

YASUKUNI SHRINE: A CASE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE AXIOLOGICAL
BASIS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE
IN SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis concentrates on the partial reconstruction of the axiological basis at the core of the ideological – nationalistic disputes between China and Japan. The recent history of Sino-Japanese international relations is analyzed in order to show how nationalistic incentives became the rational political choice in the domestic policy of both countries. The research, concerned primarily with history, memory, and historical memory, is based on the argumentation used by the *People's Daily*, an extension of the People's Republic of China's political line, in regard to Yasukuni shrine and Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's visit to the shrine in 2013. The final purpose of this thesis is to analyze the dialectical argumentation, and by comparing both country's sentiments, to explain the role of nationalism in their current bilateral relations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sino-Japanese relations have experienced over two thousand years of cooperation, mutual cultural and economic exchange, and a parallel existence free of major military conflicts. In the past century, these same relations have changed into periods of war, destruction, and events that have caused wounds that have been hard to heal. Seventy years after the end of WWII, the half-century of subverted relations is still causing diplomatic issues and political disagreements. At the time of the first military conflicts between the two countries in the late nineteenth century, Japan was already more developed militaristically and did not refrain from manifesting it and putting the new army into use against its neighbors. For the Chinese empire, the humiliation experienced by the forceful entry of the Western powers just a few decades before these conflicts with Japan was already hard to bear, but an invasion from a neighboring nation, one that was struggling with similar threats from outside, became a trope vivid in Chinese historical memory up to the present day.

Last year marked the seventieth anniversary of the end of WWII. In his speech at the commemoration of the anniversary, President Xi Jinping opened with the following words:

“Today is a day that will forever be etched in the memory of people all over the world. Seventy years ago today, the Chinese people, having fought tenaciously for 14 years, won the great victory of their War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, marking the full victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. On that day, the world was once again blessed by the sunshine of peace.”

The Chinese historical narrative presents China as the victors of the war and Japan as the victimizers and fascist aggressor. In Japan, on the other hand, conservative voices present

Japan as a victim – a victim of the militaristic government, which led the nation to war in the first place; a victim of western colonialism; and finally, a victim of atomic bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Chinese nationalistic-rhetorical terms, the Asian chapter of World War II is called “the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression,” whereas Japanese nationalists present it as “The Great East Asian War”. In other words, there is no common ground in the approach towards the past 150 years of East Asian history. One manifestation of this issue can be observed in the approach towards history textbooks in Japan, as well as the dispute about the so-called “Nanjing massacre.”¹ Both countries refer to the past for domestic and international political reasons, which in turn gives legitimacy to the leaderships on a domestic level, and legitimacy of political claims in the international arena. The Japanese ultranationalists minimize the extent of Japan's war crimes under the militarist government. In their view Japan was not the aggressor, but actually a victim of Western political trickery. The anti-Japanese arguments in China, on the other hand, legitimize the continuous rule of the Chinese Communist Party as the victorious faction that put an end to the Japanese invasion; to cite a commonly known Chinese saying, "Without the Communist Party, there would be no new China."

In the mid-nineteenth century, when the Western powers arrived in China and Japan with their full militaristic force, the realm of the two empires was self-defined as “all under the heaven” and would spread as far as the cultural influence of each empire could reach. In this way, the realm of sovereignty was defined in cultural, not nationalist, terms. By that time, Westerners would define their realms of power by national self-definitions and geographic, rather than cultural, borders. The clash of civilizations has

¹ For detailed description of these subjects see Caroline Rose 1998, 2004, 2008.

therefore introduced the idea of nationalism, which eventually changed Chinese and Japanese domestic and foreign policy. From the invasion of the Western powers and the reopening of the two empires to the Western world, until the two countries became the second and the third economic powers in the world, both China and Japan underwent innumerable reforms, and both have struggled on their way to become modern states. But it is only in the present time that both countries are internally united and politically and economically strong. Thus, it is not entirely surprising that they keep challenging each other with intensified force. The key factor is that because of the economic exchanges between the two countries, as much as they might oppose each other politically, they are still bound to cooperate in order to function properly. Nevertheless, the turn of twenty-first century has brought stronger nationalistic sentiments and more assertive foreign politics on both sides.

In a wider perspective, the Chinese Communist Party seeks its legitimacy in anti-Japanese politics dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century. For Japan, on the other hand, becoming a modern nation-state was connected to the Meiji Restoration that began in 1868. The reforms, militarization, and territorial expansion that followed eventually allowed the Meiji Government to renegotiate the unequal treaties with the Western powers, and become "the most Western country" in East Asia. During this process, Japan committed many deeds that even years after their occurrence are still a bleeding wound in the consciousness of the neighboring countries.

For this reason, the Japanese Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo is a particular case of historical complexity, not to mention a thorn in the side of diplomatic relations in East Asia. In this thesis, Yasukuni Shrine will be presented as a collective symbol that

encompasses most of the ideas constituting Japanese nationalism and gives proof to what the Chinese nationalists had to fight against. Sino-Japanese relations have a long tradition of the domestic issues' impact on the international scale, and thus the rising domestic nationalist pressure is alarming. The domestic nationalistic interests in the case of Sino-Japanese relations have an international dimension. Japan's neo-nationalism calls for prideful national identity, which would make Japan more assertive. Should the apologetic diplomacy continue, the rise of China would become a grave wound for Japanese pride. China's new international confidence makes the government more assertive in pushing for the country's interest, and thus we can observe a "Ping-Pong" situation between China and Japan, where political decisions are both causes and effects of each other's policies. In relation to Japanese politics, Lai Yew Meng states as follows: "Nationalism can influence top-level decision-making through the cohort of state-elites, namely the Cabinet headed by the PM. Since they act as the final arbiter of policy decision-making, the personalities and political dispositions/affiliations and perceptions of these key elites, especially the PM, tend to shape their policy preferences and influence their decision" (Meng, 2014).

Where there are two opposing leaderships with nationalistic notions aimed against each other, there is a fertile ground for international disputes. But, what happens at the intersection of rising nationalism and diplomatic disputes of a historical nature? Does this impact only the domestic politics of its actors, or can it have a larger meaning for the whole international community? An old Asian proverb says: "One mountain cannot contain two tigers." Can the international arena hold both China and Japan as tigers on its mountain? After all, we are observing disputes of opposing ideologies, which by nature

have no objective solution. Can ideas prevail over the presupposed “rationality” of the political elites in sustaining their countries at the international level, or are we at the eve of a larger conflict fueled by antagonistic sentiments to prepare the populations for what is to come?

In search for the answers to these questions and a mechanism that could potentially indicate the current state of affairs, this paper will analyze the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo from the perspective of a collective symbol that it constitutes in Chinese and Japanese culture, which will be explained in Chapter 2 from a theoretical perspective, and presented in more practical form in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. This form of presentation will serve to show how the dispute around the visits of the Japanese Prime Ministers to the shrine fall into the category of axiological argumentation, which deals with disputes of an ideological nature and therefore cannot be resolved in terms of reconciliation. On the contrary, they are aimed only towards reaffirming the current animosities. There is no possible way of solving the disputes because of the ideological nature of the shrine; however, since it is a nationalistic symbol, an analysis of the discourse around it can provide guidelines for interpretation of the political behavior of both China and Japan. Finally, Chapter 6 presents a case study of Yasukuni Shrine as a collective symbol in the Chinese media. The harsh rhetoric used by the Chinese opponents of the dispute points to the importance of the issue; depicts how the dispute is discursively reaffirmed in Chinese collective memory; and, finally, warns about the possible outcomes of the dispute’s escalation.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis of Sino-Japanese relations poses numerous theoretical and methodological problems. First of all, International Relations (IR) as an academic discipline does not provide a satisfactory framework that would include micro- and macro- levels of analysis. The main scope of the IR discipline is to provide explanations of the reasons for the state of affairs in international politics and to point towards solutions that would allow the achievement, or sustainment, of global peace. The current leading IR theories – neorealism and neoliberalism – concentrate predominantly on a systemic, macro level of analysis, overshadowing the importance of domestic-specific factors. On the other hand, critical theory pays extensive attention to the domestic, micro level of analysis, thus diminishing the importance of the overarching international system. Full comprehension of Sino-Japanese international relations requires the combination of both approaches (Rose, 1998). The author is well aware of the impossibility of a construction of a fully comprehensive framework without addressing philosophical inquiries on ontological, epistemological, and empirical levels, which would constitute the topic of a different research altogether. Furthermore, a full description of the contending approaches towards the discipline of international relations is a topic for a separate analysis itself. Therefore, this chapter will examine only the relevant paradigms necessary to demarcate some of the issues at stake and present the approach taken in this paper.

Micro/Macro analysis in IR

According to neorealists, following Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* in particular, "power" is the supreme category in world politics and its achievement is an inevitable cause of conflicts among the actors of the international arena. The nature of international relations is defined by its ordering principle – anarchy. The states – the basic analytical units – act according to their interests that are aimed toward securing the power balance and they will put their own interests above those of the other states². In this framework, survival is the core interest of all states. There is no central authority that could enforce rules on the actors of the international arena which creates the anarchical nature of the whole system. The states that are part of the system are formally equal, but the difference between them lies in the unequal disposition of capabilities. The relative capabilities are the base for the pursuit of the states' own interests, and the assessment of the relative gains and losses ensures the final balance of power. One of the problems with this approach is that it creates the so-called "security dilemma" in which the states are never sure of the other states' intentions and interests, and therefore they develop military power to assure their relative power on the international arena. The security dilemma is a vicious cycle, where one state arms fearing a possible invasion by the other one, which in response resorts to arming itself for conflicts, and so on.

In the case of Sino-Japanese relations, the security dilemma can be observed when the rising power of China creates a threat to Japan. Japan, as a result, tries to override the peace clause of its Constitution, and thus allows China to justify its further

² Disambiguation of the terms nation, state, and nation-state, will be provided in the following sections.

armament. Critiques of neorealist theories argue that this approach has an embedded premise of the unavoidability of war, which makes the achievement of global peace impossible.

Neoliberals, on the other hand, while acknowledging the anarchical nature of the international system, concentrate more on the way in which states can cooperate within the system in order to pursue their interests and achieve absolute gains. The relative gains are related only to power balance, while the absolute gains include economic and cultural aspects. This theory aims more to explain the possible ways in which a state can cooperate in the anarchical system in order to achieve mutual gains. The lack of war between China and Japan, in this perspective, is related to economic cooperation, and the need of stable relations between the two countries in order to fully benefit from the trade relations that is the core – peace-securing – interest for both sides. On the top diplomatic level, both China and Japan seem to opt for cooperation, and efforts aimed towards maintaining stabilized relations can be observed. However, the public discourse on both sides of the East China Sea is imbued with antagonistic, nationalistic sentiments, resulting occasionally in protests and boycotts that work against economic cooperation.

The concentration on a systemic-level approach of the two mainstream theories creates an epistemological problem, which issues from the fact that those theories are not analytically adapted for analysis of non-material factors and variables, such as culture, identity, or ideology. By treating states as a given basic-unit, these theories overlook their social character and the social construction of the state's identities, arguing that these aspects are of lesser importance. In the international arena, states do act as separate units, and therefore a systemic analytical approach is needed. However, the existence of states

is also bound to the existence of the nations that constitute them, meaning that the systemic analysis is an insufficient form of holistic evaluation. One can find stateless nations that impact the international arena (i.e. Kurds or Basks), but there are no nationless states. In a globalized world, free of the Cold War bipolarization of power, a state-based framework is not fully efficient. Furthermore, the international corporations, institutions or organizations do not act towards the interests of the states, but rather for the gains of states' populations, whether it involves military truces, defense of human rights, or simply capitalistic profit. If we consider the international dimension of nationalism as an ideology, which presents the interests of a certain nation as superior to those of other nations, then with its growth in power on a domestic level, it is hard to deny its consequences in the international arena.

A further approach to international relations is derived from the area studies discipline. In contrast to the above, the area studies approach seeks to explain international relations mainly through country-specific factors, history, and political culture, which once again distances the analysis from the factors specific to the systemic level of the international arena. While we cannot completely discount the area studies approach as a useful tool of analysis, it is ultimately too narrow in its scope. In the Sino-Japanese case, it is useful to observe the Confucian and Neo-Confucian political traditions, or the specific approach towards hierarchy and respect. But after all, despite the possible domestically-specific cultural or political solutions deriving from a given culture, in the end that culture is part of the international system, subject to global influences, whether it likes it or not.

Given the problems inherent in the above international relations theoretical approaches, the overarching analytical paradigm applied in this thesis is constructivism, and social constructivism in particular. Social constructivism will be examined in more detail below, but a brief rationale for this choice will be explained here: constructivist epistemology allows for the simultaneous (micro-level) explanation of the socio-political concepts of identity, historical memory, and nationalism, as well as their role in the international system (macro-level). As Anthony D. Smith astutely puts it: “No memory, no identity. No identity, no nation.”

Although constructivism is one of the commonly accepted paradigms for the purpose of the analysis of international relations, following the approach of Alexander Wendt (1999): “constructivism is not a theory of international politics,” and therefore it will be used only as an epistemology aimed towards a more eclectic approach to the analysis of Sino-Japanese international relations encompassing viable solutions and approaches derived from other theories and disciplines. Finally, since the main purpose of this paper is to reconstruct the axiological basis (defined in detail below) of the nationalistic-ideological discourse in Sino-Japanese relations, constructivism will serve to explain the reasons for such an endeavor and the implications of this process.

Ideas in IR

Another problem in IR is a divide in approach towards the variables that influence political outcomes. The supporters of the leading schools, taking states as the primary analytical unit, find the influential variables in material ones, such as the physical capabilities of the countries, technological achievements, geographical advantages, and

relative power (neorealism), or economic interdependence, and the level of international institutionalization (neoliberalism). At the same time, both schools consider ideological variables, like ideas, customs, norms, and identities, as epiphenomenal. Indeed, the material variables can be quantified, and depending on the paradigm of the approach, value can be attached to them in order to compare, contrast, and draw conclusions from the relative situation. This gives more viability to the first two approaches as social science's theories. The ideological variables, which, on the other hand, are difficult to define, and non-quantifiable in their nature, do not fall into a clear framework for analysis in the IR perspective, but the difficulties in definition of ideas do not strip them of analytical potential in the international arena. As a matter of fact, culture and identity may be the core of many policy-making decisions' explanations. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (1993) refer to a particular situation that addresses this problem: "In situations where there are no objective criteria of action on which to base one's choices, political elites may settle on courses of action on the basis of shared cultural, normative, religious, ethnic, or casual beliefs." These shared beliefs (ideas) of any form are found in nations in the form of social constructs. The interests to which both neorealists and neoliberals refer are formed on the basis of such shared beliefs. As Alexander Wendt (1999) famously put it: "[a] world in which identities and interests are learned and sustained by intersubjectively grounded practice is one in which 'anarchy is what states make of it,'" pointing to the fact that even if we acknowledge the anarchic nature of the international system, we also have to realize that it is not an arbitrary state of matters given *a priori*, but rather a final effect of other processes. In the radical words of Robert Jackson (1993): "'Ideas' and 'interests' are in my view both concepts and therefore

‘ideas.’” Therefore, the states’ interests are not inherent but rather created according to the ideological dispositions. In an idealistic – utopian – case of the international arena, where all the actors’ core interest is global peace, and not survival, certain material variables related to relative power, would cease to exist. But once an idea (or interest) becomes part of the political line, it is institutionalized for the purpose of its implementation and propagation, and in turn becomes part of the self-reproducing system. Zheng Wang (Wang, 2012, p. ix) highlights this in the following passage:

“Institutionalization is the process of embedding particular values and norms within an organization, social system, or society [. . .] [obtaining] lasting impact for generations to come. Furthermore, once a policy choice leads to creation of reinforcing organizational and normative structures, the policy idea can affect the incentives of political entrepreneurs long after the interests of its initial proponents have changed.”

In other words, although not as apparent as the material factors and capabilities, ideas might as well be of a higher importance for the sake of the international arena than the mainstream theories would assume. The analytical framework of the mainstream theories does not treat some of the most horrific events of human history in terms of international relations. Many of the genocides of the twentieth century occurred on the ideological basis and not in regard to materialistic capabilities, between nations that did not have their separate states. A good example of such events would be the Tutsi/Hutu genocide in Rwanda, or the Bosnian Srebrenica genocide. Interestingly enough the *International Tribunal* ruled that the Bosnian event was a genocide, basing their claims in accordance with the *international law*.

A quote from Alexander Wendt is useful in summing up the paradigmatic differences of approaches towards international relations:

“Neorealists see the structure of the international system as a distribution of material capabilities because they approach their subject with a materialist lens; Neoliberals see it as capabilities plus institutions because they have added to the material base an institutional superstructure; and constructivists see it a distribution of ideas because they have an idealist ontology” (Wendt, 1999).

Since the topic of this thesis refers to ideological discourse, the author finds constructivism as the most suitable paradigm for the analysis of Sino-Japanese relations. Additionally, the premises of social constructivism in relation to system theory and communication, explained below, serve to portray the importance of ideas and their possible role in the international arena.

Social constructivism

To support the claim that ideas can matter in international relations, there is a need for an understanding of social systems first. For this purpose, let us analyze the theoretical approach proposed by social constructivists.

According to Niklas Luhmann: “society is not composed of human beings, it is composed of the communication among human beings” (Luhmann, 1990). Modern society is therefore understood as a system of communications that is differentiated into a network of subsystems. Each of these systems reproduces itself recursively through communication on the basis of its own, system-specific operations. The systems observe themselves and their environment, but whatever they observe is created through unique, subjective perspective, because of the subjective selectivity used for their observations. That selectivity is an embedded nature of social systems that serves the purpose of the reduction of complexity, without which the systems would not be able to exist. The self-observation of psychological systems involves consciousness, but that of social systems needs

communication (Luhman, 1995). A state does not have consciousness and cannot observe its own actions or decisions; it is only through communication within the state that it can observe itself. Luhmann defines communication as a synthesis of three selections: information (a selection from a repertoire of referential possibilities), utterance (a selection from a repertoire of intentional acts), and understanding (the observation of the distinction between utterance and information) (Luhman, 1995). The distinction between information and utterance is entirely immanent with regard to the autopoiesis of a system that employs this particular schema to process complexity in the form of meaning. The social construction of meaning occurs in social systems through the process of communication. An important concept at the basis of this premise – autopoiesis – was coined as a result of neurobiological research led by Humberto Maturana and Francis Varela concerning perception in living systems. According to Maturana, autopoiesis defines and explains the nature and the way of functioning of all of the living systems. An autopoietic system is autonomous, recursively self-reproductive and operationally closed, in the sense that there are sufficient amounts of processes within it to maintain it as the whole, and these processes are inaccessible from outside. Thus, for radical constructivists, any knowledge or understanding of the reality outside of the autopoietic system is a subjective interpretation, rather than an observation of the objective “actual” phenomenon. As Luhmann puts it: “Reality, then, may be an illusion, but the illusion itself is real” (Luhman, 1995).

The reproduction of living systems like cells is based on chemical processes; the brain, on the other hand, works with neurophysiological impulses. By contrast, systems that operate on the basis of consciousness (psychic systems) or communication (social

systems) require meaning for their reproduction. Luhmann defines meaning as the “horizon” of all the possibilities. Meaning resides in the self-referential structure of a consciousness that consists solely in and through its autopoietic operations and that, in selecting from a self-generated horizon of surplus references, reproduces that horizon without ever exhausting its possibilities or transgressing its boundaries. Since social systems cannot be derived from a subject, psychic and social systems must be considered as two separate autopoietic systems, each of which draws its boundaries on the basis of its own systemic operations and conditions of connectivity and, in so doing, demarcates what constitutes the environment for that system. In fact, the two systems emerge together, as the consciousness emerges together with and encourages the formation of social systems.

In other words, according to Luhmann, society is the all-encompassing social system that orders all possible communication among human beings. The political system is one of its subsystems, alongside other subsystems for religion, science, economy, education, family life, and medical care, among others. The individual subsystems actualize society from their specific perspective according to correspondingly specific system/environment referential frameworks (Luhmann, 1990). A system is called self-referential that produces and reproduces the elements – in this case political decisions – out of which it is itself composed. The final goal of a system is to sustain itself through the process of self-reproduction. In the case of economy, the self-reproductive nature of the system can be depicted by a fact that the neoliberals point out: namely the interdependence of international economic relations. Two countries, even if they differ ideologically in regard to politics, will still sustain economic relations, despite being part

of different political systems (for example China and the United States). The legal system is the best example of the autopoiesis as it is composed of legislations that create new legislations in order to secure the legislative system in general. In political terms, the state is then a means of the self-description of the political system of society (Luhmann, 1990).

The constructivist analysis allows us to understand the set of ideological presuppositions that defines the subjects, whether individual or collective. By observing the communication and the simplification of the systems' external complexity in the form of axiomatic social constructs, we can observe the meanings underlying them, and thus observe the processes of self-reproduction. To relate these assumptions back to the IR framework, Alexander Wendt's quote comes in handy again: "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces. The identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature" (Wendt, 1999).

Nationalism

Despite the rising popularity of the voices proclaiming the end of nations due to the progressing development of globalizing forces and the high level of global interdependence, the system of world politics is an "inter-national" system, and thus it includes nations. Nationalism is therefore bound to become the topic of analysis for the scholars interested in the mechanisms guiding the international system, but a framework encompassing its domestic and international impact is needed for such an endeavor. In the light of the previously explained theoretical approach, nation is a social system and nationalism is the communication, or the discourse, used to reproduce it. The fluidity and

multiplicity of the meanings of ‘nation’ enable nationalism to achieve social reproduction, both at the level of individual nations and of the modern world system. Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as “a political principle, which holds that the political (state) and the national (nation) unit should be congruent” (Gellner, 1983, str. 1).³ As Hugh Seton-Watson (1977) once addressed the definition of nation: “[. . .] I am driven to the conclusion that no “scientific” definition of the nation can be devised, yet the phenomenon has existed and exists.” Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that nations are “imagined communities,” which supports the claim that nations are social systems, as it can be reinterpreted in social constructivist terms in the form of “nations are social constructs.” What is more, the importance of nationalism is often completely overlooked by mainstream IR theories, which treat it as a variable of merely domestic importance. Although nationalism as an ideology related to nation impacts primarily domestic politics rather than international politics, domestic issues can also become part of foreign policy decision-making. Nationalist pressure coming from domestically important political actors can effectively constrain a state’s behavior. An example of such a situation would be in the case where political elites are dependent on nationalism for their legitimacy, and the domestic political system is characterized by a strong connection between the political elites and the masses (Meng, 2014).

On the psychological level, nationalism gives an identity and unifies people. Nation includes socio-cultural and psychological dimensions, namely “the objective features of language, culture, religion and common descent that form the basis of a

³ To overcome ambiguities in definitions of state, nation, and nation-state, in what follows the author, following the previously mentioned Gellner’s definition of nationalism and Luhmann’s definition of the state, uses nation-state as the combination of the political/communicative entity – state, and the cultural/social entity – nation.

collective identity, and the subjective element of consciousness, passion and affection towards the perceived shared identity” (Zheng, 1999). The thought that others believe in the same values and are willing to defend them plays an important role in a globalized/globalizing world, as it reassures the members of the smaller community that they are not alone and will not perish without support. At the same time, through the embedded national mythology, nationalism creates a sense of superiority, which can fuel conflicts. The positive sense of “us” as the community fuels the feeling of superiority of that community, which eventually can result in treatment of “them,” not belonging to the nation, as inferior. Furthermore, one of the earlier definitions of the subject by Hans Kohn (1939) also identifies the psychological dimension of nationalism which as “‘a state of mind’ [. . .] recognizes the nation-state as the ideal form of political organization and the nationality as the source of all creative cultural energy and of economic well-being.” It is a concept that “‘compromises ‘institution’ and ‘identity,’ two crucial components of the nation-state. It is not important when expressed by individuals, but only when expressed collectively by institutions” (Zheng, 1999).

Considering “the dark” chapters of the modern history of both China and Japan—the recent rise of Chinese relative power and their more assertive approach towards diplomacy, as well as the Japanese attempts to redefine the Constitution in order to reintroduce a national army—the increase in nationalistic expressions becomes alarming in terms of regional security. The ongoing disputes relating to the Japanese history textbooks, the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands disputes and the criticism of the officials’ visits to Yasukuni Shrine represent Chinese newly developed confidence in the international arena, which is provoking Japan to take a harder stance in its own diplomatic approach.

On the other hand, Japan's revisionism of history and attempts to redefine the constitution in favor of possible armament raise fears of preparation for another militaristic conflict. The nationalistic sentiments aimed against each other just fuel the tensions, resulting in increased public support of more active and aggressive foreign policy in both countries. Neither the neorealist nor the neoliberalist approaches can explain this state of matter alone. A quarter of a century after the collapse of the Cold War's "Iron Curtain," the international balance of power is quite different, and it does not fit into the dichotomized explanations of world politics coined during the Cold War. Some of the reasons for the present possible instability of power across the globe derive from Sino-Japanese relations. East Asia is a region where crucial political and economic interests of the three biggest economies in the world intersect, which in terms of contemporary economic interdependence means that the nationalistic sentiments can have global impact. The triad of the US-China-Japan political and economic relations is particularly interesting in as much as it represents almost half of the world's nominal GDP, with almost 2 billion inhabitants (almost 30% of the world population), and three of the top four military powers according to the Credite Suisse's Military Strength Index.⁴ According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2016 Fact Sheet (for 2015)⁵ out of the world's total 1,676 billion dollars spend on military, half of it (852) is spent by the US (596), China (215), and Japan (40.9) only. Thus, instability in relations between these countries could result in a military conflict of unprecedented scale, but also, because of ideological disputes, it can influence the global economy. Disruption in

⁴ Credite Suisse Research Institute report "The End of Globalization or a more Multipolar World?", September 2015

⁵ <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1604.pdf> [accessed on 5/8/2016]

economic relations between China, Japan, and the United States could cause insufferable damage to the world economy in general. Although the development of the international interdependencies in recent decades has progressed immensely, there is still no supranational authority that could execute its power over nation-states. Furthermore, the international organizations and treaties are just agreements, and not physical boundaries. The role of nations thus remains important in political discourse, which is manifested in the popularity of nationalist parties across the world in general. The negative aspects of globalization help to reaffirm the positive nationalistic notions of those who want their own country to prosper, regardless of the international economic interdependencies. Indeed, when a nation is facing pressures of globalization, the nationalistic narratives and the historical memory narration inspire patriotism and evoke feelings of solidarity. The case of Sino-Japanese relations proves this point. Nationalism has been a historically-grounded factor defining bilateral relations, and through its institutionalization it shapes the current relations and influences the foreign policy decision-making to the present day.

Axiological Argumentation

The main purpose of this thesis is to reconstruct the axiological basis of the Chinese ideological – nationalistic – discourse in Sino-Japanese relations. Nationalistic discourse is created around disputable issues of a political or ethical nature, which are subjects of axiological argumentation. Axiological argumentation is a form of argumentation in which the audience's task is to decide whether the proposed argument is sound or unsound in relation to the value system of the audience's given culture. In the case of the Japanese Prime Minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, the aim of the axiologically based arguments is to validate the visits as just or unjust. This occurs by

relating to culture's axiological basis, or simply put, set of commonly known and accepted beliefs. Since according to Chaim Perelman (Perelman, 2004) there is no universal objective truth, the only way to validate the argument is by refereeing it to a general axiological base – the referential framework – subjective by being culture-specific. Only an understanding of the specificity of the context and culturally dependent set of interpretants allows us therefore to understand the justifications of the arguments.

In axiological discourse, from the perspective of the proponent, the best choice of materials for the argument is based on “cultural objects,” which constitutes the axiological base of a given culture. These objects are a set of widely accepted, culturally enrooted sets of beliefs, evaluations, or preferences – found in collective symbols.

Collective symbols are universals operating in a particular culture. Each culture extracts and evaluates these collective symbols as representations of beliefs. Michael Fleischer defines them as follows:

“Collective symbol” is a set of signs with intricate and fully developed interpretant. For this reason they manifest the cultural meanings, depending on the particular manifestation of the culture, as well as strong positive or negative values shared by the entire given culture, hence they give a frame of reference for differentiation of values. In order to properly interpret a collective symbol, the interpreter needs to have a particular knowledge regarding the semiotic and (most importantly) the signifying aspects of the interpretant. This knowledge is acquired both through culturally-influenced process of socialization, as well as by means of communication within the culture's discourse, which allows the participant to adequately communicate in his interdiscourse. The cultural meaning is most often quite different from the lexical, linguistic one. The collective symbols are the most important elements of interdiscourse” (Fleischer, 2002).

According to Michael Fleischer, collective symbols are internally differentiated and consist of three counterparts:

a) kernel, very stable, functionally responsible for consistency of the symbol and its anchoring in a given culture;

b) up-to-date area, responsible for the particular meaning in the society of a given culture;

c) connotative area, responsible for the dependency of the symbol on the natural language and lexical meanings. (Fleischer, 2007)

There is also a subclass of collective symbols, which are called ideological objects. They differ from the collective symbols because even within the same culture they can adapt different designations. This has the potential to create competing ideological systems in which they are evaluated differently. Typically, any real, individual object has an unlimited number of parameters, and for this reason, the crux of the argument lays in a particular reduction of these parameters and their subsequent evaluation. A biased selection of parameters, transforming collective symbols into ideological ones, can change entirely the reference to the ideological space. In accordance with this premise “Yasukuni” is a cultural object, or as we have established – a collective symbol -- that through different ideological attributions becomes an ideological symbol. The biased selection of the parameters in regard to Yasukuni can thus allow for a construction of a sound argument in favor of the official visits on behalf of the proponents, as well as a similarly sound argument against this kind of visit on behalf of the opponents. Yasukuni can at the same time refer to pride, glory, and honor, as well as horror, shame and regret.

A fully comprehensive reconstruction of the axiological basis at the core of Sino-Japanese disputes would require a detailed analysis of the use of the axioms in the argumentative discourse of all the political issues between China and Japan on both sides in both languages, which is not at stake in this research. Instead, focusing in particular on the Yasukuni Shrine issue, the author will reconstruct the collective symbol in relation to the problems it causes in an international arena. For this purpose, Chapter 3 will

concentrate on the kernel of the collective symbol by describing how it is rooted in Chinese and Japanese cultural in historical perspective; Chapter 4 will provide the analysis of the symbol's up-to-date area, or in other words, the meanings that the symbol acquires by different ideological attributions; Chapter 5 will analyze the connotative area of the symbol by presenting some of the possible arguments used in the ideological disputes; and, finally, Chapter 6 will present a case study related to the symbol's usage and rhetoric around it in articles from *People's Daily* in regard to Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's visit to the shrine in December of 2013.

The main argument of the paper can be presented as follows: the analysis of Sino-Japanese ideological discourse in relation to Yasukuni Shrine will identify the underlying axiological basis, understood as the set of beliefs commonly accepted and taken for granted by each of the cultures in which they are embedded. These sets of beliefs are in the author's view tantamount with the social constructs at the core of both of the societies, and, thus, they can provide guidelines for understanding the political-nationalistic identities, which shed light on the possible reactions of the states on the international arena.

CHAPTER III

YASUKUNI: THE KERNEL

In order to better understand the international reactions caused by the official visits of the Japanese Prime Minister (PM) or the members of his cabinet to the shrine, it is crucial to understand the multiplicity of issues, controversies, ideological attributions and emotions that Yasukuni evokes. For this purpose, it is beneficial to first answer the question of: What is Yasukuni? Although the question seems quite simple, depending on the perspective taken, it is subject to many contending answers and understandings. In terms of the previously presented framework of the analysis of axiological argumentation, the following chapter will first present the Yasukuni shrine as an object belonging to “reality” –free of communications—that belongs already to the socially constructed “actuality.” While identifying some of the collective symbols present at the shrine by providing the knowledge of the context, some examples of their usage in the connotative area will follow. Finally, the next chapter will answer the question of how Yasukuni becomes an overall collective symbol.

Yasukuni – object of reality

Yasukuni Shrine was established in 1869. Nowadays, Yasukuni is a “touristic” destination, in as much as it receives approximately 8 million visitors per year (Harootunian, 1999, p. 150). From an objective perspective of someone without the culture-specific contextual knowledge, it is first and foremost a complex of buildings situated in the center of Japan’s capital, right outside the Imperial Palace moat. The shrine’s topographical placement allows an unaware tourist to find himself on the premises of the complex without the intention to visit it. At the entrance to the complex

there is the stone pillar with the inscription of “靖国神社” (靖国 - “Yasukuni,” 神社 - *Jinja*, “shrine”), which already identifies the place as a shrine, but to understand the engravings some kind of linguistic knowledge is already required. Then, there is the imposing *Daiichi Torii*,⁶ (“First Shrine Gate or the Great Gate”), the tallest of its kind. For a visitor without the cultural specific knowledge, the torii gate may be overlooked and treated as a decorative kind of metal construction. It is in fact the first collective symbol present at the shrine that represents Shintoism. It marks the boundary between the terrestrial and spiritual realm, and refers to a long-lasting tradition of placing this kind of structure in front of temples, shrines, and other areas of spiritual importance. Thus with proper identification of the symbol, Yasukuni transforms from a merely architectonic structure (object of reality) to a place of spiritual importance (object of socially constructed actuality).

On the immediate right of the first *torii* gate, the visitors can find a monument in memory of the Hitachi Maru Incident, an event that took place during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, in which three Japanese transporter ships were sunk by the Russian fleet. Walking further down, one passes by the first western-style statue in Japan, or the statue of “the Father of Modern Japanese Army”– Omura Masujiro (1824-1869),⁷ who introduced western military training not only to samurai, but also to the commoners. Omura is further an important figure in that he argued for the abolishment of the feudal army and the samurai class, as well as the introduction of national military conscription.

⁶ *Torii* – specifically shaped gate is usually found at the entrance to a Shinto shrine, but also at the entrance to other religious spaces.

⁷ <http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/precinct/statue3.html> [access on May 7th 2016]

Although Omura did not live to see the introduction of the reforms he supported, having died as a result of a pro-samurai ambush, the legacy of his ideas marked the beginning of militaristic reform in Meiji Japan. The two monuments bring to the foreground yet another symbol – loyalty in the form of military service, which at Yasukuni Shrine serves the commemorative function of a memorial place dedicated to the war dead who gave up their lives for the nation, manifested in the monuments in honor of war heroes.

Finally, the visitor to Yasukuni arrives to the main complex marked by the biggest bronze *torii* gate in Japan – the *Daini Torii* (“Second Shrine Gate”), dating back to 1887; and a cypress gate adorned with 1.5 meter wide, sixteen-petal chrysanthemums seals, the official *mon*⁸ of the Imperial house, on its doors – the *Shinmon* (“Main Gate”). At this point one more purpose of the complex can be identified, namely the link to the Imperial house in form of the usage of the chrysanthemum *mon*.

Crossing the main gate brings the visitor to a cherry tree garden with a Nogakudo – a Noh theater—on the right. Noh dramas and traditional Japanese dance are performed on its stage in honor of the resident divinities, whereas the cherry blossoms are related to the long tradition of Japanese affection towards this particular kind of tree. According to Yasukuni’s official website: “Each year, the Japan Meteorological Agency bases its cherry blossom flowering forecasts on the cherry trees at Yasukuni Shrine,”⁹ which

⁸ Japanese form of coat of arms. Chrysanthemum mon is used either only by the Emperor himself, or on items that represent Emperor’s authority, like the Diet members’ pins and orders, or the front of the Japanese passport’s cover.

⁹ <http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/precinct/cherrytrees.html> [access on May 7th 2016]

further points to the importance of the place for Japan in general.¹⁰ Several teahouses, a Japanese garden, and a sumo ring can also be found within the boundaries of Yasukuni's premises. As John Breen points out: "At the early stage it [Yasukuni] was a place of respect and veneration, but also, for the purpose of dissemination of the concepts it stood for, it was also a place of entertainment" (Breen, *Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan's Past*, 2008).

From here the path open to the visitor is twofold: in front, there is the final *torii* gate behind which *Haiden* – the Main Hall, and *Honden* – the Main Shrine, are found; whereas to the right the visitors can find the Yushukan – the controversial museum presenting relics of the wars in which Japan took part; Yasukuni archives – which collect data related to the life and circumstances of the death of the Yasukuni deities; the Monument of Dr. Pal, added in 2005, which honors the only Asian judge at the International Tribunal for the Far East, and the only one who insisted that all defendants were not guilty (In his opinion American and Britain were the real aggressors and not the Japanese); and finally, the Statue of War Widow with Children – "a tribute to the many war widows who did such a fine job of raising their children in the face of incredible hardship and loneliness."¹¹

Aside from the main complex, three more buildings require particular attention: the *Reijibo Hoanden* ("the Repository for the Symbolic Registers of Divinities"), situated behind the main shrine, where the list of names of all the deities worshipped at Yasukuni

¹⁰ More on the symbolism and cultural importance of the cherry blossoms in relation to Yasukuni in the chapter 4.

¹¹ <http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/precinct/statue1.html> [access on May 7th 2016]

Shrine is kept; the *Motomiya* (“the Original Shrine”) hidden on the left side of the Main Shrine, apparently the prototype of the current Yasukuni Shrine moved to Tokyo from Kyoto, where it was originally established by imperial loyalists at the end of Tokugawa period; and the *Chinreisha* – “Spirit-Pacifying Shrine,” right next to the Original Shrine, which was built in 1965 to console the souls of everyone who died in wars fought anywhere in the World.

It is the story and symbolism of these structures, behind the Main Gate, that are the main subject of the domestic and international controversies. Should Yasukuni be only a Shinto shrine with the intention to commemorate the war dead under the austerities of the Imperial House, such a place would not raise much criticism. “National war memorial” is a universally accepted norm, and state officials have a moral duty to visit such memorials (Meng, 2014). Most of the countries across the world have places of similar purpose that are also religious sites – for example the Arlington Cemetery in the United States. After all, rituals regarding the dead are usually held on religious grounds or in observance of religious traditions. Commemoration of the fallen in battles is, after all, a common practice for the leaders of modern nations. Yasukuni, though, is much more than just a place of remembrance. In fact, the Yasukuni issue contains controversies of a religious, ideological, political, and historical nature as well as conflicting perceptions towards history and identity. In Takashi Mikuriya’s (Matsumoto, Mikuriya i Sakamoto, 2005) words, the problem of Yasukuni is a ‘simultaneous equation’ of all of these aspects.

Yasukuni – collective symbol

At the time of its establishment in 1869, Yasukuni Shrine, initially called Tōkyō Shōkonsha (東京招魂社 "shrine to summon the souls") was intended to be a memorial monument commemorating those who gave up their lives for the Japanese newly-born nation. Indeed, the first 7,000 souls or so enshrined at Yasukuni were the souls of the imperial loyalist soldiers who fell during the Boshin War – the Japanese civil war between the forces of the Tokugawa shogunate and the supporters of the revival of the Imperial Court. The current name – Yasukuni Jinja (靖国神社 “shrine to protect the peace of the nation”) was established only in 1879. By then the shrine’s pantheon included the *kami* (spirits) of the fallen in the first overseas expedition of modernizing Japan – the Taiwan invasion of 1874. The following veneration of a bigger scale were related to the international military conflicts in which Japan had entered at the turn of the century, namely the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), 13,000 souls; and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), 89,000 souls. Sadly, the larger amount of casualties was a fertile ground for usage of Shinto to further propagate the narrative of the “glorious war dead” and solidify culturally the importance of the Shrine in the public life of modern Japan. The real big numbers though are related to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1941), 191,000 souls; and the Pacific War (1941-1945), over 2 million souls, which accounts for over 85% of all the souls enshrined at Yasukuni in total.

With the end of the WWII, in accordance with the provisions of the Shinto Directive, the official relations of the State and Shinto, including funding, were put to an end. “Section j)” of the Directive requires particular attention: “The use in official

writings of the terms ‘Greater East Asia War,’ ‘The Whole World under One Roof,’ and all other terms whose connotation in Japanese is inextricably connected with State Shinto, militarism, and ultra-nationalism is prohibited and will cease immediately” (The Shinto Directive, 1960). Such phrasing was not repeated in later regulations, thus allowing Yushukan war museum to use the controversial term “Greater East Asia War.”

In the early post-war period, even with the enacted provisions of the Shinto Directive, Yasukuni was very lucky. First of all, despite the American bombings of Tokyo, which destroyed the city and killed at least 100,000 citizens, Yasukuni survived intact (Breen, *Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan's Past*, 2008). Secondly, with the cutting off of state funding, the future of the shrine was very uncertain; still as Breen (2008) points out: the Yasukuni Worshippers’ Society (Yasukuni jinja hosankai) includes “an imperial princess as president, a former Foreign minister as vice-president and a former Prime Minister and company presidents as consultants, [so] it is not surprising that fundraising [for the shrine] proved highly successful.” The subject of national-mythmaking, was apparently too precious to let it perish in ruins.

In the years after the Occupation, Yasukuni shifted from the center of attention, but was never forgotten or neglected. All prime ministers of the Liberal Democratic Party since 1945, except Takeshita Noboru, attended the spring and autumn festivals celebrated at the shrine. The illegality of prime minister’s visits has been challenged every year in the Diet, and the petitions for renewed state support of the Yasukuni Shrine started as early as 1956 (Hardacre, 1989). The year 1978 marks a date that meant a lot for the future of Yasukuni, since it was in 1978 that the secret enshrinement of Class-A War Criminals occurred. This single event is fiercely criticized, and constitutes the main reason for the

official visits at Yasukuni, as at least rhetorically speaking, it opens ground to a whole new level of arguments for the Chinese side.

In the early 2000's, during his electoral campaign, Junichiro Koizumi publically promised to pay tribute at the shrine every year of his term in office. After becoming the prime minister, he indeed paid visits every year between 2001 and 2006, which resulted with suspended diplomatic relations with China. Since then, the last time Yasukuni made it to the headlines of newspapers across the globe was in relation to Abe Shinzo's visit to the shrine on December 13th 2013. In order to provide a perspective on ideological attributions towards Yasukuni that occur in Chinese nationalistic discourse, the Chinese reactions in regard to this visit published in *People's Daily* will be further analyzed as a case study in Chapter 6. The following chapter will present the meanings of Yasukuni, which although presented separately, are all intertwined, and should be acknowledged together. It is precisely because of the interaction between them that Yasukuni emerges as a collective symbol and the controversies around the shrine arise.

CHAPTER IV

YASUKUNI: UP-TO-DATE AREA

In a political sense, history is not facts, but rather their interpretations. It is not what happened that matters, but what the events can mean, and how they can be used. History can be used as the fuel for the creation of an identity. As Gillis points out, memory is also a subjective phenomenon (Gillis, 1994). In regard to the previously explained theoretical framework, it is the discourse of the historical subsystem. Historical memory is in this case “the lens which gives understanding and interpretation in approach to conflict resolution” (Wang, 2012). As pointed out in the introduction, contemporary Sino-Japanese relations, despite official stabilization, are witnessing numerous events resulting in rhetorical disputes that by referring to culture-specific sets of collective symbols allow the proponents of the arguments to ignite emotional – nationalistic – reactions. In the case of Sino-Japanese relations, the core of the nationalistic disputes lays in the approach to history adopted by the opposing sides, in particular to issues of memory.

As the history proves, the politics of memory has been a crucial tool in political transition throughout the world, and the East Asian powers conform to this tendency. The resurgence of radical nationalism in East Asia could be first observed in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Cold War’s balance of power. The new political circumstances of the international arena have caused among many nations a need to redefine their national identities. In the case of China and Japan, the construction of the new identity was correlated with the rising nationalistic interests manifested in the redefinition of historical memory. The past advocated through the narratives of historical

memory usually serves to legitimize the political power of the ruling elites. According to Wang (2012): “historical memory is not just a post hoc rationalization of behavior motivated by national interests but rather a direct source of policy behavior motivation.”

Understanding the history of Yasukuni, or the role it has played in the history of Japan, is important for a better comprehension of the issues that the shrine raises in general. As mentioned previously, the ideological disputes in Sino-Japanese relations refer mainly to the approach towards history. At Yasukuni, the history emerges in several ways. The shrine’s history is closely related to the history of Japanese nationalism, the history of Japanese militarism, and the history of modern Japan in general. Even in the present day, the shrine is a powerful symbol used by the supporters of nationalistic movements. The previously mentioned Meiji Restoration was an enterprise of deep social and psychological change. It was arguably one of the most prominent examples of implementation of social engineering in practice. In order to support the initial political change of the passage from Tokugawa’s feudal regime into an Imperial nation-state, and legitimize the new power, Japan underwent a process of nation-building at every social level, including the religious sphere. In order to achieve the status of a modern nation, Japan, following the example of the Western nations, not only introduced national military service, a national education system, and political institutions copied from the Western powers, but also, unlike the West, reinvented the tradition of Shinto and proclaimed it to be the national religion of Japan. Thus, the establishment of Yasukuni was, crucial for the Meiji Government from a nation-building aspect. Moreover, as a memorial place, Yasukuni relates to history by commemorating those from the past. As a monument it is a historic symbol of the glorious past. And finally, because of the

presence of the archives and the Yushukan museum, it is a place that creates and propagates a certain kind of historical narrative. As Ann Sherif states: “Yasukuni represents Japan as the future warrior rather than a defeated nation honoring its past” (Sherif, 2007). Indeed, it is the shrine’s role in glorifying Japan’s war past, through the Yushukan “war museum,” and the secret enshrinement of the Class-A war criminals in October 1978, that cause the biggest outrage among the opponents of the shrine (Meng, 2014).

Until the Meiji Restoration, although Shinto was present and observed since antiquity, it was Buddhism that predominantly occupied the religious landscape of Japan. In 1868 the Meiji government suspended official patronage of Buddhism and began the Great Promulgation Campaign, which was supposed to propagate the indigenous Japan-specific religion – Shinto—as a national religion (Hardacre, 1989). The Great Promulgation Campaign reminds us of some of the concerns of the previous leadership in regard to the appearance of the Westerners. Part of the isolationist policy, implemented during the Tokugawa era (1603-1868), was intended to prevent the Western dissemination of Christianity, which was seen, in current political terms, as a “soft power” tool used by the European imperialist powers to influence foreign cultures. When these powers could not efficiently penetrate the markets, they would send their missionaries to “penetrate people’s minds” and create more favorable conditions for the reception of the West. In a similar way, the Meiji Government wanted to use the potential of dissemination that a religion can offer by using Shinto as a medium of national indoctrination. In fact, the establishment of the Yasukuni shrine, soon after the change of leadership, was far from accidental. Under the Tokugawa shogunate, Japan was

organized according to “centralized feudalism,” with the capital at Edo. The Edo-based shogunate possessed hegemonic authority, but has not created a specific, unified identity for the whole country. In order to use the resources of the whole nation, in particular the ability to access the full militaristic potential in the form of its soldiers, the Meiji reformers had to find a factor that would bring people, who had been living for centuries in their own prefectures, together. A common national identity was a must for the successful development of the national conscription army, and thus the new mythologies were constructed. The mythical aspects of nationalism are essential for the creation of national identity, as they “cloak the differences” and “highlight the commonalities” within the nation, while differentiating the members of other nations (Guibernau, 1996, pp.80-82). The search for all “essentially Japanese,” meaning different and unique from other cultures, had begun, and where it could not be found, it was constructed anew or appropriated using old traditions and concepts.

Shinto had been present in Japan since antiquity, which was used astutely by the Meiji Government. The legitimacy of the supreme leader of the new nation – the emperor – was constructed around the myth of his direct descent from the Sun Goddess Amaterasu – the mythological mother of Japan, one of the central figures in Shinto mythology. People had to believe in something that would justify, or even glorify, dying for non-spiritual reasons like the new “imagined” nation of Japan. Elevating the Emperor to a status of demigod and establishing a shrine for those who would give up their lives in his name, and by extension in the name of Amaterasu, was one of the ways to achieve that instead. Since the *kami* of the fallen heroes were enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine, their social status was brought closer to Amaterasu and to the Emperor himself. The Emperor’s

respects paid at Yasukuni would further bring honor and recognition not only to the fallen soldiers, but also to their entire families; after all the descendent of the Goddess herself paid his respects to the dead. As John Breen (Breen, Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan's Past, 2008, p. 13) puts it:

"Yasukuni was, from the moment of its creation, distinctive among these shrines either created anew or newly appropriated and transformed by the modern state. It was so in its relationship to the military, to the emperor himself and to society at large. Yasukuni, alone among modern Japan's shrines, was overseen jointly by the Army and Navy ministries, and they ensured that it never wanted for funding."

The nature of Shintoism allowed it to coexist with other religious beliefs and to supplement the spiritual needs of the believers. Thus the Shinto represented in Yasukuni is part of the "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm) introduced in Japan only at the end of the nineteenth century, and the rites performed by the Shinto priests of Yasukuni do not derive from the ancient traditions only, but are modern appropriations of the older beliefs. The differences between Shintoism in its traditional form and Shinto State, as the construct of the Meiji Restoration, creates arguments against the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, referring to the fact that the Prime Minister is not using his right to the freedom of religion, secured by article 20 of the Japanese Constitution, but rather paying respects to what Yasukuni Shrine stands for in ideological terms – Japan's imperialistic past. Although paying respects at a national war memorial is a universally accepted norm, which involves the moral duty of the leadership to respect the memory of those who gave up their lives for the sake of their country – and the Shintoist rituals of apotheosis, veneration and propitiation are indeed part of Japanese cultural uniqueness – Yasukuni Shrine performs them selectively by observing only the spirits of the glorious soldiers, not the war dead. Souls of people who died as a result of the war, like victims of the

Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, for instance, are denied their space at Yasukuni. The two types of rites performed at Yasukuni are: the rite of apotheosis – elevation of the spirits to the status of *kami*; and the rite of propitiation – veneration and pacification of the enshrined *kami* (Breen, 2004). The first rite is continuing the tradition of the promise made to soldiers that their souls will be elevated to godly status. *Kami*, often translated as ‘deity’ or ‘spirit’, are a form of spiritual beings nonexistent in other religions. They are a manifestation of the universe’s energy that is part of the nature and their worship is central to Shinto’s belief. Their character can be positive or negative, granting either blessings or cursing the humans. According to Shinto beliefs, souls of those who died too soon can seek vengeance and curse the people. The rite of propitiation is meant to pacify them and change their nature from evil spirits into benevolent ones. John Breen explains the rite in following words:

“*Goryo* cults involve the belief that the spirits of (usually) noble men and women who died inauspicious deaths are angry and resentful on account of their lives being cut prematurely short and, in their anger and resentment, return to curse the living and wreak havoc upon them. If, however, the living propitiate the angry spirits with the right offerings, then the angry spirits may be persuaded to desist from destruction and, indeed, to deploy their numinous powers to protect and bring solace to the living.” (Breen, Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan's Past, 2008, p. 146)

The defenders of Yasukuni Shrine bring this tradition as an argument for the importance of paying respect to the *kami* of Yasukuni, so that the spirits will not haunt the people, but there is no explanation given to the possible haunting of the people by *kami* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims. In an attempt to partially address this issue, the *Chinreisha* – “Spirit-Pacifying Shrine,” was built to pacify the souls of all the war dead around the world. Not only is it a smaller shrine, hidden in the corner of the complex, but

also throughout the history of its existence, it was fenced in order to stop its public observance. It is also not the subject of the main rituals performed at Yasukuni.

Another example of the meanings created by Yasukuni can be found in reference to cultural tokens. The cherry blossoms, mentioned previously, in Japanese culture and tradition stand for the soul of Japan. In a historical perspective, the Japanese have started to admire, praise, and associate the Japanese identity with the blossoms of these trees in response to the Chinese tradition of the similar cultural approach towards plum trees. The cherry blossom was therefore one of the older means to differentiate “us” – the cherry-like Japanese, from “them” – the plum-like Chinese. By the time of the Meiji Restoration the cherry blossoms had become a trope in Japanese art and literature that would refer to the concept of *mono no aware* that can be understood as the acknowledgment of the ephemerality of life and nature. Indeed, since the cherry blossoms fall from the trees once they have achieved their final, most beautiful form, they were used as a metaphor of mortality and acceptance of human’s destiny. The appreciation of this concept led to the tradition of *hanami* or the observance of flowers that already in *The Tale of Genji* (arguably the first world’s novel, written in the eleventh century) refers to the observance of the cherry blossoms in particular. Up to the present day, the tradition is very popular among the Japanese population. The beautiful blossoms encourage people to gather under the trees and find time to enjoy the beauty of nature for as long as it lasts, while at the same time giving reasons to contemplate the ephemerality of one’s own existence. In fact, at Yasukuni the cherry trees were originally planted to console the souls of the fallen soldiers and for the joy of the visitors to the shrine. As the processes of Meiji militarization accelerated, the same cherry blossoms were used as a metaphor for young

soldiers who, like the falling cherry petals, in the prime of their lives, would face their demise. Additionally, Japan's government would mark its presence in the newly acquired colonies by "beautifying" the landscape with the imported cherry trees. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney provides a full analysis of how this aesthetics was used by the militarist government to promote a militaristic agenda and the sacrifice made by the kamikaze pilots (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2010). The cherry blossoms are therefore not only the beautiful metaphor of "the Japanese soul," but also a reminder of the deaths of young men, as well as Japan's colonialism in Asia.

The up-to-date area of the Yasukuni as a collective symbol, manifested in the meanings presented above, allows for the reference towards shared ideological beliefs in the process of the argument-construction, which subsequently are found just or unjust depending on the ideological preferences of the audience. The next chapter will present some of the uses of these meanings in practice.

CHAPTER V

YASUKUNI: CONNOTATIVE AREA

Since axiological argumentation refers to matters of religion, ethics, and politics, among others, the collective symbol of Yasukuni Shrine can be easily used as an ideological object supporting the justifications of the arguments used in such a type of argumentation. The following chapter presents arguments in regard to the religious, political and ethical issues related to Yasukuni Shrine and its official observance by the Japanese Prime Minister.

Yasukuni – religious aspects

Seki Hei (Breen, Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan's Past, 2008) uses the spiritual argument in argumentation based on the differences in Chinese and Japanese religiosity. The current leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the 4th and 5th generation in particular, were brought up in communist China, where atheism prevailed over religious beliefs of the past, and as a result explains their lack of understanding of religious importance. On the contrary, Japanese leaders see religious expression as an immanent part of their life, since Shinto was always present in Japan and thus is observed by the political elites in their private manner. In other words, Chinese critics of the Japanese PM's religiously-grounded explanations in regard to paying respects to the souls of the fallen are unsound, as the concept of soul does not exist in the mind of Chinese leadership. This claim is supported with the example of Chairman Mao's Memorial Hall in Beijing, where up to the present day the late chairman's body is displayed, and it is "the materialistic" object of memory and political legitimization and not a "spiritual/esoteric" one (Hei, 2008). This kind of argumentation is an outstanding

example of the ideological nature of the dispute, as it relates to the axiological beliefs related to the afterlife on both sides of the dispute. To bring another example of the usage of Shinto's meaning in the connotative area of the collective symbol, Nitta Hitoshi's argument grounded in beliefs helps in providing an understanding. His argument relates to the fact that for the veterans, Yasukuni is the place of reunion with the comrades to whom they promised to "meet again at Yasukuni." The families of the soldiers departing to war would also promise to visit them there at Yasukuni, should the soldiers not return home. According to Hitoshi:

"If one makes a promise to the living, the arrangement can be changed as and when the circumstances require, but there can be no such revising of promises made with and received from the deceased. [...] If the living were to change the arrangement to meet a new set of personal circumstances, it would be tantamount to a betrayal. If the living deceive the dead this way, consoling the spirit of the dead can have no meaning whatsoever" (Hitoshi, 2008).

This statement hides two underlying premises concerning the spirits of the dead: first, that they exist; second, that their consolation has an important meaning, which is undeniably true for the Shinto practitioners, but it omits the fact that "the promise" itself was part of militaristic propaganda.

Yasukuni – ethical aspects

In legal terms Yasukuni brings further disputes related to the understanding of the Japanese Constitution. According to the rulings of the Fukuoka Court and Osaka Court, the Prime Minister's official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine breach the Constitutional provisions of separation of state and religion. On the other hand, the same article assures freedom of religion, in which case the PM as a private subject has all the rights to execute his freedom. The article 20 of the Constitution of Japan reads, as follows:

1. Freedom of Religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the state, nor exercise any political authority.
2. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts, celebration, right or practice.
3. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.¹²

The Prime Minister, as a public servant of a very high rank, should undisputedly follow the Constitution as he is representing the government that uses it to sustain itself, but this creates a paradox in which by observing the provisions of the constitution he either breaks its laws, or denies himself the rights provided by it. That paradox would be true if not for the Article 89 of the constitution, which states:

“No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority.”¹³

The Prime Minister’s visits to the Shrine in a private capacity, meaning without public announcements of the visit, with no use of public money for the offerings and no use of the government’s vehicles or the official title, would not cause any problems. But there is a “catch 22” observed by the opponents of the visits. The Prime Minister, by being a public official of high rank, is being protected by the secret service funded from public money, and thus his visits to the Shrine involve public funding.

There is another legal dimension pointed out by Takehashi Tetsuya (2003), known for his critique of nationalist right-wing policies. He fiercely addresses the issue related to the enshrinement of the Class-A War Criminals, which points not only towards the denial of Japan’s responsibility for its colonial past, but also to the current

¹² *The Constitution of Japan*, Article 20 (1947).

¹³ *The Constitution of Japan*, Article 89 (1947).

government's political agenda. He criticizes the reduction of the problem of the PM's visits to just the observance of enshrined Class-A war criminals. Such presentation of the issue overshadows many other controversial deeds of the other war dead enshrined at Yasukuni. The de-enshrinement of Class-A War Criminals would not solve the problem, but only bury the real issue – support of militarism. The new national site of mourning as the solution would also not solve the problem. The voices advocating for this solution sound like an expectation of a new generation of “fallen soldiers.” The PM's visits to Yasukuni and the attempts to reestablish national patrimony of the shrine are intended to re-acustom the Japanese population to the military narrative and to help the political elites to argue in favor of the abolishment of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, known as “the peace clause,” which prohibits Japan from having a regular army.

The PM's visits are also referred to from a more ethical perspective relating to the imperial connections to the shrine. Since Emperor Hirohito was granted immunity during the Tokyo Trials, and was thus not held responsible for the war atrocities despite being the chief commander and the leader of the nation at the time, why should his people feel any guilt? The same emperor was the head of the country before the war and after, so the sacrifices made in the war did not serve only the militaristic government, but also the future Japan. As John Dower observes: “Emperor Hirohito became postwar Japan's preeminent symbol, and facilitator, of non-responsibility and non-accountability” (Dower, 2012).

Yasukuni – political aspects

Finally, Yasukuni is used in political terms both at the domestic and international level. For Japanese politicians, Yasukuni visits are important in order to win the

nationalistic part of the electorate. According to *Mainichi Daily News* poll from 2006, 50% of Japanese supported PM Koizumi's visit to the shrine¹⁴ (Rose, 2008). The younger generations of nationalists are tired of the apologetic tone of Japanese diplomacy and demand a more assertive approach. Criticism of the country is seen as "unpatriotic," which is fueled by official statements of politicians, academics, and ultra-conservative rightwing supporters. The Chinese and Korean reactions to the PM's visits are presented as interference into Japan's internal affairs on behalf of the generally skeptical neighbors, who through their rhetorical machinations are trying to demote Japan from its place as a global leader. Yasukuni can further be seen as a tool of interference into the domestic policy of China. Since the anti-Japanese sentiments in China are strong, the Japanese PM's visits to Yasukuni will have to meet with a reaction on behalf of the Chinese government. That precise reaction can possibly turn into anti-Japanese protests, which, with enough friction, can morph into protests against the government in general. The lack of any reaction can trigger protests of dissatisfaction with the leadership's weakness, which the CCP tries to avoid at all costs. Thus the political gains in the international arena can be observed on both sides. What is important to remember, though, is that for as much as many countries fear the Chinese increasing in strength, its weakness is also a cause of fear. In a paradoxical way, in order to sustain the current international system, China cannot fail, but at the same time, the more its power grows, the more security dilemmas arise.

¹⁴ '50% of Japanese support Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni shrine, 17 August 2006.

Yasukuni – conclusion

For Japan, Yasukuni is a memory of the past: the glorious past and the fearful past. Disregarding it completely would make the deaths of all those who died for the greatness of the nation to have fought in vain. But at the same time it calls to mind all the futile deaths that the war has brought. The ideology propagated through Yasukuni at the time of its establishment was an important factor in the nation-building enterprise and helped to create the unifying spirit of national identity. It is part of the foundation of the Japanese nation, the same way Mao Zedong is the father of PRC, despite the fact that China suffered because of the Cultural Revolution that was launched because of him. Even if Mao has been critiqued by the following generations, saying that he was entirely wrong would discredit the trustworthiness of the political system founded by him. The problem then lies in the fact that not everything about Yasukuni can be discarded, but many of its aspects would benefit from a redefinition in the spirit that acknowledges the perpetrated atrocities that have happened due to the Japanese struggle for the recognition as a powerful modern state. For other Asian nations, Yasukuni is precisely the reminder of the lack of full responsibility for what happened. It is the reminder of all the war-related atrocities. Referring to John Breen's words once more: "It was the Japan of the Meiji constitution, over which the emperor, descended from the Sun goddess, ruled as 'sacred and inviolable'; it was the Japan in which the Imperial Army enjoyed extraordinary constitutional privileges; the Japan in which the Imperial rescript on education and its Confucian ethical imperatives were accorded sacred status. This was not the democratic Japan of individual freedoms and rights" (Breen, 2008).

CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY: ARTICLE ANALYSIS

The final chapter of this thesis is intended to present how the axiological basis of the discourse around Yasukuni is used in practice. The following analysis will present the reduction of Yasukuni's parameters by the Chinese Government in order to use it as an ideological object in its own nationalistic discourse. For the purpose of this paper, 101 articles were retrieved from the website of the online version of the Chinese newspaper – *People's Daily*.¹⁵ *People's Daily* is a state-run newspaper with an estimated circulation of 3 to 4 million readers. As much as the objectivity of the published articles is being criticized due to the close relation of the newspaper with the Communist Party, *People's Daily* is an excellent medium for the analysis of the Party's policies and viewpoints. The image of Abe Shinzō, as well as opinions on his visits to Yasukuni shrine, can be therefore treated as the extension of the government's standpoint and provide the information on the rhetoric used by the CCP to influence the domestic public opinion. Moreover, the arguments and the connotations in which the image is presented will serve to portray the use of Yasukuni as a collective symbol in the ideological attribution of anti-Japanese nationalistic discourse.

Although the online version of the newspaper can be accessed in different foreign languages, the ties with the Party pose problems in analysis of the content. One of the main obstacles can be found in the meanings “lost in translation”. The foreign versions of the articles tend to have a less aggressive tone, and the content of the articles focuses more on Chinese foreign policies, thus transforming the newspaper into a direct tool of

¹⁵ <http://world.people.com.cn/GB/8212/191606/372930/> accessed on June 12th 2014.

"soft power" propaganda, rather than a medium for report of an objective truth. Taking this into consideration, all the data collected for the purposes of this thesis was retrieved in Chinese. For this reason, the analysis presented here is just an attempt to recreate the image of Abe Shinzō as disseminated by the Chinese Government through the public press, in order to point toward further research. The author is fully aware that for a more conclusive interpretation of the presented data, there is a need for revision of it by an expert with higher proficiency in the Chinese language. Similarly, in order to recreate the entire image of Abe Shinzō in the Chinese press, there is a need for further research on a bigger variety of sources.

All the articles used in the analysis were posted from January 2nd to February 26th 2014. The collected data forms a representative corpus of text composed of 106,827 Chinese characters. Since the majority of Chinese characters are morphemes and there is no need for space to separate words, the characters were first separated into larger meaningful units that would facilitate analysis (words, idioms, metaphoric expressions, etc.) and later checked for any possible errors. This process provided 56,244 separate words in total, among which 6,611 words were of distinct, separate meaning. Due to the isolating nature of the Chinese language the process of lemmatization was not required; regardless of their grammatical or syntactical functions the Chinese words do not change their orthographic form. The final data retrieved in this way was subsequently analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative analysis

For the purpose of the quantitative analysis, words of semantically similar meanings were categorized into larger groups. Uncategorized words irrelevant for the purposes of this research (among which were for example the words with only grammatical function, such as particles) were discarded. This process was an attempt to establish semantic categories in order to present the most objective reflection of the reality created through linguistic construction. The categories retrieved in this way will serve as the basis for the analysis of the image of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō created in *People's Daily*. Since most of the meaningful units in Chinese are two-character compounds, and the idiomatic expressions usually are formed by four-character compounds, the collocations given to the analyzed words were retrieved from a range of six characters to the left of the given word, and six to the right. In this manner the analysis would observe the meaningful units with their grammatical variations. The column Word% represents the percentage of the total number of occurrences in respect to the final number of words in the whole corpus of data. Table 1 shows the results of the categorization process.

Table 1.

Categories	Number of Occurrences	Word%
Japan	1510	2.68%
Yasukuni	1314	2.34%
Abe Shinzō	1212	2.15%
War	1170	2.08%
International Relations	1113	1.98%
Criticism	864	1.54%
Militarism	638	1.13%
China	567	1.01%
Crimes	471	0.84%
Peace	417	0.74%
USA	398	0.71%
History	345	0.61%
Harm	279	0.50%
Korea	227	0.40%
Fascism	105	0.19%
Germany	99	0.18%

a. Japan, Yasukuni, and Abe Shinzō

Considering the topics of the articles it is not surprising that the three top categories regard "Japan", "Yasukuni" and "Abe Shinzō." The word "Japan," in any of its possible syntactical positions, has occurred 1,510 times and is a category of its own. The

category "Yasukuni" is composed of two groups: the direct references to the shrine, and words that could be separately categorized as "worship." For instance, the word 参拜 (cānbài) – meaning “to formally call on/to worship/to pay homage” appeared 517 times, and 供奉(gòngfèng) – “to enshrine and worship/an offering/a sacrifice”— 82 times. Both of the terms were used in close collocation with prime minister's name, primarily as a description of the action he undertook when visiting the the Yasukuni shrine. In the category "Abe Shinzō," beside the direct usage of the proper name, additional referential words were included, for example 首相(shǒuxiàng) - "prime minister" (249) and 领导人(lǐngdǎo rén) - "leader" (101).

b. War, militarism, and crime

Of particular interest were all references to war and army, divided into the categories of "War," "Militarism," and "Crimes." The three categories have obvious collocations with the topics of the articles, since Yasukuni is the shrine devoted to the souls of the war dead, and the 14 Class A war criminals are enshrined there. Additionally, it is being treated as the symbol of the militarist past of Japan. These three categories are the core of the controversies aroused by the prime minister's visits.

Most of the words constituting the category "War" had one character in common – 战 (zhàn), which on its own means “war/fight/battle/to fight.” The word 战争 (zhànzhēng) "war" occurred 222 times. The second biggest semantic collocation included in this category was 侵略(qīnlüè), which means "invasion" and occurred 199 times. The two words combined together form a compound noun 侵略战争 (qīnlüè zhànzhēng) or

"the invasive war," that occurred 84 times separately from the previous instances. Historical events, such as World War II (222), the invasion of China (65), the First and Second Sino-Japanese Wars (12), the Pacific War (14), and the Russo-Japanese War (5), were also included in this category. Under the category "Militarism" the most common character was 军 (jūn) "army/military/arms" and the top occurrence was 军国主义 (jūnguó zhǔyì) or "militarism" (235). The reference to the 军事法庭 (jūnshì fǎtíng) "the military tribunals" appeared 37 times. Finally, the category "Crimes" has enclosed all the references to the Class-A War Criminals enshrined in Yasukuni. The most commonly used word to refer to the war criminals was 战犯 (zhàn fàn) "war criminal" (176), that was preceded by 甲级 (jiǎjí) "first grade" in 122 cases. 罪行 (zuì xíng) "crime/offense" (39) was most commonly collocated with the word 战争 (zhàn zhēng), which formed another way of expressing "war crimes." The 南京大屠杀 (Nánjīng Dàtúshā) "the Nanjing massacre," and the 东京审判 (Dōngjīngshěnpàn) or "the Tokyo Trial," were also included in this category and they were mentioned 36 and 17 times respectively.

c. International relations, USA, Korea, China, and Germany

Another very relevant semantic category was constituted of words categorized under "International relations." The word 国际 (Guójì) "international" appeared on its own 286 times, and in 128 cases was followed by 社会 (shèhuì) "society." The most common collocates of "international" were 战后 (zhàn hòu) "post-war" and 秩序 (zhìxù) "social order" creating together the compound noun "post-war international order" (57). Another collocation was 挑战 (tiǎozhàn) meaning "challenge" (46). The category

"International relations" also included the 242 reference to diplomacy (ambassador - 133, diplomacy - 68, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – 35, embassy – 21, etc.), as well as 邻国 (línɡuó) "neighboring countries" (108), and 中日(zhōngrì) "Sino-Japanese" (111). The latter was most commonly collocated with 关系(guānxi) – "relations." The 23 references to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands disputes were also included in this category.

The USA, Korea, China, and Germany, were separated from the category "International relations" since the occurrences of this words and their collocations was found relevant for separate analysis. The word 美国(měiguó) "the United States" appeared in the corpus on its own 307 times, and it was collocated with the words 失望(shīwàng) - "disappointed/to lose hope" (27), 政府(zhèngfǔ) - "government" (32), and 国务院(guówùyuàn) - "State Department" (14). 美日关系(měi rì guānxi) - "American-Japanese relations" were evoked 14 times. The 227 occurrences of the word "Korea" were most closely collocated with the word "China;" most of the times the two countries were mentioned both as opposing Abe's visit to Yasukuni, as well as victims of Japan's militarist past. The word "China" appeared most often, with the collocation of 人民(rénmín) - "people" (96), and 大使(dàshǐ) - "ambassador" (70), pointing towards the two main subjects of the critique towards Abe Shinzō. 德国(déguó) - "Germany" was most closely collocated with 日本(riběn) - "Japan" (30), and 历史(lìshǐ) - "history" (22), both in meaning of shared history under the Axis alliance, as well as in the arguments about

the different way in which the two countries dealt with their war-related past. Germany was used as an example for Japan to follow in the future.¹⁶

d. History

The word "history" that appeared 345 times was collocated with 问题(wèntí) – "problem" (50), 反省(fǎnxǐng) – "to reflect upon oneself" (46), 侵略(qīnlüè) – "invasion" (97), 军国主义(jūnguó zhǔyì) – "militarism" 38, and 翻案(fān'àn) – "to present different views on a historical person or verdict" (29). These collocations indicate clearly the Chinese viewpoint on Japanese approach to history, and the rhetoric of its critique.

e. Harm

The two characters that have appeared most often in the compound words categorized as "harm" were 伤(shāng) "to injure/wound" (65), and 害(hài) "harm/evil/calamity" (130). In 28 cases they appeared together forming the compound 伤害(shānghài) "to injure/to harm". The words composed of 伤(shāng) were most closely collocated with 中国人民(zhōngguó rénmin) – "Chinese population" (28) and 感情(gǎnqíng) – "feeling/emotion" (12). Words containing 害(hài), on the other hand, appeared most often in close presence to 人民(rénmín) – "population" (59), 受(shòu) – "to receive/to suffer" (45), 严重(yánzhòng) – "grave/serious/critical" (29), and 和平(héping) – "peace" (22). Besides all of the words containing either 伤, or 害, the other

¹⁶ More details in the analysis of the category "fascism"

words that have been included in this category included 灾难(zāinàn) – "calamity" (30), 遗族(yízú) – "the bereaved" (27), and the reference to 慰安妇(wèi'ān fù) – "the comfort women" (13).

f. Peace

The word 和平(héping) – "peace" has appeared in all the articles 251 times. It was most often collocated with the words 世界(shìjiè) – "world" (70), 维护(wéihù) – "to protect/defend/uphold" (43), and 稳定(wěndìng) – "stability/to stabilize/to pacify" (37). The category "Peace" also included all the occurrences of the word 合作(hézuò) – "to cooperate" and 希望(xīwàng) – "to hope" (50), expressing the hope for Japan to 改善(gǎishàn) – "to improve" (29) relations with the neighboring countries, and the view of its own history.

g. Fascism

The category "Fascism" included all occurrences of the words 希特勒(xītèlēi) – "Hitler," 法西斯(fāxīsī) – "Fascist," and 纳粹(nàcuì) – "Nazi." The in-depth analysis of this category will be covered in the following section of qualitative analysis.

Qualitative analysis

The corpus of the collected data could be analyzed in detail in many aspects, but the qualitative analysis of the articles is concentrated mainly on one aspect. The category "Fascism" discovered during the quantitative analysis of the data appeared to be particularly interesting, and therefore the qualitative analysis will consist of closer

readings of the articles containing straight reference to this category. The so-called *argumentum ad hitlerum* is a well-known *ad hominem* and *ad misericordiam* fallacy, or a fallacy of irrelevance, which derives its rhetorical power from the mechanism of guilt by association. The use of this particular scheme in the case of the presented articles is not entirely fallacious, as one can find associations between Japanese militarist government of the WWII era and Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, in many cases, the comparison of Abe Shinzo to Hitler is fallaciously aimed to divert the attention from the main argument of the dispute towards the provocative associations that they engender.

h. "Fascism"

As we already saw in the quantitative analysis, the category "Fascism" was not the most popular in the corpus, yet in the author's opinion, it was the most interesting. After all, the semantics of this category are rhetorically extremely powerful and provocative, and they evoke one of the most shameful and horrifying facts, feelings, and memories of the history of humanity.

Altogether, out of the 101 articles the words from the category "Fascism" were used in the titles or leads of 11 of them (4 used 法西斯 (fàxīsi) - "fascism," three used 希特勒 (xītèlèi) - "Hitler," and 6 used 纳粹 (nàcuì) - "Nazi").¹⁷ Out of 51 uses of the word "fascism" in the whole corpus of data, it was used 26 times with the preceding particle 反 (fan) "oppose/ anti-." The following is an example of such usage with the collocation of the word "fascism" and "Abe Shinzō:"

¹⁷ In case of two articles more than one word of the category was used at the same time, therefore the final number of usages does not correspond to the number of articles.

安倍参拜靖国神社,是对世界反法西斯战争成果和战后国际秩序的挑战¹⁸

Abe's visit to Yasukuni Shrine is a challenge to the outcome of the world's Anti-Fascist war and the post-war international order.¹⁹

The word "Nazi" was used 35 times, and Hitler's name appeared 20 times. Out of the 11 articles, 5 of them were the translated statements of the Chinese Ambassadors to France, Mauritius, Great Britain, Italy, and the European Union; one was a biographic portrayal of all of the 14 Class-A war criminals; and the rest were general articles on Abe Shinzō's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. The article on the Class-A war criminals will not be analyzed in detail, since it is a historical portrayal. I will present briefly the main arguments against Abe Shinzō and the worship of Yasukuni stated in the other articles in the following section.

i. The Ambassador's reactions

In the corpus data 38 articles in total consisted of the reprinted commentaries of Chinese diplomatic envoys to foreign countries from all around the globe, including the Chinese official diplomatic representation to the EU and the UN. The previously mentioned international dimension of Yasukuni can be observed easily through the arguments and, most importantly, media in which they were reprinted abroad that were presented by *People's Daily*. Chinese outcry against Abe Shinzo's visit to the shrine has been presented in a global dimension. Out of all of the reactions, five of them directly used reference to fascism.

¹⁸"中国驻欧盟使团团长接受欧媒专访揭批安倍参拜靖国神社"
<http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0125/c1002-24225528.html> accessed on 06.12.2014.

¹⁹ All the translations in this section were performed by the author.

France

"中国驻法国大使法媒刊文:安倍拜鬼如同有人在希特勒墓前献花"²⁰ (Chinese Ambassador to France in an article published in French Media: Abe's Ghost Worshiping is Comparable to Someone's Offerings of Flowers at Hitler's grave) summarizes the arguments presented by the Chinese Ambassador to France, published in French newspaper "Le Figaro" on the 16th of January 2014 under the title "Why the Visit of the Japanese Prime Minister to the Yasukuni Shrine is a Shock for China?". Ambassador Zhai Jun, apart from comparing Yasukuni shrine to Hitler's grave, condemns the Yushukan Museum by giving the following arguments:

- It blames the outbreak of the Pacific War on the United States' and Britain's "provocation" and "oppression"; the purpose of war was "to get rid of white colonial rule in Asia."
- It denies the Nanjing Massacre. The museum does not mention the fact that the Japanese massacred more than 300,000 Chinese civilians and prisoners of war.
- It treats the construction of the so called "Death Railway" as an engineering marvel, not mentioning that the railway was built at the expense of the lives of 13,000 Allied prisoners of war, and 90,000 workers from Southeast Asia.
- It completely negates the Tokyo Trials, saying that they were unilateral trials created by the victors according to their own laws against the vanquished.²¹

²⁰ "中国驻法国大使法媒刊文:安倍拜鬼如同有人在希特勒墓前献花"

<http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0116/c1002-24142189.html> accessed on 06.12.2014

²¹ Ibid.

The comparison of Yasukuni to Hitler's grave overlooks Yasukuni's role as a war memorial and redirects the reader's attention directly to the connotations related to the Class-A War Criminals enshrined at the shrine. The Ambassador concludes the article relating to a recent trial of a German war criminal. While praising Germany for the on-going fight against the war criminals, he poses a key rhetorical question:

"许多中国人会问，为何日本不能像德国一样对待历史问题？"

Many Chinese people will ask, why cannot Japan treat historical issues as Germany did?

In this manner, the Ambassador astutely links Yasukuni Shrine visits to the parallel disputes in regard to Japanese history textbooks.²²

Mauritius

In "中国驻毛里求斯大使李立批安倍:开历史倒车没有前途"²³ (Chinese Ambassador to Mauritius Li La Criticizes Abe: Turning Back the Clock Has No Future), the Ambassador Li La states that Abe's visit to Yasukuni shrine openly challenges the Tokyo Trials, as well as the international peace and order. He refers to the 70 years of fight against fascism, and then evokes all the atrocities committed by Japan under the fascist rule:

"日本侵略军肆意屠杀中国军民、强掠劳工、蹂躏摧残妇女、进行活体实验、细菌战和化学战、制造南京大屠杀等一系列灭绝人性的惨案，而其中双手沾满各国人民鲜血"

²² Controversies in regard to the revision of history textbooks and the changes to the Fundamental Law of Education. For detailed description of the controversy see Rose 1998, 2004.

²³ 中国口毛里求斯大使李立批安倍:开口史倒口没有前途
<http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0113/c1002-24104743.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

Japanese invaders massacred Chinese civilians indiscriminately, forced labor upon them, violated and ravaged women, led in-vivo experiments and biochemical warfare trials, and made a series of inhuman/cannibalistic tragedies happen, such as the Nanjing Massacre, which stained with blood the hands of people of all the countries.

The particularly evocative metaphor of the “hands of people of all the countries” is intended to portray Japan as not only harmful to China, but also to the whole world. Furthermore, the Ambassador evokes all of the war crimes committed by Japan, thus extrapolating the meaning of Abe’s visit to Yasukuni to appraisal of all of the mentioned atrocities. The Ambassador finishes his article with a figurative rhetorical question further supporting this point

"安倍执意参拜这样一个地方，难道不怕梦中见到当年受害者淋漓的鲜血吗？"

Abe insists on visiting this kind of a place, is he not afraid to see the blood-dripping victims in his dreams?

Great Britain

In "刘晓明大使接受英媒直播专访 批安倍参拜“日本纳粹”²⁴ (The Ambassador Liu Xiaoming Accepted Live Interview with the British Media and Criticized Abe's Homage to "Japanese Nazi") the Chinese Ambassador to England openly condemns Abe Shinzō 's visit to the Yasukuni shrine. He says:

"事实是，日本首相悍然参拜供奉有甲级战犯的靖国神社，甲级战犯就是日本的纳粹。试想如果德国领导人参拜希特勒或其他纳粹战犯，英国人民将作何感想？将心比心，就能更好地理解中国人民的感受。"

The truth is that Japanese Prime Minister flagrantly visited the Yasukuni shrine to worship the Class-A War Criminals, the Class-A War Criminals are precisely the Japanese Nazis. Imagine if a German leader would pay homage to Hitler or other Nazi war criminals, how would the British people feel? Only when you put

²⁴刘晓明大使接受英媒直播专访 批安倍参拜“日本纳粹” <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0115/c1002-24128547.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

yourself into somebody else's shoes, you can understand better the feelings of Chinese people.

As it is noticed, the above statement from the interview with Ambassador Liu was replayed in the prime time evening news programs.²⁵

Italy

In "中国驻意大利大使李瑞宇:日本成国际社会担忧的不稳之源"²⁶ (Chinese Ambassador to Italy Li Ruiyu: Japan Became the Source of Concern for Instability to the International Community), a reprint of the article published in Italian *Corriere della Sera* under the title "Never Allow Japan to Turn Back the Clock," Li Ruiyi praises German chancellor Willy Brandt's public apologies in front of the Warsaw's monument for the victims of the ghetto uprising that occurred in December 1970. He argues that the Japanese Prime Minister should learn from former German chancellor's actions. When referring to Abe Shinzō 's visit to Yasukuni he says:

"靖国神社是二战期间日本军国主义对外发动侵略战争、实施殖民统治的精神工具和象征"

The Yasukuni shrine is the tool and symbol of launching of the war of aggression by the Japanese militarist and implementation of the spirit of the colonial rule during the World War II.

He adds further:

"一个对历史缺乏反省的国家是危险的。安倍改革防务政策，增加军事开支，甚至扬言修改和平宪法。这一系列言论和举动，正在把日本带向十分危险的歧途。安倍所作所为已经引起亚洲邻国和国际社会的高度警惕与担忧。"

When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe visited the Yasukuni Shrine for the war of aggression he fully exposed his right-wing nature. This indicates that

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 中国口意大利大使李瑞宇:日本成国口社会担口的不口之源
<http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0113/c1002-24105160.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

today, nearly 70 years after the end of World War II, the Japanese still cannot understand and treat its history of aggression correctly. The visit's purpose is an attempt to subvert the post-war international social justice trial of Japanese militarism, as well as challenge the results of World War II and the postwar international order.

European Union

In 中国驻欧盟使团团长撰文批评日本不能正视和反省历史²⁷(The Article of the Head of Chinese Diplomatic Mission to the EU Criticizes Japan For Not Being Able to Face and Reflect Its Own History) once again Germany's way of dealing with its Nazi past is evoked as an example for Japan to follow. Additional comments on Abe's politics are expressed as follows:

"文章指出，去年 12 月 26 日，日本首相安倍晋三悍然参拜靖国神社，再次引起亚洲国家和国际社会的严重关切。国际舆论普遍注意到，上台一年来，安倍加强国家安全机制，对日本防务政策作出重要调整，增加军事开支，放松在武器出口方面的自我约束，甚至公开宣称，他毕生奋斗的目标在于修改和平宪法。"

As the article pointed out, the outrageous visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō to the Yasukuni Shrine on the 26th of December of the last year, yet again caused serious concerns of the Asian countries and the international community. The international public opinion has been alarmed, from the year that Abe has come to power, he has strengthened the national security, made important adjustments to the Japanese defense policy, increased military spending, loosened the self-restrains in the export of weapons, and even publicly declared that he struggled all his life in order to revise the peace clause of the constitution.

In this case the EU Ambassador attacks the previously mentioned legal issue surrounding Yasukuni Shrine. The final unjustness of Abe's visits to Yasukuni is found in his attempts to remilitarize Japan and change the peace clause of the Japanese Constitution that is prohibiting the country from engaging in military actions other than self-defense.

²⁷中国驻欧盟使团团长撰文批评日本不能正视和反省历史
<http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0103/c1002-24014234.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

Ambassador's reactions – summary

The Ambassador's reactions to Japanese Prime Minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine address mainly the international and legal dimensions of the Yasukuni dispute. They differ from the previously exemplified ones in as much as the reduction of Yasukuni's parameters is aimed for political gains of China in international arena. The Chinese rhetoric is very congruent as we can see for a comparison in President Xi Jinping's speech quoted in the introduction. The reduction of the shrine's parameters and presentation of the topic in close relation to other controversial issues is meant to mutually reinforce the unjustness of the PM's visit as advocated by the Chinese side. In fact, the religious aspects are not tackled by the Chinese side as much as in the case of the Japanese opponents of the visits. The comparison of Yasukuni Shrine to Hitler's grave is evoking similarities of the atrocities committed by Japan and Germany, but it overlooks the fact that the PM, at least officially, is not visiting the shrine to pay his respects to the Class-A War Criminals in particular, but rather to commemorate the war dead in general. The articles presented below, on the other hand, attack precisely this issue in a rhetorical manner.

j. The remaining articles

In "安倍身上的希特勒 DNA"²⁸ (Abe's Hitler's DNA) posted on January 18th 2014, the author of the article compares the current political and economic situation in Japan to the one that Hitler's Germany was facing after WWI. Abe's redefinition of

²⁸安倍身上的希特勒 DNA <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0118/c1002-24157431.html> accessed on 06.12.2014.

"aggression", revision of the history textbooks, and proposed changes to the constitution regarding the pacifism clause are compared to the actions that Hitler undertook to overthrow the Weimar Pact. The article is concluded with the following words:

"安倍去年 9 月在美国纽约的一场演讲中说过, “如果大家想称我为‘右翼军国主义者’的话, 那就请便吧。”安倍, 如果改称你为“希特勒”呢?"

Last September in his speech given in New York Abe Shinzō said the following words: "If you want to call me a right-wing militarist, then go ahead". Abe, what if we called you "Hitler"?

This rhetorical question is an outstanding example of the *ad hitlerum* fallacy, which in relation to the support of militarism, transposes associations related to Hitler to the current Japanese PM.

Similarly, in 遗族会用悲情牌施压日本政要参拜²⁹ (The Association of the Bereaved Families Used Sorrowful Signboards to Put Pressure on Japanese Politicians Paying the Visits) the strongest argument is made by exposing more the intimate connection of Abe Shinzō to the venerated Class-A War Criminals.

"众所周知, 安倍是日本二战甲级战犯岸信介的外孙"

As we all know, Abe is a grandson of Japanese World War II Class A war criminal – Kishi Nobusuke.

Abe Shinzō 's visit to Yasukuni Shrine is then once again juxtaposed with Willy Brandt's apologies in front of the monument for the victims of Warsaw's ghetto uprising. The argument that the prime minister should pay his respects to the victims, rather than the oppressors, is put forward once again. Additionally, the author points out the rightists

²⁹遗族会用悲情牌施压日本政要参拜 <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0102/c1002-24001874.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

support of Abe Shinzō in Japan, and quotes the words of Asahi Brewery honorary advisor:

"不参拜靖国神社的政治家，没有当政的资格。"

The politicians that do not visit Yasukuni shrine, are not eligible for holding the power.

This maneuver is aimed to warn the audience of the overall right wing tendency in Japanese domestic policy to support militarism, and thus to present the "fascist" inclinations of the ruling political elites.

In 加拿大媒体谴责日本首相安倍参拜靖国神社³⁰(Canadian Media Condemn Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe for Visiting the Yasukuni Shrine) the current chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Dachau concentration camp is mentioned. The main argument lays in the fact that her visit to Dachau or any other war memorial was not with the purpose to commemorate the Nazi soldiers, but for the memory of the victims. Abe Shinzō 's visit is commented as follows:

"与此形成鲜明对照的是，2013年12月26日，日本首相安倍参拜了靖国神社。靖国神社供奉着二战期间的14名甲级战犯和手上沾满了无辜平民鲜血的日本士兵。"

In sharp contrast [to chancellor's Merkel visit to Dachau], on December 26th, 2013, the Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō visited the Yasukuni Shrine. The Yasukuni Shrine venerates the World War II 14 famous Class-A war criminals and worships the hands of Japanese soldiers stained with the blood of innocent civilians.

³⁰加拿大媒体谴责日本首相安倍参拜靖国神社 <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0208/c1002-24299630.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

Thus we can observe the Chinese criticism towards “the war memorial” aspects of Yasukuni Shrine, which is not intended to commemorate the victims, but rather the victimizers.

Finally, 别让绥靖再把世界拖入战争³¹ (Do Not Allow for the Appeasement That Will Drag the World into War Again) presents a wide range of criticism of Abe's domestic and foreign policy, especially the individual or party interests which are put above the interests of the nation. The changes to the constitution proposed by Abe are compared to the changes to the constitution in Nazi Germany. Finally, words of disappointment and critique were addressed towards the United States. The United States' official reaction to Abe's visit was "disappointing", which in the Chinese view is a bit too selfish and veiled. The United States should not support Japan in order to counter China, as they will suffer once more.

“在安倍参拜靖国神社后，美国仅仅表示‘失望’，但它可以做得更多，作为唯一的超级大国，美国不能凭一己之私，只对中国搞平衡，而背后支持日本。美国这种做法的最终结果，只会使自己更大程度受到日本的牵制和影响，最终再次深受其害。”

After Abe visited the Yasukuni Shrine, the United States merely expressed 'disappointment', but the US can do more, as the only superpower, the United States cannot rely on selfishness, only to seek a balance against China, and in result support Japan. The final outcome of such approach by the United States will only make them subject to a greater extent of containment and bigger influence from Japan. Eventually the United States will suffer from Japan once more.

To summarize, the way that the Japanese Prime Minister is reported in the Chinese media in regard to Yasukuni “feeds into patriotic education campaigns and reinforces what the younger generation of Chinese has been taught in school” (Rose,

³¹别让绥靖再把世界拖入战争 <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0118/c1002-24157428.html> accessed on June 12th 2014.

2008). The previously mentioned assertiveness in diplomatic claims can be observed in criticism of the USA's reactions to Yasukuni shrine visits. Although, Japan and the United States are official allies, and therefore they are more keen to support each other in diplomatic issues, Chinese rhetoric is critical to the lack of diplomatic intervention. Once again, despite the militaristic interests of the US in form of alliance with Japan, in order to maintain profitable relations with China, the US government has to acknowledge the ideological disputes and maneuver diplomatically between the Chinese and Japanese nationalistic sentiments.

In conclusion, closer analysis of the article's related to Abe Shinzo's visit to Yasukuni Shrine, show how China uses the reduction of ideological parameters to only those related to the militaristic and shameful past of Japan. At the same time they are used as powerful rhetoric tools to reaffirm anti-Japanese sentiments of the population. On the other hand, since these exact notions are already fairly institutionalized by the patriotic education campaign and the main historical narrative presented by the CCP, the Chinese leadership cannot refrain from criticizing Japan for the wrongdoings. This could be interpreted as leadership's weakness and could result in public protests. In a similar way, the Japanese leadership, whose part of the electorate derives from right-wing nationalistic supporters, cannot discard the importance of the observance entirely, as it could result in protests as well.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The method presented in this work was aimed to address one of the issues in Sino-Japanese relations from a micro-level, culture-specific perspective, and present how it relates to the macro-level, system-specific approach. The constructivist epistemology allows for the demonstration of how subjects can be related to systems, and how the systems reciprocally shape the subjects. The comprehension of this process helps to understand the current political situation in regard to ideological disputes in Sino-Japanese relations and gives possible guidelines for the interpretations and predictions of future developments. By analyzing the different rhetorical attributions towards a shared collective symbol in the form of Yasukuni Shrine, one can observe the ideologies behind them. This thesis does not provide an answer to how to solve the issue of Yasukuni Shrine in Sino-Japanese relations – on the contrary – it points out the reasons for which such a solution is not possible, namely the axiological nature of the dispute. At the same time, by observing the extremist's arguments on both sides of the dispute, we can analyze the possible way in which the worse-case scenarios could develop. The same way that the collective symbols are part of larger system, the Yasukuni dispute is also just one manifestation of the complex interactions between the East Asian powers. This could be observed in further detail in Chapter 6. The analysis of articles from *People's Daily* showed precisely how the Chinese side evokes other unresolved issues that are part of the disputes between the two countries. Yasukuni shrine is the most populist and rhetorical one, and thus it gives the most substantial amount of data for the purposes of an analysis. The Class-A War Criminals enshrined at the site just add additional ideological

references for the opponents of the shrine's observance. Chinese harsh rhetoric and increasing assertiveness, on the other hand, aid the supporters of the shrine's observation to construct arguments against foreign interference into domestic policies and issues. In the end the dispute relates to, and creates anew, cultural references shared by entire populations, which have to be taken into account by their leadership. Even if in the 21st century the globalized international arena is not made only from nation-states, and it includes international organizations, actors, and corporations, nevertheless states play an important role in it. Since states are the political/communicative representation of the cultural/social – nation, the ideological disputes grounded in nationalism, may have more importance than strictly materialistic incentives.

The interjections of different sub-systems of the overarching social system are not inherent but rather are constantly shaped. The current way in which this process occurs in Sino-Japanese relations is aimed towards further antagonisms in public opinions and collective identities. Although by itself this situation may not necessarily be sufficient to ignite militaristic conflicts, as the neorealists are correct to attribute importance to materialistic variables, and the global interdependence advocated by neoliberals does play an important role in balancing the power around the world, it is nevertheless alarming how some of the deeply-rooted collective symbols are brought to the international discourse between the two countries. If the leadership wants to hold the power in the domestic arena, the state's actions have to be justified by its population. For example, the Tokugawa regime and the Qing Empire were eventually overthrown by their populations, exactly because they could not fulfill their role of satisfactory government. Likewise, the United States did not participate in WWII until a reason – the

Pearl Harbor incident –finally gave them a justification that would convince the American populace of the righteousness of the war. Similarly, the Iraq War (2003-2011) would not have been possible if not for the support of the American population in pursuing some of the axiological beliefs – democracy, freedom, and peace. The way that these beliefs have been approached ideologically is question of rhetorical strength and proper presentation of the ideology. The assumption that actors on the international arena are rational and will act only towards securing their own materialistic interests is also quite idealistic. After all, many of the conflicts in the history of the world’s civilization were based on ideological premises. Of course, materialistic gain would be part of the stake as well, but not necessarily the trigger. In the end, war always brings loss, but it also opens new opportunities – “where two quarrel, the third wins.”

Finally, the approach used in this thesis shows the cyclical relation between states and their nations in the autopoietic - reciprocal - creation of each other. It may seem that in the final account the Yasukuni issue cannot be solved because of the fact that once an idea enters the system’s cycle, it is constantly reproduced by the system in order to sustain itself. But as it was pointed out in this thesis, the beginning of this process starts from institutionalization of a certain communicative, discursive process, and thus even if there seem to not be enough incentives to change the discourse and aim for reconciliation, we can only hope that this will eventually become a final interest in the international arena, regardless of power, ideologies, and interdependence. For this purpose research of the topic in both languages, and a more detailed analysis of the different arguments of the proponents and the opponents would bring a better linguistic picture of the possible gravity of the current shape of the ideological disputes.

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