focuses on the difference between the GDP of the two countries and their trade patterns, with Korean imports from Japan outweighing exports to it, sustaining an asymmetrical relation of dependence. Only later, after reforms in the country which eventually lead to the transformation of the Korean economy, did the country gain enough confidence to take a more relaxed approach to Japan, for example lifting the ban on Japanese goods (or other possible sources of Japanese cultural influence) (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009). Is the situation between China and Japan comparable? Let us look at the numbers.

According to the CIA World Factbook, given the nature of the official exchange rate in the P.R.C., which is determined by fiat rather than market forces, the real GDP at purchasing power parity offers a clearer measurement of the Chinese economic output; using this measure for comparison, the P.R.C. has become the first global economy by economic output, with an estimate of 23 009 billion dollars in 2020 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022) (22,492 bn USD in 2019, and 21,229 in 2018; for comparison, the same parameter for the USA amounts respectively to 19 846, 20 563, and 20 128 billion U.S. dollars, Central Intelligence Agency, 2022); Japan, does not have an estimate for 2020 in the World Factbook, but the previous two years give an

idea of the order of magnitude, 5 224 billion USD for 2019, and 5 210 billion USD for 2018 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022). Nominal GDP paints a slightly different picture, with the U.S. again at the top with 23 trillion USD, China in second place with 19 trillion USD, and Japan with 4, as of 2022 (International Monetary Fund, 2022). In either case, Japan is still lagging behind China, while still maintaining its position as the third global economy. The overtake happened in 2010, and while the Chinese GDP continued to grow up until now, the Japanese GDP suffered alternate phases of contraction and growth, but until now the trend has been negative (World Bank, 2022). The disparity however is not as drastic as that between the ROK and Japan in the years of the transition, with a Japanese GDP being about 40 times that of Korea in the 1980s (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009). Even as far as the import/export balance is concerned, the relation between China and Japan is much fairer than that between Korea and Japan at the time; while in the latter case the ratio between export to and import from Japan ranged from 3.97 to 1.88 in spite of the remarkable growth of the Korean economy, in the case of Japan and China the difference is in the order of magnitude of tens of billions of dollars: in 2020, 151 billion USD in import from China compared to 133 billion USD in export (The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2022); in 2018, the year the MoU on the TPMC was signed, the numbers were not that different, with 173 billion USD in import from China and 144 billion USD in export to China (WITS, 2022), thus with a milder ratio of export to import of 1.13 in 2020 and of 1.2 in 2018. The corresponding Japan to Asia Foreign Trade Dependency ratios for these two measures are 6% in 2018 and 5,6%; a relatively high value, but comparable to that with ASEAN (around 4,5%) so while being the biggest market for Japan, the

trade volume between the countries should not run the risk of being used against Japan down the line.

The case at hand does not completely fit for Press-Barnathan's theory, and while in the case of the domestic support a purely bilateral approach was still applicable, in this case there is a need for small adjustments to accommodate the interests in third countries and for this reason I add as an additional indicator of the economic disparities the market shares of the two countries in ASEAN: in this sense, the gap is wider, with Japan losing shares quickly; once the first partner to ASEAN up until 2009, it went to fall behind the U.S. and the EU-bloc in 2020 (To, 2022) in trade shares, while China remained firmly the first partner. On the other hand, this could be an incentive to get more involved in the region and regain at least the second place in the trade volume statistics of ASEAN.

2.2.4 - Impact of third-party involvement

Strictly speaking, the role of a third party in this process is not necessarily beneficial or detrimental to the transition to peace; in fact, the third party does not even have to intervene in a specific way, in order to have a positive effect. The third party could for example provide security guarantees, as the U.S. did in many several occasion, from Western Europe to East Asia, but this alone could do little to encourage economic interaction or a successful cooperation between the two parties (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009). Other possible way that a third party can influence the process is to provide political or political benefits to the parties along with the result of the successful cooperation, and other times the involvement of a third party might even consist in the threat of privation of benefits, as the U.S. did in the peace process between the Republic of Korea and Japan. A third party can both incentivise the signature of a peace treaty, or work

towards the normalisation of relations between the two former enemies; to do so, however, it needs to be able and (willing) to incentivise interaction between the other two actors continuously and willingly, and Press-Barnathan suggest in her book that one way to achieve this result is to embed the bilateral cooperation in a multilateral setting, “Such an institutional context can offer a longer shadow of the future for both parties and provide a more stable basis for them to develop their relations” (2009). However, as I mentioned above, third parties can have a negative impact on the transition to peace as they can, for example, impose economic sanctions as consequence for a rapprochement. Press-Barnathan’s book focuses more on the involvement of a major power (the U.S.) as a third party, but this is because they have more tools at their disposal to change the preference of the other two actors involved, and thus more likely to succeed, but what really matters is that the third party can address concerns that might arise or affect in some way the preferences of either party. Press-Barnathan herself stated that the third party does not need to be a single actor, and rather it can even be the multilateral setting cited earlier: to continue the quote “[...] provide a more stable basis for them to develop their relations *than a reliance on a time-specific policy of a certain great power*” (emphasis added). She more explicitly say that in the case that the parties decide to nest their cooperation in a multilateral setting, the third party “the third party will not be an interested major power but rather a multilateral institution or international institution through which various interested states, or the organization itself, can operate to promote, stabilize, and lock in the bilateral transition to peace between the former enemies” (Press-Barnathan, *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*, 2009).

Involving a third party by definition, the TPMC between Japan and the P.R.C. seems to offer a good candidate for a third party capable of facilitating the normalisation

process; success of this cooperation would certainly bring economic gains in the longer term, with a better-connected Southeast Asia, both via land linkages to China and via sea routes to Japan, as well as a better interregional connection that will benefit the segments of the production chains of Japanese businesses located in the region. The success of the initiative for China is an important step in the realisation of the BRI, of fundamental importance to the Chinese government, and to Japan this could provide an effective and financially viable way to maintain a foothold in the region while avoiding a competition with China that could ultimately subtract further resources from the Japanese economy, strengthened ties with the region and maybe regain the lost market shares in the region. Very importantly, it allows the Japanese government to participate in reaping the benefits of the Chinese global initiative while moderating most of the potential negative side-effects that some internal observers have brought up in the period leading up to the cooperation. Furthermore, the multilateral nature of the initiative, according to the theory, is a characteristic that can help the normalisation process.

Summing up, it appears that, at least initially, the TPMC has the potential to lead to further steps towards the normalisation of the relations between Japan and the P.R.C. There has been a strong support for the initiative on both sides, the tandem between governments and businesses; the lack of significant economic disparities, coupled with an international climate that pushed Japan and China closer together, mean respectively that the situation is not such that the successful cooperation between the two could advantage disproportionately the stronger party (in this case, the P.R.C), or lead to dependency to a degree that it can be leveraged upon to influence the internal politics of the weaker party; and finally, the very nature of the TPMC means that a third party is included in the process by definition, and this third party can provide further

economic as well as political benefits to the cooperation. By including multilateral settings, it can provide an institutional space to both address eventual concerns (as China has eventually come to accept the respect of Japan's principles for a cooperation in infrastructure investment), and a way to dilate the time frame of the two parties' gains, thus providing more incentives for continued cooperation, which is the way towards normalisation of relations.

Has this initial support been enough momentum to cause an appreciable change in the bilateral relations between China and Japan? The following section will try to answer this question.

2.3 - Empirical assessment of the improvement in bilateral relations

Given the relative recent time frame of the cooperation in exam, compared with that needed to see appreciable effects on bilateral relations, this seems a high task. However, I hypothesise that, if the cooperation has had its fruits, at the very least the mutual representation of the Other in the respective discourses should have changed, at the very least; after all, trust building is one of the fundamental steps in peace transition and normalisation processes between former enemies.

2.3.1 - Construction of the “Other”: before the TPMC

2.3.1.1 - Construction of the Japanese “Other” in Chinese discourse

The image of the rocky relations between China and Japan come also from the sharp rhetoric that is often employed by either party. In particular, Japan has often been accused by China of never completely facing their militaristic past, at best, or even having revisionist tendencies, trying to “beautify” their past wrongdoings. This is what transpires from one speech by Xi Jinping in 2014, in occasion of the 77th anniversary of the Marco Polo incident, which eventually started the Second Sino-Japanese war, an event of great importance for the history of modern China and for the CCP. In this instance, Xi employed both generalisation, admonishing those who wish to “beautify a *history of aggression* (emphasis added)”, and dramatization, reminding the audience of the amount of human lives and suffering imposed on China by the Japanese aggression (“tens of millions of lives lost”). He proceeds with what arguably is a securitising stance, in the way intended by Hagström and Hessen, by calling the revisionist minority as “going against the tide of history, denying and beautifying the history of aggression, and harm international mutual trust and create tension in the region”. Xi also stated “History is history and facts are facts. Nobody can change history and facts. Anyone who intends to deny, distort or beautify history will not find

agreement among Chinese people and people of all other countries” (China Daily, 2014) While not posing clearly Japan as a threat in this specific passage, on the other hand the different attitude to history is framed as illegitimate, not only going against what are “facts” and “history”, thus something that is completely alien to reality, but also finding opposition both in China along with the rest of the peoples of the world; while being classic imagery found in socialist speeches, the global magnitude of the opposition is a reflection of the depravity that such a behaviour constitutes. If the speech itself is not specific about who this minority is supposed to be, the comment added by the author of the article on China.org.cn, from which the extract of the speech is taken, points unmistakably to the Japanese leadership. «Yang Bojiang, deputy chief of the Institute of Japanese Studies under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said "the rare move apparently targets the fact that the authorities in Japan have not learned from past wrongs". Yang noted that, to serve the political tide of "turning right", Japan's right wing is adjusting laws and policies on the one hand while putting a gloss on history to lay down the basis of the values it needs on the other. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's announcement on July 1 that the country's Self-Defense Forces can fight overseas, marked a radical change in the country's postwar pacifist stance by reinterpreting Article 9 of the Constitution. And right-wing figures in Japan, including Abe, have been consistently denying that the imperial army routinely committed atrocities, massacred civilians or forced about 200,000 "comfort women" from China, the Korean Peninsula and others, to serve Japanese troops. Yang said China is not only arguing with Japan on issues of history, but is struggling "for the security of East Asia"» (China.org.cn, 2014). The events leading up to this speech are put in the general context of the aggression of Japan on China: the reforms in the JSDF are interpreted as a rearmament process that frighteningly mirrors that in the beginning of

the Syôwa era, the negationist stance of Japanese politicians, including the Prime Minister itself, are stressed once again, as is stressed once again the suffering inflicted on China. The final remark on China, struggling for the security of East Asia, is the last stroke of a painting of Japan as a revisionist, unrepenting nation, a danger to peace in the region, in the present as it was in the past. This is a common representation of Japan in China, and this in itself is not surprising, considering the importance that the anti-Japanese struggle has for the legitimacy of the CPP. It should be pointed out that the comment to the speech is relevant as well, since in China information is centrally controlled and China.org.cn specifically is a state-affiliated news outlet: its official name is the “China Internet Information Centre”, and its managed by the State Council Information Office and the China International Publishing Group, the latter being owned by the CPP, and its editor-in-chief is Wang Xiaohui, has also served as the vice minister of the Propaganda Department of the CPP. It is then safe to assume that, while not coming from prominent political leaders, the commentary itself is reflective of the official narrative.

This rhetoric and imagery was drawn upon in the days leading up to the anniversary of July 7th, with an editorial on the same site on the eve of the celebration doubling down: it starts by proposing a moral obligation for Japan, who “should remember” the July 7th as is observed in China; it goes on to enunciate the crimes of the Japanese army and denounces the twisted military leadership at home “Civilians were killed by gunfire, bombs, gas and biological weapons; women were raped; forced laborers were tortured to death. It was a devastating tragedy not only for China, but also for Japanese people. Ignoring objections from peace lovers at home, warmongering fascists initiated the war, leaving Japanese soldiers to shed their blood away from their motherland and women and children deserted back home. Those people who provoked the war

marked their own country with humiliation in history.” (China.org.cn, 2014) A parallel is then drawn to the current government in Japan, making now the referent to the “minority” mentioned by Xi clearer. The (at the time) recent actions by the Japanese government are represented as a ridiculous caricature of the military government of the Syôwa era, with a “slapstick” nationalisation of the Diaoyu islands, and “ridiculous” visits to the Yasukuni shrine, a point of contention for many in countries who were the objective of Japanese imperialistic designs during the Second World War as it is the temple commemorating those who died in wars for Japan, including convicted A-class war criminals, such as Tôzyô Hideki. These actions, along with the reinterpretation of the Japanese constitution, are clearly declared a provocation, provocation that will have to stop, lest the Japanese government is willing to “take its medicine”. The negative imagery goes on, with the same people who want to undermine the peace process called “devils who try to spark war and trample peace under foot”; this article also employs reification negatively, saying that being Japan “an island country with limited natural resources, [...] there are always a small number of people who attempt to loot the resources of other countries by way of invasion, bringing catastrophe to neighbors including the Korean Peninsula, India, Vietnam, the Philippines and China.”

On the 7th of July the People’s Daily online published an article furthering this parallel, using most of the strategies mentioned above: its starts with the dramatization, remembering the “huge pain caused to Asian people”, and that serves to introduce the following generalisation: while the “psychological wounds of the Chinese people have not been fully healed”, Japan persists in the vexation of China, as “Japanese rightists have repeatedly denied its atrocities of the aggression and taken a provocative approach in addressing ties with its neighboring countries”, and these wounds have been touched recently by the recent resolution allowing Japan to exercise the right to

collective self-defence, interpreted as an act of defiance to the post-war regional order (“Japan has been banned to exercise the right to collective self-defense after World War II due to its heinous war crimes to Asian countries”), and a possible threat to China. This is nothing surprising, it’s only natural, as “It is by no means the first time that the Abe's administration irritates its neighbors and stirs up regional tensions by adopting provocative policies.”. The following paragraphs return to the dramatization of China, which is securitised by Japan in spite of its “peaceful development”, and continue with the representation of Japan as an arrogant, unrepenting and careless actor in the regional system, claiming that Prime Minister Abe was “playing with fire”, that “it is really *unwise* for Japan to engage in big-power geopolitics and *aggressions against its neighbors* (emphasis added). As the *provoker* and *defeated country* of the World War II, *Japan should learn from the lessons of the wars* and give up its attempt for better warships and missiles as its *recklessness* would affect Asia as a whole. Beijing always tries to develop a strategic partnership of mutual benefits with its neighboring country, but a *dangerous* Tokyo has *wasted* many precious chances to build sound bilateral ties amid its *endless provocations*. As one of the important players in Asia and on world arena, *it is high time for Japan to face up to its aggression in history* and pursue the path of peaceful development *instead of angering the region with rounds and rounds of irresponsible words and provocative policies.*”(emphasis added) (People's Daily, 2014)

Since this pieces were produced around a particularly sensitive anniversary in Chinese history, it is not surprising that these tones are used to refer to Japan; I have included this both to show the full extent of the representation of Japan, which is a substratum of its construction in less emotionally charged times, and because this representation is one which is routinely drawn upon by the Chinese government, and not just the

product of the emotional response to the events commemorated during the anniversary. In less sensitive times Japan has been represented in an analogous way. During Abe's visit to the U.S. in 2015, for example, the state-affiliated news agency Xinhua, strongly criticised prime minister Abe for not properly apologising for the colonial rule in Asia and the war of aggression in China. The event was in May, so quite far from the anniversary of July 7th or September 18th, known as the National Humiliation Day, commemorating the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and which had sparked controversy in China in 2004 due to a scandal involving a Japanese tourist group, with responses drawing upon imagery reminiscent of the Second Sino-Japanese War (Koschut, et al., 2017). In this occasion, Xinhua defined the visit as simply damaging, jeopardising regional peace as a consequence of the renewed bilateral defence guidelines, which will allow the "country's Self-Defense Forces (SDF), according to the guideline, could be projected at every corner around the world when the U.S. forces are being attacked and the SDF could exercise the use of force." (Xinhua news agency, 2015); not only that, but the new guidelines would also constitute a more direct threat to China and Chinese sovereignty, as they would entail the possibility of "joint operation with the U.S. forces to meddle in the South China Sea as the two outsiders are trying to increasingly involve themselves in helping countries like Vietnam and the Philippines confront with China on territorial issues." Sovereignty is another sensitive topic in Chinese narrative, as China would have barely escaped a century long of humiliation by foreign powers, and as such threats to Chinese sovereignty are evoking of a period of a weak, divided China. Abe in particular has been represented in this article as "hawkish", a "revisionist" who "deliberately" did not offer a proper apology for Japan's past (while this intention is not apparent in international coverage of the visit, such as that of the Guardian), and careless, making

promises to the American ally that stirred protests by the opposition in the diet; The Guardian also claims that Xinhua also said that “Team America: world police now has a more loyal Japanese samurai to join the cast and meddle in global affairs.” (The Guardian, 2015), referring to a comedic American film in which heavily caricature American interventionism as being akin to the titular “world police”, accusing Japan of being an uncriticising supporter of this policy. This coupled with the “outsiders” in the South China sea constructs Japan as an external to the Asian international system, a clear example of positioning, relating Japan to the West, that is not uncommon (see for example Chan, 2012). It is repropounded later in 2016, when Defence Minister Inada Tomomi reported voices from ASEAN that what happened in the South China Sea could happen in the East China as well. Not only did China consider did a patronising attitude (“Geng said ASEAN states could speak for themselves on the South China Sea issue, noting that Japan is not an ASEAN mouthpiece.” Geng Shuang was the spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of the P.R.C. at the time), a trait which would not go down well in the region and in particular with ASEAN, known for prizing their autonomy even in their multilateral mechanisms, and it is reminiscent of the “big brother of Asia” title that Japan used in propaganda directed to its colonial empire during the Second World War, but also called Japan an “outsider”, who should learn from the past and not “stir up enmity” (People's Daily, 2016). A few months later Geng commented the discussion of placing U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defence Systems (THAAD) by saying that Japanese military and security activities are being closely watched by its Asian neighbours and the international community “because of its history” (People's Daily, 2016).

It is clear that Japan is constructed as a very negative presence in the region: its defining traits are its complete disregard for its past actions and the pain that they

caused to its neighbours, refusing to apologise; disregard for the concerns of its neighbours and for the security of the region at large, embarking in military build-up, irresponsible provocation, and disrespectful meddling in Asian affairs. Japan is an arrogant outsider, closer to western countries, and one that can threaten China with his dangerous behaviour.

2.3.1.2 - Construction of the Chinese "Other" in Japanese discourse

The Japanese construction of China, in essence, is not much different from the previous one, the major difference being that the Japan does not insist so much on a past traumatic event caused by China. However, the strategies for framing the other are not very dissimilar.

In statements and positions papers on controversies, the dominant discursive tool is dramatization: Japan is a victim of Chinese vexation in the form unilateral actions and irresponsible provocations; for example, the Japanese position paper on the situation of the Senkaku Islands, available on the website for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, refers to the use of a weapons-guiding radar directed at a Japanese escort vessel not only as being extremely regrettable, but also as a *provocative act, liable of causing an unforeseen incident, and a further escalation of the situation* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, 2013). The event is then put in a more general context of China trying to unilaterally change the status quo via illegitimate means (*"China continues to take provocative actions, attempting to change the existing order through coercion and intimidation."*, emphasis added) since 2008. Japan, on the other hand, is obviously legitimised, having nationalised the islands so as to avoid further deterioration of the situation (the islands were previously privately owned, and before the nationalisation there was a proposal by then governor of Tokyo to acquire them). Note that the Japanese government uses the term *"purchased the three islands"*, rather than

“nationalised”, as that is a much less politically and emotionally charged term, but most importantly legitimises the acquisition as being the result of a transaction between two actors, contrasted with the unilateral actions of the P.R.C., who continued to intrude Japanese territory after the latter tried to defuse the situation. In this paper Japan, a “*peace-loving* country”, who is contributing “to *peace* and *prosperity* in the region” is worried about the two-faced attitude of the Chinese government, who on the one hand states the importance of nurturing positive relations with Japan, and on the other continues to create tensions between the two. Japan continues to claim sovereignty over the islands but, being a “responsible stakeholder”, contrary to China, it will handle the situation in a *calm* manner, as a natural consequence of its national policies since the end of the Second World War. In the protest lodged after the fact, China is yet to offer a *sincere* explanation, as it is its responsibility, and should avoid such damaging acts for bilateral relations. After explaining the lengths Japan has gone to bring factual evidence in support of its version of the facts (or rather, the facts themselves, according to the statement), a dismissive China calls Japan’s claims “untrue” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, 2013).

Even in less tense conjunctures, the Japanese representation of China is still negative, worrisome, and marked by suspicion. For example, in a series of press conferences by the Prime Minister office (one of the primary actors in the formation of foreign policy in Japan) in 2015, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga stressed the lack of transparency on the part of China when asked about the raise in China defence budget but refrained from framing it as a cause of changes in the security environment of Japan, dodging the journalist’s question more than once. On the other hand, when the topic moved to the Senkaku Islands, he both reified and legitimised Japanese sovereignty on the islands, being the result of the historical process as well as diplomacy, while China

“distorts the facts” to promote its unilateral narrative (Prime Minister Office, Japan, 2015). The lack of transparency is stressed again in a later conference, when asked about the growth in Chinese arms export. In a 2016 press conference, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga was asked to comment the statement by then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the P.R.C., Wang Yi, that the Japanese leadership is in fact two faced, probably referring to the situation in the South China Sea. Chief Cabinet Suga was that it all comes down to rule of law and, while not making explicit reference to China, he stated that “Any country should say what ought to be said regarding unilateral efforts to dominate by force. That is the international rule.” (Prime Minister Office, Japan, 2016).

While the office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are cautious in their public stances about China, for clear reasons of public diplomacy, exposing themselves only in case of discussion about sensitive issues, the Ministry of Defence is much more straightforward about their view of China. In the “Defense of Japan”, the annual position paper of the Ministry of Defence, issue of 2014, the overview of Japan’s security is much more focused on China than on other issues: the first infographic locating the security-related issues show a majority of threats coming from China, mainly its military build-up, the violation of airspace in the Ryûkyû islands, the expansion of Chinese activities in the South and East China Sea, and the Strait of Formosa. China has two pages dedicated to its effect on the regional security scenario, on par with the DPRK, and the discourse is similar to that found in the previous two ministries: China needs to behave in a more responsible way, *accept and comply with international norms*, and is building up its military capacities broadly and swiftly. China is adopting *assertive* measure, using *coercion* to advance its maritime interests, which coupled with the *lack of transparency* is a source of grave concern to Japan, as well

as being threatening for the security of the region: “this activity raises security concerns for the region and the international community” (Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2014). While the tone is generally more aseptic, some of the discursive strategies of interest are used in the same way as the Prime Minister Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the earlier generalisation of China using force to advance its interests, or dramatization in the case of the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, seen as a violation of Japan’s sovereignty, by including the Senkaku Islands, and a violation of international law, or the repeated violation of airspace and territorial waters (“China has intruded into Japanese territorial waters frequently and violated Japan’s airspace by its government ships and aircraft belonging to maritime law-enforcement agencies, and has engaged in dangerous activities that could cause unexpected situations” (Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2014). This portrait of China is repeated in the following issue of the white paper, with the addition that China seems to have “signaled its position to realize its unilateral assertions without making any compromises”, but on the other hand also to have taken steps to avoid unforeseen circumstances (Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2015). This specific remark has not been reported in the 2016 edition, which instead goes more in details about the concerning activities of the P.R.C. in the South China Sea, unilateral actions that *highten tensions*, “including large-scale and rapid reclamation of multiple features, establishment of outposts there, and their use for military purposes, based on China’s unique assertions which are incompatible with the existing order of international law, and has made steady efforts to create a *fait accompli*” (Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2016)

In this period, as it was shown, the construction of the Chinese “other” in Japanese institutions was influence by the crisis around 2013-2014 in the southern periphery of

Japan, involving existential issues such as territorial integrity and national security. As such, and given the repeated instances of these behaviours, through mainly generalisation and dramatization China was represented as using illegitimate means to achieve its interests, going against international law and international principle such as the freedom of navigation, irresponsible, intentionally damaging of the regional security environment, as well as being untrustworthy, given the concerns over transparency. While the white papers of the Ministry of Defence employ less often these discursive strategies, they recur to textbook securitisation, by framing China as a threat, possibly an existential one given the importance of freedom of navigation for an island country.

2.3.2 - Construction of the “Other” after the TPMC

2.3.2.1 - Construction of the Japanese “Other” in Chinese discourse

In the years following the signature of the MoU on the Third-Party Market Cooperation, some improvements can be seen in the Chinese image of Japan; for example, whereas the issue of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands was an issue of hot contention between the two countries involved, in a 2017 press conference the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lu Kang avoided mentioning Japan as a source of instability on the region, focusing on the U.S. Specifically, the spokesperson was asked for a comment on the statement by then U.S. Secretary of Defence Mattis that the bilateral security treaty is applicable to the Senkaku Islands, and the answer to that was that, while stressing Chinese sovereignty over the islands through means of naturalisation, the U.S. should act responsibly, stop making wrong statements on the islands, and making the region more prone to instability (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, 2017). In a following conference, the spokesperson was asked to comment on statements by both the U.S. Secretary of Defence and the Japanese Minister of

Defence on both the disputed islands and the South China Sea; this time the spokesperson could not avoid mentioning Japan, since it was more exposed on controversial issues, but the reply is noteworthy, nonetheless. The first half of the reply was centred on the legitimisation of Chinese claims on the territorial waters of the South China Sea, stressing its respect for international norms concerning freedom of overflight and navigation, while being opposed to show of force by other countries, and just safeguarding its own sovereignty. What is interesting is the following paragraph, calling out countries external to the regional system who are misinformed about the situation, animated by ulterior motives, and to substantially leave the matter to regional countries. On the other hand, Japan is named clearly in the towards the end of the reply, and while the spokesperson dismissed its claims as “not worth” refuting, the fact that Japan is later asked to act more cooperatively towards the improvement of both bilateral relations and regional stability is a clear shift from the past, where Japan was considered an external country. This shift in the construction of Japan was noted by other scholars of Sino-Japanese bilateral relations, such as Chan (2012), who too applied CDA to this field.

While this is sure a noticeable improvement compared to what could be seen in the previous timeframe, some traits remain unchanged. Around the time of the adoption of the defence white paper by Japan, which identified China as a major threat, Lu Kang answered as such: “In disregard of facts and harping on the same string, Japan's new defense white paper once again made groundless accusations against China's normal defense and military activities, made irresponsible remarks on China's maritime activities and tried to stir up troubles on the South China Sea issue. China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to that and has lodged serious representations with the Japanese side.” Not only that, but Chinese institution were still using the usual

mix of generalisation and dramatization when referring to Japan: “In recent years, Japan has been overhauling its military and security policies and attempting to justify its military buildup and amending of constitution by exaggerating security threats in the neighborhood, [...]. We urge the Japanese side to learn from history, stick to the path of peaceful development, watch its words and actions in the military and security fields, and contribute to enhancing mutual political and security trust between China and Japan and maintaining regional peace and stability” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, 2017). The rhetoric was not different even in the case of the Yasukuni Shrine visits by some Japanese lawmakers that year, still stressing the damages caused by Japan and asking it to face up its history, and while the spokesperson noted the fact that none of the Cabinet members visited the controversial temple, it seems that this was interpreted more as a figue leave than anything else, considering that the visit itself is called a “wrong move” by the “Japanese *side*”, rather than a minority of Japanese representatives. It’s also interesting to note that the opening paragraph of the reply states that China is strongly “dissatisfied”, rather than using the term “concerned”.

Even the official press seems more lenient towards Japan in these years. In 2018, for the 73rd anniversary of the Nagasaki bombing, the People’s Daily publishes an article titled “Japan urged to remember its atrocities in WWII, as Nagasaki marks 73rd anniversary of atomic bombing by U.S.”; interestingly enough, the article itself only reports about the declarations in favour of a ban on nuclear weapons, the possibility of creating a nuclear-free zone in Northeast Asia, and the celebration of the anniversary itself, while avoiding actually mentioning anything about Japan’s imperialistic past which (Peoples' Daily, 2018), as it was shown, was done quite often in the occasion of WWII-related recurrences, in the 2013-2016 period as well as before. The Chinese press remains more outspoken than the government, and while

the coverage of the 2018's Japanese defence white paper was in line with the government's stance the previous year, claiming that Japan is exaggerating the threat scenarion in the region to justify its military buildup, in the face of a safer environment: "The Japanese defense white paper has also said that "there is no change" in Japan's view of the threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s nuclear weapons and missiles, though admitting the DPRK's commitment to denuclearization made at a summit with the United States in Singapore on June 12 is "significant."" (People's Daily, 2018), while adding that there were improvement in the bilateral relation (a "positive momentum" which Japan should consolidate). The negative characterisation of Japan is still alive and well, with Japan "making lame excuses to fuel an arms race", suggesting a deliberate intent, and a previous article stating that the defence white paper "is full of stereotypes and lies" (People's Daily, 2018)A few months later, in the context of the visit by Prime Minister Abe, China Daily published an article calling a "new chapter" for bilateral relations, which included an excerpts calling the discussions between the two leaders a show of "shared stance", the visit being "steady steps", shelving their differences and contributing to regional peace, and generally showing a more positive attitude, and this shift seems to have had some momentum of its own: Chinese news on Japanese military activity is often emotionally charged, as it was shown, but in the case of those covering the plans to upgrade the Japanese helicopter carrier Izumo to be able to carry F-35Bs, among others, in the context of new defence guidelines, it was more neutral in tone, explaining that, while drawing criticism from experts, the Japanese government has justified its choice and assured that it was not a choice meant to acquire attack capability, in the respect of the pacifist constitution, and the newspaper legitimises the move as an appeasement to a concerned public at home, rather than a design to justify a

dangerous accumulation of capability that is reminiscent of Japan's militaristic past. The only negative remark about the situation is in the last two lines of the article, regarding the Japanese decision to install Aegis Ashore Ballistic Missile Defence systems, which the article simply calls "missile systems" and an acquisition "that has caused public uproar and major concerns among Japan's neighbors" (People's Daily, 2018). While it cannot be expected that China, which has always been concerned about the survivability of its nuclear deterrent, would be willing to let slide decisions that would tip the strategic balance in its disfavour so early in the context of this rapprochement, it is again interesting to note that such a register would have hardly been used in the previous year, were such a decision to be taken. In the case of the abovementioned discussion over the THAAD systems in Japan, China could not avoid citing Japan's past as a cause of concern, whereas no generalisation (or naturalisation, depending on how one decides to interpret this statement) of the sort happened here. Finally, in December 2018, the two countries activated the maritime and air liaison system, meant to help in the handling of violation of territorial water and airspace; even in this case, the article is very neutral in tone, only reporting the statements made by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hua and without characterising Japan's action in any way, which is something that was routinely done when covering the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute.

From the articles and statements taken into exam, it seems that the cooperation, at least in the initial stages, has had some positive effects on the construction of the Japanese "Other" in China. While, especially in 2017, concerns were still raised, a progressively softer tone was used to refer to Japan, coming to the almost neutral one in the coverage of news in 2018. Unfortunately, going on this attitude seems to have reversed, as for example more recent articles return to a more emotionally charged

register (see for example the China Daily editorial “Unwise for Japan to be U.S. puppet in Asia”, 2021, which despite the negative title referred to Japan in a respectful manner in the body of the article, saying that China hopes that Japan, as an “independent country”, is able to look at China’s development in an “objective and rational way”), but that can also be seen in the context of the cooperation grinding to a halt. Not only that, but the Chinese government has been also more careful in stoking anti-Japanese nationalism, as reported by Reuters (2021), which can be considered a more lasting effect of the TPMC on the relations between the two.

2.3.2.2 - Construction of the Chinese “Other” in Japanese discourse

Have these steps been met by the Japanese counterpart? Starting with the defence white papers, China is still identified as a threat, with no significant changes to the construction of the previous white papers analysed in this thesis. The 2017 white paper still sees China as acting unilaterally in the South China Sea, unlawfully restricting freedom of overflight and navigation, endangering the other actors involved in activities in the sea, intruding Japan’s territorial waters, stating that China is a “serious security concern for the region encompassing Japan” and for the international community at large (Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2017). Concerns over the lack of transparency have been made as well. The danger posed to Japan is existential, as the white paper states that ensuring secure vital lanes is “vital for the survival of the nation”. The following year’s edition makes the threat even clearer, stating for the first time that a Chinese military vessel has entered the Senkaku territorial waters in 2016, with repeated instances in 2018 (Ministry of Defence, Japan, 2018). This behaviour is framed as dangerous and intended. They generalised as being “an attempt to change the status quo unilaterally using force and escalate the situation one-sidedly.”, as well as being a cause of serious concern for Japan. Further instances of China being defiant of

international norms are included, for example in the decision of China not to follow the 2016 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, insisting on a claimed historical right to the area encompassed by the Nine-Dash Line. The 2018 paper insists on the importance of secure sea lanes for the survival of the nation, continuing the framing of the behaviour of China in the East China Sea and South China Sea as vital, but also mentions the new mechanisms of communication between China and Japan that should avert this situation in the future, as long as all the actors involved refrain from unilateral acts. Coming from the Ministry of Defence it does not surprise that the outlook is overall negative, so let us move to the Prime Minister Office perception of China after the decision to engage in the TMPC. On this side, the situation does not seem to have changed in an appreciable manner, excluding instances of public diplomacy. In a 2017 conference about the Chinese state television criticising circumvention of ban on imported food from Japan, due to the concerns over the nuclear incident in Fukushima, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented that Japan was already tackling the issue by sharing information with China and releasing fact-checking statements, and when later asked whether Japan would take action against China, he did not add anything to the previous statement (Prime Minister Office, Japan, 2017). In a later conference, when asked about the ruling of the Permanent Arbitration Court in 2016 regarding the dispute in the South China Sea, decided in favour of the Philippines, and how Japan intends to engage with China, who is still refusing to comply with the decision, Mr. Suga first avoided mentioning China directly, and when asked directly by the journalist about China, he still refrained, limiting to a statement about the need for all parties involved to pursue the demilitarisation of the contested features, and that the government will cooperate with the parties involved to ensure the rule of law (Prime Minister Office, Japan, 2017). In a later conference,

he maintained a neutral stance on the new leadership of Xi Jinping, stating that Japan will continue to seek cooperation and improvement in bilateral relationship, avoiding further comments. When asked about the Senkaku Islands and how the stronger power base in China could lead to a more assertive China, he showed a less confrontational stance, limiting to note the fact that the Senkaku are under Japanese effective control and legally Japanese, and that the Japanese government would continue to exert this control in a firm and calm manner, completely avoiding mentioning China (Prime Minister Office, Japan, 2017), which is a noticeable change from the previous stance. Similar comments have been made in regard to the summit between China and the DPRK, in which the former is simply considered another partner among the international community with which Japan has cooperated to put pressure on the latter, without qualifying China in any particularly negative or positive way (Prime Minister Office, Japan, 2018). The most significant statements were, again, made in occasions of public diplomacy, such as when Prime Minister Abe warmly welcomed the participants to the China-Japan CEO Summit of 2017, stressing the “inseparable” relation that the two countries shared, and drew parallels between the two most important Prime Ministers who have worked to improve normalisation of relations with China, Fukuda Takeo and Tanaka Kakuei (Prime Minister Office, 2017), or when visiting China in 2018 vowed to improve significantly relations, and stated that “Japan and China are neighbors and partners. We will not become a threat of each other” (sic) (Kyodo news, 2018).

After signing the MoU with China, Japan seems to be still concerned about China, although the stance is less confrontational on delicate issues, and in general more careful about the impact on bilateral relation, while not showing significant improvements in the construction of the Chinese “Other”. Strategies of generalisation

and dramatization, and in general a securitising discourse have still been employed by the security apparatus, while desecuritisation has only happened in bilateral meetings or summits.

What can be taken from this analysis is that, while there has been some improvement in the perception of the Other in the two countries, following the signature of the MoU on the TMPC, these changes have been more in the direction of a less negative depiction, moving towards more neutral tones, with just slightly more positive one in Chinese discourse, with some positive effects carried onwards such as the defence of cultural links with Japan.

2.4 - Control factors

To further control the validity of the findings, I chose to compare it with a few more factors, such as the number of Japanese tourists travelling to Japan, cultural initiatives, which are included in Press-Barnathan's framework as possible indicators of civil society involvement in the peace process, with critical effects on its success (2009) results of polls on the popular image of both countries, and ASEAN hedging, a feature of the competition between the two in the region.

As far as the number of Japanese tourists is concerned, there has been an increase, but it is still far from the boom experienced in the early 2010s, and the growth itself has started between 2015 and 2016, so little too early to ascribe it to the positive effect of the TMPC. Furthermore, the rate of growth was actually contracting in the later period, going from the 2,5 million to 2,57 million of the 2015-2016 period, to 2,57 million to 2,68 million of 2016-2017, to then significantly contract to just 2,68 million to 2,69 million in the 2017-2018. An increase in cultural initiative and exchanges, even though Prime Minister Abe vowed to expand them, did happen in

the 2017-2018, although slight and of limited relevance, (see for example ...). Mutual perception among the population seems to have increased, according to the poll included in Wu's 2021 article "Can Pop Culture Allay Resentment? Japan's Influence in China Today". However, even in this case the growing trend actually started before the MoU between China and Japan, so it is not possible to ascribe it to it. In China the growing trend started even in 2013, three years before Japan and during what were tense times for bilateral relations, and as of 2019 the gap between positive and negative respondents is much lower in China than in Japan (Wu, 2021), which could be a consequence of Japan's more lukewarm tone. Finally, even hedging in ASEAN seems not to have had any significant change, as articles can be found in the literature studying this phenomenon well in the 2020s, for example by Tan (2020) (Tan, 2020) and Gerstl (2020) (Gerstl, 2020)

3 - Conclusions

The decision from the P.R.C. and Japan to join efforts in the context of the Third-Party Market Cooperation initially looked promising for their bilateral relations. I held that the contingency of the Japanese recession and the fear of abandonment by the U.S. could not have been enough to push two former enemies to reach such an agreement. My hypothesis was that this was the first step in the process to reach a full “normalisation” of relations, in the sense that the prospect of military confrontation between the two countries not only would be unlikely but unthinkable, such as the case of the members of the EU or, closer to the case at hand, that between Japan and the Republic of Korea. The TPMC is an initiative of great importance for both Japan and the P.R.C., as it also brought advantages to both Japan and China in different fields; in the case of Japan, it would better connect the stages of the production chains set in Southeast Asia by Japanese companies, would relieve pressure from the economy, and better ensure the presence of Japan in the ASEAN market, which recently has been taken over by China and with an EU looking more and more threatening to Japanese market shares. It would also help Japan in promoting quality infrastructure in the region, ultimately benefitting the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), while avoiding duplication of efforts between Japan and China, given the complementarity between the economies of the two countries. For China, on the other hand, the success of the TPMC ultimately meant the success of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of extreme importance for China in different ways, by providing outlets for the Chinese economy, suffering from overcapacity, offering occasions of development for the peripheral regions, which have historically been left behind by the coastal belt in several metrics. The development of peripheries is not a goal pursued for its own sake, but has other

crucial consequences domestically: wealthier peripheries would be less likely to concern the Chinese government with revolts, calls for autonomy or even independence (as is the case, for example of Xinjiang, also known as East Turkestan or Uyghuristan, and to a lesser extent Inner Mongolia, which tried to resist attempts by the central government to culturally homogenise it to the rest of the country), and better infrastructure in the peripheries, another result of the BRI, would also allow swifter deployment of personnel to unstable areas in the countries; finally, it reinforces the claim to legitimacy of the government, by showing that it is keeping its promise to the people of prosperity and the “Chinese dream”. The TPMC not only is a key initiative for the support of the BRI for its material success, but it’s also, in a smaller measure, important in terms of improving the Chinese image to the rest of the international community, which has accused it in multiple occasions to “play dirty” with its so-called debt-trap diplomacy towards countries involved in the BRI; with the TPMC, China tried to involve developed countries in the larger initiative, not only benefitting of their *savoir-faire* but also demonstrating to be a dependable partner, and steps in this direction such as the acceptance in 2019 of the principle of transparency and sustainability of the infrastructure seem to corroborate this. When inspecting the partnership under the lenses of peace studies, more precisely those of Press-Barnathan’s theory, it seemed that the TPMC had the potential to be a milestone in the development of Sino-Japanese relations. It did have, with very few doubts enjoy solid support in the relevant actors in the P.R.C., these being the central government, which originally developed the scheme and the BRI, so it is not a surprise, and the business sector; in China, this sector has characteristics that served to ensure the support to the initiatives of the government, such as the fragmentation of entrepreneurs, which would reduce the chances of them

understanding themselves as a group with common interests and goals and coordinate effort and resources to lobby the government; the presence of members of the Chinese Communist Party in the administration of firms, or managers who are rotated between administrative positions in firms and posts in governmental agencies to further homogenise the abovementioned interests and goals of these with the government. Furthermore, the strong financial support offered by Chinese institutions means also that Chinese firms are much less concerned with the profitability of the projects themselves, something which cannot be said for the Japanese counterparts. On the Japanese side of the partnership, the Japanese government was initially sceptic, choosing to initially observe, and stressing the concerns about transparency and debt sustainability of the proposed projects; it was the business sector who was initially the most supportive of the cooperation, in light of the conditions of the Japanese economy I have mentioned earlier. In Japan, contrary to China, the instruments that tie industrial sectors, firms, and the government together allow a bilateral flow of influences. *Zaikai*, the most important of these, are associations that federate the upper sectors of the Japanese economy, and have several ways of contacting the government, most importantly by participating in committees and hearing for the Diet and ministries, submitting their position on economic issues through their position papers. Sectorial associations and business federations also have historical ties to the LDP, having provided donations to the party during the Cold War to ensure business-friendly policies, and some such as Japan's Association for the Promotion of International Trade, and Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) have been actively involved with the promotion of the TPMC. It is partially thanks to this support and these instruments that the Japanese government finally decided to join China in Southeast Asia. The

next step was to measure the economic disparities between the two countries, and the result was that, according to several indicators, there were not significant disparities; they are the top economies both in Asia and in the world, and major trade partners, with little (relative) difference in terms of exported and imported value, and the trade dependency index of Japan to China is comparable with that of other countries such as ASEAN. The only parameter in which Japan performs significantly worse is the market share in ASEAN, but that in turn could be more of an incentive to engage with the region without drawing too much of its own resources. Economic disparities could hamper the process of normalisation in promoting narratives of victimhood by the weaker party and frustrating the population, as was the case for the transition between Japan and ROK; economic disparities also instil fear in the weaker party of dependence and undue influence in domestic affairs through economic leveraging, but this is clearly not the case here. Finally, the role of the third party is absolved by ASEAN, which not only hosts the infrastructure projects and provide substantially economic benefits to the two countries, in the forms of better connected markets and production chains, but it also provides another institutional setting in which Japan and China could settle eventual controversies: although Press-Barnathan herself admits that the role of the third party is not necessarily always productive to the peace transition, she points out that these factors, the capacity of providing benefits (which could be both material or political), and the settling of controversies increase the likelihood of the transition to succeed. Thus, while it did meet the requirements set by Press-Barnathan, it is not enough for the purpose of this thesis, and the following step is to analyse official discourse in China and Japan and gauge how the construction and representation of the other has changed before and after the signature of the memorandum of understanding that

marked the beginning of the partnership. I have done this by comparing the frequencies at which discursive strategies of legitimisation, reification, positioning, generalisation and dramatization are used in official discourse, mainly found in official statements, press releases, position papers and similar for Japan, while I have concentrated more on news for China, as it provides a far bigger source of documents and, unlike Japan, being the information controlled centrally it reflects the official discourse. The finding was that the construction of the Other was negative in both cases, making wide use of generalisation in a securitising way, framing the Other as either violating international norms (in the case of Japan), or being animated by revanchism (for China). In the case of China, there was also a more marked use of victimisation compared to Japan, referencing often the loss China had to endure during the Japanese invasion and in general the experience of the war, identifying in Japan an irresponsible culprit who fails to properly amend for its misdeeds and to learn from history. In the case of Japan victimisation was more often tied to territorial issues, in which Japan saw its sovereignty violated by an assertive China. Both discourses were staunchly securitising. After the signature of the memorandum of understanding, the only notable consequences were the decrease of markedly securitising strategies and outspoken tones, although some negative characterisations still remained (e.g., China referring to the Japanese Defence White Paper as “full of lies”), recurring mainly to victimisation but dropping, at least for the period, the references to Japan’s past. On the other hand, these changes are even less appreciable in Japan, where the Defence Papers still identified China as a threat, and the attitude of the government appeared wary towards China, while avoiding negative characterisation in public declarations, and limiting positive ones only on occasions of public diplomacy. It would then seem that

the TPMC has failed to make a solid impact. The cooperation eventually grinded to a halt, and even as far as the discursive indicators go, China turned to more abrasive tones when speaking of Japan (the “puppet of the U.S.”, although the fact that this time Japan seems to have been characterised with moral agency might be a more lasting consequences of the partnership). Not only that, but also the control factors confirm the little to no impact of the initiative on bilateral relations, with indicators such as influx of tourist by the counterpart, mutual perception as measured by opinion polls, cultural exchange and ASEAN hedging progressing on trends that have started before the memorandum of understanding has been signed. There are probably different reasons that led to this outcome, the main one being that identified by the majority of the literature on the matter: Japanese enterprises quickly lost interest in the opportunity, due to concerns about the profitability of the projects that were not properly addressed. Another important cause was the fact that it remained an initiative between governments; while Press-Barnathan concentrates more on the peace process rather than the normalisation, she still argues that interaction between societies is fundamental for the normalisation of relations, because they will allow to break negative preconception and create new bonds of familiarity and friendship. While opinion polls may look encouraging in this prospect, there is still work to be done. The COVID epidemic may have also contributed to the isolation of the two societies, as well as the falling out of the cooperation between businesses. However, at least at the discursive level, it seems that there has been some progress, suggesting that maybe, were the partnership to have continued, more appreciable effects could have emerged, and instead its falling out might have cause the return to more negative constructions. I hope the results can encourage further

application of Press-Barnathan framework, and underappreciated one combining liberalism with peace studies, in the study of bilateral relations in Asia.

4 - Bibliography

- Anwar, A. (2020). South Asia and China's belt and road initiative: security implications and ways forward. In A. L. Vulving, *Hindsight, insight, foresight, thinking about security in the Indo-Pacific* (pp. 161-178). Honolulu: Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.
- Barclay, K., & Koh, S.-H. (2008). Neo-liberal reforms in Japan's tuna fisheries? A history of government-business relations in a food-producing sector. *Japan Forum*, 139-170.
- Beckman, R., Schofield, C., Townsend-Gault, I., Davenport, T., & Bernard, L. (2013). Factors conducive to joint development in Asia—lessons learned for the South China Sea. In R. Beckman, C. Schofield, I. Townsend-Gault, T. Davenport, & L. Bernard, *Beyond Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea*.
- Boon, H. T. (2017). Anatomy of a Rivalry: China and Japan in Southeast Asia. In S. Ganguly, A. Scobell, & C. J. Liow, *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Security Studies* (pp. 345-356). London: Routledge.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2022, May 13). *China - The World Factbook*. Retrieved from The World Factbook - CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/#introduction>
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2022, May 16). *Japan - The World Factbook*. Retrieved from The World Factbook - CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/japan/#economy>

Central Intelligence Agency. (2022, May 16). *United States - The World Factbook*.

Retrieved from The World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/united-states/#introduction>

Chan, M. (2012). The discursive reproduction of ideologies and national identities in the Chinese and Japanese English-language press. *Discourse & Communication*, 361-378.

China Daily. (2014, July 07). *Xi commemorates start of War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression*. Retrieved from China Daily:

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-07/07/content_17652881.htm

China Daily. (2021, April 08). *Unwise for Japan to be US puppet in Asia*. Retrieved from China Daily:

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202104/08/WS606eb208a31024ad0bab445b.html>

China.org.cn. (2014, July 6). *77 years on, Japan still fails to introspect*. Retrieved

from China.org.cn: http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2014-07/06/content_32875626.htm

China.org.cn. (2014, July 08). *Japan must face up to past*. Retrieved from

China.org.cn: http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2014-07/08/content_32886866.htm

Gerstl, A. (2020). Malaysia's Hedging Strategy Towards China Under Mahathir

Mohamad (2018–2020): Direct Engagement, Limited Balancing, and Limited Bandwagoning. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 106-131.

- Hagström, L., & Hassen, U. (2016). War is peace: the rearticulation of 'peace' in Japan's China discourse. *Review of International Studies*, 266-286.
- Hosokawa, R., & Takeuchi, Y. (2021, April 16). EU and China tussle for clout in Montenegro over road project. *Nikkei Asia*.
- Hu, Y. (2019). Tangled, Hesitated and Joining: Japan's Strategic Orientation under the "Belt and Road" Initiative. *2019 International Conference on Emerging Researches in Management, Business, Finance and Economics (ERMBFE 2019)*, (pp. 38-49).
- Insisa, A., & Pugliese, G. (2020). The free and open Indo-Pacific versus the belt and road: spheres of influence and Sino-Japanese relations. *The Pacific Review*, 1-29.
- International Monetary Fund. (2022, April). *World Economic Outlook (April 2022) - GDP, current prices*. Retrieved from IMF Datamapper: <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>
- Jialu, Y. (2020). Analysis of Sino-Japan Cooperation under the framework of The Belt and Road: Development Course and Motivation. *The Frontiers of Society, Science and Technology*, 2(14)., 124-132.
- Koo, M. G. (2009). The Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute and Sino-Japanese political-economic relations: cold politics and hot economics? *The Pacific Review*, 205-232.

Koschut, S., Hall, T. H., Wolf, R., Solomon, T., Hutchison, E., & Bleiker, R. (2017).

Discourse and Emotions in International Relations. *International Studies Review*, 481-508.

Kyodo news. (2018, October 27). *Japan, China vow to promote new economic cooperation amid trade war*. Retrieved from Kyodo News:

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2018/10/646e04aecb99-update2-japan-china-agree-to-boost-economic-cooperation-amid-trade-war.html>

Lams, L. (2017). Othering in Chinese official media narratives during diplomatic standoffs with the US and Japan. *Palgrave Communications*, 1-11.

Ministry of Defence, Japan. (2014). *Publications | DEFENSE OF JAPAN 2014*.

Retrieved from Ministry of Defense:

https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2014/DOJ2014_Digest_part1_web_1031.pdf

Ministry of Defence, Japan. (2015). *Publications | DEFENSE OF JAPAN 2015*.

Retrieved from Ministry of Defense:

https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2015/DOJ2015_1-1-0_web.pdf

Ministry of Defence, Japan. (2016). *Publications | DEFENCE OF JAPAN 2016*.

Retrieved from Ministry of Defense:

https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2016/DOJ2016_1-1-1_web.pdf

Ministry of Defence, Japan. (2017). *PUBLICATIONS | Defense of Japan 2017*.

Retrieved from Ministry of Defense:

https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2017.html

Ministry of Defence, Japan. (2018). *PUBLICATIONS | Defense of Japan 2018*.

Retrieved from Ministry of Defense:

https://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11591426/www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2018.html

Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, Japan. (2018, October 24). *First Japan-China Forum on Third Party Market Cooperation To Be Held*. Retrieved from METI: https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2018/1024_003.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China. (2017, August 09). *Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Remarks on Japan's New Defense White Paper*. Retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/201708/t20170809_696838.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China. (2017, February 03). *Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Remarks*. Retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/201703/t20170309_696793.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. (2013, February 7). *Position Paper: Japan-China Relations Surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands -In response to China's Weapons-guiding Radar Lock-on*. Retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/position_paper3_en.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. (2013, February 8). *Protest lodged by Mr. Chikao Kawai, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, to H.E. Cheng Yonghua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Japan*. Retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2013/2/0208_02.html

Pascha, W. (2020). The quest for infrastructure development from a "market development" perspective: China's "Belt and Road", Japan's "Quality Infrastructure", and the EU's "Connecting Europe and Asia". *International Economics and Economic Policy*, 688-704.

People's Daily. (2014, July 7). *Japan frays nerves of neighboring countries*. Retrieved from People's Daily Online:
<http://en.people.cn/n/2014/0707/c90780-8751801.html>

People's Daily. (2016, November 17). *China urges Japan not to stir up troubles on South China Sea issue*. Retrieved from People's Daily Online:
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/1117/c90000-9143266.html>

People's Daily. (2016, November 28). *China urges Japan to act prudently in military field*. Retrieved from People's Daily Online:
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/1128/c90000-9148020.html>

People's Daily. (2018, August 30). *Commentary: Japan needs more efforts to better ties with China, contribute to regional peace*. Retrieved from People's Daily Online: <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0830/c90000-9495602.html>

People's Daily. (2018, December 19). *Japan approves new defense guidelines amid controversies, opposition*. Retrieved from People's Daily Online:
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/1219/c90000-9529902.html>

Peoples' Daily. (2018, August 09). *Japan urged to remember its atrocities in WWII, as Nagasaki marks 73rd anniversary of atomic bombing by U.S.* Retrieved from People's Daily Online: <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0809/c90000-9489314.html>

People's Daily. (2018, August 29). *Japan's defense white paper hypes up regional threat.* Retrieved from People's Daily Online: <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0829/c90000-9495052.html>

Polachek, S., Seiglie, C., & Xiang, J. (Defence and Peace Economics). The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on International Conflict. 2007, 415-429.

Press-Barnathan, G. (2006). The Neglected Dimension of Commercial Liberalism: Economic Cooperation and Transition to Peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 261-278.

Press-Barnathan, G. (2009). *The Political Economy of Transitions to Peace: A Comparative Perspective*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Prime Minister Office. (2017, December 4). *Welcome Reception for the Third Japan-China Business Leader and Former High-Level Government Official Dialogue (Japan-China CEO Summit)*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/201712/4article4.html

Prime Minister Office, Japan. (2015, March 4). *Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201503/4_p.html

- Prime Minister Office, Japan. (2016, March 18). *Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201603/8_p.html
- Prime Minister Office, Japan. (2017, July 12). *Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201707/12_p.html
- Prime Minister Office, Japan. (2017, July 12). *Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201707/12_p.html
- Prime Minister Office, Japan. (2017, March 21). *Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201703/21_p.html
- Prime Minister Office, Japan. (2018, March 28). *Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary*. Retrieved from Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201803/28_a.html
- Ren, X. (2019). *REN, XThe status quo and trends of sinojapanese economic and trade cooperation under the belt and road initiative*. Retrieved from https://ir.kneu.edu.ua/bitstream/handle/2010/31541/ZE_2019_177.pdf?sequence=1
- Reuters. (2021, June 9). *China defends cultural links with Japan amid online nationalist fury*. Retrieved from Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-defends-cultural-links-with-japan-amid-online-nationalist-fury-2021-06-09/>

- Sato, Y. (2021). Industrial Policies, the East Asian Miracle, and Regional Integration After The 2008 Global Financial Crisis. In M. Kolmaš, & Y. Sato, *Identity, Culture, and Memory in Japanese Foreign Policy* (pp. 85-102). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Singh, B. (2021). Japan's responses to China's Rise: Soft Balancing in Southeast Asia. *Asian Security*.
- Sinkkonen, E. (2019). The more the merrier? Sino-Japanese security relations in the context of complex interstate rivalry in the Asia-Pacific region. *The Pacific Review*, 748-777.
- Su, E., Xue, J., & Xu, Y. (2020). Third-Party Market Cooperation between China and Japan in ASEAN under "the Belt and Road" Initiative: Background, Opportunities and Challenges. *Annual review of economics*.
- Tan, S. S. (2020). Consigned to hedge: south-east Asia and America's 'free and open Indo-Pacific' strategy. *International Affairs*, 131-148.
- The Guardian. (2015, April 30). *China and South Korea criticise Japanese prime minister's speech in US*. Retrieved from The Guardian:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/30/china-and-south-korea-criticise-japanese-prime-ministers-speech-in-us>
- The Guardian. (2021, August 20). *Protests in Pakistan erupt against China's belt and road plan*. Retrieved from The Guardian:
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/20/water-protests-in-pakistan-erupt-against-chinas-belt-and-road-plan>

- The Observatory of Economic Complexity. (2022). *China (CHN) and Japan (JPN) Trade*. Retrieved from The Observatory of Economic Complexity:
<https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/chn/partner/jpn>
- To, C. (2022, February 17). *ASEAN: Market Profile*. Retrieved from HKTDC Research: <https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/Mzk5MzcxNjEz>
- Trčková, D. (2014). *Representations of natural catastrophes in newspaper discourse*. Brno: Masarikova Univerzita.
- Umirdinov, A. (2019). *Generating a Reform of the BRI from the Inside: Japan's Contribution via Soft Law Diplomacy*. Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry.
- WITS. (2022). *Japan trade balance, exports, imports by country and region 2018*. Retrieved from WITS - World Integrated Trade Solutions:
<https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/JPN/Year/2018/TradeFlow/EXPIMP>
- World Bank. (2022). *GDP (Current US\$) - Japan China*. Retrieved from World Bank Data: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=JP-CN>
- Wu, Y. (2021). Can Pop Culture Allay Resentment? Japan's Influence in China Today. *Media and Communication*, 112-122.
- Xinhua news agency. (2015, May 05). *Abe's US visit jeopardizes regional peace, shadows ties with neighbors*. Retrieved from Xinhua news agency:
http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2015-05/05/c_127766738.htm

- Yosimatu, H. (1997). Business-Government Relations in Japan: the influence of business on policy-making through two routes. *Asian Perspective*, 119-146.
- Zhang, M. (2021). Sino-Japanese “Third-market” Cooperation: Policy Challenges and Case Studies in Southeast Asia. *Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 81-106.
- Zhang, Y. (2019). Third-party market cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative: progress, challenges, and recommendations. *China International Strategy Review*, 310-329.
- Zhao, H. (2018). *Chinese and Japanese infrastructure investment in Southeast Asia: from rivalry to cooperation*. Retrieved from URL: [https://www. ide. go. jp/English/Publish/Download/Dp/689. html](https://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Dp/689.html)
- Zhu, T. (2015). International Context and China's government-business relations. *Economic and Political Studies*, 3-29.