

NEW RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
2009 EDITION



Soft Power in Asia: Results of a 2008 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion

Christopher B. Whitney, Project Director
David Shambaugh, Senior Project Consultant



In Partnership with



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**THE CHICAGO COUNCIL
ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

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Introduction

Asia is in flux. Although ostensibly peaceful, relations between Asian states are changing rapidly. In recent years Asian economies have posted world-best growth statistics (although they have been severely hit by the economic downturn, especially since the onset of the international financial crisis in September 2008). Regional interdependencies are binding economies and societies together like never before. Multilateral mechanisms are growing, and intergovernmental cooperation has reached new levels. While terrorism is a persistent problem in Southeast Asia, no interstate or intra-state wars rage in the region. Conflict around the normally volatile Taiwan Strait has been notably muted. Previous hostilities have been quieted and relations among former adversaries normalized.

Yet beneath the surface, suspicions and tensions among societies are evident. Historical memory has not been erased between longtime regional adversaries. The rise of China is reshaping the strategic map.¹ Japan's former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's "Asia First" policy indicated a desire for his country to reengage on the regional stage. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gained a new level of confidence

and regional engagement after celebrating its fortieth anniversary and promulgating a new charter. Beyond shifting power, regional "hotspots" like North Korea and the "black spot" of Myanmar fester and continue to threaten regional stability. Globalization and nontraditional security concerns affect all countries in the region.

The region is also experiencing a shift in power, both in terms of U.S.-China relations and key regional relationships. The emergence of China as a major power has strengthened the region's role as a global economic engine and altered the regional balance of power. While the United States remains the leading military power in Asia and the region's primary export market, some have questioned its reliability, responsibility, and continued military presence in the region. China has used its growing economic power, increased East Asian economic interdependence, and skillful diplomacy to co-opt the interests of its neighbors and assert its influence. As a result of these and other developments, East Asia as a region is facing a new political task of finding ways to reduce tensions, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations prevalent in any period of power shift and transition.

To better understand the power shift and the U.S. role compared to China and other regional actors, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the East Asia Institute (EAI) surveyed people in six countries—China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam,

1. See Evan S. Medeiros et al, *Pacific Currents: The Responses of U.S. Allies and Security Partners in East Asia to China's Rise* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 2008); David Shambaugh, *Power Shift: China & Asia's New Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Robert Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia: Promises and Perils* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Kokubun Ryosei and Wang Jisi, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004).

Indonesia, and the United States—in the first half of 2008 about regional security and economic integration in Asia and about how these nations perceive each other. In a new era of interconnectedness and growing interdependencies, the goal was to examine Asian perceptions of these six nations’ “soft power” in the region. Which country has the most soft power, or ability to achieve its goals through “attraction rather than coercion or payments” (Nye 2005)?² How do citizens of these nations view each other’s popular culture, commercial prowess and brands, intellectual influence, diplomatic reputations, and political systems? This report aims to outline trends in the current and potential use of soft power in East Asia.

The surveys included more than forty questions in each country and were completed prior to the global economic downturn during the second half of 2008. The Council published initial findings in its 2008 report *Soft Power in Asia*. This report presents the project’s complete findings.

The findings were unexpected. The responses directly called into question the conventional wisdom that China was chipping into, if not overshadowing, U.S. soft power and showed that the United States continues to wield considerable soft power in the region.

Section one of this report deals with attitudes towards economic integration and regional security in East Asia. Section two analyzes the implications of the survey results for soft power in the region. Section three examines the perceptions of the surveyed countries towards one another, and section four analyzes four important bilateral relationships: U.S.–China, U.S.–Japan, China–Japan, and Japan–South Korea.

2. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

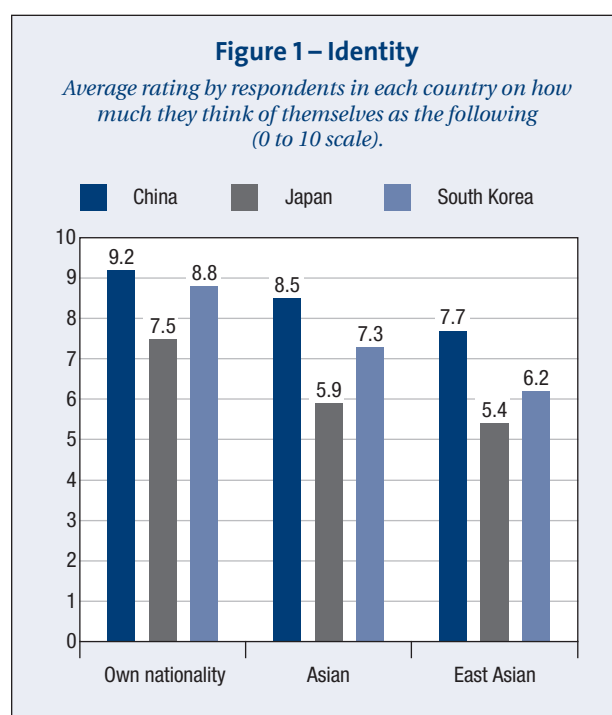
Section I: Attitudes Towards Economic Cooperation and Security in Asia

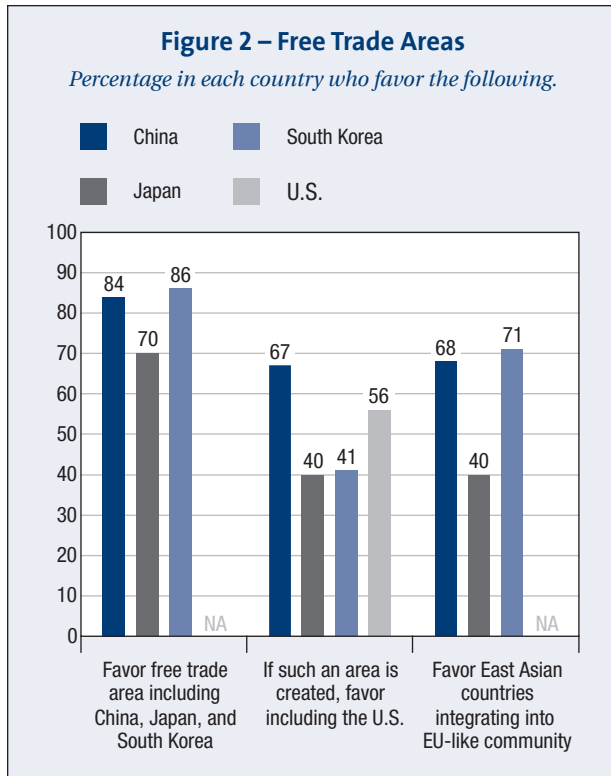
Economic Integration

Intraregional interactions at all levels have significantly intensified across East Asia in recent years. All major trading states in East Asia now engage in greater intraregional trade than with other parts of the world. East Asia is the world's largest regional recipient of foreign direct investment, and the vast majority of it originates in the region. Deep economic interdependencies have developed alongside increases in trade and investment. Dramatic rises in intraregional tourism, student and cultural exchanges, professional interactions, and electronic communications have supplemented economic connections. Intraregional diplomacy is also intensive. Leaders and government officials constantly tour the region to strengthen bilateral ties. In addition, multilateral institutions and groupings have proliferated across Asia in recent years, creating an institutional architecture of overlapping organizations. While East Asia has nowhere near the institutionalized level of pan-regional cooperation as Europe, Asian multilateralism is following its own path and is developing rapidly.

These connections among Asian societies have multiplied with remarkable speed and intensity over the past decade. But are they leading to greater regionalism and regional identities? Are these interconnections doing for Asia what occurred in Europe in the 1990s?

On the question of identity, respondents in China and South Korea—and to a lesser extent Japan—tend to view themselves less as either “East Asian” or “Asian” than as their own nationality (see Figure 1). On separate 0 to 10 scales asking how much a respondent thinks of himself or herself as the country's nationality, East Asian, or Asian, Japanese, Chinese, and South Koreans identify most closely with their own countries (averaging 7.5, 9.2, and 8.8, respectively, on the scale). While these same citizens see themselves less as East Asians (5.4, 7.7, and 6.2, respectively)





and Asians (5.9, 8.5, and 7.3, respectively), these ratings are not low. This indicates that there is definitely some identification with the greater region beyond national borders. Thus, as in Europe, there is evidence that Asians simultaneously think of themselves in both national and regional terms.

Another indicator of growing regional integration is the widespread support for bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) as well as surprisingly strong support for an intraregional East Asian free trade area including China, Japan, and South Korea (see Figure 2).

If such an FTA were formed, 56 percent of Americans say the United States should be included. However, only Chinese support American inclusion (67%). Fifty-seven percent of Japanese and South Koreans are against it.

A strong majority of Chinese (68%) favor the integration of East Asian countries into a regional community similar to the European Union (EU), calling into question the idea that Chinese are state-centric realists. South Koreans are even more in favor (71%), while Japanese are more skeptical, with only 40 percent in favor.

Regional Security

Greater interdependence between East Asian countries, facilitated by rapidly growing trade in recent years, has led some experts of the region to hypothesize that the historical tensions between countries will give way to greater cooperation and make military conflict unthinkable. Current military patterns, however, suggest that fears of one another persist. Survey data confirm that even though cooperation has grown and the publics are in favor of even stronger economic ties, Asians fear the military power of their neighbors and the United States in the region. The data also show that while there is unease about the American presence, it is overwhelmed by concerns about neighboring countries. Although East Asia is presently peaceful, important changes are under way.³

Almost all militaries across the Asian region are modernizing their forces.⁴ In 2007 Asia accounted for five of the world's ten largest standing armies (China, India, North Korea, South Korea, Vietnam) and the world's four largest surface navies (if the United States and Russian navies are included, along with China and Japan). In terms of total defense expenditures, Asia ranked equal to European NATO nations in 2005 (\$256 billion for Asia versus \$259 billion for European NATO countries), but totaled only half that of the United States (\$495 billion). China and Japan had the second and fourth largest defense budgets in the world in 2005 (the United States ranked first and Russia third). For most East Asian nations, military modernization programs involve importing sophisticated weaponry from abroad. Six of the world's top ten arms importers are in Asia (China, India, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan), although in aggregate the Middle East still imports more than Asia. China's military modernization program has been particularly intensive over the past

3. See Ashley Tellis, Mercy Kuo, and Andrew Marble, eds., *Strategic Asia 2008-2009: Challenges and Choices* (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2008); David Shambaugh and Michael Yahuda, eds., *International Relations in Asia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

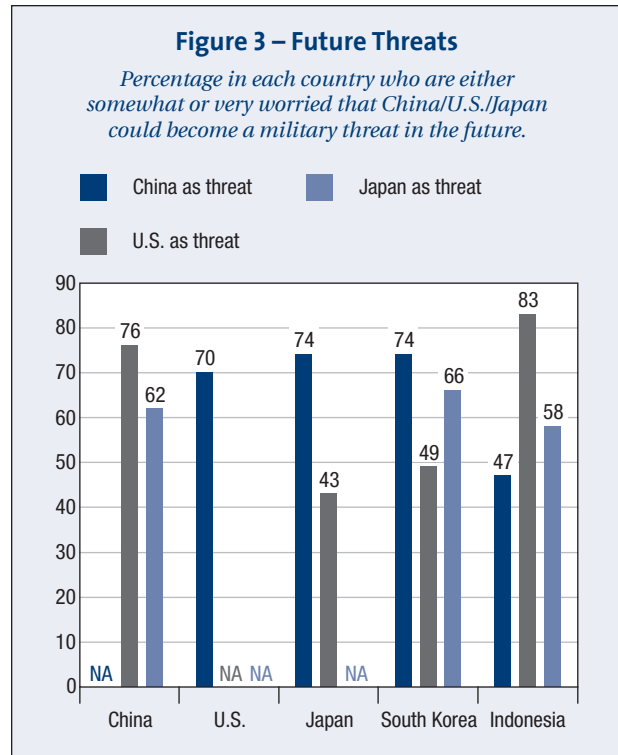
4. See Ashley Tellis and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2005-2006: Military Modernization in an Era of Uncertainty* (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005).

two decades, and this has raised concerns in the United States and throughout the region. To offset China's growing capabilities and uncertain intentions, the United States has been strengthening its five bilateral alliances in the region (with Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, and Thailand) as well as building defense ties with nonallied states such as Singapore, Indonesia, Mongolia, Vietnam, and India.

The regional insecurity suggested in this military buildup is further reflected in Asian responses to questions about how greater trade and more cultural ties in East Asia have affected the possibility of conflict in the region. Most answer that the potential for conflict has increased. Nearly 60 percent of Chinese respondents believe that the potential for conflict has either "very much" (29%) or "somewhat" (29%) increased. Japanese opinion is split. Only in South Korea does a majority (60%) say that the possibility of conflict has decreased. It is possible that South Koreans see much more opportunity for growth in economic relationships with the much larger economies of China and Japan, whereas citizens from these larger Asian countries are more wary of the potential for conflict over natural resources necessary for growth.

Respondents were also asked to rate the likelihood of future military conflict in East Asia in the next ten years on a 0 to 10 scale in which 0 means no possibility for conflict and 10 means that conflict is extremely likely. The average score falls right around the middle of the scale—within 4.5 and 5.9 for all four countries where the question was asked (China, Japan, United States, and South Korea).

Still, majorities or pluralities in every country are at least "somewhat worried" that China could become a military threat to their country in the future (see Figure 3).⁵ Despite Japan's "peace constitution," majorities in China (62%), South Korea (66%), and Indonesia (58%) are worried that Japan may pose a future military threat to their respective countries. The Chinese are even more worried about a military threat from the United States (76%) than Americans are worried about a Chinese



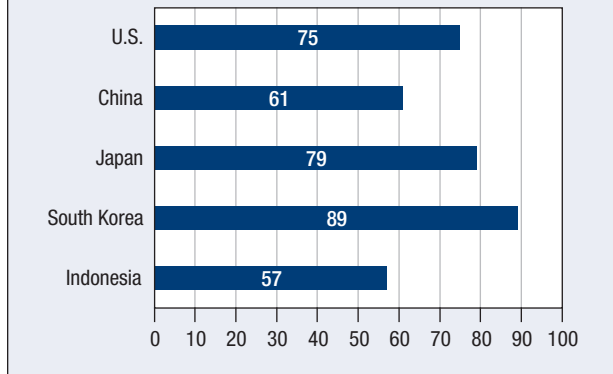
military threat (70%). While most Japanese and South Koreans are not worried about a threat from the United States, a substantial number are at least somewhat worried (43% of Japanese and 49% of South Koreans). The greatest concern about the United States is in Indonesia, a largely Muslim country, where 83 percent of the population is at least somewhat worried about a future military threat. This view likely reflects concern over U.S. military involvement in the Middle East in recent years.

However worried some Japanese and Koreans may be of a possible U.S. military threat to their countries, majorities in South Korea (72%) and Japan (68%) believe that the U.S. military presence in the region increases stability. Chinese are more wary of American military forces in Asia than the Japanese and South Koreans, with a slight majority of Chinese (52%) believing that the U.S. military presence in Asia *decreases* stability. Yet in all five Asian countries, majorities believe that if the United States removed its armed forces from the region, it could spark a competitive military buildup between China and Japan (see Figure 4). Eighty-nine percent in South Korea, 79 percent in

5. This question was not asked in Vietnam.

Figure 4 – China–Japan Arms Race

Percentage in each country who think it is somewhat or very likely that China and Japan would build up their militaries to compete with each other if the U.S. removed its armed forces from East Asia.



Japan, 75 percent in the United States, 61 percent in China, and 57 percent in Indonesia say such a scenario is at least “somewhat likely.”

A large U.S. presence in Asia is seen as a counterbalance to the growing influence and power of China in the region. Asked if they favor or oppose their country supporting the United States in an effort to balance China’s rise as a great political and military power, 69 percent in Japan and 68 percent in South Korea are in favor. A slight majority of Americans (51%) are in favor of a U.S. attempt to contain China’s political and military power.

China has not softened the effect of its growing military power through effective diplomacy. Throughout the region China is viewed as somewhat ineffective in dealing with regional problems. This is surprising given Beijing’s central role in the Six Party Talks. When it comes to working to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue, majorities in Japan (59%) and South Korea (56%), along with half of those surveyed in the United States (50%), believe that China has been somewhat or very ineffective. By contrast, Chinese have a very positive attitude on the effectiveness of other members of the Six-Party Talks. They have an especially positive view of North Korea, with 69 percent saying the country has been somewhat or very effective in resolving the North Korea nuclear issue. The United States is the only country about which majorities or pluralities in all other countries say it

has been effective in resolving this nuclear weapons problem.

On another regional security dilemma—persistent tensions between China and Taiwan—fewer respondents in each country agree that China and the United States have been effective in dealing with this issue. However, 64 percent of Chinese agree that Taiwan has been “somewhat” or “very effective” in helping to manage tensions. This percentage is only second to Chinese approval of their own country’s handling of the issue.

Other territorial disputes in the region causing tensions between neighbors include (1) the dispute between Korea and Japan over the island known as “Dokdo” in Korean and as “Takashima” in Japanese and (2) the dispute between China and Japan over the islands “Diaoyu” or “Senkaku” in their respective languages. Judging by public attitudes, these islands are still very contentious. On the Korea–Japan dispute, 78 percent of South Koreans and 69 percent of Japanese say their country should not be willing to compromise on the issue. With regard to the China–Japan dispute, 80 percent of Chinese and 72 percent of Japanese say their country should not be willing to compromise.

Overall, signs of hostility and suspicion still exist among East Asian neighbors despite the increased pace of regional economic integration. The United States is perceived as an important actor in the region, balancing the power of a rising China and contributing to conflict resolution and peaceful relations between neighbors.

Section II: Soft Power

As interdependencies have grown, Asians (and analysts of Asia) have increasingly begun to focus on a new level of interaction—soft power—to better understand regional dynamics and how we might mitigate tensions between states. Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye coined the term in his famous book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*.⁶ In his now classic study, Nye equates soft power with attraction and asserts: “In international politics, the resources that produce soft power arise in large part from the values an organization or country expresses in its culture, in the examples it sets by its internal practices and policies, and in the way it handles its relations with others.”⁷ Subsequent to the publication of Nye’s book, many studies of American and European soft power and public diplomacy ensued. More recently, journalists, scholars, and government analysts have begun focusing on China’s alleged soft power.⁸

6. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

7. *Ibid.*, 8.

8. Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, “Sources and Limits of Chinese Soft Power,” *Survival* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 17-36; Ingrid d’Hooghe, “Into High Gear: China’s Public Diplomacy,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 3 (2008): 37-61; Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), *China’s Soft Power in Developing Regions* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, March 2009); Congressional Research Service (CRS), *China’s Foreign Policy and “Soft Power” in South America, Asia, and Africa* (Washington, DC: United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and U.S. Government Printing Office, April 2008).

This study is the first public opinion survey to evaluate soft power in Asia regionally. It questions how these nations view each other’s popular culture, commercial prowess and brands, intellectual influence and appeal, universities, diplomatic reputations and political systems. While the People’s Republic of China has gained increasing attention for its Asian diplomacy and regional soft power, the other nations, aside from the United States, have not been as closely examined, and China’s alleged soft power has not been carefully scrutinized using empirical survey data. This study fills this gap and provides unique insights into soft power in Asia.

Overall Soft Power Findings

To assist in the analysis of the report’s findings, the results of many questions were combined to produce indices for each of five general areas of soft power: *economic*, *cultural*, *human capital*, *political*, and *diplomatic*. These five indices were then averaged to produce an overall “Soft Power Index” (see Figure 5). Changes in opinion were tracked on a few key questions that were asked both in this survey and in The Chicago Council’s 2006 Global Views survey.⁹

According to the overall Soft Power Index—and contrary to conventional wisdom—the United

9. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Global Views 2006* (Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006).

States continues to possess significant soft power in Asia. There is high recognition of U.S. economic, cultural, and human capital soft power in all survey countries as well as great respect for its political and diplomatic standing. American influence in Asia has clearly not diminished recently and remains very strong, especially among citizens of the major powers. This gives the Obama administration a strong base to build upon. The United States ranks highest on the index among Chinese, Japanese, South Koreans, and Indonesians, and second to Japan among Vietnamese, though not by much. South Korea comes out consistently ahead of China among Americans and Japanese. Conversely, Japan ranks last among Chinese respondents. Although animosities are not as high as expected, Chinese and Japanese generally rate the other country lowest on most forms of soft power, while general admiration is apparent between Chinese and South Koreans. In contrast to the great powers, Indonesian and Vietnamese citizens believe Japan has slightly greater soft power than the United States and that China ranks ahead of South Korea. Thus, there appears to be a division between the great powers and Indonesia/Vietnam in terms of perceptions of soft power in Asia.

The following sections summarize the findings for each of the five specific soft power indices.

Economic Soft Power

Every country has high respect for U.S. economic soft power (see Appendix A). The United States comes out on top among Japanese, Chinese, and South Koreans, and second among Indonesians and Vietnamese. Citizens in China,¹⁰ Japan, and South Korea believe the economic relationship with the United States is their most important, that the United States has the greatest economic influence in Asia,¹¹ the U.S. economy is the most

10. Chinese give the economic relationship with the United States and the European Union the same average score.

11. This ranking applies only to those given by each national public to the other countries. Chinese believe the economic influence of their country is greater in Asia than that of the United States. Japan places the United States a close second to China in terms of economic influence.

Figure 5 – The Soft Power Index

Average level of influence on a 0 to 1 scale when soft power questions are combined, followed by rank (see Appendix A for questions included).

Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
United States	—	.47 (3)	.67 (1)	.49 (2)
China	.71 (1)	—	.62 (3)	.65 (2)
Japan	.69 (1)	.51 (3)	—	.56 (2)
South Korea	.72 (1)	.55 (3)	.65 (2)	—
Indonesia	.72 (2)	.70 (3)	.72 (1)	.63 (4)
Vietnam	.76 (2)	.74 (3)	.79 (1)	.73 (4)

How the Soft Power Index Is Calculated

The questions in this survey were designed to measure Asian attitudes regarding soft power. Various indices were created as summary measures that represent the average rating for each country for different aspects of soft power and provide one basic rating of the overarching concepts. Each index was created by standardizing the scales for several questions on a particular aspect of soft power (i.e., cultural soft power), adding together the scores for those questions, and then averaging to arrive at a combined rating for “cultural soft power.” Overall soft power is broken down into five separate indices that each measures a different form of soft power—economic, cultural, human capital, political, and diplomatic. Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed listing of the questions included in each index. The overall Soft Power Index was created by averaging the soft power index scores for each of the five different forms of soft power. Each of the soft power indices was considered equally important and therefore they were weighted equally in the overall score no matter how many questions were included for that particular index.

internationally competitive, and the U.S. economy provides the best opportunities for its workforce. Japan is a close second to the United States in terms of perceived economic soft power and is ranked even higher than the United States by Indonesians and Vietnamese. China and South Korea are almost always at the bottom of this index, although China is generally slightly ahead of South Korea. China tends to rank ahead of South Korea in terms of perceived economic importance to other countries and on the international competitiveness and economic influence of China’s economy in Asia. South Korea understandably receives lower ratings on these questions compared with the economic powerhouses of the United States, China, and Japan. China suffers

from perceptions of low product quality, a lack of humanitarian assistance to other Asian countries, and the perception that there are few economic opportunities for its workforce.

Cultural Soft Power

There is a clear divide between citizens of the major powers and citizens of Indonesia and Vietnam in their perceptions of cultural soft power. The United States ranks first according to Japanese, Chinese, and South Koreans, but is last according to both Indonesians and Vietnamese, who consider China the preeminent purveyor of cultural soft power in Asia (see Appendix A). Chinese, Japanese, and South Koreans believe the United States has a great degree of cultural influence in Asia, find American culture appealing, and believe that the spread of U.S. popular culture is positive. Indonesians find U.S. culture appealing in general and think that it has a great deal of influence in Asia, yet nearly all Indonesians feel that the spread of U.S. culture is a “bad thing” and has a negative influence on Indonesia. Despite the fact that most Indonesians think U.S. culture is attractive, Indonesians who believe U.S. influence in Asia has increased in the past ten years are less likely to think the spread of U.S. culture is good. In contrast, Indonesian and Vietnamese citizens believe Chinese culture has a large and mainly positive impact on their own societies. China is not considered much of a cultural soft power by citizens of the major powers, even though there is a general perception that China possesses a rich cultural heritage. Japan and South Korea generally rank in the middle on the Soft Power Index. Although ratings of cultural soft power differ somewhat on individual questions, overall, Americans and Indonesians have greater respect for Japanese cultural soft power, while Vietnamese and Chinese have greater respect for South Korean cultural soft power.

Human Capital Soft Power

Similar to economic soft power, citizens in nearly every country surveyed (except Vietnam) believe

the United States possesses the greatest degree of human capital soft power (see Appendix A). It is notable that the United States rates so highly on this scale and that there is a considerable gap between the United States and the rest of the major powers. There is general agreement that the United States has a highly educated population, that it possesses advanced science and technology, that it has quality universities, and that it is very important to learn English. Japan, China, and South Korea are once again second, third, and fourth, respectively, on the index for nearly all of the surveyed countries. There is considerable respect for Japanese science and technology among respondents in all countries. China’s advantage over South Korea in terms of human capital soft power lies in the higher ratings it receives for science and technology and the importance of learning Chinese over Korean.

Diplomatic Soft Power

The diplomatic Soft Power Index again shows a major power/Southeast Asia divide. Japanese, South Koreans, and Chinese believe the United States possesses the greatest diplomatic soft power, although Chinese rank South Korea slightly higher than the United States (see Appendix A). Contrary to conventional wisdom, within these countries the United States has a good reputation for its use of diplomacy, respect for sovereignty, and leadership in international institutions. In contrast, Indonesians and Vietnamese rate Japan slightly higher and China relatively equal to the United States on the overall diplomatic Soft Power Index. Indonesians believe China and Japan use diplomacy more effectively to resolve key problems in Asia and have a greater respect for sovereignty than the United States. In addition, animosity between Japan and China is evident on this index. Citizens in neither country believe the other uses diplomacy effectively (i.e., negotiations regarding North Korea’s nuclear program and tensions between China and Taiwan), and both Chinese and Japanese believe the other fails to build trust and cooperation among Asian countries. South Korea is second and China third on the index in

the eyes of the United States and Japan, while South Korea ranks last according to Indonesians and Vietnamese in diplomatic soft power.¹²

Political Soft Power

The United States and Japan are highly regarded in the area of political soft power (see Appendix A).¹³ Citizens of China, Japan, and South Korea believe the United States has the greatest respect for human rights and possesses a political system that serves the needs of its people. Japan has ratings in the same range as the United States from people in every country except China. Interestingly, China rates quite poorly on this particular index. Citizens of the other major powers agree that China possesses limited political soft power, believing its political system does not serve the needs of its people and that it has little respect for human rights.

12. The Vietnamese index was based only on perceived success of promoting policies in Asia. Vietnamese rank China and South Korea equally, which places these countries third after Japan and the United States on this index.

13. The questions on political soft power were not included in the Vietnamese survey.

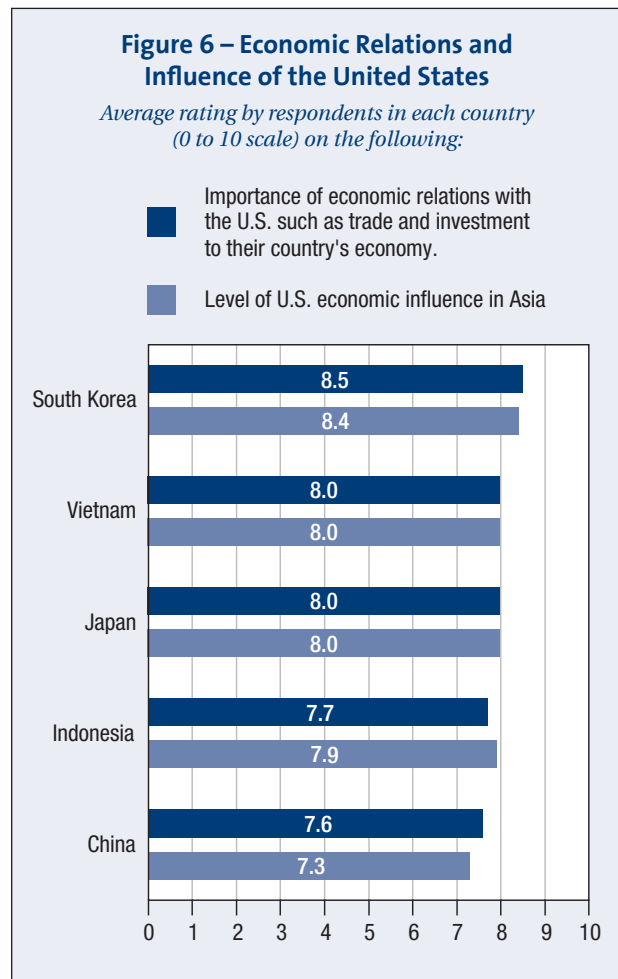
Section III: Perceptions of Individual Countries

Perceptions of the United States

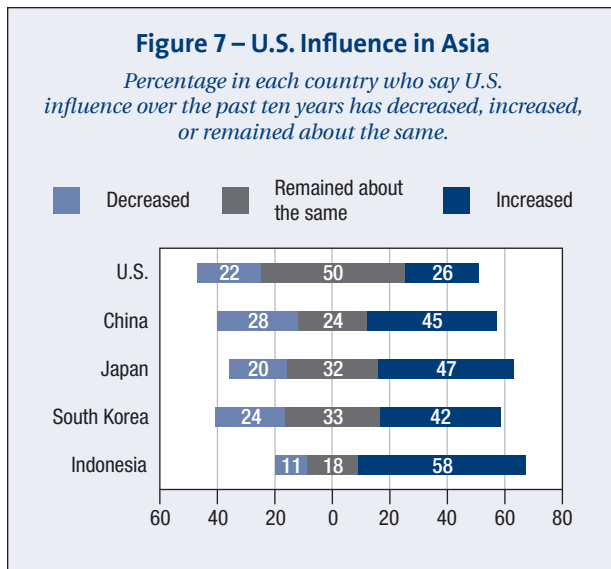
For much of the post-World War II period, America's soft power has been felt strongly in Asia. American universities have educated several generations of Asian professionals and elites, and its popular culture—movies, music, sports, designer goods—have penetrated deeply into Asian societies. The American democratic model has inspired many Asian countries as they transitioned from authoritarian to democratic political systems. The American economy has been the main export market for Asian producers for many years. American missionaries have proselytized their religious practices through Asian societies. Asian tourists have flocked to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland.

Despite this sixty-plus-year legacy of American soft power in Asia, the media has been filled with reports in recent years of America's declining appeal throughout the region. This survey indicates quite clearly that America's soft power is still robust and pervasive.

On a 0 to 10 scale of economic influence, the United States ranks as either the first or second most influential economic power in Asia in all the surveyed countries. The United States receives a mean level of 8.4 among South Koreans (see Figure 6), ahead of both China and Japan. The United States ties with Japan for first place among Vietnamese (8.0) and Indonesians (7.9). However, the United States ends up as the second most important eco-



conomic power after China among Chinese (7.3 to 8.0) and Japanese (8.0 to 8.2), with Chinese seeing a larger gap between the two. American military strength is perceived as significantly higher than



Chinese military strength among Japanese (9.0 vs. 7.9), South Koreans (8.7 vs. 7.7), and Indonesians (8.6 vs. 6.7). However, Chinese and Americans see the United States as just slightly behind China in military power (8.0 to 8.1 among Chinese and 7.5 to 7.6 among Americans). Additionally, a majority of Indonesians (58%) and pluralities of Japanese (47%), Chinese (45%), and South Koreans (42%) believe overall U.S. influence in Asia has increased over the past ten years. Minorities ranging from 11 percent to 28 percent in the surveyed countries believe U.S. influence has declined (see Figure 7).

Feelings toward the United States are relatively warm among the publics of the surveyed countries and have grown warmer among those countries that were also surveyed in the 2006 Chicago Council “Global Views” study. On a scale of 0 to 100 where 50 is neutral, Chinese give the United States a warm average of 61, ten points higher than its average score in 2006 and the third highest rating overall after South Korea and Taiwan.¹⁴ There is a more modest warming trend in feelings toward the United States among South Koreans (up three points from 58 in 2006 to 61) and Indonesians (up two points from 54 to 56), although this increase is within the survey’s margin of error. The United States receives its highest rating from Vietnamese (68) followed by the Japanese (62). Unlike other

14. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Global Views 2006* (Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006).

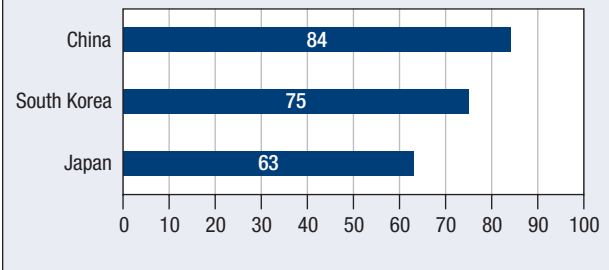
international surveys that have shown a generally unfavorable perception of U.S. global influence, citizens of the surveyed Asian countries generally perceive the United States as a positive influence in their region. Majorities in Vietnam (76%), Japan (69%), China (66%), and South Korea (54%) say the United States is having a “somewhat” or “very positive” influence in Asia. Only in Indonesia, where perceptions of the U.S. role may be influenced by U.S. foreign policy in other regions such as the Middle East, do people feel more negative. A plurality (48%) of Indonesians believe the United States plays a “somewhat” or “very negative” role, compared to 24 percent who say the opposite.

Broadly held beliefs within the surveyed countries of the economic importance of the United States to Asia likely contribute to positive perceptions of the overall U.S. role in Asia. There is wide recognition that U.S. ideas on the benefits of free markets and open competition have been influential in the region. Majorities in all surveyed countries—94 percent in Japan, 93 percent in South Korea, 76 percent in Indonesia, 71 percent in China, and 56 percent in Vietnam—say these ideas have been “somewhat” or “very important” in their countries’ economic development. There is also a prevalent perception that the United States has the most competitive economy. On a 0 to 10 scale evaluating economic competitiveness of different economies, the United States both scores the highest among all assessed countries and is significantly ahead of both Japan and China. The United States receives an average score of 8.9 among Vietnamese, compared to 8.6 among South Koreans, 8.4 among Japanese, and 8.1 among both Chinese and Indonesians.

On the same 0 to 10 scale, the United States is considered the most important trade and investment partner (see Figure 6) for Japan (8.0) and Vietnam (8.0). Chinese give both the United States and the European Union the same score (7.6), significantly ahead of Japan (6.7) and South Korea (6.8). Similarly, support for signing free trade agreements with the United States (see Figure 8) is higher than that for any other potential bilateral agreement asked of the surveyed Asian popula-

Figure 8 – Free Trade Agreements with the United States

Percentage who think their country should have a free trade agreement with the United States.



tions except for the Japanese—a slightly higher percentage say their country should have a free trade agreement with South Korea.

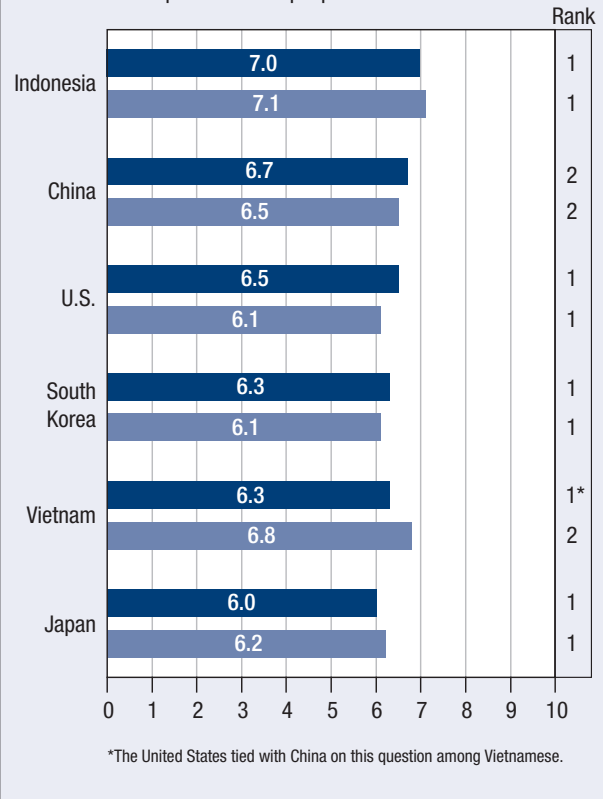
Asians also generally regard the United States as a highly advanced technological power with strong multinational corporations that are positively engaged in the region. On a 10-point scale assessing the degree to which countries possess advanced science and technology, the United States scores the highest in every country: 9.1 in Vietnam, 8.9 in South Korea, 8.8 in Indonesia and China, and 8.4 in Japan. The United States also receives the highest average scores of any country on the degree to which it has leading multinational companies. American companies are generally viewed favorably, with majorities in Vietnam (86%), Japan (80%), South Korea (75%), China (73%), and Indonesia (54%) believing U.S. companies make a positive contribution in their countries.

Asians have mixed perceptions of the impact of the U.S. military presence in the region. Strong majorities of South Koreans (72%) and Japanese (68%) believe the U.S. military presence increases stability in East Asia, while 52 percent of Chinese disagree. Indonesians are split (35 percent say it increases stability, and 38 percent say the opposite). Indonesians and Chinese also have the strongest concerns about the United States as a potential military threat to their countries. South Koreans are surprisingly mixed on this question, with 49 percent worried and 50 percent not worried. However, there is agreement in all surveyed countries, including the United States, that the

Figure 9 – Promoting Ideas/Policies in Asia

Average rating by respondents in each country (0 to 10 scale) on the following:

- How effective the U.S. has been in promoting its ideas about the best world order
- How effective the government of the U.S. has been in promoting its policies to the people of Asia



U.S. military presence keeps China and Japan from entering into an arms race.

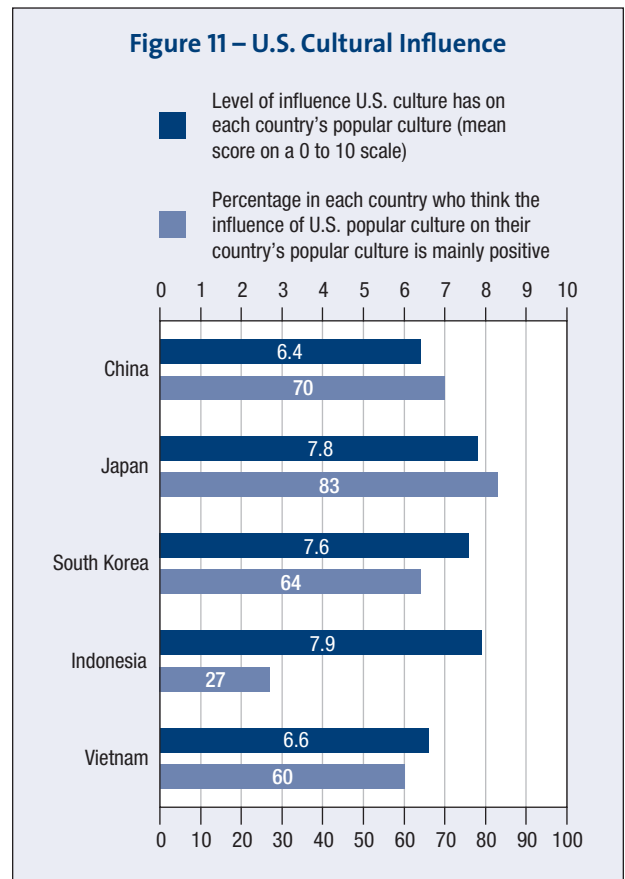
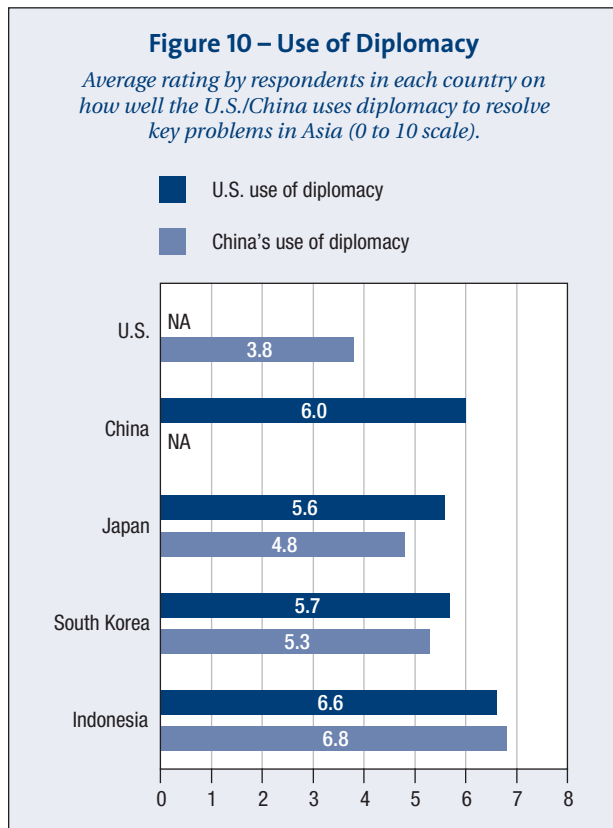
Asians generally consider U.S. public diplomacy in the region to be effective. On a 0 to 10 scale evaluating how successful the United States and China are in promoting their ideas about the best world order, Japanese (6.0), South Koreans (6.3), and Indonesians (7.0) all see the United States as significantly more effective (see Figure 9) than China (4.5, 4.9, and 6.6, respectively). Chinese disagree, giving their own country a score of 7.7 compared to 6.7 for the United States. Vietnamese see China and the United States as equally effective (6.3). A similar pattern emerges on a 10-point scale assessing the effectiveness of the U.S., Chinese,

Japanese, and South Korean governments in promoting their policies to people in Asia. The United States gets the highest average score (see Figure 9) among Indonesians (7.1), Japanese (6.2), and South Koreans (6.1), but is second to China in the eyes of Chinese (6.5 compared to 7.8) and second to Japan in the eyes of Vietnamese (6.8 compared to 7.1).

Asians also generally see the United States as the most effective of the four countries in its leadership of international institutions like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. American efforts to promote democracy and human rights internationally are generally viewed as having had a positive effect on Asia by majorities of Japanese (60%), South Koreans (55%), Indonesians (50%), and Chinese (50%). American use of diplomacy to resolve problems in Asia is also generally well regarded. On a 0 to 10 scale assessing this issue (see Figure 10), the United States receives the highest average score of any foreign country from Chinese (6.0, on par with South Korea), South Koreans (5.7), and Japanese

(5.6). Among Indonesians, the United States places third (6.6) behind Japan (7.1) and China (6.8). Majorities of South Koreans (70%), Chinese (67%), and Japanese (57%) also believe the United States has been “very” or “somewhat effective” in working to resolve the problem of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. A surprisingly strong majority of Chinese (63%) believe the United States has been effective (“very” and “somewhat” combined) in managing tensions between mainland China and Taiwan, although Chinese perceptions of U.S. respect for sovereignty is lower (5.1 on a 0 to 10 scale).

U.S. cultural influence is both pervasive and considered generally positive among surveyed Asian countries. It is seen as the strongest foreign popular culture influence among Indonesians (7.9 on a 0 to 10 scale), Japanese (7.8), and South Koreans (7.6). Among Chinese, it is second only to South Korea in cultural influence (6.4 compared to 6.5). Among Vietnamese, U.S. cultural influence ranks last of the four assessed cultures (American,



Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean). The United States ranks first in terms of the appeal of its popular culture in every surveyed country except for Vietnam, where it ranks fourth after China, Japan, and South Korea. American movies, television programs, and music are the most frequently viewed or listened to among all non-native entertainment in every surveyed country with the exception of Vietnam, where South Korean and Chinese entertainment rank higher.

Strong majorities of Japanese (83%), Chinese (70%), South Koreans (64%), and Vietnamese (60%) believe U.S. cultural influence on their popular culture is generally positive (see Figure 11). Indonesians strongly disagree (60% believe it is negative). Similarly, the spread of U.S. cultural influence in Asia is considered a positive development by the publics of all surveyed Asian countries except Indonesia, where 75 percent see it as negative. In contrast, 72 percent of Japanese, 69 percent of Chinese, 63 percent of Vietnamese, and 57 percent of South Koreans view the spread of U.S. cultural influence favorably.

Overwhelming majorities (96% to 100%) in the five Asian countries surveyed believe it is at least somewhat important for children in their country to learn English in order to succeed in the future. Many Asians also look to the United States as an educational destination for their children. The United States is the first- or second-choice destination for higher education for the children of Asian parents, and there is a belief that the United States has the highest quality universities.

Perceptions of China

Much has been made in recent years of China's growing influence and soft power globally, particularly in Asia.¹⁵ Many media reports even link China's improved image in Asia as coming at the expense of America's, which is seen as in decline.¹⁶

15. See n. 8.

16. Jane Perlez, "The Charm from Beijing: China Strives to Keep Its Backyard Tranquil," *New York Times*, October 8, 2003; Jane Perlez, "Asian Leaders Find China a More Cordial Neighbor: Beijing's Soaring Economy Weakens U.S. Sway," *New*

Figure 12 – Ratings of China's Soft Power: The View Is Better from the South

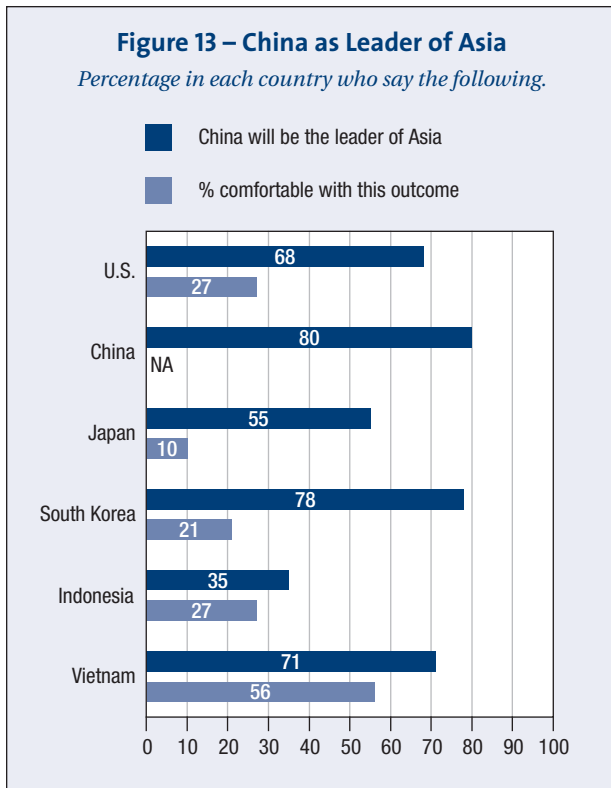
Average level of influence on a 0 to 1 scale when soft power questions are combined for five key areas (see Appendix A for questions included).

Survey Countries	Economic	Human Capital	Cultural	Diplomatic	Political
United States	0.52	0.55	0.56	0.40	0.34
Japan	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.44	0.41
South Korea	0.57	0.64	0.54	0.51	0.48
Indonesia	0.73	0.74	0.62	0.69	0.71
Vietnam	0.70	0.80	0.77	0.67	—

Yet the data from this survey indicate China's soft power in the region is, in fact, uneven. On several indices it is quite limited. Beijing scores consistently higher in Southeast Asia (Indonesia and Vietnam) than in other respondent countries (United States, Japan, and South Korea), where respondents are much more circumscribed in their perceptions of Chinese soft power (see Figure 12). Chinese hold a very high opinion of their own country's soft power—ranking China considerably higher than it ranks in other respondent countries across virtually all categories.

Overall, perceptions of China in the region are mainly positive. Clear or strong majorities in *all* respondent countries assess China's overall regional influence as either "very" or "somewhat positive" (53% in the United States, 62% in Japan, 58% in South Korea and Indonesia, and 76% in Vietnam). Majorities of respondents in all countries (except Indonesia) also believe that China

York Times, October 18, 2003; Jane Perlez, "As U.S. Influence Wanes, A New Asian Community," *New York Times*, November 4, 2004; Editorial, "China's More Nuanced Diplomacy," *New York Times*, October 14, 2003; Philip Pan, "China's Improving Image Challenges U.S. in Asia," *Washington Post*, November 15, 2003; Michael Vatikiotis and Murray Hiebert, "How China Is Building an Empire," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 20, 2003, 30–33.



will be the “leader of Asia” in the future. Only in Vietnam is a majority of the public comfortable with this possible future development (see Figure 13).

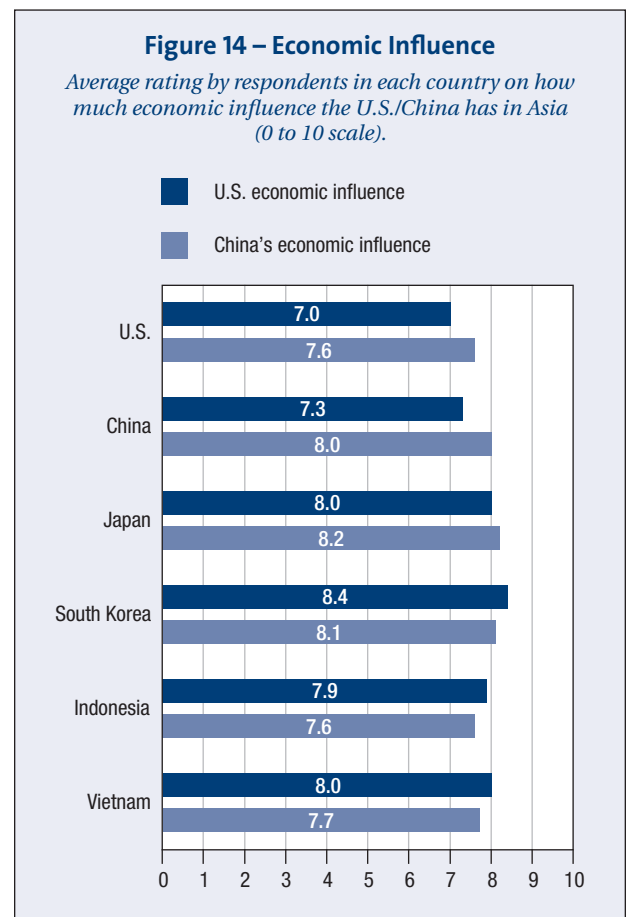
On a 0 to 100 scale of feelings toward China where 50 is neutral, the country scores lower. The mean score given by Americans is a chilly 35, while the mean given by Japanese is 45. South Koreans have neutral feelings at 50, down from 57 in the 2006 Chicago Council survey. Indonesians have warmer feelings at 60, as do Vietnamese at 62.

Skepticism about China is also evident when respondents are asked whether their country shares similar values with China. With the notable exception of Vietnam and to a lesser extent South Korea, majorities in the United States, Japan, and Indonesia all believe that their values converge either “a little” or to “no extent” with China. With respect to China’s political system, when asked whether China’s political system serves the needs of its people, with the exception of Indonesia, the mean score is 5.1 or below on a 10-point scale. Similarly, on a 10-point scale of respect for human rights and the rule of law, with the exception of

Indonesians (6.8), China receives low average ratings from Americans (2.7), Japanese (3.9), and South Koreans (4.5).

Concerning economic dimensions of soft power, China does fairly well. On the question of how important economic relations with China are to their country, responses in all countries average between 6.5 and 8.3 on a 0 to 10 scale. Further, China’s economic influence in Asia is considered to be very high, scoring between 7.6 and 8.2 across all survey countries (see Figure 14). This is an important finding, given China’s centrality in the regional production chain and as a catalyst for economic growth in East Asia. Nevertheless, Chinese are judged to have somewhat average entrepreneurial spirit, and the quality of Chinese products receives mixed reviews.

Chinese diplomacy, unlike its economic influence, receives surprisingly low assessments. Asked if China uses diplomacy to resolve key problems in Asia or builds trust and cooperation among Asian

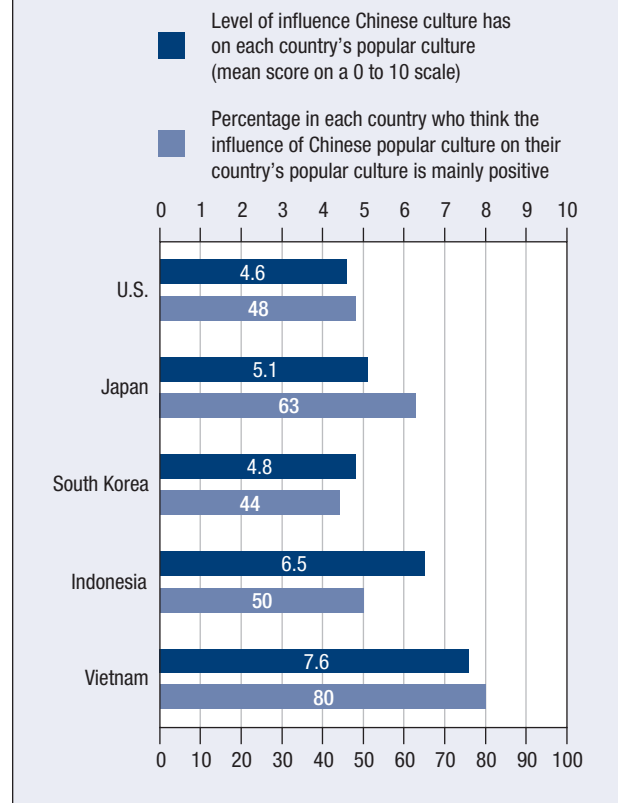


countries (two separate questions), Americans, Japanese, and South Koreans give China mean scores in the low to mid range on a 10-point scale (see Figure 10). Even more surprising, majorities in the United States (50%), Japan (59%), and South Korea (56%) rate China as either “somewhat” or “very ineffective” in resolving the problem of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. China also receives negative assessments of its effectiveness in helping to manage tensions between Taiwan and the mainland—55 percent in the United States, 62 percent in Japan, and 53 percent in South Korea rate it as at least “somewhat ineffective.”

Thus, China’s regional diplomacy is not perceived by respondents to be as effective as is commonly portrayed in the media and the policy expert community. Moreover, China’s own efforts to popularize its ideas about world order and the conduct of foreign policy do not resonate in Asia. Large majorities of the publics in each country have not heard of China’s concept of a “harmonious world” (和谐世界). This is not good news for the Chinese government, which has invested considerable effort and resources to popularize this idea since 2007. Similarly, on a 0 to 10 scale China receives low scores regarding its ability to promote its ideas about the best world order from South Koreans (4.9), Japanese (4.5), and Americans (4.0). However, China does considerably better on this question among Indonesians (6.6) and Vietnamese (6.3).

China receives better, but still mixed ratings on soft power indicators concerning contemporary Chinese culture. When asked to assess whether China’s popular culture has a mainly positive or negative influence on their own popular culture, majorities only in Vietnam (80%) and Japan (63%) say this influence is “somewhat” or “very positive” (see Figure 15). Citizens in all the countries surveyed have a high regard for China’s “rich cultural heritage,” with mean scores ranging between 7.8 and 8.6. However, when asked to rate the appeal of China’s popular culture on a 0 to 10 scale, mean scores fall around the midpoint—between 5.5 and 6.4—with the notable exception of Vietnam (8.2). Chinese cultural products do not seem to be successful in terms of penetrating the popular culture

Figure 15 – Influence of Chinese Culture



of its neighbors. Strong majorities of Japanese and South Koreans and pluralities of Indonesians say they “rarely” or “never” view Chinese movies or television. Only in Vietnam does a plurality view such Chinese entertainment “every day” (16%) or “more than once a week” (29%).

One explanation for China’s relatively low scores on cultural soft power (see Appendix A) may be that Chinese movies, television programs, and literature, among other offerings, are almost exclusively available only in the Chinese language. Hence their appeal may be limited to overseas Chinese communities in other Asian countries. However, majorities in all countries except the United States feel it is at least somewhat important for their children to learn Chinese—despite the fact that China ranks low relative to other countries as a preferred destination for their children’s higher education.

In sum, the survey’s findings indicate that China’s soft power image in Asia and the United States is more limited than the scholarly and jour-

nalistic communities have suggested in recent years. Naturally, China emerges as one of the stronger regional actors in terms of its economic power and attractiveness, but this is not matched by its ability to serve as a regional negotiator and political and cultural leader.

Perceptions of Japan

Japan boasts the world's second largest economy after the United States measured by gross domestic product and third largest after the United States and China adjusted to purchasing power parity. Due to China's rising economic clout in East Asia and Japan's slow economic growth throughout the 1990s and until 2003, Japan has been perceived by some as slowly losing its competitive edge and its leadership position in the global economy. The country's ability to increase its soft power in the region has been plagued by its military expansions in the region in the twentieth century. Also, due to Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni shrine, a war shrine containing the remains of Japanese war criminals, Japan lost some of its soft power in the region, compromising its image as a peaceful and cooperative nation.

Japan's soft power, however, has been helped by admiration from others for its technologically advanced economy and its highly educated workforce. Some of its cultural exports have also gained recognition in the region. Japanese cuisine and *manga* have become known and sought around the world, and some of its music, films, and animation have become popular in the region. Its diplomatic efforts have been recognized and valued, especially by Indonesians and Vietnamese. While some have expressed skepticism about Japan's soft power in the region and its ability to expand it in the face of a growing China, our data show that the country is still greatly admired for its advanced economy and that the hostility for its wartime actions is not as prominent amongst its neighbors as one might expect.

Overall, feelings towards Japan on a 0 to 100 scale are mainly positive. The lowest score comes from the Chinese, who give Japan their low-

est rating of 46, slightly below the neutral point. Koreans give Japan a neutral rating. Americans, Indonesians, and Vietnamese register much warmer feelings, giving Japan their warmest ratings of any country asked about (58, 66, and 68, respectively). Japan's overall influence in Asia is regarded as at least "somewhat positive" by majorities in all countries polled. There is greater disagreement regarding perceptions of Japanese economic influence in Asia. Indonesians and Vietnamese rank Japan first (along with the United States) in terms of economic influence in Asia, but Chinese and South Koreans give Japan the lowest relative ratings among the major powers.

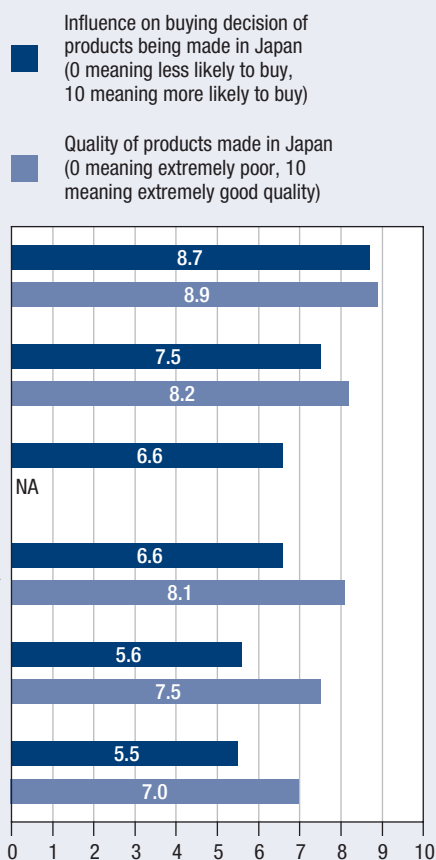
Despite the fact that Japan is not seen as tremendously influential economically, it ranks very well on a variety of other economic soft power indicators. Japan's economic Soft Power Index score takes the top spot among Americans, Indonesians, and Vietnamese and the second place among Chinese and Koreans (see Appendix A).

Majorities of respondents in all countries say that knowing a product is made in Japan increases the likelihood they will buy the product (see Figure 16). When it comes to quality of products, Japan gets the highest rating of any other country's products on a 0 to 10 scale from South Koreans, Indonesians, and Vietnamese. It gets the second highest from Americans and Chinese (see Figure 16).

This high level of trust in the quality of Japan's products by Indonesians and Vietnamese extends to trust in its companies. Thirty percent of Indonesians and 31 percent of Vietnamese believe Japanese companies make a very positive contribution in their countries. These percentages are higher than that for any other country. This confidence in Japan's technological prowess and economic strength is also expressed in the willingness of its Asian neighbors to enter into free trade agreements with Japan. Seventy-nine percent of Chinese and 74 percent of South Koreans believe they should have a Free Trade Agreement with Japan. These percentages, however, are lower than those who think their country should have a free trade agreement with the United States and ASEAN.

Figure 16 – Appeal/Quality of Japanese Products

Average rating by respondents in each country (0 to 10 scale) on the following.



A further testament to Japan’s economic attractiveness is the perception that the country helps other Asian countries develop economically. Japan receives the highest ratings relative to the other major powers on a 0 to 10 scale from Indonesians (7.4) and Vietnamese (7.8) on this indicator. In terms of the importance of overall economic relations with Japan, both the United States and Indonesia rank their economic relationship with Japan as more important than any other country surveyed.¹⁷

Unlike its economy, Japan’s political system and the way it conducts its foreign policy in the region is not viewed as particularly effective by others. When asked to rate the level of respect for the sovereignty of other Asian nations on a 0 to 10

17. Americans rate the importance of economic relations with Japan higher than that of the EU and China.

scale, Japan receives higher ratings than any other country only from Americans and Indonesians. South Koreans rate Japan on the same level as China (4.9) on this indicator, but higher than the United States (4.8).

Similar to its political soft power, Japan’s regional diplomacy receives somewhat mixed ratings. On the question of the use of diplomacy to resolve problems in Asia, Americans and Indonesians again give Japan their highest ratings (6.5 and 7.1, respectively). Chinese and South Koreans rank Japan’s use of diplomacy around the midpoint (5.4 and 5.5, respectively). Japan’s efforts to solve the North Korea nuclear issue are considered “very” or “somewhat effective” by a slight majority only in China. Japan’s diplomatic efforts in managing tensions between mainland China and Taiwan are considered “very” or “somewhat ineffective” by majorities or pluralities in all surveyed countries except the United States, where a plurality thinks Japan has been at least “somewhat effective.” Apparently, Japan’s attempts at regional diplomacy have not resonated with the Chinese and South Korean publics, and it emerges as one of the weaker aspects of Japan’s overall soft power.

One surprising finding is that Japan’s government receives above average ratings across the board for its effectiveness in promoting its policies in the region. Lower ratings might have been expected because of Japan’s territorial disputes with China and South Korea over islands in the Pacific and because of the loud protests in recent years in both countries over visits to the Yasukuni shrine as well as the approval of a Japanese history textbook glossing over Japanese wartime aggression. In terms of resolving the territorial disputes, none of the Chinese, South Korean, or Japanese publics has a conciliatory attitude. When it comes to the Yasukuni shrine visits, both the Chinese and Korean publics agree that they should protest them in some manner (only 2 percent in each country think their country should not protest these visits).

Unlike attitudes towards its politics and diplomacy, admiration for Japan’s human capital earns the country higher marks. On most indi-

Figure 17 – Japan’s Human Capital Soft Power

Overall score on a 0 to 10 scale with rank in parentheses (see Appendix A for questions included in the score).

Survey Countries	Japan soft power
U.S.	.69 (1)
China	.68 (2)
Japan	—
South Korea	.75 (2)
Indonesia	.80 (2)
Vietnam	.91 (1)

cators, such as the level of education of Japan’s population, the quality of its universities, and its advanced science and technology, Japan is ranked first by Americans and Vietnamese and second usually only to the United States by Chinese, South Koreans, and Indonesians (see Figure 17).

Perceptions of the cultural component of Japan’s soft power are also mixed. Majorities in every country except South Korea (which is split) think that the influence of Japanese popular culture is either “very” or “somewhat positive.” Overall, majorities in all countries except South Korea believe the spread of Japan’s cultural influence in Asia is mainly a “good thing” rather than a “bad thing.”

Yet there is little agreement as to whether the influence of Japan’s popular culture on the respondents’ culture is positive or negative. In South Korea, only a weak plurality believes Japan’s influence on Korea’s popular culture is positive. A solid majority of Chinese (59%) think that the influence of Japan’s popular culture is mostly positive, but this is the lowest relative rating given by the Chinese (between China, the United States, Japan, and South Korea). While South Koreans may not view Japan’s cultural influence as very positive, they give Japan the second highest ranking of appeal of its popular culture after that of American popular culture. Vietnamese rank the appeal

of Japanese culture after that of China. Japan is ranked second by almost every country on indicators such as the appeal of its popular culture, the richness of its cultural heritage, and its attractiveness as an international tourist destination. On most cultural indicators, the two Southeast Asian countries rank Japan after China.

Generally, Japanese soft power is felt throughout the region but is limited on the diplomatic front. While the survey finds that the United States has the greatest power of attraction in almost all surveyed countries, Japan usually ranks close behind.

Perceptions of South Korea

South Korea has high aspirations for its role in Northeast Asia and sees itself as a pivotal player in the politics of the region, acting as broker, balancer, or hub of the great powers that surround it. South Korea has taken an active role in promoting regional integration, seeking trade agreements with its allies, and looking to actively mediate disputes between the United States and North Korea and potential tensions between China and Japan.

However, being surrounded by great powers, South Korea has struggled to gain recognition for its achievements and dynamism. South Korea is the thirteenth largest economy in the world, but is physically located between the second (Japan) and the fourth (China) and is an ally of the United States. South Korea’s products and technology are becoming trusted international brand names, but Korea still lacks Japan’s “Gross National Cool.”

Regionally, South Korea has developed a closer relationship with China both economically and politically, as China has become an attractive place for Korean investment and has taken (or been handed) a more active role in dealing with North Korea. South Korean relations with Japan are publicly warming (despite recent dustups over Japan’s colonial legacy), as younger generations have grown up with Japanese cultural exports and no living memory of the Korean War.

While South Korea struggles to stand out among its neighbors politically and economically,

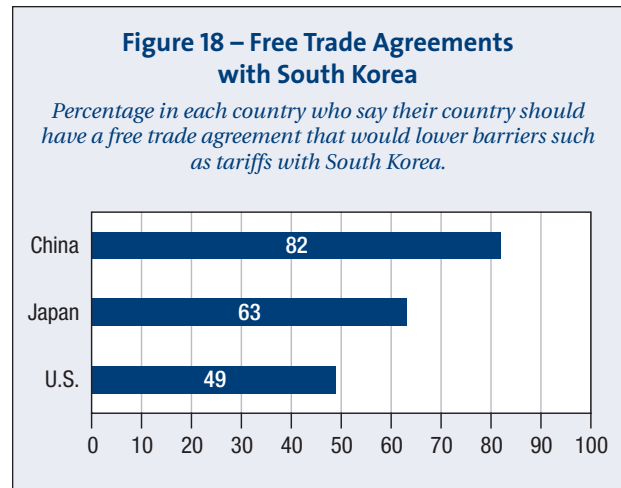
its cultural impact on the region is growing. The *Hallyu* wave of popular dramas and Korean pop music have spread throughout Asia. South Korea's stars, sounds, and fashion have found regional and global appeal.

But what does this mean for the soft power of South Korea? Have stronger cultural exports and regional ties increased South Korea's soft power?

Perceptions of South Korea are relatively positive among the major powers, especially among Chinese, but somewhat less so among Indonesians and Vietnamese. On the 0 to 100 scale of feelings toward countries, Chinese give South Korea a very warm average rating of 65, higher than they give both the United States (61) and Japan (46). Such positive Chinese feelings towards South Korea are evident in many areas of soft power discussed below. Americans and Japanese both show much warmer feelings toward South Korea than they do toward China. In contrast, although Vietnamese and Indonesians show warm feelings toward South Korea in an absolute sense (64 and 53, respectively), Vietnamese show warmer feelings toward both the United States and Japan, while Indonesians put all three major powers (the United States, Japan, and China) ahead.

Not surprisingly, South Korea's overall economic and military power rates behind that of the three major powers (Vietnam and Indonesia were not asked about). In both cases, however, South Korea still receives moderate absolute ratings of economic influence in Asia (between 5.5 and 6.8 on a 0 to 10 scale among all surveyed countries) and of military strength (between 5.3 and 6.3).

Similarly, Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesians, and Vietnamese rate South Korea last in terms of the importance of economic relations, economic influence in Asia, and the international competitiveness of its economy compared to that of the United States, China, and Japan. The only exception is that Chinese rate the importance of economic relations with South Korea slightly higher than the importance of economic relations with Japan and with Indonesia. South Korea is also at a comparative disadvantage in terms of entrepreneurial spirit and having leading multinational



companies, ranking at the bottom on both (except that Japanese think South Korea's entrepreneurial spirit is higher than that of China).¹⁸

Although South Korea's economic stature ranks relatively low compared to the major powers, South Korea remains an important economic partner. Americans, Japanese, and Chinese are quite interested in a free trade agreement with South Korea. While citizens in most surveyed countries believe that it is most important to have a free trade agreement with the United States, a free trade agreement with South Korea (see Figure 18) is second in importance for Americans (49% in favor).¹⁹ In Japan, a trade agreement with South Korea receives the highest level of support (63% in favor, tied with Japanese support for an FTA with the United States).²⁰

South Korea also rates well on helping other Asian countries develop their economies. Chinese rate South Korea highest, Americans rank South Korea second (ahead of China), and Japanese rank it second on par with China, though the average scores on this indicator are moderate.

South Korea has a moderate degree of political soft power in Asia. Americans give it average marks on respect for human rights (5.0 on a 0 to 10 scale) and on whether its political system serves the needs of its people (5.2 on the same scale), ranking

18. Entrepreneurial spirit question was not asked of Indonesian and Vietnamese samples.

19. Americans were not asked about a free trade agreement with ASEAN.

20. This question was not asked in Vietnam.

it behind Japan but ahead of China. Japanese rate South Korea slightly higher on these questions (5.6 and 5.8, respectively), placing it behind the United States but ahead of China. Chinese respondents have a much more positive view of South Korea's respect for human rights (6.6) and its political system (6.9), ranking South Korea in second place behind the United States and ahead of Japan. Indonesians give South Korea a 6.7 on its political system, though it still ranks behind the United States, Japan, and China. However, Indonesians rank South Korea's respect for human rights (6.8) on par with the United States and China and only a little lower than Japan (7.2). In terms of providing assistance in the event of humanitarian crises in Asia, South Korea rates first among Chinese (6.3) and second among Americans (4.6) and Japanese (4.9), though these last two are below-average scores.

South Korea receives moderate marks for its regional diplomacy. Americans give South Korea a 5.3 in terms of its use of diplomacy to solve key problems in Asia, placing it after Japan but before China. Chinese give South Korea their highest rating (6.4) when it comes to building trust and cooperation among Asian countries. Americans and Japanese rank South Korea second on all these aspects of diplomacy, usually ahead of China, and Japanese even rank South Korea slightly ahead of the United States in its respect for the sovereignty of other Asian countries. Only in China do a majority of respondents say South Korea has been "somewhat" or "very effective" in working to resolve the problem of North Korea's nuclear weapons program. South Korea also gets average scores in its leadership of international institutions, its effectiveness in managing tensions between China and Taiwan, and its effectiveness in promoting its policies to people in Asia. Indonesian and Vietnamese ratings of South Korean diplomacy are not as informative, given that very few questions were asked on this topic. But it is safe to say that these countries do not rank South Korea as high as the major powers in terms of diplomacy.

There is a high degree of variance in perceptions of South Korea's cultural influence. Ameri-

cans and Indonesians do not think South Korea has much cultural soft power, but Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese have high respect for South Korean cultural power. Majorities or pluralities in every country agree that the spread of South Korean cultural influence is "mainly a good thing" (79% in China, 78% in Japan, 44% in Indonesia, and 83% in Vietnam). Americans and Indonesians also do not think that South Korea's popular culture is as appealing or its cultural heritage as rich as that of China and Japan. In contrast, Chinese give South Korea high relative ratings on these questions.

While South Korea receives positive scores on measures of human capital soft power, it still ranks lower than the major powers in this area. Learning Korean ranks last in all surveyed countries in its importance to future success. Americans, Chinese, and Indonesians²¹ also rate South Korea's universities,²² the educational level of its population, and its science and technology last compared with the other major powers. Japanese give South Korea a mean rating of 6.0 in terms of its advancement of science and technology, though Japanese still rate other countries higher. Respondents in the other surveyed countries all give South Korea an equal or higher score on this measure, but, again, South Korea still ranks lower compared to the other major powers. Chinese, Japanese, and Americans all give South Korea moderate scores in terms of the quality of its universities. Vietnamese rate South Korea low on these measures. Interestingly, Japanese give South Korea its highest score (7.2) in terms of the level of education of the Korean population. South Korea ranks last on this measure according to Indonesians and third according to Vietnamese.

21. Indonesians were not asked to rate South Korean universities.

22. The question on the quality of universities was not asked of the Indonesian and Vietnamese samples.

Section IV: Bilateral Perceptions

China–United States

The Sino-American relationship is increasingly recognized as the most important bilateral geopolitical relationship in both Asian and international affairs. It is, at the same time, a deeply interdependent and ambivalent relationship. Both powers' economies and national security interests are deeply intertwined. Cooperation occurs amidst competition, while mutual trust exists alongside suspicions.

At the governmental level, the relationship has never been more deeply institutionalized and productive. Beijing and Washington are working together on a broad range of regional and global issues—including the North Korean and Iranian nuclear problems, stability across the Taiwan Strait, stability and improvement of human rights in Myanmar and Sudan (Darfur), nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, public health pandemics, relief after natural disasters, international trade liberalization, global climate change, and many other challenges to Asian and global governance.

At the substate level the two societies have never been more deeply intertwined. Two-way trade in 2007 totaled a staggering \$387 billion, a relationship in which the United States ran an unprecedented deficit of \$256 billion. In 2008 China surpassed Japan as America's largest foreign creditor. By September 2008 Beijing owned

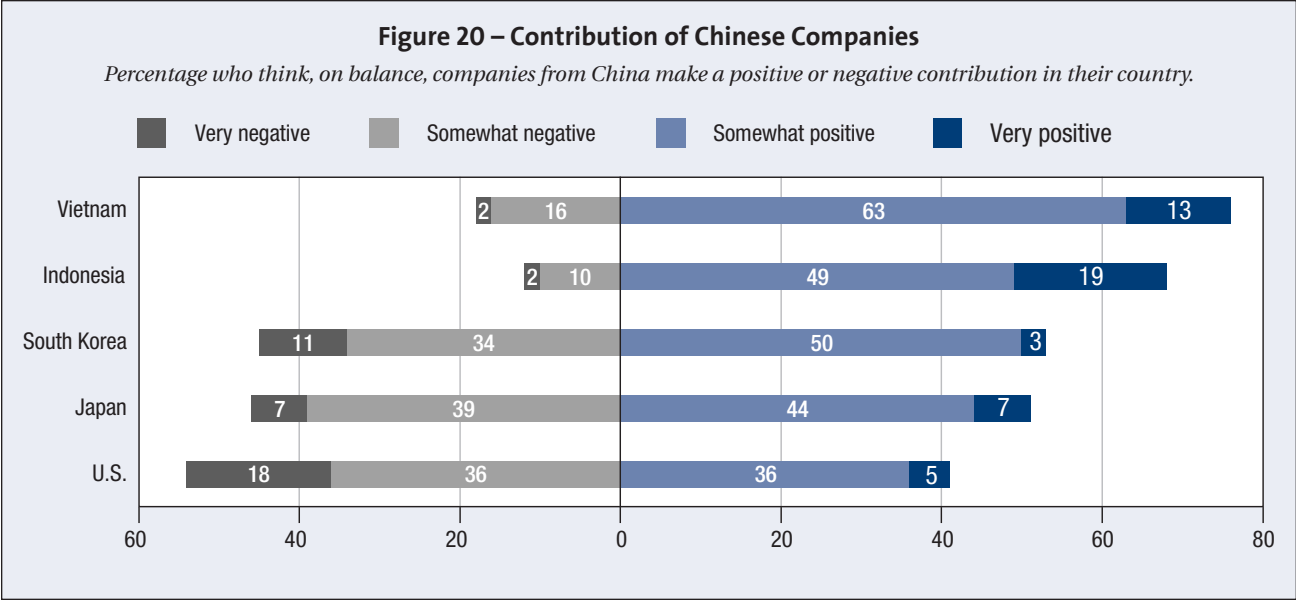
Figure 19 – Feelings Toward China/U.S.

*Average rating of Chinese/American feelings toward each other's country on a 0 to 100 scale.
100 = Very warm, favorable feeling
50 = Not particularly warm or cold feeling
0 = Very cold, unfavorable feeling.*



\$1 out of every \$10 of U.S. national debt—a total of \$585 billion in U.S. Treasury bonds, pulling ahead of Japan's \$573.2 billion. As China also purchases U.S. debt instruments through third countries, estimates are that Beijing's holdings may total \$800 billion or more.²³ Instantaneous telecommunications link the two societies every minute of every day. Professionals from various sectors work together on collaborative projects. More than 67,000 Chinese students studied in American uni-

23. Anthony Faiola and Zachary A. Goldfarb, "China Tops Japan in U.S. Debt Holdings: Beijing Gains Sway Over U.S. Economy," *Washington Post*, November 19, 2008, D1, 4.



versities in the 2006-07 academic year, while more than 11,000 Americans were resident on Chinese campuses. In 2006, 1.7 million American tourists visited China, while 457,728 Chinese tourists visited the United States.

Despite the deep interdependence and cooperation between the United States and China, the bilateral relationship remains troubled by mutual strategic suspicions, trade tensions, and vastly different political systems. Frictions are growing in the economic realm, particularly for Americans, due to the burgeoning U.S. trade deficit with China and the outsourcing of U.S. jobs to China. Human rights concerns in China continue to cloud the relationship. This fluid environment is reflected in the survey’s findings.

American Perceptions of China

Overall, Americans have very cool feelings toward China. On the 0 to 100 temperature scale where 50 is neutral, Americans give China a low average rating of 35, down five points from 40 in 2006 (see Figure 19). Fifty-one percent of Americans rate their feelings toward China below the neutral point of 50, while only 16 percent rate it above 50.

There is a strong belief among Americans that China is an increasingly influential power in Asia. Accordingly, Beijing is viewed as a more serious

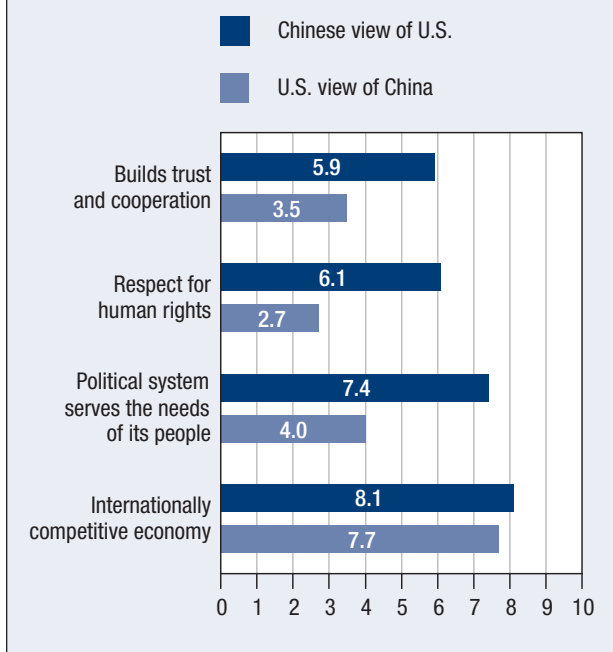
economic and strategic competitor to the United States. The American public believes that Chinese economic influence and military strength in the region is stronger than any other country, including the United States. On a 0 to 10 scale, Americans rate China’s military strength in Asia at 7.6. A considerable majority of Americans (70%) are either “very worried” (25%) or “somewhat worried” (46%) that China could become a military threat to the United States.²⁴

Americans rate the international competitiveness of China’s economy highly (7.7 on a 0 to 10 scale), though they rate the level of education of its population lower (6.1 on the same scale). They also think China produces inferior products in comparison to Japan, the United States, and South Korea. While Americans believe China has the greatest economic influence in Asia, its economic relationship with the United States is not viewed as important as the relationships with Japan and the European Union. Americans also do not think China’s economy offers many opportunities for its workforce (4.9 on a 0 to 10 scale) and a majority (54%) thinks that Chinese companies make a very or somewhat negative contribution in the United States (see Figure 20).

24. Adding together “very worried” and “somewhat worried” equals 70 percent and not 71 percent due to rounding of the original categories.

Figure 21 – Bilateral China–U.S. Perceptions

U.S. and Chinese ratings of each other (0 to 10 scale) on the following.



A majority of Americans (53%) acknowledge that China has a mainly positive influence in Asia, with 39 percent saying China’s influence in Asia is mainly negative. However, on specific regional issues such as North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, 50 percent of Americans believe Beijing has been either very or somewhat ineffective in working to resolve the problem. On the key bilateral issue of managing tensions between China and Taiwan, a majority of Americans (55%) believe China has been either “very” or “somewhat ineffective.”

On other indicators of soft power, Americans consistently give China low mean ratings on the 0 to 10 scale (see Figure 21), from its respect for human rights and the rule of law (2.7), to its ability to build trust and cooperation among Asian nations (3.5), and its use of diplomacy to resolve problems in the region (3.8). However, Americans give China credit for having an internationally competitive economy (7.7), advanced science and technology (7.0), leading multinational companies (6.5), great entrepreneurial spirit (6.1), a highly educated population (6.1), and a rich cultural heritage (8.0) as well as for being an attractive destination for international tourism (6.6). Americans do

not, however, think they share a way of life with the Chinese—68 percent say they share “no” or “little” values in common with Chinese. Nor do Americans see Chinese culture as particularly influential on their own culture. Fifty-four percent of Americans think the spread of Chinese culture in Asia is “mainly a bad thing.” Despite the increased awareness of China in American society, 29 percent of Americans think it’s only “slightly important” for their children to study Chinese, and 34 percent think it is “not at all important.”

Chinese Perceptions of America

Chinese views of the United States are much more positive. Chinese give the United States an average of 61 on the 0 to 100 scale of feelings, much warmer than American feelings toward China (see Figure 19). Although Chinese do not feel as negative towards the United States, they do not have a sense of shared values with Americans. A majority of Chinese (68%) believe they share values to “little” or “no extent” with Americans.

With respect to Chinese perceptions of the United States in Asia, an overwhelming number believe the United States exerts strong economic and military influence in the region. A majority (66%) thinks the United States has a “very” or “somewhat positive” influence in Asia. Chinese give the United States ratings slightly above the midpoint on the 0 to 10 scale in terms of Washington’s use of diplomacy to resolve key problems in the region (6.0), helping Asian countries develop their economies (5.9), building trust and cooperation among Asian countries (5.9), and providing assistance to Asian countries in the event of humanitarian crises (5.8). Chinese give the United States better than expected ratings on its effectiveness in managing tensions between China and Taiwan (63% believe the United States has been either “very” or “somewhat effective”), perhaps reflecting mutual disenchantment with the former Chen Shui-bian government in Taipei. However, concerning security, 76 percent of Chinese are either “very” or “somewhat worried” that the United States could become a military threat to China in the future (see Figure 3).

Nevertheless, on a wide range of soft power indicators, America remains strong in the view of Chinese. Chinese believe that economic relations (trade and investment) with the United States are extremely important to their country's economy (7.6 on a 0 to 10 scale). In addition, a plurality of Chinese (44%) would pick the United States as their first choice for their children's higher education (the next choice is the EU at 23%), and 82 percent believe it is "very important" for their children to learn English in order to succeed in the future. Chinese also express across-the-board admiration on the 0 to 10 scale for the quality of American universities (8.7) and the educational level of its population (8.1) as well as for having advanced science and technology (8.8), an appealing popular culture (7.5), economic opportunity for its workforce (7.5), entrepreneurial spirit (7.9), and a political system that serves the needs of its people (7.4).

United States–Japan

The relationship between Japan and the United States has been exceptionally strong since the end of hostilities in World War II. Japan became a stable, open-market democracy and the closest ally of the United States in the region. Despite some difficulties on the economic and political fronts, the U.S.–Japanese relationship remains one of the strongest for both countries overall, and certainly the strongest for both within the region.

Japan is the fourth largest U.S. trading partner, trailing only Canada, China, and Mexico. The United States remains the most important trading partner for Japan. In 2007 trade between the two countries totaled \$218 billion, with Japan importing \$63 billion from the United States and the United States importing \$145 billion from Japan. As these numbers indicate, the United States runs a large trade deficit with Japan, totaling \$83 billion in 2007, though this is only roughly one-third of the U.S. deficit with China. As U.S. trade with China has increased, the dominance of the U.S.–Japan economic relationship has diminished somewhat. Once viewed as an economic threat to the United

States, Japan is now seen in a positive, nonthreatening light as a strong economic partner.

The two countries also have a strong security alliance, and there are many important U.S. military bases on Japanese territory. However, there are signs of growing resentment of the U.S. military presence in Japan and South Korea due to incidents such as the alleged rape of a Japanese girl by a U.S. marine stationed at Okinawa. Relations were also further strained when Japan suspended refueling activities that supported U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

Japanese citizens have a great respect for and interest in the American political and economic system and its popular culture and entertainment. In comparison to other Asian countries, Americans also have high respect for Japanese culture and its economy. Japan and the United States have also worked closely on North Korean nuclear disarmament talks.

Japan underwent several changes of leadership during the George W. Bush administration, from Yoshiro Mori (2000-01), Junichiro Koizumi (2001-06), and Shinzo Abe (2006-07), to Yasuo Fukuda (2007-08) and Taro Aso (2008 to present). The "Elvis-loving" Koizumi and Bush enjoyed a close relationship, and both worked to strengthen U.S.–Japanese political, economic, and security ties. Japan participated in the U.S. military mission in Iraq under Koizumi's tenure despite significant domestic opposition. These strong affinities continue, reflecting a strong sense of shared values.

American Perceptions of Japan

American citizens have an appreciation for the longstanding partnership between the United States and Japan going back to the end of World War II. In comparison to China and South Korea, Americans rank Japan far ahead on all of the soft power indicators—economic, human capital, cultural, diplomatic, and political. Japan is in a category all its own in terms of American perceptions of positive influence and soft power.

Americans do not show particularly warm feelings toward any of the Asian countries except

Japan. Every country surveyed receives ratings on the cooler end of the scale (less than 50). By contrast, Japan receives an overall positive rating of 58, a feeling that is mutual (see “Japanese Perceptions of America”).

On economic soft power indicators, Americans rate Japan very highly on a 0 to 10 scale. Americans believe the Japanese economy is very influential (7.3), that Japan has an internationally competitive economy (8.1), and that economic relations with Japan are very important for America (7.2). In comparison to U.S. ratings of other Asian countries, the Japanese economy also receives high marks for the contribution of its companies to the U.S. economy (81 percent say Japanese companies make “very” or “somewhat” positive contributions), its leading multinational companies (8.0), overall product quality (7.0), and providing economic opportunities for its workforce (7.1). A clear majority (59%) is also in favor of a free trade agreement with Japan, higher support than exists for free trade agreements with China and South Korea.

Americans also give Japanese culture much higher average ratings on a 0 to 10 scale than the other Asian countries. There is a perception that Japan possesses a rich cultural heritage (8.4), is an attractive tourist destination (7.8), and has high quality universities (7.2). Americans also believe that Japan has a fairly high degree of influence on American culture (5.9). An exceptional majority (76%) thinks that the influence of Japanese popu-

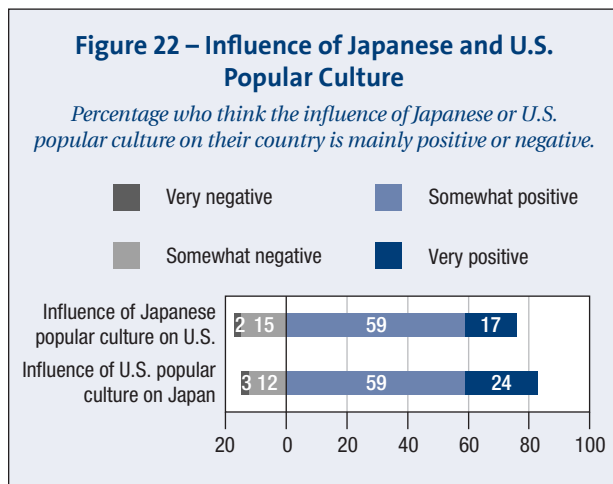
lar culture is “very” or “somewhat positive” (see Figure 22).

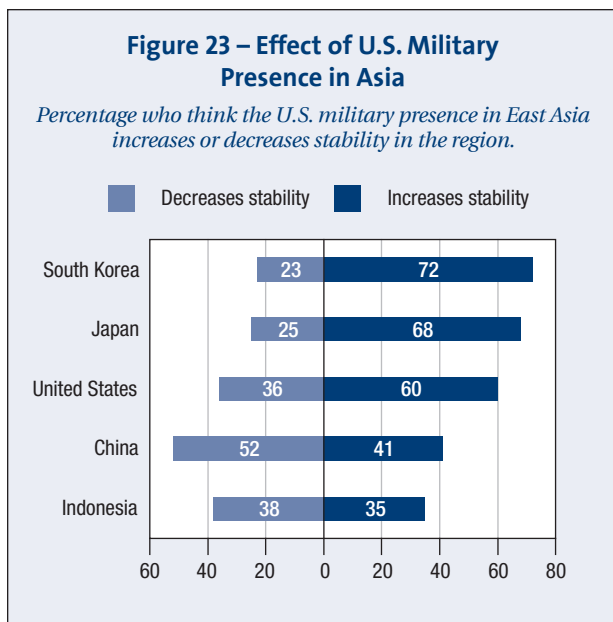
Although a plurality of Americans (33%) think learning Japanese is not at all important to future success, this is true for Americans with regard to all Asian languages. Japan is highly regarded in terms of the educational level of its population (8.4 on a 0 to 10 scale) and its advanced science and technology (8.6 on the same scale).

Japan clearly possesses the closest relationship to the United States in terms of its political system and use of diplomacy. On the 0 to 10 scales, most Americans believe Japan has a good degree of respect for human rights (6.5) and has a political system that serves the needs of its people (6.9), a clear differentiation from views of China on these items. On a 0 to 10 scale, Americans also believe that Japan generally uses diplomacy to solve problems in Asia (6.5), respects the sovereignty of other Asian countries (6.5), builds trust and cooperation among Asian states (5.8), provides assistance in humanitarian crises in Asia (6.2), and provides leadership in international institutions (6.3). However, Americans are ambivalent concerning Japanese effectiveness in dealing with the North Korean nuclear situation and managing tensions between China and Taiwan.

Japanese Perceptions of America

Japanese are equally positive about American influence and power in the region. The United States comes in first among Japanese in every category of soft power. The close economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties between Japan and the United States are clearly evident on these measures. On a 0 to 100 scale of feelings, Japanese give the United States their highest average score of 62. Forty-seven percent believe U.S. influence in Asia has increased over the past ten years, and a very strong majority (69%) feels U.S. influence in Asia is either “very” or “somewhat positive.” Japanese think the United States has been quite effective in promoting its policies in Asia, giving it a mean of 6.2 on a 0 to 10 scale. The United States receives an exceptionally high rating on military strength in





Asia (9.0 on a 0-10 scale), and Japanese are positive about the effect of the strong American military presence in East Asia, with 68 percent believing it increases stability in the region (see Figure 23).

Similar to U.S. views of Japan, Japanese give the United States high marks for both its hard and soft economic power. There is a great respect for the strength of the U.S. economy. On a 0 to 10 scale, Japanese believe that the United States has a lot of economic influence in Asia (8.0), that it has an internationally competitive economy (8.4), and that economic relations with the United States are very important for Japan (8.0). Japanese also think the United States has leading multinational companies (8.5), a great entrepreneurial spirit (7.7), provides economic opportunities for its workforce (6.6), and has high quality products (6.3). Sixty-three percent would like to have a free trade agreement with the United States. A strong majority of Japanese (80%) believe American companies make “very” or “somewhat” positive contributions to the Japanese economy.

Interest in American culture among Japanese is also very high. Japanese believe the United States has had a very high degree of influence on Japanese popular culture (7.8 on a 0 to 10 scale), and most Japanese (83%) think this influence is “very” or “somewhat positive” (see Figure 22). A majority of Japanese (53%) watch American mov-

ies and television or listen to American music more than once a week. There is near unanimity among Japanese (98%) that it is “very” or “somewhat important” to learn English in order to succeed in the future. There is also high appreciation for American human capital. Japanese give the United States 8.4 on a 0 to 10 scale in terms of its science and technology, and 8.6 out of 10 for the quality of American universities.

Lastly, Japanese give the United States above-average ratings on the 10-point scale for its respect for human rights (6.3) and the degree to which its political system serves the needs of its people (6.8), though these ratings are not as high as one might expect. While Japanese believe the United States provides leadership in international institutions (7.0), they give the United States lower relative scores on use of diplomacy to solve problems in Asia (5.6), assistance in humanitarian crises to Asian countries (5.6), and building of trust and cooperation among Asian states (5.5). A majority sees the United States as effective in dealing with the North Korean nuclear situation (57 percent say it has been “very” or “somewhat effective”). However, when it comes to managing tensions between China and Taiwan, 55 percent of Japanese say the United States has been “very” or “somewhat *ineffective*.” Thus, Japanese are less enthusiastic about U.S. political and diplomatic influence than other areas, but these ratings are by no means negative, and the overall relationship between Japan and America remains extremely strong and positive.

China–Japan

The China–Japan relationship is critical to Asian stability and prosperity. For more than a century, when Sino–Japanese ties have been adversarial or strained, Asia as a whole has been unstable. Conversely, during the 1970s, ’80s, and ’90s when the bilateral relationship improved in the wake of normalization of diplomatic relations and the triangular “Grand Bargain” among Beijing, Tokyo, and Washington, Asia enjoyed greater stability. However, beginning in the late-1990s and

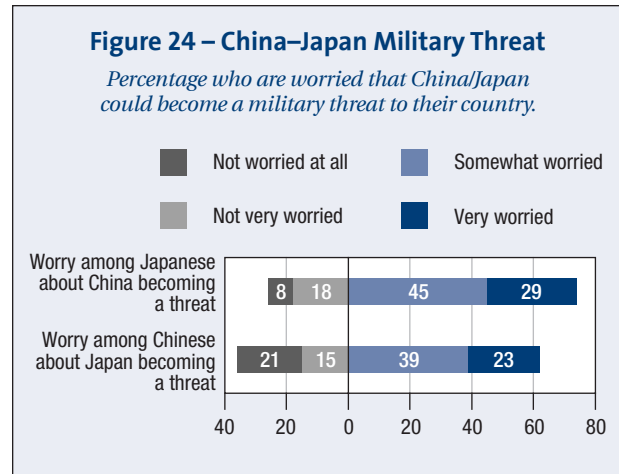
continuing throughout Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's tenure (2001-06), relations deteriorated steadily. Various opinion polls in both countries showed overwhelming majorities of negative opinions of the other. However, under Koizumi's successors (Prime Ministers Abe, Fukuda, and Aso), bilateral ties at the governmental level have not only stabilized, but have improved markedly. Abe and Fukuda paid successful "ice-breaking" visits to Beijing, while China's Premier Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao reciprocated with successful "ice-melting" visits to Tokyo. Despite the ups and downs of political ties and diplomatic relations, commerce continues to bind the two nations together. Bilateral trade exceeded \$236 billion in 2007.

Japanese Perceptions of China

Is the upturn in government-to-government relations reflected in public opinion? According to this study, the China-Japan relationship is not nearly as frigid as might be assumed from the often-troubled diplomatic relationship and previous opinion surveys in both countries. Although Japanese give China an average rating of 45 on the 100-point scale of overall feelings (where 50 is neutral), this is not as low as one might expect. And, while 55 percent of Japanese say they share similar values with the Chinese to "little" or "no extent," most Japanese now view China's regional influence in Asia either as "very" (19%) or "somewhat" (43%) positive.

There is clear recognition among Japanese of the economic importance of China. Japanese view China's regional economic influence as very high (8.2 on a 0 to 10 scale). They also give the Chinese economy relatively high rankings in terms of its international competitiveness (7.4 on a 10-point scale) and its advanced science and technology (6.1). A slight majority (53%) of Japanese supports a bilateral free trade agreement with China.

Seventy percent of Japanese respondents think that learning Chinese is "very" or "somewhat important" for the future success of Japanese children. There is also moderate Japanese respect for the educational level of Chinese citizens (5.8 out



of 10), China's entrepreneurial spirit (5.8), and its multinational corporations (5.4).

On the cultural side, there is strong recognition of the richness of Chinese cultural heritage (8.2). And Japanese believe Chinese popular culture has a limited but mainly positive influence on Japan.

These somewhat encouraging findings are partially offset, however, by the continuing negative views of China's military power and diplomacy. Japanese are worried about China's growing military strength in Asia, which they rate at an average of 7.9 out of 10. Seventy-four percent of Japanese are either "very" or "somewhat worried" that China could become a military threat to their country (see Figure 24). Seventy-nine percent of Japanese believe that in the absence of U.S. military presence, the two countries would compete for military dominance in the region.

On the diplomatic side, Japanese do not give China a very high score for using diplomacy to solve regional problems (4.8 on the 10-point scale). When asked specifically about China's role in working to resolve the problem of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, a majority of Japanese (59%) also say Beijing has been either "somewhat" or "very ineffective." This may be due in part to the fact that China has not placed the same priority on the "abductees issue" as Japan.

Japanese also do not perceive China as respecting the sovereignty of other Asian countries (4.2), providing assistance to other Asian nations in the event of humanitarian crises (4.0), respecting

human rights (3.9), or having a political system that serves the needs of its people (4.2).

Chinese Perceptions of Japan

Chinese views of Japan are generally parallel. Chinese give Japan an average of 46 on the 0 to 100 scale of overall feelings, almost identical to the ratings Japanese give China. Although this score is not as low as one might expect given the history between these two nations, it ranks last among all countries asked of the Chinese (the United States, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam). An even larger majority of Chinese than Japanese (64%) believe that China and Japan share “similar values and a way of life” to “little” or “no extent” (see Figure 25).

Yet Chinese show a strong pattern of openness to economic integration and favor a strong economic relationship with Japan. While Chinese do not rate Japan’s regional economic influence quite as high as Japanese rate China’s (6.5 out of 10 compared with 8.2), they are more enthusiastic than the Japanese about a free trade agreement between the two countries (79% in favor). Sixty-eight percent of Chinese also believe Japanese companies make “very” or “somewhat positive” contributions in their country. A majority of Chinese (60%) also believe that Japan has a “very” or “somewhat positive” influence in Asia. As measured on the 10-point scale, Chinese give Japan

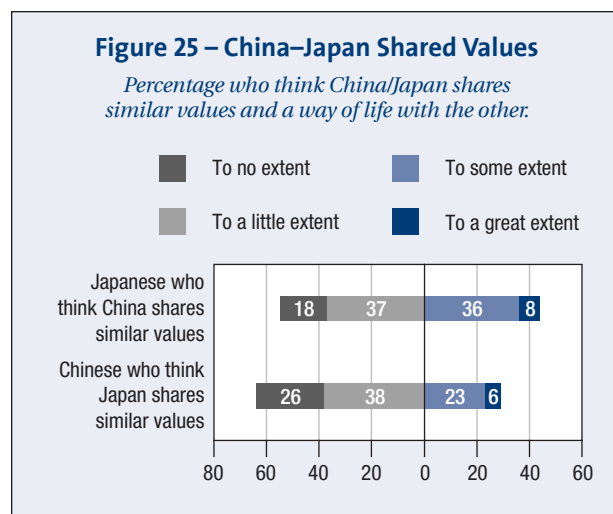
high average marks in terms of the level of education of the Japanese (7.4), Japan’s advanced science and technology (8.0), and the economic opportunities that Japan provides for its own workers (6.9). However, Japan’s culture does not resonate much in China—63 percent of Chinese respondents “rarely” (37%) or “never” (26%) watch movies or television or listen to music from Japan.

Despite the basically positive views of Japan’s soft power and the desire for economic cooperation with Japan, there is similar concern among Chinese as among Japanese on the diplomatic and military front. Chinese give Japan only a midrange mark on use of diplomacy to solve problems (5.4 out of 10), and 50 percent of Chinese respondents believe Japan has been at least “somewhat ineffective” in ameliorating tensions between China and Taiwan. Alarming, but probably predictably, 80 percent of Chinese respondents do not think their government should compromise with Japan on their territorial dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, while 72 percent of Japanese feel their government should not compromise. In addition, military fears are strong: 62 percent of Chinese are “somewhat” or “very worried” that Japan could present a future military threat to their country (see Figure 24).

Overall, these findings are significant, given the past negativity and mistrust as well as the potential for regional rivalry between these two predominant regional actors. Citizens of both countries are not terribly positive towards one another relative to their perceptions of the United States and South Korea. However, the results are not as negative as one might expect and point to the possibility for further integration and cooperation between the dominant powers of the region.

Japan–South Korea

Public relations between South Korea and Japan have often been strained. Yet recent changes in government have helped bring Japan and South Korea closer together, allowing the two countries to forge a strong working relationship despite their differences. In April of 2008, Japanese Prime



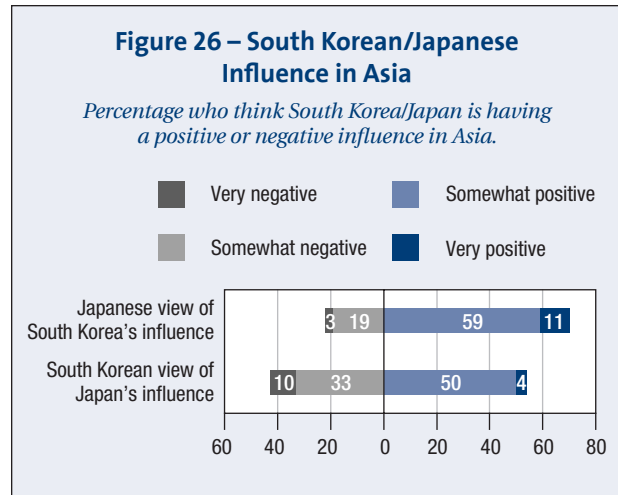
Minister Fukuda and Korean President Lee met in Tokyo, marking the beginning of shuttle diplomacy between the two nations and recommitting them to negotiating a free trade agreement.

Crucial differences still remain between the two countries. While Japan is unsure about the rise of China, South Korea has embraced the emergence of a production powerhouse at its border and has shifted investment there, making China its number one trading partner. Territorial disputes over Dokdo/Takeshima, Japanese government-authorized textbooks that gloss over Japanese colonial atrocities and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to the Yosukuni shrine have inflamed Korean (and Chinese) nationalism and sparked demonstrations against Japan. Meanwhile, South Korea's strategy for engaging North Korea in spite of North Korea's recent nuclear tests is at odds with Japan's more hard-line stance on North Korea and stronger insistence on working with the United States on regional issues.

Japanese Perceptions of South Korea

South Korea is perceived positively by Japanese in many ways, but remains in the shadows on most measures of soft power. There is an overall positive feeling towards South Korea among Japanese (55 on the 0 to 100 scale), ranking behind only the United States and Taiwan on this measure. A strong majority of Japanese (70%) believe that South Korean influence in Asia is either "very" or "somewhat positive" (see Figure 26). Politically, Japanese do not rank South Korea far behind the United States in terms of soft power. They believe South Korea has a moderate degree of respect for human rights (5.6 out of 10) and has a political system that serves the needs of its people (5.8 out of 10).

Japanese rate South Korea strongly on economic power, but far behind the United States and China. South Korea receives a 6.4 out of 10 on economic influence in Asia, a 6.1 on international competitiveness, and 6.6 on the importance of its economic relationship to Japan. Interestingly, the same percentages of Japanese (63%) favor a free trade agreement with South Korea as they do with



the United States. There is general ambivalence on most other measures of economic soft power. Thus, despite the fact that South Korea's perceived economic influence is less than the economic powerhouses of the United States and China, there is clearly a positive valence associated with its influence.

Japanese believe that South Korea has had a moderate degree of influence on Japanese culture (6.1 out of 10). Reflecting the popularity of Korean cultural exports across Asia, exceptional majorities think that this influence has been "very" or "somewhat positive" (79%). Despite these positive ratings, Japanese do not consume very much South Korean entertainment. A majority (64%) says they "rarely" or "never" consume South Korean television, movies, and music. South Korea receives moderate scores on its attractiveness as a tourist destination (5.6 on a 0 to 10 scale) and on the quality of its universities (5.4 on the same scale). Japanese recognize the significance of South Korea's human capital. Japanese give South Korea their highest average rating in terms of the educational level of its population (7.2 on a 0 to 10 scale).

However, South Korea is not perceived very positively in terms of diplomatic soft power. There is not much difference between Japanese ratings of China and South Korea on the overall diplomatic Soft Power Index, both of which fall below the midpoint at 4.8 out of 10. More specifically, Japanese do not feel South Korea has been very effective in promoting its policies in Asia (4.8 on

a 0 to 10 scale). On other measures, Japanese rate South Korea's respect for the sovereignty of other Asian countries around the midpoint at 5.2, its promotion of trust and cooperation among Asian states at 5.4, its provision for assistance to other Asian nations in the event of humanitarian crises at 4.9, and leadership in international institutions at 4.5. A majority of Japanese believe South Korea has been "somewhat" or "very ineffective" in working to resolve the North Korean nuclear situation (57%) and in managing tensions between China and Taiwan (60%).

South Korean Perceptions of Japan

South Koreans see a clear hierarchy among the great powers in Asia. America leads the way, with Japan following close behind and China last in terms of economic, human capital, cultural, and political soft power. While South Koreans recognize Japanese economic, military, and human capital power, there is considerable apprehension among South Koreans regarding the degree of Japanese military and cultural influence in the region. The results overall show ambivalence among South Koreans toward Japan.

South Koreans' feelings toward Japan lie at a neutral average of 50 on the 0 to 100 scale. A slight majority (54%) thinks that Japanese influence in Asia is either "very" or "somewhat positive."

South Koreans have great respect for Japanese economic power. South Koreans give Japan a mean of 8.0 out of 10 in terms of economic influence in Asia, a 7.8 on the international competitiveness of its economy, and a 7.8 on the importance of their country's economic relationship with Japan. There is considerable support (74%) for a free trade agreement with Japan. South Koreans also give Japan high average ratings for the quality of its products (8.1), for having leading multinational companies (7.8), for its entrepreneurial spirit (7.8), and for the economic opportunities it provides its workforce (7.2).

Japan is also rated highly by South Koreans on its human capital soft power. Most South Koreans (77%) believe that learning Japanese is "very" or

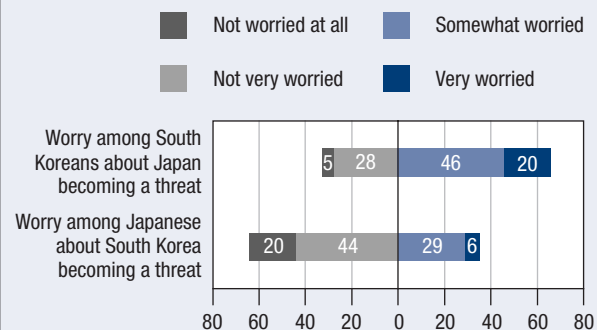
"somewhat important" for future success, and they show great respect for the advanced state of Japanese science and technology (8.5 out of 10), the educational level of its population (7.5 out of 10), and for the quality of its universities (7.7 out of 10).

There is a perception among South Koreans that Japanese popular culture has a great deal of influence on South Korean culture (7.0 on a 10-point scale), despite the fact that few South Koreans consume Japanese entertainment. However, respondents are split on whether this influence is positive (49%) or negative (48%). Japan still receives high ratings for the richness of its cultural heritage (7.1 out of 10) and its attractiveness as a tourist destination (7.5 out of 10).

In terms of political soft power, South Koreans give Japan positive ratings, but not nearly as positive when it comes to diplomatic soft power. South Koreans rate Japan's respect for human rights and the ability of its political system to serve the needs of its people above the midpoint at 6.5 and 6.8 out of 10, respectively. Yet they rate Japan much lower on average (in the same range as China) on diplomatic indicators such as its respect for the sovereignty of other Asian nations (4.9), building trust and cooperation among Asian countries (5.0), and its use of diplomacy to solve problems in Asia (5.5). South Koreans believe that the Japanese government has been only moderately effective in promoting its policies to people in Asia (5.8). On specific problems, majorities of South Koreans

Figure 27 – South Korea–Japan Military Threat

Percentage who are worried that South Korea/Japan could become a military threat to the other.



see Japan as “very” or “somewhat *ineffective*” in working to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue (67%) and in helping to manage China-Taiwan tensions (75%).

Indeed, there is still substantial distrust of Japan by South Koreans, reflecting a strong historical memory of occupation. South Koreans rate Japanese military strength highly (7.5 out of 10), and a strong majority (66%) is either “somewhat” or “very worried” that Japan could become a military threat to their country in the future (see Figure 27).

Conclusion

Outward regional hostilities and tensions in Asia have eased considerably in recent years. Interdependencies in terms of economics, diplomacy, culture, and politics have grown between individual Asian countries and between Asian countries and the rest of the world. There is now unanimous recognition of China's growing hard military and economic power in Asia. There has also been a great deal of attention paid to China's attempts to foster its regional soft power and its supposed growth in this area. Importantly and somewhat surprisingly, the survey results indicate that China's "charm offensive" has thus far been ineffective. Citizens of the other major regional powers—the United States, Japan, and South Korea—have a relatively low opinion of Chinese economic, cultural, human capital, diplomatic, and political soft power compared to the other regional powers.

On the other hand, also somewhat surprisingly, American soft power in Asia remains strong. It is clear in this survey that the United States is still the preeminent power in Asia despite China's continued economic rise and diplomatic efforts. There is a high level of recognition of U.S. economic, cultural, and human capital soft power in all survey countries as well as great respect for its political and diplomatic standing. Asians have great respect for American businesses, popular culture, education, diplomatic efforts, and its political system.

The survey shows that historical animosities between China and Japan remain, although they are not as strong as one might predict based on previous surveys. Chinese and Japanese generally rate the other country lowest on most forms of soft power, but not as low as one might have predicted. Conversely, the strong relationship and mutual respect among Japanese and Americans remains. Americans generally rate Japan higher than China and South Korea on most measures of soft power. A general admiration is also apparent between Chinese and South Korean citizens. Lastly, in contrast to the great powers, Indonesian and Vietnamese citizens tend to rate Japanese soft power slightly ahead of the United States and China ahead of South Korea, indicating an apparent division between the major powers and Indonesia/Vietnam in terms of perceptions of soft power in Asia.

The insights on the distribution of soft power in Asia provided by this survey address many outstanding questions regarding influence in the region, while also bringing up new questions and topics for study. For instance, why have Chinese efforts to increase its political and diplomatic standing in the region so far failed to affect attitudes and perceptions? Why does America enjoy such continued high levels of soft power in Asia, and what are the underlying sources of strong American influence in the region? These and other issues deserve careful monitoring in the years ahead.

Appendix A: Soft Power Indices

Average level of influence on a 0 to 1 scale when soft power questions for each category are combined, followed by rank. See page 36 for survey questions included in each index and page 8 for an explanation of how the indices are calculated. For complete survey questions and results, visit www.thechicagocouncil.org.

Political Soft Power				
Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
U.S.	—	.34 (3)	.67 (1)	.51 (2)
China	.68 (1)	—	.63 (3)	.68 (1)
Japan	.66 (1)	.41 (3)	—	.57 (2)
South Korea	.75 (1)	.48 (3)	.67 (2)	—
Indonesia	.73 (2)	.71 (3)	.74 (1)	.68 (4)
Vietnam*	—	—	—	—

*Not rated

Cultural Soft Power				
Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
U.S.	—	.56 (2)	.72 (1)	.51 (3)
China	.66 (2)	—	.57 (3)	.67 (1)
Japan	.69 (1)	.57 (3)	—	.61 (2)
South Korea	.66 (1)	.54 (3)	.59 (2)	—
Indonesia	.53 (3)	.62 (1)	.59 (2)	.53 (3)
Vietnam	.67 (4)	.77 (1)	.71 (3)	.74 (2)

Diplomatic Soft Power				
Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
U.S.	—	.40 (3)	.58 (1)	.47 (2)
China	.60 (2)	—	.52 (3)	.61 (1)
Japan	.56 (1)	.44 (3)	—	.47 (2)
South Korea	.59 (1)	.51 (3)	.52 (2)	—
Indonesia	.69 (2)	.69 (2)	.72 (1)	.65 (4)
Vietnam*	.68 (2)	.67 (3)	.71 (1)	.67 (3)

*Vietnam diplomatic index based solely on Q910: Government's effectiveness of promoting policies in Asia.

Economic Soft Power				
Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
U.S.	—	.52 (2)	.69 (1)	.50 (3)
China	.73 (1)	—	.68 (2)	.67 (3)
Japan	.70 (1)	.57 (3)	—	.58 (2)
South Korea	.75 (1)	.57 (3)	.71 (2)	—
Indonesia	.73 (2)	.73 (2)	.77 (1)	.66 (4)
Vietnam	.80 (2)	.70 (3)	.81 (1)	.68 (4)

Human Capital Soft Power				
Survey Countries	U.S. soft power	China soft power	Japan soft power	South Korea soft power
U.S.	—	.55 (2)	.69 (1)	.46 (3)
China	.87 (1)	—	.68 (2)	.61 (3)
Japan	.83 (1)	.58 (2)	—	.57 (3)
South Korea	.87 (1)	.64 (3)	.75 (2)	—
Indonesia	.91 (1)	.74 (3)	.80 (2)	.64 (4)
Vietnam	.89 (2)	.80 (4)	.91 (1)	.82 (3)

Questions included for each index

Economic

Q80: Importance of economic relations
 Q90: Probability of buying product
 Q110: Free trade agreement
 Q220: Economic influence in Asia
 Q291C: Helps Asian countries develop economies
 Q291E: Humanitarian assistance
 Q347A: Contribution of companies
 Q795A: Competitive economy
 Q795H: Economic opportunities for workforce
 Q795J: Entrepreneurial spirit
 Q795K: Leading multinational corporations
 Q850: Product quality

Human Capital

Q780: Learn language
 Q795B: Highly educated population
 Q795C: Advanced science/tech
 Q795L: Quality universities

Cultural

Q680: Spread of cultural influence
 Q681: Influence of popular culture
 Q685: Positive influence of popular culture
 Q790: Movies, TV, music

Q795D: Popular culture
 Q795E: Rich cultural heritage
 Q795F: Tourist destination

Diplomatic

Q291A: Uses diplomacy to solve problems
 Q291B: Respects sovereignty
 Q291D: Builds trust and cooperation
 Q291E: Humanitarian assistance
 Q291F: Leadership in international institutions
 Q360: North Korean nuclear program effectiveness
 Q370: China/Taiwan tensions effectiveness
 Q910: Promoting policies in Asia effectiveness

Political

Q291G: Respect for human rights
 Q795G: Political system that serves its people

Note: Questions 240, 345, 750, and 905 were not included because they referred specifically to U.S. and Chinese soft power.

Appendix B: Acknowledgments

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs would like to express its appreciation to the many organizations and individuals who contributed in different capacities to this report. The project would not have been possible without the generous financial support of several institutions. The Chicago Council is very grateful for the continued support provided by the Korea Foundation, which was instrumental in the execution of this year's study and has also made the Korean-U.S. component of the last two Chicago Council public opinion studies possible. We are also very thankful for the support of Joong Ang Ilbo, which allowed us to expand the survey beyond its original parameters. The Chicago Council would also like to thank the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) for its support both in the conceptualization phase of the study and for its partnership in the execution of the survey in Indonesia.

In undertaking its public opinion studies, it has been the Chicago Council's practice to assemble a project team whose members possess the necessary expertise and a willingness to dedicate a substantial amount of their time and work in a highly collaborative environment. The Chicago Council is very fortunate once again to have the participation of such a distinguished project team that contributed at every phase of the study's development. This year's project team included David Shambaugh, director of the China Policy Program at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University; Steven Kull, director of PIPA; Benjamin I. Page, Gordon Scott Fulcher Professor of Decision Making in the Department of Political Science at Northwestern University; Gregory Holyk, visiting lecturer in American politics at the University of Illinois at Chicago; and Catherine Hug, president of Hug Communications.

Special recognition is due to Christopher Whitney, now former executive director for studies at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, who as project director and editor-in-chief had overall responsibility for developing and implementing the study. We also want to recognize Silvia Veltcheva, who served as project officer, for her excellent work in carrying out this project in all its phases. Thomas Wright, executive director for studies at The Chicago Council oversaw the final leg of this project and helped with editing and publicizing the final report. Dr. Takashi Inoguchi of Chuo University and David Tully of Northwestern University assisted the team in the planning phase; Andrew Sherry provided valuable assistance in the editing of the short version of this report; Stephen Webber and Evan Lewis of PIPA also provided important support to the project. Chicago Council staff and interns, including Arya Alatsas, Naima Brown, Sebastian Burca, Zachary Gebhardt, Victoria Strokova, and Katherine Shepherd provided assistance on the project.

The Chicago Council would like to express sincere thanks and appreciation to Kim Byung-Kook, former director of the Center for Foreign Affairs and Security at the East Asia Institute (EAI), for making the collaboration on this project as productive and successful as the work we jointly undertook in 2004 and 2006. We also would like to thank Lee Sook-jong, who is currently serving as EAI president, for continuing our successful collaboration. Special thanks goes to Jeong Han-Wool for all his efforts in coordinating the Korea aspect of the survey. We would also like to thank all the members of the South Korea study team: Lee Nae-Young, Lee Yong-Wook, Lee Shin-wha, and Jhee Byong-Keun.

The Chicago Council is also grateful to Bill McCreedy and Stefan Subias at Knowledge

Networks and Lloyd Hetherington and Ilda Islas at Globescan for all the hard work they dedicated to the study.

The data from this survey will be placed on deposit with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut; and NORC (National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago. It will be available to scholars and other interested professionals. The report will also be available on the Internet at www.thechicagocouncil.org.

Marshall M. Bouton
President

Appendix C: Methodology

United States

The survey of the United States was conducted by Knowledge Networks (KN), a polling, social science, and market research firm in Menlo Park, California. The survey was conducted between January 17 and February 6, 2008, with a total sample of 1,029 American adults who had been randomly selected from KN's respondent panel and answered questions on screens in their own homes. The survey was fielded to a total of 1,470 panel members, which yielded 1,029 completed surveys, for a cooperation rate of 70 percent. The margin of sampling error is approximately plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

The survey was fielded using a randomly selected sample of KN's large-scale, nationwide research panel. This panel is itself randomly selected from the national population of households with telephones. These households are subsequently provided Internet access for the completion of surveys (and thus the sample is not limited to those in the population who already have Internet access). The distribution of the sample in the Web-enabled panel closely tracks the distribution of United States Census counts for the U.S. population eighteen years of age or older on age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, geographical region, employment status, income, education, etc. Poststratification weights are applied to the sample based on gender, age, race, education, region, metro area, and Internet access to adjust for any nonresponse or noncoverage biases. The panel is recruited using stratified random digit dialing (RDD) telephone sampling. RDD provides a nonzero probability of selection for every U.S. household with a telephone. Households that agree to participate in the panel are provided with

free Web access and an Internet appliance (if necessary), which uses a telephone line to connect to the Internet and uses the television as a monitor. For more information concerning the methodology of the U.S. sample, please visit the KN Web site at www.knowledgenetworks.com.

China

The survey of China was conducted by the international polling firm Globescan. The survey was conducted between January 25 and February 19, 2008, with a total sample of 1,237 respondents. The survey was fielded to a total of 24,442, with 1,237 completed interviews, 17,326 partial interviews, and 5,879 refusals, a cooperation rate of 5 percent. All interviews were conducted by telephone in Chinese. The sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. The sample is nationally representative of those eighteen years of age or older and was drawn by a stratified multistage sampling method. All thirty-one provinces were divided into three strata according to their geographical location and their Human Development Index (HDI). The sample was weighted to represent the 2005 census, which indicated that 43 percent of Chinese people live in cities or towns and 57 percent of people live in villages.

Japan

The survey of Japan was also conducted by Globescan. The survey was conducted January 16-29, 2008, with a total sample of 1,000 respondents. The survey was fielded to a total of 6,914, with 1,000 completed interviews, 124 partial interviews, and 5,790 refusals, which resulted in a cooperation rate of 14 percent. All interviews were

conducted by telephone in Japanese. The sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. The sample is nationally representative of those eighteen years of age or older.

South Korea

The survey of South Korea was conducted by Han-Kook Research Company for the East Asia Institute and The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The survey was conducted between January 22 and February 5, 2008, with a total sample of 1,029 respondents. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Korean. The sample is nationally representative of those nineteen years of age or older. The survey employed multistage quota sampling of South Korea's administrative divisions (Seoul Metropolitan Area, Busan City, Daegu City, Incheon City, Gwangju City, Daejeon City, Ulsan City, Gyeonggi Province (Do), Gangwon Province, Chungbuk Province, Chungnam Province, Junbuk Province, Junnam Province, Gyeongbuk Province, Gyeongnam Province (Jeju Island was excluded based on its low percentage of the total South Korean population (1.1%), its remote location, and the high costs required to survey in the area). Respondents were randomly chosen from among the fifteen administrative divisions based on known age and gender distributions from the 2005 Korean Resident Registration Census. Poststratification weights were applied based on region, gender, and age.

Vietnam

The survey of Vietnam was conducted by the international polling firm Globescan. The survey was conducted between February 22 and March 8, 2008, with a total sample of 1,000 respondents. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Vietnamese. The sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Only residents in and around major cities were sampled because it was considered unfeasible to properly sample the rural areas of Vietnam. Some questions asked in other countries that were considered sensitive were not included in the Vietnamese sample.

Indonesia

The survey of Indonesia was conducted by Synovate. The survey was conducted between January 19 and 29, 2008, with a total sample of 811 respondents and a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points. There was a total of 1,449 contacts, resulting in 811 successful interviews and 649 unsuccessful interviews, yielding a total response rate of 55 percent. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Indonesian. The sample is nationally representative of those eighteen years of age or older. The survey employed multistage quota sampling of respondents in Aceh, Sumatera Utara, Sumatera Barat, Riau, Jambi, Sumatera Selatan, Bengkulu, Lampung, Dki Jakarta, Jawa Barat, Jawa Tengah, Di Yog Yakarta, Jawa Timur, Banten, Kalimantan Barat, Bali, Sulawesi Selatan, and Maluku. Poststratification weights were applied based on region, gender, and age.



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