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Dilemma of Openness: Societal Pressure in China's Foreign Policy Making

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ABSTRACTS: The paper examines the increasing influence of various domestic factors such as academics, media, and public opinion within the context of newly developed internet technology, on the foreign policy making of the People's Republic of China in the last decade. The basic research questions of this study are: Has there been an emergence of societal forces, independent of the Communist Party, that have begun to exert influence over the foreign policy making process? If so, how is it affecting the ability of Chinese government to frame and implement foreign policies? It argues that due to an open door policy and the increasing development of information technology, China's hierarchical, elite-driven foreign policy making structure has experienced profound changes; these changes, which are characterized with decentralization, professionalization and institutionalization, have created opportunities for societal forces to influence the decision making process. It suggests that globalization has produced a certain amount of transnational forces within Chinese society, and the degree of its influence depends on how the public is informed and manipulated and the degree of the country's integration with the world. When the public has more access to information about the outside world and internal development, the societal pressure influencing foreign policy behavior becomes more visible.

KEYWORDS: Chinese Foreign Policy, Societal Forces, Chinese Civil Society and Social Factors in Chinese foreign Policy

The spring of 2005 was quite turbulent in China-Japan relations. Along with the issues of Security Council bid, the history textbook, and gas exploration in disputed waters, Japan stated on the Chinese Lunar New Year that the Senkaku Islands were officially Japanese. In February, Japan and the US declared a closer military bond. After another visit by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where convicted Class-A war criminals are honored along with other Japanese war dead, the bilateral relations plunged to their lowest point since 1972, when a nationwide anti-Japanese riots erupted in China. Angry Chinese protesters marched at the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, throwing eggs and rocks protesting against school textbooks they say whitewash Japanese wartime atrocities in China, and against Tokyo's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and against Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine. After a week of violent protests against Japan in Beijing, thousands marched on the Japanese consulate in Shanghai, smashing its windows with rocks, pelting it with paint bombs and attacking Japanese restaurants along the way. Protest spread to several large cities in the south, as Chinese massed outside Japanese stores and consulates, calling for a boycott of Japanese products and demanding that Japan own up to war crimes of 60 years ago. The rising anti-Japanese sentiments within Chinese society have made it more difficulty for the Beijing leadership when making their policies towards the Tokyo. Chinese government became tougher towards Tokyo and publicly registered its objection to Japan's bid to UN Security Council. Meanwhile, Chinese government began to clamp down harder to keep the capital peaceful before Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura's visit. University students were warned by email not to protest. Top anti-Japanese activists in Beijing were rounded up to prevent further protests. China even began to control media coverage of Sino-Japanese relations and had cancelled a few academic conferences and workshops related to Japan.

Why did the Chinese leadership decide to take a tough stand toward Japan at the time China is trying to show to the world its peaceful intention of rising up? At the same time, what made the Chinese leaders try continually to maintain relations with Tokyo, not hurting 178 billion dollars in annual trade between the two economic powers?

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What happened in the spring of 2005 seems to illustrate a long overlooked element affecting Chinese foreign policy making: the influence of social forces. Since 1949, Chinese foreign policy has been traditionally viewed as highly centralized, dominated by a few powerful, personalized seniors acting free from domestic public pressure. Never before has Chinese leadership considered the interests and opinions of various domestic political constituencies. What happened in 2005 in China's policy towards Japan seems to illustrate an interesting change. Beijing leadership had to accommodate domestic outcry in the wake of the certain external events, even though they wished to maintain and continue to improve Sino-Japanese relations. The moment may have arrived in China when policy makers cannot create policy initiatives without a serious consideration of public opinion, and support within the bureaucratic apparatus. This may represent a gradual but significant shift from the Communist Party's centralized control over China's foreign policy making, relatively free of social pressure, to a new pattern characterized by increasing domestic restraints.

Traditional Approach to the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy

The study of Chinese foreign policy has traditionally received less attention from the academic community than the study of Chinese domestic politics and remained relatively undeveloped until the 1980s. This is partly due to the tightly-control by the Chinese government, partly due to training of early China Watches in the West, partly because of the uncertain role of comparative foreign policy in the field of political science, and to a certain extent, because of a lack of conceptual methodology in the study of Chinese foreign policy.¹

In the West, the early study of Chinese foreign policy was based on the state-centric assumption of a traditional realist approach to the study of international politics. China's foreign policy was treated as the product of a rational, unitary state pursuing and maximizing its national interests under the constraints imposed by the external environment. Several studies focused on the domestic politics of Chinese policy toward

the United States and the former Soviet Union, arguing that the outcome of political struggles among the Chinese ruling elite fundamentally affects China's strategic postures and policy preferences. (Gutove and Harding 1971, Zogoria 1967, Whiting 1979, Lieberthal 1978, Garver, 1980). Some studied the domestic politics of Chinese foreign policy emphasizing its relationship to China's international position (Goldwin 1984, Ross 1989); others focused on domestic political events and their relationship to foreign policy behavior (Whiting 1970). The early study of Chinese foreign policy mirrored the larger domestic-international linkage debate, emphasizing the importance of factions within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party to the policy making process. ²

Since the death of Mao in 1976, Chinese foreign policy has undergone significant changes. It has become less personal, radical, and ideological, and increasingly pragmatic and sophisticated. China's national interests are more specifically defined, and the pursuit of those interests has become more realistic and flexible. The new sources of information that became available in the 1980s have triggered a more vigorous and diverse generation of the study of Chinese foreign policy. Since the Chinese foreign policy has been elite-driven and free from public scrutiny, most attention before the mid 1990s was focused on attempting to reveal the "black box" of the Chinese foreign policy process. The research still relied on the sovereign state-centered approach, but it had a special emphasis on the foreign policy making structure, processes, and bureaucratic politics. A. Doak Barnett's ground-breaking work of 1984 revealed the role of various domestic institutions and their interaction within China's foreign policy making process (Barnett 1984). David Shambaugh has also examined, through in-depth interviews of scholars and officials, the Chinese foreign policy bureaucracy and foreign policy analysts at various institutions regarding their perception and approaches to international affairs and the United States. (Shambaugh, 1989) Others also attempt to understand Chinese foreign policy making institutions, structure and processes from various perspectives (Lu 1997, Swaine 1998, Hamril and Zhao 1995). Some have also tried to provide a deeper understanding of the policy making system, its relationship to the external environment and domestic politics, and the reasons behind decisions in major policy issues (Hao and Huan 1989, Robinson and Shambaugh 1993, Christensen 1996, Nathan and Ross 1997, Johnston 1996, and Whiting

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1995, Zhao 1996), all of which provide useful information and understanding but do not pay enough attention to domestic constraints.

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in literature concerning the relationship between domestic politics and China's external behavior. More efforts were made to explore the role of various domestic factors in the Chinese foreign policy process in the age of globalization. This domestic-centered approach, however, still emphasizes ideological preferences, objectives of key players and their factional politics, and bureaucratic cleavages as an extension of domestic politics. (Christensen, 1997, Whiting, 1995) Only recently has attention been given in David Lampton's ground-breaking work on China's foreign and security policy, to social factors that have long been held as insignificant such as public opinion, media, think tanks and other social forces (Lampton, 2001). Scholars are beginning to recognize that Beijing leaders are under increasing social pressure when making their foreign policies. The complexity of the leaders' responses to social pressure however, remains largely unknown.

Structural Changes in Chinese Foreign Policy Making

The Chinese foreign policy making structure is currently undergoing several interesting and simultaneous changes such as pluralization, decentralization, institutionalization, and professionalization (Lampton 2001). In terms of pluralization, the number and variety of actors involved in decision-making has expanded rapidly and now includes non-government (or quasi-government) actors. China's growing economic, political and military interaction with the world has created a situation in which many ministries at the national level, most of the Chinese provinces, and many large military and civilian corporations are engaged in foreign affairs through their direct dealings with other countries. Foreign policy is no longer the domain of ministries of foreign affairs, defense and national security, and heads of government. It has begun to include ministries dealing with industry, commerce, trade, agriculture, and banking, to name only some of

the more observable. The policy making process has thus become much more fragmented and decentralized with an increasing number of agencies becoming active players.

The media and think tanks in China have assumed increasing influence on the foreign policy process. The distribution of information is no longer limited to ranking officials in the hierarchy. Consequently, media sources have begun to shape and influence public opinion and support for government policies. The internet has allowed rising numbers of Chinese to gain access to the global media, influencing the way the Chinese decision makers formulate their foreign policy in a changing social environment.

Although the government has recently attempted to censor internet material, technological innovation has made it possible for many Chinese to breach governmental controls.

Meanwhile, many academics have been consulted by local TV and radio talk shows and have written for local newspapers, resulting in more informed and less biased reporting. Even governmental officials rely more and more on the opinions of non-government experts. Although Chinese think tanks have not reached the level of independence and influence of their American counterparts, their new roles challenge the monopoly of the government in conducting foreign policy.

In terms of institutionalization, various inter-agency organizations have been set up in recent years to shift power and influence from individuals to institutions involved in foreign policy making. Some formerly symbolic institutions such as the National People's Congress have started to assume a greater role in Chinese foreign affairs (Ken O'Brian 1999). Also, horizontal linkage between institutions in the Chinese foreign policy community, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Trade, and various agencies of national security and the military, has enhanced policy coordination and consensus building in the process.

In addition, there has been a growing trend of professionalization in China's foreign policy-making apparatus. Many mid-level officials have received extensive training in both international affairs and foreign languages at China's top universities. They have an international-oriented outlook and are generally supportive of China's integration into the

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world. The decision makers are increasingly reliant on the information provided by specialized bureaucracies.

The growing influence of the local authorities also warrants attention. In an effort to win local support for the goals of reform, the central government has, since the 1980s, increased the local governments' ability to decide how to subsidize export and allocate foreign exchange. The substantial revenue and industrial capacity of the coastal regions, as a result of export and influx of foreign investment, created strong incentives for these regions to support China's integration into the world economy. This trend also provided these areas with a source of independence from the central government (Pearson 1999). Thus, following more than two decades of outward-oriented reform and development, more Chinese have preferred foreign trade to domestic. This has profound policy implications, particularly when the central government's policy is in potential conflict with regional economic interests. Local Chinese leaders are more likely than before to exert pressure to protect their interests.

Societal variable in understanding Chinese foreign policy

It is within this context of this changing environment that I approach the societal factors as new variables in understanding Chinese foreign policy making. So far, not much has been written or documented about this domestic determinant. In fact, these social pressures have been largely neglected as a meaningful inquiry in the study of Chinese foreign policy because of the traditional view of government's autonomy in public policy making in an authoritarian society.

Internal influence and external behavior in the study of China is still one of the frontiers where the field of international relations and comparative politics meet. While there can be no doubt that in explaining Chinese foreign policy behavior, there may be numerous factors worth exploring, my study argues that social force is becoming extremely important in explaining Chinese foreign policy output today. These forces had been accommodative for decades, but are now pulling in different directions. Chinese foreign policy makers are

increasingly constrained by societal pressure, despite the fact that the decision makers in China have a much wider degree of latitude for action than their Western counterparts. Although this paper will not treat the social forces as the only variable in the world of constants, it is aimed to study the effect of this unique and neglected variable, and its relationship with other variables. This study is, therefore, in sharp contrast to previous tendencies to treat domestic variables through such broad concepts as factional politics, bureaucratic politics, and nationalistic views of top leaders.

How to define societal force? The term societal force in my study refers to the force outside of top leadership and the policy making inner circle. It is almost a catch-all notion covering a variety of societal factors including public opinions, business community, think tanks, opinion makers both in the media and in academic community, technocrats within the bureaucratic apparatus, local governments, and other sub national entities within Chinese society that seek to influence directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, the final foreign policy outcomes in favor of their preferences. This societal force operates as a loose conglomeration of individual actors and barely coordinated groups with different interests and goals. Each perceives problems and act independently, but together they represent a force that is often powerful enough to make an impact on decision makers even in a strong authoritarian state like China.

In order to grasp the role of societal force in Chinese foreign policy today, we need to understand it as a result of an endless series of forces both from below and from the mid-level bureaucrats fighting to get the attentions of policy makers, in the mid of the public mood led by past experience and present value orientation of a society. The socialization process of citizens, the role of media and educational institutions may all shape the outlook of foreign policy makers. Therefore, we need a “mixed approach” that will also take into account China’s institutional structure, coalition building process within the society as well as the interaction between societal forces and policy making elite.

China’s policy towards the Japan is selected primarily because it is revealing in this aspect. Sino-Japanese relations are highly emotional and societal forces tend to be apparent in both societies more often than other policy areas. Japan occupies a unique position in Chinese foreign policy making, not only because of its position as the world’s second largest

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economy and close to China geographically, but also because of the bitter historical experiences between the two countries in the past 100 years. The Chinese public mood towards Japan has fluctuated so much in the last century, influencing the ups and downs of the bilateral relations, making it an obvious subject to study.

This study will argue that first, China's elite-dominated foreign policy structure is undergoing profound changes. The recent trends of decentralization, professionalism and institutionalization have increased the opportunities for societal forces to influence the decision making process. Second, the ability of the central authority to formulate a consistent and coherent foreign policy, particularly the policy towards Japan, has been weakened by increased social pressures in the age of information technology. Third, globalization has produced a certain amount of transnational forces within Chinese society, and the degree of its influence depends on how the public is informed and manipulated and the degree of the country's integration with the world. When the public has more access to information about the outside world and internal development, the societal pressure influencing foreign policy behavior becomes more visible.

The Role of Internet

The swift development of the internet in China bears a much more important socio-political significance than in many other societies, not only because the internet in China has had the fastest development with a geometric rate and the largest number of users in the world, but more importantly because China's unique political and social contexts have made the internet a crucial force for both the construction of information society—informatization and for creating societal pressure on the country's policy-making.

Since China built up the first domestic Internet e-mail node in September 1987, the Internet has been growing explosively. The total number of Internet surfers in China had reached 94 million, ranking second in the world only after the United States. The total number of computers that can access the Internet had hit 41.6 million, and the total

number of websites had reached 669,000³ (CNNIC Report 2005, 2005). Compared to the figures of each of the three categories in 1997 when China started to develop the Internet, in less than ten years Internet users, on-lined computers, and websites had increased 152 times, 139 times, and 446 times, respectively.

Considering China's unique social and political contexts, probably the most significant Internet development is the emergence of the cyber forums that provide the public with online discussions. Cyber forums refer to the online chatting, instant messages, BBSs and other online discussion forms, such as blogs, Wikis, and SMSs. The three most popular online activities in China are news reading, online chatting/cyber forum discussion, and information downloading. Together they constitute more than 60 percent of the total online activities. Among them, online chatting is the 6th most frequently used online activity with 40.2 percent of Internet users, and BBS posting is the 7th with 21.3 percent of users (The Investigative Report on Internet Use and Its Impact, 2001). These figures indicate that online discussion and opinion-exchange have become a major online activity of Internet users in China as well as an important part of their daily life.

According to Prof. Hong Junhao, the online forum is effectively functional in four ways especially for "public participation" or "civic involvement". Firstly, it is a publishing medium; virtually speaking, postings and news text on the online forums can be read by any visitor. Secondly, it is a distribution medium; the information posted on the forums can be instantly spread to other online communities throughout the entire nation and the whole world. Thirdly, it is a participatory medium; the posted information and comments can elicit further responses, promote replies, and encourage various kinds of views from the public, thus putting civic participation on a large scale that is impossible by any other means. Fourthly, it is also an action-oriented medium; cyber-forums can be a platform for organizing offline campaigns and social movements (Chase & Mulvenon, 2004). In addition to the above-mentioned four common functions of online forums, cyber forums in China have some even more significant and unique functions; in a society that has a social and political system such as China's, the availability of cyber

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forums will inevitably become a new force to yield an unprecedented impact on the social structure and political system.

By the end of 2003, there were 2,536 Chinese language chat room websites and 12,592 online BBS columns (The Fourth Investigative Report on China's Outstanding Cultural Websites, 2003), favorite places for netizens to speak their minds and engage in discussions of public affairs. The forums on China's popular website sina.com, for example, cover a variety of subjects, such as culture and arts, current affairs, emotions, female topics, business, science and technology, games and exams, with a geographic classification such as Beijing, Shanghai and South China. Online individuals are usually involved in the cyber-forum-discussion by subjects, though many of them are often multi-subject participators. In the last few years, the government has been making great efforts to promote the Internet development, even though the leaders do see the political risks of the swift development of this new technology. The major motivation is for economic and technological development. As Zhao Qizheng, Director of the State Council's Information Office, said, "We (the Chinese government) missed a lot of the industrial revolution, but we do not want to miss the information revolution. We are determined not to be left behind this time" (Ming, 2004). Consequently, China's IT sector has been growing at a rate faster than any other industry and is three times as fast as the overall economic growth rate (Hachigian, 2001).⁴

The government seems to have realized that providing the public with relative freedom to surf the web and to chat on the Internet may give the netizens, and citizens as well, fewer incentives to challenge the Communist Party and the government. Leaders thus appear to be willing to tolerate a certain amount of frankness in the online public opinions that would be stamped out in the country's traditional media. The *People's Daily*, the most important state-owned national newspaper and the political organ and mouthpiece of CCP, runs a very popular BBS, "Strong Nation Forum," on its website to offer a platform for the public to vent their emotions and publish their voices on sensitive social and political issues, many of which would have been forbidden in the past because they would have been categorized as "taboos." The Strong Nation Forum has more than 280,000 registered users and more than 12,000 postings per day (Zhu, 2004). The main

reason for online forums such as this to emerge and exist is that, while China is moving toward a more open society, the Party and government have willingly or unwillingly come to want to know how the public react to the issues with which they are concerned. As a result, in order to more easily collect the public's views online, over the past several years the Chinese governments at various levels have been working on the e-government plan, which refers to the use of advanced information technologies to improve communications and relations with the citizens and to make the government work more efficient. Particularly, the central government has been vigorously promoting the e-government project. One goal of the project is to establish the online opinion collection system, from which the government can draw public views from the Internet in making major decisions and issuing policies. Many government agencies have come to regard the Internet as a useful tool that will help them make better decisions.

According to a survey of 10 large Chinese cities conducted in 2003, 63.95 percent of the people surveyed regularly go to online forums. Although "hobbies" is the most popular topic, "political affairs" ranks outstandingly second, followed by "academic issues" as the third most popular topic (The Internet Timeline of China, 2003). Despite the fact that chat rooms and many other online forums are mainly used to discuss people's daily life, many of the discussions do contain bursts of frustration with the political system and other political or policy issues and contentious matters. For example, in regard to China's foreign policies and international relation issues, the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, the collision of a U.S. spy plane with a Chinese fighter plane in 2001, the assault of Chinese businesswoman Zhao Yan by a U.S. immigration officer in 2004, and the China-Japan row over the Diaoyu Islands all led to heated discussions and fierce criticisms on chat rooms and other types of cyber forums.

For more than half a century, even in the time of the reform period, foreign policy was always a forbidden area for public discussions and all foreign policies were made at the top level of the Chinese Communist Party and government. Average people were completely excluded from any kind of participation in foreign policy discussions. This situation started to change in recent years, thanks to the Internet. Many average people used the Internet to express their views on various foreign policy issues, especially during

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major international events or crises involving China. A number of specialized cyber forums on foreign policy issues have been established, including BBSs, chat rooms, and blogs, and many more people have expressed their views in their responses to the related online news items. In the past few years, the public's cyber discussions have been wielding more and more power on the society and on policy-making. Not only has online public opinion of foreign policy issues become one of the most discussed topics, but it has also started direct or indirect, subtle or salient influences on China's foreign policy-making.⁵

The impact of the internet on the Chinese Ministry of Foreign affairs is apparent. Quite some years ago, China began its effort to keep abreast with the developments and requirements of the Internet age. Sixty percent of government departments in China, by July 1999, set up their websites to send out information about their functions, programs, regulations and activities.⁶ This idea of creating "electronic government" was initiated by the China Telecom and the State Economic and Trade Commission for the purpose of improving efficiency and political transparency. For the majority of citizens in China, it is still quite a hurdle to get across the guarded gate of a government compound in Beijing, but to reach the government through the Internet certainly helps unwrap the mysteries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was among the earliest government departments that went online. In its effort to achieve the image as well as the result of "public diplomacy," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is opening itself to the public not only virtually, but also physically.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs first opened itself to the public virtually. On the afternoon of 23 December, 2003, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing conversed online with the general public. This marked the first time that the Foreign Minister of China communicated online directly with the general public. The number of participants in this online event registered 27,000. The "fearlessness" of the participants in questioning and the candor of the Minister in answering were widely espoused and appreciated.⁷

A quick visit to the Ministry's official website (<http://www.mfa.gov.cn>) will reveal that the Ministry is not only virtually open to but also virtually interactive with the public. Results of online conversations between five female diplomats and the public are

posted with a link on the first page on the official site. Furthermore, registered users are able to converse online with (former) ambassadors and directors of various departments of the Ministry, results of which are posted at the official website. Historically, before the advent of the internet age, this type of openness and interaction with the public by governmental departments was hardly imaginable. The official site is designed also in such a manner that readers of online articles can respond immediately by posting their own feedback to the articles. Registered users can also post their own independent articles for all to view. Statistics by the Ministry's official website indicates that this site is heavily used by the public. Between the first day of 2004 and early June of the same year, there have been more than 146,668,000 visits to the Ministry's official Chinese site. For the same period, visits to other sites affiliated with the Ministry have registered more than 243,746,000. Posted statistics rank different content areas and links to help the viewers better track "hot points" and popular issues.

Interviews with numerous directors of the Ministry's departments revealed that these directors go online almost daily in order to know the general public's sentiments and opinions on China's foreign policy. Assistant Director Le Yucheng said that it is imperative to have a grip on public opinions and sentiments in face of major international events.⁸

The adoptive changes in the MFA in the internet age are a reflection of the thesis outlined above. Even though the Chinese government has constantly attempted to control the internet, or the so-called "blog" revolution, the impact of the internet on foreign affairs is profound and the emerging pattern of interaction between the MFA and Chinese public is evidence that globalization and transnational forces are making their way into Chinese society in a way unimaginable only a decade ago.

Public opinion

Because of the internet, a new force has recently emerged within China's foreign policy process: a semi-autonomous, though still limited public opinion. The spread of the

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internet, the rise of multiple media outlet in an emerging market economy, and the decreased ability of the Chinese government to control peoples' minds have opened China's door to the world. A better educated population has begun to look outward, and more forcefully express their opinions on international affairs. This growing independent and assertive public has important implications for Chinese foreign policy.

In his recently published *China Quarterly* article, Alastair Iain Johnston conducted a careful study of Chinese middle-class attitudes towards international affairs. The article argues that the development of civil society in China has made Chinese middle class more aware of international affairs and they have a general tendency to support open door policy.⁹

This author has recently collaborated with a Chinese scholar from Renmin University of China in examining this new force by looking at a broad group of China's emerging foreign policy elites' perceptions of the world and its impact on China's foreign policy. Based on several surveys conducted among a group of over 361 randomly selected Chinese international affairs college students and mid-level bureaucrats enrolled in Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs, we found out that Chinese emerging elites' image of the Japan has been shaped by external events and the way those events are interpreted by the media and the academics. To a large extent, scholars and experts are involving in creating a discourse that shaping the image of a specific country such as the United States and Japan, among the Chinese. The new elite seem to have two distinctive views of Japan: Japan as an economic and technological power and Japan as a homogeneous culture. The former is notably positive while the later is quite negative. This has profound implications for decision makers when they formulate their Japan policy because it provides room for maneuvering in either direction.

Public opinion in China has become more important in two major ways: first, it is relevant to the extent that current Chinese leaders want to know what people think. Since the current generation of Chinese leadership lacks the charismatic appeal that its predecessors Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping enjoyed, they must listen to the public to show that they care about their interests. Lately, the government has even made efforts to

commission various kinds of opinion polls and solicit the public thoughts on various issues.

Second, public opinion matters in that the elite within the policy circle mobilize public support in order to strengthen their policy positions when there is an internal struggle over policy preference. For example, there are differences regarding China's American policies; some feel pessimistic about the prospect of Sino-American relations and want to be prepared for the worst, while others believe that Sino-American confrontation can be avoided by building trust through cooperation and by interaction between the two countries in all areas. This is one place where the public opinion can be extremely valuable. Similarly, for the Sino-Japanese relations, there are people within the bureaucratic apparatus that would like to maintain a better relationship with Tokyo while there are also those who want to stand up against Japan.

In their study of Chinese public opinion and foreign policy, Fewsmith and Rosen suggest a three-dimensional interaction among public opinion, elite cohesion, and the state of Sino-American relations. They argue that a high degree of elite cohesion with a relaxed Sino-American relationship may sharply limit the impact of public opinion, whereas a high degree of tension in U.S.-China relations, or of popular mobilization, is more likely to render public opinion as a significant role in limiting policy preferences when there is high degree of policy differences among the elite.¹⁰

In the case of China's Japan policy, it seems to be quite the case. Although the elite's opinions tend to be divided over how to view Japan's intentions toward China, public opinion tends to be more homogeneous, and it can be easily mobilized. When the masses' opinions and attitudes concerning foreign relations are different from those of elite, those elite who happen to share public preferences would be in a better position to influence final policy outcome.

It is true that during the tension in Sino-Japanese relations in the last decade, internal conflicts among the elite generated a wave of popular nationalism that culminated in several bestsellers denouncing Japan. The public outcry forced leaders, who sought a more cooperative approach, to "do something" in order to avoid their patriotism from being questioned. Again, the 2005 crisis in Sino-Japanese relations

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provided an area where the public opinion play a larger role than otherwise expected in influencing Chinese policy towards Tokyo.

The Role of Media

In examining societal force, no one can downplay the importance of media in shaping public opinion and influencing the social environment in which policy makers' formulate their foreign policy. Conventional wisdom says that mass media in modern societies is powerful and omnipotent. Since media can sway public opinion on fashion, automobiles, pop music, movie stars, and political candidates, it can certainly influence public opinion on foreign policies. What role do Chinese media play in shaping public opinion? How much influence do media exert on China's Japanese policy? How does market economy contribute to the larger picture?

In explaining the cognitive change of Chinese image of Japan, many blame the Chinese Communist leaders for their efforts to demonize Japan as a ploy for their political interests. Some Japanese scholars even believe that Chinese government failed to let the public know the financial assistance Japanese government provided since the early 1980s. The group we surveyed is supposedly influenced most by the government's position, yet the positive change in their perception of Japan seems to indicate a trend in which the government's control of people's minds is becoming less effective.

Historically, the Chinese government has played a significant role in shaping public opinion about Japan by sketching a general frame for scholars and filling in the details with government-controlled media. The government would provide a basic guideline to be circulated among TV, newspapers, and the press, specifying what could be covered and where the borderlines were. However, since most of the party-controlled newspapers and publishing houses have become profit-making operations, many have created lively mass-appeal papers and sensational tabloids and have published a variety of books that have flourished on urban newsstands and in bookstores. Market competition among papers and magazines has become so intense that many headlines are often

determined by responses from sellers on the street, even though the censorship and licensing systems are still firmly in place.¹¹

As the content that the media can cover grows, Chinese media seems to have a growing impact on public opinion. We found that the role of the government in shaping the image of outside world among the younger generation, although it remains strong, has become less of a determining factor than it was a decade ago. When we asked our respondents to name the means by which they understood Japan, 18 percent of them named TV, 16 percent mentioned books, another 16 percent said movies, 12 percent referred to government statements, 11 percent said internet, 10 percent mentioned newspapers, and 8.5 percent said school education.

We also asked whether domestic media was objective in reporting America related affairs. Of those surveyed, 54 percent thought it was not objective, 39 percent thought it was basically objective, and 7 percent said they had no way to judge.¹² A large percentage of the Chinese do not trust the press and media because they only have a one-sided story and sometimes no story at all.

The Role of Think Tanks

Because of the complex and technical nature of the issues involving China's foreign policy, leaders in Beijing have increasingly relied on the advice offered by specialists. The impact of intellectuals and think-tanks on Chinese foreign policy making under Jiang and Hu is increasing, and active and multi-layered channels between the center and the periphery, between decision makers and various think tanks have been created.

David Shambaugh¹³ argues that over the past two decades, China's foreign policy think-tanks have come to play increasingly important roles in Chinese foreign policy making and intelligence analysis. He provides a detailed analysis on the think-tanks' structure and processes by offering historical perspectives on the evolution of this community. Shambaugh further argues that these think-tanks often offer important indications of broader policy debates and competitions between institutions and their staff.

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There are also an increasing numbers of Ph.D. dissertations and Masters theses focusing on this subject, some of which have recently been turned into books or journal articles. For example, a forthcoming book from the Chinese University Press of Hong Kong entitled, *Chinese Foreign Policy Think-Tanks and China's Policy toward Japan*, provides a detailed study to update the evolution of China's think-tanks and their relations with Chinese foreign policy. The author also attempts to bring the study into a broader theoretical framework that will integrate recent developments in the conceptualization of Chinese foreign policy.¹⁴

One may anticipate that as civil society continues to develop in China, there will be further demand for policy input and increasing professionalism in both governmental agencies and think-tanks. It is likely that this will push intellectuals and scholars to play even greater role in the years to come.

There are still limitations in terms of policy inputs. This is particularly true when comparing China with Western countries or comparing China with other East Asian societies that have been deeply influenced by the West, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. One major difference is the degree to which official lines of foreign policy can be openly criticized or challenged. The true policy debates over key foreign policy decision are still not open and public in the current Chinese society, despite the significant progress that has been made.

When dealing with the increasing influence of intellectuals and think-tanks on Chinese foreign policy, Beijing clearly has to calculate the advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, more policy input from intellectuals and think-tanks will increase the quality of decision making. It may also provide bargaining chips when acting in the international community. On the other hand, as an authoritarian society, the Communist Party has been careful to protect its monopoly of power when making major decisions, including foreign policy decisions. With this kind of cost-benefit analysis, there will be inevitable ups and downs in terms of Beijing's control over intellectual life. The degree of intellectual participation in foreign policy formation will correspond to the degree of party-state control over society.

It seems that the deeper Chinese reform goes, the more rapid the growth of civil society in China. The last two decades of reform and openness have led to the emergence of a vibrant civil society in China. Professional organizations and citizen groups have increased like bamboo shoots after adequate spring rains. Chinese people today are enjoying more personal freedom than during any other period in PRC history. Civil society and the Internet energize each other in their co-evolutionary development, even as both are constrained by other forces. The internet facilitates civil society activities by offering new possibilities for citizen participation, and civil society facilitates the development of the internet by providing the necessary social basis—citizens and citizen groups—for communication and interaction. Of course, the civil society in China is still fragile and needs special care for it to grow.

The emergence of civil society has broadened the foundation for an open door policy. On the other hand, the rise of a civil society makes it more challenging for the government to monopolize Chinese policy toward the United States. Decision-makers in Beijing now must take the growing social factors into consideration when making policies toward Japan and the United States. There is growing demand in Chinese society for equal international status and meeting international standards on trade, human rights and many other issues. There will be strong popular reaction whenever the people feel that China is treated unfairly by foreign powers led by the United States.

Conclusion

This study aims to discern how individuals (alone and in a group) at the micro level and collectivities (states) at the macro level shape each other's behavior in China's foreign affairs, and, how the academics, bureaucracy, media, and public opinions in China have helped to create a domestic condition that top leaders cannot ignore when making their major foreign policy decisions.

If a country's foreign policy behaviors constitute different dependent variables in the research inquiry, societal pressure can be regarded as one of the independent variables that

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influence foreign policy behavior and determine the variance.¹⁵ One dimension of societal forces, whose change depends on the degree of openness of the society and the integration with the international economic system, as well as leaders' perception of the importance of domestic stability, can be thought of as a dependent variable in my study as well. A related question is if the latitude of social pressure is more issue-area specific, namely whether there is a difference in the domestic environment of foreign economic policies as compared to security areas.

This paper tends to argue that there are two fundamentally different attitudes and perceptions regarding China's Japanese policy: those who favor stronger and improved Sino-Japanese relations and those who wish to stand up against Japan. Although Chinese policy towards Japan is primarily made by the elites based on their perception of Chinese national interests, whether derived from systemic or domestic cultural sources, it is also influenced by particularistic social interests embodied in these two fundamental outlooks. Policy makers, whether motivated by national interests or their own elite interests, may be forced to compromise with societal opponents, but they also seek to guide the public and the policy back toward their "strategic" version in the long term.

Domestic issues, especially regime survival and stability, remain China's top national security priorities, but there is a need to treat societal influence as an important variable in explaining Chinese foreign policy. It is the combination of the international environment (external source) of Chinese foreign policy and domestic societal forces in a unique state structure that has produced a certain policy outcome.

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Notes

¹Zhao Quansheng, *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), p.8.

² Robert Ross, and Paul Godwin, "New Directions in Chinese Security Studies," in *American Studies of Contemporary China*, edited by David Shambaugh, M.E. Sharpe, 1993

³ *The Statistical Survey Report on the Internet Development in China 2005*, by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, January 2005, cited from Hong Junhao's "The Internet and China's Foreign Policy Making", *China's Foreign Policy Making* (Ashgate, 2005), pg 93 – 109.

⁴ Hong Junhao, "The Internet and China's Foreign Policy Making: The Impact of Online Public Opinions as a New Societal Force" in Yufan Hao & Lin Su edited, *China's Foreign Policy Making* (Ashgate, 2005), pg 93 – 109.

⁵ Hong Junhao, "The Internet and China's Foreign Policy Making: The Impact of Online Public Opinions as a New Societal Force" in Yufan Hao & Lin Su edited, *China's Foreign Policy Making* (Ashgate, 2005), pg 93 – 109.

⁶ 'China: Sixty per cent of government departments set up websites,' *China Business Information Network*, 14 July, 1999.

⁷ 'From mystery to transparency: China's effort for public diplomacy [in Chinese],' (2004, April 5). Available: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-04/05/content_1401465.htm [2004, June 4].

⁸ 'Government compound open to the public [in Chinese],' (2003, September 7).

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⁹ See Alastair Iain Johnston, "Chinese Middle Class Attitudes towards International Affairs: Nascent Liberalization?" *The China Quarterly*, 179/1 (2004): 603-628.

¹⁰ Joseph Fewsmith and Stanley Rosen, "The Domestic Context of Chinese Foreign Policy: Does 'Public Opinion' Matter?" in Lampton edited, *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) pp. 174-175.

¹¹ According to the editor of *Global Times*, a mass-appeal paper created by the *People's Daily*, their editors will give a few tentative headlines for the street vendors to choose which they like most, as some eye-catching headlines would prompt street vendors to double their retail copies.

¹² This seems to be in line with the poll taken by Global Scan on December 2003 concerning public attitudes toward media and press in China, a plurality of 42.6 percent of the Chinese public do not trust press and media (21 percent no trust, 18.42 percent not much trust while 2.66 percent no trust at all), while 31.5 percent trust Chinese press and media, 23 percent have some trust.

¹³ David Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," *The China Quarterly*, 171 (September 2002): pp. 575-596.

¹⁴ See Janet Liao, "Chinese Foreign Policy Think-Tanks and China's Policy toward Japan", *Chinese University Press*, forthcoming.

¹⁵ Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, p. 43.