

*The Changing Perception of the Chinese on American Policies in the Post
COVID-19 Pandemic Era*

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Abstract

Chinese perception of humiliation threat has been deeply rooted in their mind because of China's early encounter with Western and Japanese imperialism. According to a number of studies (Chen & Garcia, 2016; Gries et al., 2011; He, 2018; Zhang, 2002), the century of humiliation starting from the mid-19th century has greatly affected Chinese understanding of their self-identity and perception of behaviors from external world. Chinese perception of humiliation threat has contributed to their tendency of putting themselves in the place of victim when interacting with other countries and inclination to nationalism. However, has such perception changed with the accelerated rise of China's power in recent years? To explore the present perception of Chinese college students on U.S. policies on China, online questionnaires were distributed to undergraduates in United International College and semi-structured interviews were conducted in the summer of 2020. It is found out that while 68.5 percent of respondents still regard most American policies on China as provoking humiliation, they have been fully aware of their personal bias given by the history and tried to view it more objectively. Moreover, regarding Sino-American relationship, although most respondents perceive current American policies towards China as quite unfriendly, they consider the U.S. as an opportunity rather than an enemy and regard China as a competitor rather than a victim. This study also revealed that even in the post COVID-19 era – a special moment of deepening conflicts between these two nations, 90.5 percent of respondents actually have a friendly attitude towards the U.S. and are looking forward to more mutually beneficial cooperation. This study is expected to contribute to an updated American understanding towards Chinese college students' perception of foreign policies and identity as Chinese in the post COVID-19 era.

Keywords: National Image, Chinese College Students, American Foreign Policies

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Introduction

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, although conflicts between China and the U.S. still exist due to historical, political, and cultural factors, in general, there is a tendency of increasing cooperation and friendliness. Starting from 1972 when the U.S. President Nixon made his first visit to China, followed by the establishment of formal Sino-American diplomatic relations in 1979, this relationship has been mutually beneficial in aspects of economic development and cultural communication.

However, with the accelerated rise in China's national power after more than three decades of deepening economic reform and "opening up", while the economic ties between China and America have become more closer, the competition behind it is also increasingly intensified. From the "Rebalancing of Asia and the Pacific" initiated by the Obama government, "Trade War" initiated by Trump administration to the U.S. government constant blame on China for the coronavirus pandemic, America's hostility and containment towards China have become increasingly apparent.

The reasons for the change in America's attitude can be deduced from the popular "China Threat" rhetoric, which has been subjected to diverse interpretations and explanations. In general, China threat mainly refer to its threat to the balance of the existing international power system (Halper, 2012), U.S. security (Whiting, 1996) and U.S. hegemonic position (Ravenhill, 2006). It is worth noting that as China's national strength grows, there also seems to be a change in China's attitude toward the U.S., which has gotten tougher. In the trade war, China had once imposed the same amount of tax on U.S. goods as the U.S imposed on China, regarding it as a counterattack. Moreover, the National People's Congress also passed the Law of the People's Republic of China on safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2020 May 21, despite the critique from Western Countries.

Therefore, the author believes that at this special moment of deepening conflicts, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the Chinese college students' perception of the U.S. policies, especially considering that there are not many articles focused on researching the views of Chinese younger generation towards Sino-U.S. relations. The author considering exploring the views of China's younger generation of vital importance because they are the future leaders of China and their attitude towards the U.S. could have key implications to the future Sino-U.S. relationship to a certain degree.

Literature Review

To deepen and broaden my understanding of the research topic, the author endeavors to find articles that could give answer or provide valuable information to these three questions: how is perception defined? what is Chinese perception of the U.S.? what are the influential factors that formed such perception? The findings are summarized in the following in three sections.

The national image study

Researches on people's perception of another country are normally named the

national image study. Study on the national image, as the name sounds, is research about the construction and perception of a country's national image. Starting from the 20th century, with the deepening of globalization, more and more countries' governments have become aware of the importance of national image construction, which also contributes to the popularity of national image study.

The current study on the perceived images of other nations is mainly from the social psychology perspective. Kunczik (1997) defined a perceived national image as "the cognitive representation that a person holds of a given country and what a person believes to be true about a nation and its people" (p.47). For Boulding (1956), the perceived images are the 'total cognitive, affective, and evaluative structure of the behavior unit or its internal view of itself and the universe" (p.423).

How could the national image be examined? According to Herrmann (1985; 1997), national image can be categorized as imperialist, barbarian, enemy, rogue, degenerate, hegemon, neutral, child, patron, ally and protégé depending on the character of foreign policy towards one's own nation, capability compared to one's own nation and the cultural level compared to one's own nation (as cited in Zhang, 2002, p.23). Similarly, Alexander and Levin (2005), try to examine the image of a nation from three structural features of interstate relations including goal compatibility, relative power and relative culture status. There are also other methods used to conceptualize the national image. For example, Wang (2000) argued that one nation's image of another country are characterized by three S's including subjective, stable and selective, and they are related to stereotype of a nation or people affected by history, experience and self-image (as cited in Li & Chitty, 2009, p.2)

Li & Chitty (2009) conclude the mainstream study on the national image into two aspects, noting that "national image study should comprise private frames associated with perceived images of other nations, and public frames referring to projected media images of other nations by framing theory" (p.1).

The private frames of the perceived image of other nations are mainly about how people perceive another nation. The "perceivers" could be groups of people with different identity such as the general public, the political elites or scholars. Zhang (2002) concludes the perceivers in the national image into five groups including state as a unitary actor, predominant leader, decision-making elites, influential elites and the general public (p. 28). The "perceived" also varies, it could be about people's perception of a nation as a whole, or just its people, or one aspect of the country such as its economy or political system.

The projected media image of other nations is another main topic on the study of national image. In the media, a country's national image is usually portrayed from different aspects. As Li and Chitty (2009) stated, "the examination of portrayed media images of a given country needs to be cognizant of multi-dimensionality" (p.3). Generally, the projected media image are mainly perceived from the aspect of valence and salience, where salience mainly refers to the total amount of news stories appeared on one particular newspaper during a certain period and valence mainly referred to the tones, be it positive or negative when talking about one country.

Chinese perception of the U.S.

The author found that Chinese perception of the U.S. is mainly focused on these three following aspects.

1) Chinese Perception of Sino-American relations

Chinese perception of the U.S. is a quite broad concept to explore. A great number of scholars (Deng, 2001; Gries et al., 2011; Kennedy, 2007; Nathan & Scobell, 2012; Zhang, 2015) focused on researching the Sino-American relationship in the eye of Chinese. Most of these researches (Deng, 2001; Kennedy, 2007; Zhang, 2015) are conducted by content analysis, examining articles or journals published by Chinese academics or political elites. Only Greis et al. (2011) used survey to explore the attitude of Chinese college students towards certain U.S. policies on China. This has shown a possible research gap, that is, the majority of the research on Chinese perception of Sino-American relationship are actually about the views of Chinese scholars studying this field but not that of the general public. This could be understandable considering scholar's words are of importance to government leaders and may affect a country's foreign policy. However, overwhelmingly using such an approach could also pose problems because different scholars may use different methods in selecting representative articles and thus the study of perception could become the author's subjective summary of the image portrayed by those selected articles.

Regarding the Sino-American relationship, most of the perceptions, no matter from Chinese college students or scholars, are predominantly negative. Descriptive words such as hegemony, threat, security, intervention are repeatedly mentioned. Deng (2001) and Kennedy (2007) both argued how the U.S. is regarded as a hegemonic superpower in the eye of Chinese academics and analysts. In the meanwhile, "threat" is another word that is frequently used to describe Chinese perception of Sino-U.S. relations. Greis et al (2011) categorized the threat that U.S. poses to China into humiliation and military threat and concluded that the "perceived humiliation threat had a much stronger impact on U.S. Policy preference than did perceived military threat"(p. 17). Besides, threat considering energy security, territorial integrity and influence in South East Asia is also mentioned(Nathan & Scobell, 2012, p.2; Zhang, 2015, pp. 187-188).

2) Perception of the China/U.S. National image

People's perception of a country's national image is another topic that is frequently explored by scholars(Chen & Garcia, 2016; Yang & Liu, 2015; Zhang 2002; Zhang, 2010). While the author only found a few articles examined how Chinese perceive the national image of the U.S., a great number of articles talked about how people around the world, especially Americans, perceive the National image of China.

Among them, the projected media image of a nation is the main topic explored by scholars. Yang and Liu (2015) examined China's official media perception of the U.S. by conducting a content analysis of the coverage of *People's Daily* and found that during the 11-year period from 2000 to 2011 the overall media portrayal of the U.S.

showed “a coexistence of two completely opposite images -- positive in economic-trade and other/non-critical issue areas but negative in political-ideological, military-strategic, and U.S. role in world affairs” (p. 399). The result agrees partly with the research of Zhang (2002), where he summarized that most Chinese authors have a positive perception of the performance of the U.S. economy and thought China should learn from it (pp. 235-238).

3) Chinese Perception of American people

According to the author’s research, a few academics (Lin, 2012; Luo, 2019, Ma, 2015) also try to explore the Chinese perception of American people. In their articles, Chinese “perceptions” of Americans are generally defined as “stereotypes”, which is a kind of “over-simplified, over-generalized, fixed, commonly shared and relatively homogeneous views of one social category of people held by another”(Ma, p. 7). The research by these three scholars generated similar results. As Ma (2015) stated, Chinese millennial college students generally hold positive stereotypes towards American, describing them as outgoing, untrammelled, enthusiastic and so on; however, the intensity of these positive stereotypes is not intense or strong and few negative stereotypes such as arrogant, rude and hypocritical also exist (pp. 40-42). Their study could be enlightening to my research, considering we have the same research object, that is, Chinese college students.

The influential factors of the formation of the perception/ national image

1) The media

It is found by the author that the media is considered as the most impactful channel in the forming of people’s perceptions by a number of scholars (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009; Wang, 2014; Xie & Page, 2013; Zhang, 2010; Zhang, 2012). As McCombs and Reynolds (2009) concluded, “the news media exert significant influence on our perception of ... the most salient issues of the day,” (p. 1). Similarly, Xie and Page (2013) stated clearly in their article that in the age of omnipresent mass media, “peoples’ perception of other countries are undoubtedly influenced by how these countries are portrayed in local and international media,”(p. 855). In respect of the Chinese perception of Americans, media is also considered as the most influential one. As Wang (2014) stated, the data of a survey by *Global Times* in 2005 showed that 62.7% of Chinese urban residents learn about the U.S. through the mass media (p. 49).

2) Other factors

Some articles that looked at other factors that may influence people’s perception of a country. At a macro level, the possible factors include the strategic ties, the similarity of the political system between China and other countries and so on (Xie & Page, 2013, pp. 858-860). At a micro level, the influential sources can be family, peers, school and organized education (Ma, 2015, p. 46); Besides all these factors discussed above, Luo (2019) mentioned that people’s understanding of their own identity and their cultural background could also be factors that affect how they perceive foreigners (pp. 29-30).

Methodology

The main objective of this article is to assess Chinese college students' perception of U.S. policies on China and explore the potentially influential factors that help to form their perception. Based on related study of national image, the author conceptualized Chinese college students' perception of U.S. policies on China into four aspects including salience, valence, characters of U.S. foreign policies and perceived capability of the U.S; based on which a survey is designed and semi-structured interviews followed.

Participants and Procedures

A combination of survey and interviews is used for this research. The survey was conducted from July 15 to July 22 and generated 53 valid results. All the respondents are students from United International College (UIC), among which are 17 males and 36 females. Regarding their grade, 26 respondents are year-two, 12 students are year-three, and 12 students are year-four. There are only three year-one students.

To better understand the result of the survey, the author consequently conducted semi-structured interviews to have an explanatory analysis of the data provided by the survey. Five interviewees were selected randomly by the internet program Random Number Generator. All interviews last about 40 to 60 minutes and were conducted via WeChat voice call. The information of the five interviews are listed in the following: Qin Yao, year-two, majoring in Media Art and Design; Luo Feicheng, year-three student, majoring in International Journalism; Shen Xinyan, year-four, majoring in International Relations and Politics; Yang Mingsong, year-three, majoring in Human Resources and Yi Lanjing, year-four, majoring in Applied Economics.

Key Findings

Salience, valence, and character of U.S. policies on China

As shown in table I, seven questions were asked to examine the attention(salience), attitude(valence) and specific impression(character) Chinese college students have towards U.S. policies on China.

It is found that most of the respondents read news about U.S. foreign policies very frequently: 92.4% of the respondents have read such news within three days. It could be indicated that most respondents are in fact quite interested and concerned about U.S. policies on China. Besides, all of the interviewees recalled the most recent U.S. policies they see as the policy about overseas students studying in the United States. "I remember the most recent news I've seen about America's policies is their restriction on international students," said Qin Yao. "I consider it's somewhat unfair."

Moreover, the survey data also showed that most of the respondents regard U.S. policies on China as quite unfriendly. When asked about why they regard U.S. policies on China as unfriendly, three out of five interviewees compared the U.S. attitude in the past with that of the present and said America's attitude towards China actually changed a lot in this decade. Shen Xinyan, who scored U.S. policies on China as unfriendly (4) said "I remember the U.S. helped China a lot in the past... in fact,

China's entry into WTO was largely helped by the U.S. and then China's economy started to boom." She continued, "however, the recent policies such as tariff increase on China's exports and its blame on China for the Covid-19 pandemic can no way be seen as friendly policies."

Regarding their specific impression of U.S. policies on China, the survey has found that while a majority of respondents still regard most U.S. policies on China as provoking humiliation, intend to raise Chinese people's anger and being hegemonic, almost one-third of respondents stayed neutral or disagree on such discourse. Qin Yao, who stayed neutral on this question told the author that she thought such an impression is actually only prominent in the older generation but not including the Z generation. "My parents and grandparents always feel so angry when they see some U.S. policies that may hurt Chinese interest," Qin said, "but most of my friends do not think like this." The interview also gave the author some extra findings of the characters of U.S. foreign policies in the eye of Chinese college students. Words such as "aggressive", "attacking China", "changeable", and "unwise" were used.

Besides, an overwhelming amount of respondents think they have subjective views of U.S. policies on China, which contains their personal bias. This indicates that most of them actually think their perception of U.S. policies, such as provoke humiliation, intending to raise Chinese people's anger or being hegemonic may be somewhat biased. 2 out of 5 interviewees said their interaction with friends or families contributes to their bias, two said the bias comes from the media and one said it's from the history. Yi Lanjing thought that her bias mostly came from family and friends. "Although I got the most information of U.S. policies from the media, I have more direct contact and talks with people around me," she said, "when some of my friends complained about the unfair treatment they have had in the U.S., I could feel that I see the U.S. and its policies as much more unfavorable."

TABLE I
Chinese College Students Perception of U.S. Policies on China

| Statements | Answers | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| When have you seen any news article about U.S. policies towards China recently? | Within one day | 35 | 66% |
| | Within three days | 14 | 26.4% |
| | Within a week | 1 | 1.9% |
| | Within fifteen days | 3 | 5.7% |
| What do you think of the overall attitude of U.S. policies towards China? | Very friendly (5) | 0 | 0% |
| | Friendly (4) | 0 | 0% |
| | Neutral (3) | 11 | 20.8% |
| | Unfriendly (2) | 30 | 56.6% |
| | Very unfriendly (1) | 12 | 22.6% |
| How much do you agree with the following statement: "A majority of U.S. policies on China mean to humiliate/insult or raise the anger of Chinese." | Totally agree (5) | 15 | 28.3% |
| | Agree (4) | 22 | 41.5% |
| | Neutral (3) | 10 | 18.9% |
| | Disagree (2) | 6 | 11.3% |
| | Totally disagree (1) | 0 | 0% |
| | | Totally agree (5) | 20 |
| How much do you agree with the following statement: "A majority of U.S. policies on China are hegemonic." | Agree (4) | 18 | 34% |
| | Neutral (3) | 9 | 17% |
| | Disagree (2) | 6 | 11.3% |
| | Totally disagree (1) | 0 | 0% |
| | | Very much (5) | 1 |
| Do you think you have personal bias in your perception of U.S. policies on China? | A lot (4) | 12 | 22.6% |
| | Some (3) | 32 | 60.3% |
| | Little (2) | 7 | 11.2% |
| | No (1) | 1 | 1.9% |
| | | Totally agree (5) | 4 |
| How much do you agree with the following statement: "U.S. policies on China are reasonable policies made based on America national interest." | Agree (4) | 7 | 13.2% |
| | Neutral (3) | 20 | 37.7% |
| | Disagree (2) | 16 | 30.2% |
| | Totally disagree (1) | 6 | 11.3% |
| | | Quite a lot(5) | 5 |
| Do you think your perception of U.S. policies on China will affect your attitude towards the U.S. as a whole? | A lot (4) | 25 | 47.2% |
| | Some (3) | 19 | 35.8% |
| | Little (2) | 2 | 3.8% |
| | No (1) | 2 | 3.8% |
| | | | |

Influential Factors of Chinese College Students' Perception of U.S. Policies on China

Regarding the factors that affect and form Chinese college students' perception of U.S. policies on China, it is found that news media is regarded as the most common and impactful way affecting Chinese college students' perception of the U.S., followed by their interaction with friends and families. According to the interview results, to get information about U.S. policies, instead of viewing articles from Chinese media outlets, 3 out of 5 interviewees actually favor looking at articles from international media outlets such as BBC, Financial Times, and Wall Street Journal. Shen Xinyan explained that such a reading habit may have something to do with the objectivity and informativeness of the news. "I think the news on policy issues from BBC and Financial Times was more objective than Chinese media," she said, "when I read news about the Trade war on Global Times, I felt the article just try to inflame me about the U.S. wrongdoing but in fact did not say objectively about how Chinese citizens could be affected." This echoes with the opinion of Taylor (1997) who observed that news coverage in media are packaged to be more entertaining or exciting rather than intrusive or informative (p.3). Other channels such as the articles from WeChat public accounts and videos from famous Youtubers and politics commentators that may affect their views of U.S. foreign policies were also mentioned. For example, Yang Mingsong told the author that instead of those famous news outlets, he mainly got information about U.S. policies from articles posted on North America Oversea Student Daily, a popular Wechat public accounts.

Lastly, regarding Chinese college students' perception of China's self-identity., the majority of respondents (69.8%) agree with the statement that "China will always love peace in the future and will not practice hegemonic acts". The interview result showed that respondents' belief in China's peace-loving character may be closely connected to China's traditional culture. 2 out of 5 interviewees mentioned the Chinese traditional ethical concepts such as "benevolence"(互惠 Hu Hui), "justice"(公正 Gong Zheng), "Confucius – win people by virtue"(孔子-以德服人 Yi De Fu Ren) and "philanthropism" (博爱 Bo Ai). For them, because Chinese political leaders have also been exposed to this kind of traditional culture so China will always be a peace-loving country. The author thought the survey and interview results indicated that Chinese college students understanding of China's identity is affecting their view of U.S. foreign policies a lot, especially considering the huge cultural difference between these two countries.

Table II
Influential Factors of Chinese College Students' Perception of U.S. Policies

| Statements | Answers | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Which of the following ways help you to learn about the U.S. policies on China? (multiple choice; no more than two) | News media | 51 | 62.2% |
| | Films, books and documentaries | 10 | 12.2% |
| | Textbook | 1 | 1.2% |
| | Travel | 1 | 1.2% |
| | Interaction with friends and families | 19 | 23.2% |
| Which of the following ways has had the greatest impact on your perception of U.S. policies towards China? | News media | 44 | 83% |
| | Films, books and documentaries | 3 | 5.7% |
| | Textbook | 0 | 0 |
| | Travel | 0 | 0 |
| | Interaction with friends and families | 6 | 11.3% |
| Do you think the U.S. policies on China has affected the interest of you or your family members? | Very much (5) | 2 | 3.8% |
| | A lot (4) | 7 | 13.2% |
| | Some (3) | 22 | 41.5% |
| | Little (2) | 14 | 26.4% |
| | No (1) | 8 | 15.1% |
| How much do you agree with the following statement: "China is a peace-loving country, a victim of foreign aggression, a socialist country, a bastion of revolution, a force against hegemony, a developing country, one of the major powers, a country that loves international cooperation and an autonomous country." | Totally agree (5) | 6 | 11.3% |
| | Agree (4) | 16 | 30.2% |
| | Neutral (3) | 20 | 37.7% |
| | Disagree (2) | 7 | 13.2% |
| | Totally disagree (1) | 4 | 7.5% |
| How much do you agree with the following statement: "China will always love peace in the future and will not practice hegemonic acts"?" | Totally agree (5) | 15 | 28.3% |
| | Agree (4) | 22 | 41.5% |
| | Neutral (3) | 12 | 22.6% |
| | Disagree (2) | 4 | 7.5% |
| | Totally disagree (1) | 0 | 0% |

Chinese College Students Perception of Sino-U.S. Relations

To explore how Chinese college students think of the respective role China and U.S. played in the Sino-U.S. relationship and its future development, three questions are asked.

It is found that while 43.4% of respondents regard the U.S. as a problem, 45.3% of them actually regard the U.S. as an opportunity. In the meanwhile, an overwhelming amount of respondents viewed China as a competitor (92.5%) for the U.S., rather than a victim (7.5%). The result showed an interesting contradiction among how Chinese college students define the role the U.S. played, which indicates an ambivalent attitude Chinese college students have towards the U.S. Luo Feicheng thought the U.S. is a problem for China and such problem may become bigger in the future. “ I think the conflicts between China and the U.S. cannot be resolved in the end because there is indeed some overlap between the core interests of both sides” said Luo Feicheng. Similarly, Shen Yanxing regards the U.S. as a problem, which is a blockage towards globalization. However, Yang Mingsong and Qin Yao disagree with this and regard the U.S. as a good opportunity. “although the gap between national power still exists, I think the U.S. is now showing a downward trend and many of the policies made by the government seem to be unwise.” said Yang Mingsong, “there is no doubt that the current situation provides an opportunity to China, a great opportunity for speedy development.”

Lastly, it's quite surprising for the author to find that despite most respondents thought the Sino-U.S. relation may aggravate in the future, they still hope that China and U.S. can work together to shoulder the responsibility of a global major power in the post-COVID19 pandemic era. This has revealed the actual friendly attitude Chinese college students have towards the U.S. As Yang Mingsong once said during the interview, “actually a lot of my peers like the U.S. and they are also looking forward to went to study at U.S. universities.” He added, “However, the U.S. is becoming more and more hostile towards China.”

Table III
Attitude of Chinese College Students towards Sino-U.S Relationship

| Statements | Answers | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|--|-----------|------------|
| Based on your perception of U.S. policies, do you think the U.S. is? | Problem | 23 | 43.4% |
| | Enemy | 5 | 9.4% |
| | Friend | 1 | 1.9% |
| | Opportunity | 24 | 45.3% |
| What role do you think China plays in Sino-U.S. relationship? | Victim | 4 | 7.5% |
| | Competitor | 49 | 92.5% |
| How do you think the U.S. attitude towards China will change in the post-COVID19 pandemic era? | More friendly (5) | 1 | 1.9% |
| | A bit more friendly (4) | 4 | 7.5% |
| | Stay the same (3) | 11 | 20.8% |
| | A bit more unfriendly (2) | 24 | 26.4% |
| | More unfriendly (1) | 13 | 24.5% |
| In the post-COVID19 era, when Sino-America relationship is filled with uncertainly, do you hope that China and the US can work together to shoulder the responsibility of a major global power in the future? | I hope, but I don't think this will happen | 29 | 54.7% |
| | I hope and I think it is very likely to happen | 19 | 35.8% |
| | I Don't have such hope | 5 | 9.4% |

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the author set to explore the perception of Chinese college students on U.S. policies towards China in the post-pandemic era and the influential factors that help to form such perception. Using the national image theory as the theoretical framework, the author tried to evaluate such perception from the aspect of salience, valence, characters, and perceived capability through a survey and semi-structure interviews.

The research revealed that while the majority of respondents still regard U.S. policies on China as provoking humiliation and being hegemonic, most of them are fully aware of their bias that might be given by the shadow of history or thoughts that passed on from the older generation. The news media is recognized as the most impactful and common way for most respondents to know information about U.S. policies, followed by interaction with friends and families. Besides, internal factors such as Chinese traditional culture also affect their perception of U.S. foreign policies. The huge difference between Chinese and the U.S. culture: one promotes modesty and gentleness while one encourages competition and freedom may deepen some Chinese misunderstanding and dislike of U.S. foreign Policies.

Regarding Chinese college students' understanding of Sino-American relations, the number of respondents that regard the U.S. as a problem is similar to those that regard it as an opportunity, which revealed the ambivalent attitude Chinese students have towards the U.S. The author argued that this shows the Chinese younger generation is

struggling to define their new identity in the world arena after China's rapid development in recent years: while the history – the one-hundred-year humiliation are still casting a shadow on them, they are gradually gaining their confidence back. By viewing China as a formal competitor to the U.S. rather than a victim, they are putting themselves in an equal place with the U.S. instead of feeling inferior. It seems that Chinese college students is eager to prove themselves in front of people throughout the world, to announce to the world that China has become much stronger in these decades.

The research result also indicates that Chinese college students generally have a friendly attitude towards the U.S. even during the period of amounting conflicts and are looking forward to assuming more responsibilities as a global major power in the future. This possibly has something to do with Chinese traditional culture which promotes modesty and benevolence. In general, the author argues that instead of the past history, the cultural background which specifically referred to the traditional Chinese values and thoughts are much powerful in affecting their understanding of China's identity and the image of other countries. Future research considering how much the internal influential factors affected Chinese perception of China's identity and the images of other countries are needed.

In addition, the research result also provides a testing ground for the Power Transition theory, which predicted that as the power gap between an emerging power and hegemonic power narrows, the former's perception of the latter tends to become more contempt and discontent (Organski & Kugler, 1980; cited in Liu & Yang, 2015, p. 386). However, the result agrees little with such a theory. While some contempt emotion can be perceived from the words used by some interviewees, the result that a majority of respondents still have a friendly attitude towards the U.S. and are looking for more cooperation showed that the Chinese have not become contempt or discontent with the U.S. after the striking rise of China's national power.

Lastly, the research do have some limitations. Firstly, the survey samples are not large enough and thus the data might be not very representative of UIC students' perception of U.S. policies on China. Besides, the fact that the survey, as well as interviews, all targeted solely at UIC students without including other mainland colleges also means the data is very much not representative of Chinese college students as a whole. To have a better understanding and more accurate descriptive account of such a topic, replicable surveys are needed. Moreover, there have been some problems with the design of the survey questions: some of them seem vague and could confuse readers. One of my interviewer Shen Xinyan has once told me during the interview that regarding the question "what do you think of the overall attitude of U.S. policies towards China?", she felt confused about which period it is referring to, since during different period, the U.S. attitude is completely different. More clearly-defined questions with a specific time period are needed. Last but not least, the author also thought the research topic is somewhat broad which explored not only Chinese college student' perception but also its influential factors; this has resulted in the loose structure of this paper. For future research, the research topic should be narrowed down for deeper and more organized analysis.

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