

A Constructivist Analysis of the Conflict between Japan
and China over the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands and a
Suggestion for the Future

Kenichi WATANABE

International University of Japan

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Niigata, Japan

ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR NORTHEAST ASIA

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1. Introduction

Although Japan's exports to China decreased in 2009 due to the financial crisis in the United States, they otherwise increased rapidly from 2003 to 2011 (Figure 1 and Table 1). However, they decreased greatly in 2012 and 2013. It is understood that the decrease was due to the political conflict between the two countries over the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands (Institute of Chinese Affairs [ICA], 2014, pp. 185–6). In this case, one can easily assume that political factors affect the economic relationship. Since politicians and government officials decide economic, monetary, and diplomatic policies, in some cases political factors are independent variables, and economic factors are dependent variables. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that politics affects the economy significantly. On the other hand, it is quite clear that sometimes economic factors affect politics. For instance, if cooperation between two countries to deal with a specific problem would appear to maximize benefit for both countries, and there are no political obstacles, that situation would entail political handling or an international institution between the two countries to tackle the problem. Therefore, one can assume that sometimes economic factors construct the political frameworks among states. It seems reasonable to conceive that economic factors and political factors affect each other and construct social realities in international society.

This paper will analyze the case between Japan and China from the perspective of the international political theory named “constructivism”. To analyze the political relationship between states, it is clear that one should refer to a theory of international politics. Since many factors, such as the will of the leaders, public opinion, political regimes, geopolitical conditions, culture and history, affect the political relationship between states, it is quite difficult to create a general mathematical theory of international politics as for economics. Therefore, scholars of international politics frequently refer to philosophy and sociology. That is not to say that theories of international politics are not scientific, but relations among states are too complicated to quantify.

This paper assumes that in order to consider a resolution to the problem between Japan and China, the perspective of functionalism is quite useful. Functionalism's basic assumption is that technological advancement and its “spillover effects” will enable

cooperation between states (Griffiths and O'Callaghan, 2002, pp. 116–8). In addition, Ernst Haas, complementing Mitrany's arguments, asserted that to distribute the gain from collaboration among states fairly, international society needs an international organization that is independent from national governments (Griffiths and O'Callaghan, 2002, p. 117). Notwithstanding severe political conflict, it seems to be clear that both Japan and China require cooperation concerning technology (ICA, 2014, pp. 187–8). Constructivism itself refers to the ontology of political phenomena (Wendt, 1999, pp. 370–9), thus suggesting a resolution to the problem by merely referring to the constructivist perspective appears insufficient. On the basis of the perspective of functionalism and neo-functionalism, this paper will argue that cooperation between Japan and China may be a way to achieve a stable political relationship between them.

In the first section, this paper will explain why it uses constructivism for the research. In the second section, it will analyze the conflict between Japan and China mainly by referring to the theory of constructivism, especially Alexander Wendt's theory. In the third section, the paper will suggest a way to deal with the unstable relationship between Japan and China by referring to the theories of functionalism and neo-functionalism.

2. Research Methodology: Why Constructivism for the Analysis of this Case?

This paper makes the assumption that political factors affect the economy significantly, in the way that they shape the actors' economic actions in the case of Japan and China. Generally speaking, the constructivist approach is idealistic. Constructivism assumes that ideational factors such as culture, norms and ideas have significant roles in the process of the shaping of the actions of actors in international society. Culture is constructed by the shared ideas of the actors. As Wendt (1999) noted: "Shared ideas make up the subset of social structure known as 'culture'" (p. 249). Structure in Wendt's terms means "Structure confronts actors as an objective social fact that constrains and enables action in systematic ways, and as such should generate distinct patterns" (Wendt, 1999, p. 184). According to Wendt, culture is common and collective knowledge as well, therefore it concerns actors' beliefs (Wendt, 1999, pp. 159–160). Thus, in this theory, it is said that culture shapes the norms, rules and the actions of actors, since shared beliefs would determine how actors interact with each other, and what kind of norms and rules they need. In sum, actors' shared ideas constitute culture as a political structure and common knowledge, and culture affects the actions of actors, and the norms and rules they make. In these senses, even if actors have institutions playing important roles in the process of shaping their actions in the international arena, material factors are indispensable for the process of the construction of social reality, due to the significance

of the roles of culture, norms and ideas, and it is said: “ideas *almost* all the way down”. In addition, Wendt emphasized the importance of interaction among agents for the construction of agents’ identities and interests. In the words of Wendt (1999), “... whenever we treat identities and interests as given, we should regard this as a methodological bracketing of the process by which they are produced, and not let it become a tacit ontology. To understand this process we need to show how identities and interests are a continuing outcome of interaction, always in process, not show them only as an input” (p. 316). Furthermore, it is not only that social structure shapes interactions among actors, but also that those interactions shape social structure too (Wendt, 1999, pp. 182–4).

As we have seen in this section, constructivist, and especially Wendt’s, assumption about international politics is that ideational factors such as culture, norms and ideas significantly affect the actions of actors. A basic assumption of this paper is that actors’ shared ideas and beliefs ultimately shaped their actions in this case and entailed a decrease of Chinese people’s consumption of Japanese products. Thus, it appears to match the assumption of this paper. Therefore, this paper will use constructivism for the analysis.

2.1 “Three Cultures of Anarchy”

In Wendt’s theory which we have seen in this section, it appears that additional information about *culture* in his terms is necessary. Concerning culture in his theory, Wendt stated that there are “three cultures of anarchy”. Since there has not been a world government, in international relations theories it is said that the world is in anarchy. The three cultures are Hobbesian culture, Lockean culture, and Kantian culture (Wendt, 1999, Ch. 6). In Hobbesian culture, actors assume that other states are enemies. That is to say, states conceive that other states could threaten their very existence, and they would also do so if they needed to. In Lockean culture, actors suppose that other states are rivals. States do not threaten the existence of other states, and they respect other states’ rights as sovereign states in principle. However, to protect their rights as sovereign states, diplomatic conflicts and local wars can occur. The so called Westphalian system is a good example of this culture. In Kantian culture, actors regard other states as friends. That is a relationship between states characterized by non-violence, team-play and mutual aid. The relationship between Britain and the United States would be an appropriate example of this.

According to Wendt, there is a teleological process where Lockean culture changes into Kantian culture (Wendt, 2003, pp. 42–51). Lockean culture is unstable regarding the possibility of war and people’s hatred of war, and therefore it would change into “world society”: that is, “a universal security community, in which disputes are settled non-

violently” (Wendt, 2003, p. 44). However, this is also unstable regarding the lack of collective protection against aggression (Wendt, 2003, p. 45). Since any state can be outside of society because of, for instance, a domestic revolution, and refuse to accept non-violent resolution, “world society” can hardly be stable. In addition, as it seems that every state wants the mutual recognition of rights as states, and because of their fear of war due to the lack of collective protection against aggression, the state of the world would naturally progress toward “collective security”. The additional condition it acquires is: “not only must its members – now both individuals and states – recognize each other’s right to exist and practice non-violent dispute resolution, but they must defend each other against threats on the principle of ‘all for one, one for all’ ” (Wendt, 2003, p. 46). This is the Kantian culture of friendship in Wendt’s terms. In particular, Wendt claimed that states’ desire for mutual recognition of their existence and rights encourages the progression of the system of world politics.

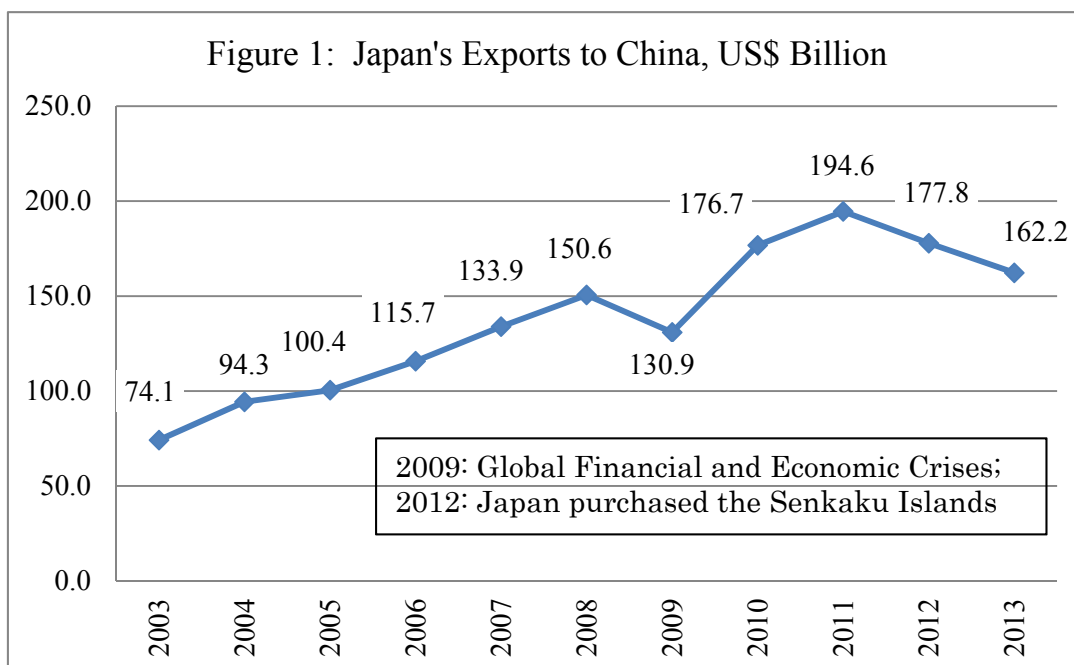
This paper will use the concepts of constructivism we have seen in this section for the analysis of the case of Japan and China.

3. Japan–China Conflict over the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands

The conflict between Japan and China over the possession of the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands has become more severe since the Japanese government’s purchase of the ownership title to the islands. In the pre-modern era in the Far East region, there was no dispute over the ownership of the islands between the two states since they did not have the concept of a sovereign state (ICA, 2013, p. 61). The islands were merely a guide for sailors from the Ryukyu Kingdom. However, in 1879, Imperial Japan, as a modern state, sent troops and police to seize control of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The kingdom was part of the Chinese tributary system, and therefore China protested against the Japanese taking it over. Since the Senkaku Islands were uninhabited, the Japanese government did not declare that the islands were part of Japanese territory. Due to the consequences of the Sino–Japanese war, China could not help but accept Japanese control of the Ryukyu Kingdom (Okinawa Prefecture), and the Japanese government then announced that the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands were its territory.

In 1968, the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) pointed out the possibility that around the islands there were large oil reserves (ICA, 2013, p. 62). Since then Taiwan has claimed its right to the islands. From 1971, the People’s Republic of China also started to insist that the islands were theirs. Due to information disclosure by the British government, it was revealed that in 1982 Prime Minister Suzuki of Japan told Margaret Thatcher that he and Deng Xiaoping had agreed that Japan and China would mutually refrain from claiming the right to the islands (ICA,

2015, p. 115). The Chinese government believed that the agreement was valid and effective; however, the Japanese government assumed that that was merely China's unilateral claim (ICA, 2013, p. 63). In April 2012, Shintaro Ishihara, the Governor of Tokyo, announced that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government would purchase the ownership title of the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands. The Noda administration was afraid of an escalation of Ishihara's provocative actions and deterioration in the Japan–China relationship. Therefore, it began to consider the purchase of the islands before Tokyo could obtain them (ICA, 2013, p. 63). Although Hu Jintao declared a strong objection to the Japanese purchase of the islands at an APEC meeting on 10 September 2012, Japan did obtain the ownership title of the islands on 11 September. In addition, 2012 was the fortieth anniversary year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and China. Because of those facts and China's stance of the agreement on the moratorium being effective, the action of the Japanese government caused huge anti-Japanese demonstrations in China. The sentiment of the Chinese people concerning the history of the Japanese invasion was also a cause for boycotts. Because of the Chinese government's distrust of and anger against the Japanese government, and of the influence of the national sentiment of the Chinese people concerning this problem, it was difficult to resolve the boycotts (ICA, 2013, p. 194; 2014, p. 187). In consequence, Japan's exports to China in 2012 and 2013 dramatically decreased.



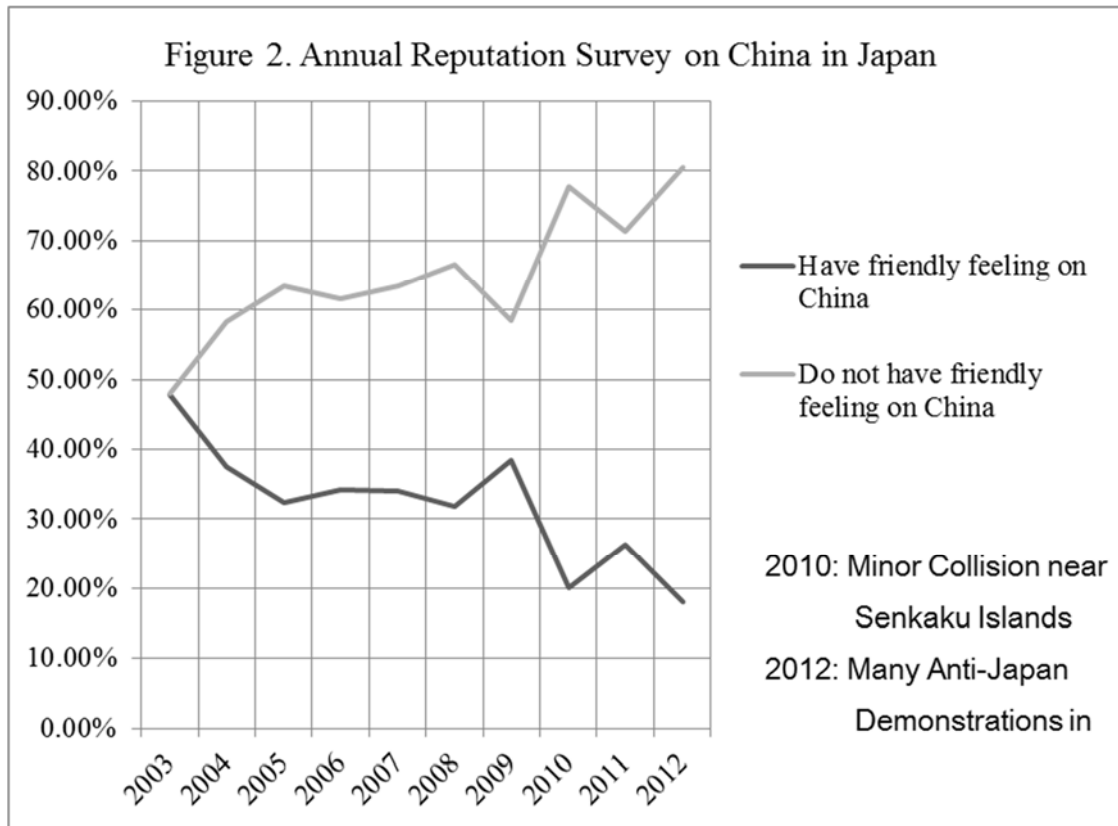
Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2004–2014

3.1 A Constructivist Interpretation of This Case

This paper assumes that the theory of constructivism can properly explain and clarify the structural causes of the confusion in the economic relationship between the two countries.

Firstly, this paper argues that the conflict between China and Japan is in Lockean culture. In the first section, we saw that in Lockean culture, actors assume that other countries are rivals, and the Westphalian system of sovereign states is a good instance of that. In that culture, states do not try to deny the very existence of another state. However, they would fight each other if they perceived that their rights as sovereign states were being violated by another state. For states to claim the right to the same territory is apparently to claim the right as sovereign states. Considering the facts that China has nuclear weapons, and the United States, which has nuclear weapons, protects Japan, an all-out war between Japan and China would appear impossible, since that would entail the total destruction of both countries. Thus, even though local and small conflict is still possible, one can say that the two countries perceive each other not as *enemies*, but as *rivals*. Before the conflict happened, it seemed that they were rivals as well, since although they did not have explicit and major conflict as in the case we are dealing with in this section, they were not “friends” like Britain and the United States, and they always had potential causes for such a conflict, especially concerning the interpretations of historical incidents involving them in the last century. Therefore, it seems that because of the conflict, to some degree a regression of the political structure of the relationship between the two states toward Hobbesian culture occurred.

Secondly, this paper argues that actors in both countries interacted with each other and shaped the shared idea that the other country was becoming more like an “enemy” than a “friend”. The action of the Japanese government roused the Chinese government and shaped its perception that Japan was confronting China diplomatically. In addition, in China it is said that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) controls the government (Nishimura and Kokubun, 2009, p. 119). The leaders of the CCP allowed and encouraged people’s violent demonstrations against Japan (ICA, 2013, p. 59). It is supposed that the massive popular reaction at the inducement of the CCP strengthened and legitimated the Chinese leaders’ stance on the issue. Moreover, according to a survey in 2012 in Japan, the number of people who perceived that they had a friendly feeling toward China dramatically decreased, and the number of people who did not have that feeling increased, although the latter had already dramatically increased after a minor collision at sea between a Japanese patrol boat and a Chinese fishing boat near the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands in 2010.



Source: Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2015

In April 2013, three Japanese cabinet ministers visited Yasukuni Shrine, which is regarded as a symbol of Japanese militarism (ICA, 2014, p. 102). Moreover, the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe presented a special offering in the celebration of Shintoism called *masakaki* to the shrine on the same day. One might assume that the anti-Chinese sentiment of Japanese people enabled the actions of the politicians to some degree, and the actions might shape people's ideas on China as well. Furthermore, it seems that those anti-Chinese actions of the Japanese government shaped the anti-Japanese ideas of Chinese leaders and as well as their diplomatic actions. As a matter of fact, a conference at the highest level by Japan, China, and the ROK scheduled for June 2013 was canceled at China's request (ICA, 2014, p. 103). In November 2013, China set up an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) which overlaps Japan's ADIZ, including the airspace over the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands (ICA, 2013, p. 103). The Japanese government expressed great anxiety about the actions by China. In December 2013, Abe himself visited Yasukuni Shrine. After that, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs summoned the Japanese ambassador and protested against Abe's action. One may suppose that public opinion in both countries on the issue affected the actions of the governments of both countries.

Since the Japanese government purchase of the islands, it seems that the actors of

both countries had interacted with each other and mutually strengthened the idea that the other state has become more like an enemy than before. That shared idea made the political structure of their relationship closer to Hobbesian culture within the range of Lockean culture. According to this culture, the actions of actors and their utterances toward the other country became more unfriendly than before. It seems that this situation caused the decrease in Japanese exports to China. It is also assumed that the interactions among the actors shaped the identity of both states being an enemy to the other.

It is clear that political actors and economic actors are the same in the sense that they are persons within societies. The same persons vote and consume as well. Concerning the decrease in Chinese imports of Japanese products in 2012 and 2013, it is assumed that the idea of Chinese people that Japan had become more like an enemy than before ultimately shaped their actions as economic actors through the process this paper has explained, and entailed the decrease in consumption of Japanese products. Because of their efficiency and durability, it seems that the Chinese people had the idea that Japanese products were valuable. However, the structural change of the political relationship between the two countries affected the actions of actors as economic actors as well. Therefore, in this case, even with the dramatic change in the economic indicators, one can say that it is a case of “ideas *almost* all the way down”.

3.2 Critique of the Constructivist Analysis

Although this paper assumes that the result of the analysis itself is reasonable, as it pointed out in the introduction, the constructivist analysis can be criticized in some respects.

Firstly, since the theory of constructivism itself is to clarify the ontology of social phenomena, it is difficult for the theory to suggest a resolution for a social problem. In the second section, we saw the structural causes of the problem, and the process of its construction as a problem in the real world. However, with the theory of constructivism, one cannot go further. Concerning the way to achieve world peace, Wendt merely claimed that there is a teleological progression from Lockean culture toward Kantian culture, as this paper mentioned in the first section. That is similar to Hegel’s idea of dialectical and dynamic social progress. Thus, from that point of view it is difficult to figure out a good resolution for the problem.

Secondly, one might make the criticism that the analysis from the constructivist perspective ignores the possibility that economic cooperation can construct a political system among nations. In fact, in the case of Japan and China, it seems to be clear that the shared ideas of the actors concerning politics greatly affected the Chinese people’s consumption of Japanese goods. However, one might assert that material factors, such as

the need for technological cooperation among states, sometimes affect politics significantly. Merely making the assertion that ideas affect material affairs might be shortsighted. To suggest a way for the improvement of the political relationship between Japan and China, this paper will use a theory called functionalism.

4. Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism and a Suggestion for the Future

As this paper argued in the last section, there can be some critiques made of the constructivist analysis. In this section, this paper will refer to the theories of functionalism and neo-functionalism to indicate a possible way to deal with the problem. On the basis of a functionalist and neo-functionalist perspective, this paper refers to the possibility of cooperation between Japan and China on environmental issues to suggest a way to improve the political relationship between them.

4.1 The Theory of Functionalism

As this paper described in the introduction, the theory assumes that technological advancement and the pragmatic need for cooperation among states encourage them to work together to attain common peaceful goals. That concerns the process of integration among states. Its basic assumption is that politics interferes with the cooperation for the resolution of a common problem among states which specific technical knowledge can resolve (Griffiths and O'Callaghan, 2002, p. 116). It was David Mitrany who created the theory. During World War II, Mitrany was seriously thinking about how to avoid such a tragedy in the future. His answer was that states could achieve peace by addressing a functional approach. He claimed that states should overcome nationalism by cooperating in technology and pragmatic needs in the real world, and they should ultimately achieve a world government (Mitrany, 1948, pp. 359–60). In the words of Mitrany (1948), “A scheme started by a few countries for transport, or for oil, and so on, could later be broadened to include belated members, or reduced to let reluctant ones drop out. Moreover they can vary in their membership, countries could take part in some schemes and perhaps not in others, whereas in any political arrangement such divided choice would obviously not be tolerable ... functional arrangements have the virtue of technical self-determination, one of the main reasons which makes them more readily acceptable” (pp. 357–8). Mitrany (1948) also noted that “... the true choice is not between the present competitive nationalisms and a lame international federation, but between a full-fledged and comprehensive world government and equally full-fledged but specific and separate functional agencies” (p. 360).

Through the analysis of the case of Japan and China, we have seen that political factors interfered with Japan's export of products to China. Mitrany argued that states

should cooperate in the field of technology and for the needs of people in the real world, putting aside ideological and political arguments. From those facts, it is reasonable to assume that functionalism is an appropriate framework within which to think about a resolution for the problem.

4.2 The Theory of Neo-Functionalism

As this paper described in its introduction, Ernst Haas presented a theory of neo-functionalism to complement Mitrany's theory. As we have seen in this section, in Mitrany's theory, it is said that political factors interfere with technical, pragmatic cooperation among states. Therefore, it is reasonable to separate political issues from technical issues. However, it is difficult, as a matter of fact, to keep political factors from affecting technical issues among states. In the words of Haas (1964) "... under modern conditions the relationship between economic and political union had best be treated as a continuum. Hence definite political implications can be associated with most movements toward economic integration even when the chief actors themselves do *not* entertain such notions at the time of adopting their new constitutive character" (p. 707). In addition, if the gain from technical cooperation is less than its cost, it is clear that a state will be inclined to withdraw from the union of states. Therefore, "... it is crucial to establish formal institutions that can impose and uphold agreements made by states" (Griffiths and O'Callaghan, 2002, p. 117). Haas (1964) argued that "... whenever key actors *perceive* their postunion welfare as *diminished* because of real or alleged hardships attributed – rightly or wrongly – to the economic union, political disintegration is almost certain to set in. The growth of political integration on an economic basis can prevail only so long as the perception of benefits and drawbacks remains, at least, uncertain and uneven among sectors of the population" (p. 708). Those institutions have to be independent from national governments to some degree, and states have to accept the rule of law and the principle of majoritarian decision-making for the effectiveness of the institutions (Griffiths and O'Callaghan, 2002, p. 117). An international institution in Haas's terms means a relatively large one for economic cooperation which states have officially established, such as the ECSC. Concerning the autonomy of international institutions from national governments, Haas (1964) noted: " 'Political union' implies any arrangement under which existing nation-states cease to act as autonomous decision-making units with respect to an important range of policies" (p. 709). In sum, Haas argued that it is difficult to separate politics from technology completely. Moreover, if the benefit from the collaboration is unfairly distributed among states, they would want to leave the union. Therefore, to maintain a functional collaboration among states, it is important to establish an international institution that is independent from national governments.

4.3 Conditions for Integration

In Haas's theory, it is said that economic cooperation would eventually entail political integration among states (Haas, 1964, p. 709). Therefore, to achieve that integration, one should start from economic cooperation. According to Haas, there are background conditions for integration among states. As Haas (1964) noted, "... it was found that a high rate of previous transaction, a similarity in size and power, a high degree of pluralism, and marked elite complementarity were extremely favorable to the rapid politization of economic relationships" (p. 712). Other than the background conditions, Haas argued that there are conditions at the time of economic union. Concerning the political commitment to economic integration, there are four possible conditions for integration: "1) Identical economic aims with a strong political commitment merit a 'high' rating, and 2) converging economic aims with a strong political commitment also deserve a 'high' rating ... 3) Identical economic aims accompanied by a weak political commitment are rated 'mixed,' and 4) converging economic aims with a weak political component merit a 'low' evaluation" (Haas, 1964, p. 713). Moreover, Haas asserted that there are two types of integration. The first one is "built-in" integration. In the words of Haas (1964), "'Built-in' integration takes place on the basis of a firm schedule for the rate and amount of dismantling of obstacles to factor movements. Exemptions from the schedule are administered by the central authority, not national governments" (p. 713). The second one is negotiated integration. As Haas (1964) noted, "The opposite mode of integration (negotiated integration) features a much looser institutional structure which avoids the notion of 'supranationality' in explicit intent as well as in fact. The timetable for dismantling is flexible; each major step must be negotiated anew; exemptions and escape clauses flourish, and their administration is decentralized" (p. 713). Based on Mitrany's and Haas's theories, one can say that if there is pragmatic need for economic and technical cooperation between two states, it is quite possible to create an international institution for the fair distribution of gains from cooperation in the procedure we have seen in this section. In accordance with the functionalist and neo-functionalist theories, those institutions would encourage political reconciliation between the two countries.

Functionalism and neo-functionalism are theories for integration of states. However, it seems that the political integration of Japan and China is very difficult to achieve because of the great differences of the cultures of the two countries. They have different languages, different historical backgrounds, and different religious and social customs, etc. Nevertheless, this paper assumes that it is reasonable to use those theories to suggest a plan for the improvement of the Japan–China relationship. As we have seen in this section, even if states cannot achieve international integration, it seems that a

functional approach would contribute to the construction of friendly and sustainable political relationships among states by establishing international institutions. One can assume that that would eventually entail stable political relationships among them also.

4.4 What is Needed for Cooperation?

We have seen the conditions for successful cooperation among states and the establishment of international institutions in this section. What is needed then for economic cooperation between Japan and China? Regarding the size and power of states, Haas (1964) noted: “What is important here is not the absolute military power or industrial capacity of the participants but the relative weight of these features in the specific functional context of the union” (p. 711). Although China’s population is much larger than Japan’s, and China’s GDP is now greater than Japan’s, Japan still has the third largest GDP in the world, and Japan has a lot of high technologies that China doesn’t have. Therefore, concerning technical cooperation, it seems to be reasonable to say that Japan and China are good partners in respect of size and power. Concerning the rate of recent transactions between Japan and China, it should be evaluated as a high rate, because from 2009 to 2013 Japan had been the second or the third largest trading partner for China. In addition, China was the biggest trading partner of Japan in 2014 (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1:
Mean Annual Trade Turnover of China by Country/Region from 2009 to 2013 in
US\$ Million

	1st	2nd	3rd
2009	United States (298,262.60)	Japan (228,782.56)	Hong Kong (174,931.07)
2010	United States (385,385.29)	Japan (297,779.59)	Hong Kong (230,562.47)
2011	United States (446,582.27)	Japan (342,834.01)	Hong Kong (283,475.50)
2012	United States (484,674.25)	Hong Kong (400,701.47)	Japan (312,377.85)
2013	United States (520,748.70)	Hong Kong (341,311.00)	Japan (329,455.78)

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2010–2014

Table 2:
Japan's Trade Turnover in 2014 by Country/Region

Country/Region	Trade Turnover, US\$ Million
China	309,200
ASEAN	221,700
NIES	219,100
United States	201,200
EU	149,800

Source: JETRO, 2015

Considering the recent political conflict between Japan and China, it seems that there is not a high degree of pluralism and sufficient elite complementarity between them. As we have already seen, according to Haas, if states have identical economic aims and they strongly commit to cooperation politically, or if they have converging economic aims and strongly commit to cooperation politically, the possibility of establishment of an international institution is high. Therefore, for successful economic cooperation, strong political commitment is required in any case. Concerning the type of integration, it seems that negotiated integration is favorable for Japan and China, since there has not been a central authority between Japan and China to manage the schedule for the successful establishment of international institutions. Away from that, they have had severe conflict between national governments recently, as we have seen in this paper. If they could satisfy the conditions, one can assume that Japan and China could achieve a successful international institution for the fair distribution of the gains from economic cooperation through gradual negotiations. If Mitrany's and Haas's theories are right, such an institution would eventually encourage a stable political relationship between them.

For instance, recently it has been said that environmental issues such as acid rain and the dispersal of the harmful particulate matter PM_{2.5} in China have become severe, and they have affected Japan too. The causes of the problems are said to be car fumes and exhaust gas from factories that burn coal (Hatakeyama, 2014, pp. 25–7). In addition, Japan has precision technologies to remove pollutants from the fumes (Hatakeyama, 2014, pp. 42–4). Therefore, it seems reasonable for Japan and China to cooperate on these problems. However, the reduction of the consumption of fossil fuels in China might slow the development of Chinese industry, while Japan would obtain nothing but benefit from that (Mori, 2008, pp. 423–4). Therefore, for successful cooperation between Japan and China in tackling environmental issues, an international institution to distribute the benefits and costs of the cooperation, which is sufficiently independent from national

governments, seems to be necessary. If there were a strong political commitment, elite complementarity and sufficient pluralism for the two states, the establishment and effectiveness of such an institution would be successful. In this way, one could assume that Japan and China could establish an international institution for technical cooperation based on functionalism and neo-functionalism. It seems that that would contribute to the improvement of the political relationship between them.

5. Conclusion

It appears that the cause of the dramatic decrease of Japan's exports to China in 2012 and 2013 was the change in the actions of the two actors of China and Japan, due to Japan's purchase of the ownership title to the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands. From the nineteenth century there has been conflict over the islands. From the 1970s, because an international organization announced that there may be large oil reserves around the islands, the conflict has become more severe. The government of Japan decided to purchase the ownership title of the islands because the Governor of Tokyo, said to have an anti-Chinese attitude, attempted to purchase the islands. One could assume that the Japanese government purchased the islands notwithstanding China's strong objection to avoid the deterioration of the Japan–China relationship. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reacted to the Japanese government's action quite harshly. The Chinese people also reacted to the Japanese government's action very severely and that entailed huge boycotts of Japanese products in China. In addition, it is said that the CCP usually induces and allows people to take such mass political actions in public. The Japanese government reacted to the actions and utterances of the CCP in an unfriendly manner also. Furthermore, according to a survey, more than 80% of the Japanese participants in the survey stated that they had an unfriendly sentiment toward China.

From the perspective of constructivism, and especially Alexander Wendt's theory, it seems that the actors of Japan and China shared an idea that the other country has become more an enemy than before due to the actions in the other country. According to Wendt's theory, there are three types of structure (culture) of relationships among states: Hobbesian culture, Lockean culture and Kantian culture. It is supposed that the structure of the relationship between Japan and China has been a Lockean culture, but due to the shared idea, that regressed toward a Hobbesian culture within the range of a Lockean culture. It seems that the change of the structure of the relationship between the two states shaped the unfriendly actions of the actors in both countries. In addition, from the perspective of Wendt's theory, one can say that interactions among the actors shaped their identities and beliefs, and eventually the structure also. Those structural causes seemed to shape and strengthen the actors' unfriendly actions toward the other country. Political

actors, especially the masses, are crucial economic actors as well, since they consume within society. It is supposed that the worsening of the sentiment of Chinese people toward Japan was followed by the decrease in their consumption of Japanese products.

Although it seems that the analysis from the constructivism perspective is reasonable, one can make the criticism that the theory itself cannot suggest a way to improve the Japan–China relationship. One can say that Wendt’s theory merely refers to the ontology of the phenomena in international society, and does not deal with problems. Moreover, it seems that one cannot grasp how technical factors can construct a political relationship among states from the constructivist perspective. Therefore, this paper has inquired into a way to improve the political relationship between Japan and China from the perspectives of the theories of functionalism and neo-functionalism. Functionalism asserts that pragmatic needs for technical cooperation without the interference of political and ideological arguments would eventually entail the integration of states and world peace. Neo-functionalism would complement the functionalism theory. It asserts that it is difficult to exclude political factors from technical cooperation among states, and states need international institutions to share the benefits and costs of the cooperation in order to sustain it. Ernst Haas suggested conditions for the successful establishment of such an institution. This paper supposes that the Japan–China relationship is lacking in some of these conditions: strong political commitment, elite complementarity, and a high degree of pluralism in the two countries for cooperation. If the two countries have a specific technological problem which cooperation between them can resolve, and they satisfy the three conditions, it seems that it would not be difficult to establish an international institution to tackle the problem and share the benefits and costs of the cooperation. For instance, regarding environmental issues in China, it seems reasonable for Japan and China to cooperate technically. One can assume that there should be many other similar cases. Based on the functionalist and neo-functionalist theories, one can say that the establishment of those institutions would contribute to a stable political relationship between Japan and China. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that a stable political relationship between the two countries would eventually entail a stable economic relationship too.

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