プロジェクト報告

Escalation, De-escalation, and Maintenance in the Sino-Japanese Rivalry[1)]

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Between September 2010 and late 2013, the dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands escalated to dangerous heights. The dispute initially heated up on September 7, 2010, when the Japanese Coast Guard（JCG）arrested a Chinese fishing boat captain and his crew in the East China Sea waters surrounding the islands after he steered his trawler into collisions with two JCG vessels. China denounced the detentions and demanded their release. Though the crew and the trawler were released in the following week, prosecutors announced that the captain's detention would be extended ten days, leading to stronger denunciations from Beijing and large anti-Japanese protests on the streets. China finally retaliated by arresting four Japanese nationals working in China and by unofficially blocking the export to Japan of rare earth minerals, the production of which China monopolizes. Tokyo at this point gave in, repatriating the captain to Chinese authorities on September 24. Throughout much of 2012, tensions slowly built up again over the prospect of either the metropolitan Tokyo city government or the national government purchasing three of the five Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands from their private Japanese owners, who were looking to dump the resource-barren rocks. The debate over buying the islands led to large-scale anti-Japanese protests in China and damage to Japanese-owned

1）Paper presented at the Conference on Regional Peace at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan, November 17, 2018. This article thanks Routledge for allowing excerpts from The Ever-Changing Sino-Japanese Rivalry（Routledge 2019）to be re-printed here.

businesses. Beijing denounced any such purchase as provocative, warning it would have repercussions on Sino-Japanese relations. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) cabinet went ahead with the purchase anyway in September 2012, to stop from the right-wing governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, from doing the same. The decision was the lesser of two evils for the DPJ, but it infuriated China nonetheless (Drifte 2014; Weiss 2014). This led into the most dangerous part of the escalated dispute. In December 2012, Chinese surveillance aircraft began flights over the islands. Then on separate occasions in January 2013, Chinese frigates locked their fire-control radar onto a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense forces (MSDF) helicopter and an MSDF destroyer in the vicinity of the islands This brought the two states closer to conflict than probably at any point since 1945. Finally, in November 2013, China announced the introduction of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea covering an area that includes the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, requiring all foreign aircraft to report their flight paths to China or risk being shot down.

Yet by 2018, the situation between China and Japan had seemingly taken a 180-degree turn. China and Japan began to hold high-level communications and meetings between officials on improving relations, starting in 2014. These encouraging signs led to the first (albeit awkward) meeting between Japan's Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and China's President Xi Jinping at an APEC conference in November 2014 (Takahara 2014). The maritime intrusions around the disputed islands continue, including even armed Chinese naval vessels and fleets of over 200 fishing vessels, but warm relations between the two governments have continued to grow. At the most recent bilateral meeting in October 2018, a summit between Abe and Xi in Beijing, the two leaders expressed their belief that Sino-Japanese relations had made a new start (Qiuyu 2018). The summit also produced concrete results: China and Japan signed several agreements pertaining to maritime cooperation and business dealings. Now is this how rivals with a bitter, ongoing territorial dispute and unresolved historical issues behave?

This article presents parts of my book, *The Ever-Changing Sino-Japanese Rivalry* (Routledge 2019) that were presented at Aoyama Gakuin University in November 2017. In the next section, I will present the argument. The empirical support for the

argument, presented in two sections, will follow the argument. The two empirical sections will cover the years 2010-18 of the Sino-Japanese relationship. First, I present the evidence of the values of the independent variables. Then I present the evidence of the values of the dependent variable. These two sections represent a sample of the empirical support from the book, which covers the years 1870-1937 and 1990-2018. The final section is a conclusion, which summarizes the evidence found in the empirical sections.

The Argument：Domestic Politics and Expected Costs

The example of Sino-Japanese relations in the introduction shows the ever-changing nature of the Sino-Japanese rivalry. Many rivalries do not feature a constant escalation to greater and greater levels of conflict. They ebb and flow as each rival chooses to escalate, de-escalate, or maintain the status quo. The goal of this paper is to provide an explanation of why rival states choose one of these options. The argument is a revised version of a model of rivalry behavior developed by Michael Colaresi in his 2005 book, *Scare Tactics, The Politics of International Rivalry*.

Like Colaresi, I argue that the independent variables, domestic politics and expected costs, largely determine the actions that rivals choose to take. Rivalry behavior is thus not determined entirely at the interstate level, as with many theories of conflict, but is two-level in nature. That is to say, the relative capabilities between the two rivals and the potential involvement of any third parties (which determine expected costs) interact with the relationship between each state's leadership and its domestic political opposition to influence the action each rival takes. Variables coming from domestic politics are often overlooked in international relations, due to the strong influence of structural realism (Waltz 1979).

The international factor influencing actions vis-à-vis the rival is what Colaresi calls the expectations of future costs relative to benefits, a cost-benefit calculation that the state leaders make with regard to the rivalry (2005, 23). Costs can be calculated from the relative military capabilities of the rivals. As one state's military becomes more powerful through increased spending, arms building, and alliance building, its

expected costs for maintaining the rivalry will decrease and its rival's expected costs will rise, all other factors remaining constant. Colaresi simplifies the measurement of this variable by simply labeling costs as being high or low.

The engagement of one state in a conflict with a third party state can also have an effect on expected costs for the rivalry. When one state is engaged in a war with a third party (not its rival), then this ties up military resources, government spending, and the attention of the leadership. It will cost more of all of these resources to maintain the rivalry, leading to higher expected costs. All other things remaining constant, the rival benefits by having lower expected costs. Any type of conflict that reduces military capabilities, including readiness and latent economic resources, raises expected costs for one state (and lowers them for the rival).

Finally, a credible threat of international intervention in the rivalry can also raise expected costs. Measuring this is more difficult however, since the threat must be perceived as credible by the potential target of intervention. International intervention is not so common, especially going back further into history, unless the potential intervener perceives a direct threat to its territory or interests.

The domestic political independent variable is called *rivalry outbidding* (Colaresi 2005, 29-34). This describes the situation in which a domestic political opposition can outflank the leadership by calling for stronger policies vis-à-vis the rival. This ability to outflank the leadership draws the leader's policies more toward escalation with the rival, to avoid being replaced by the opposition.

The success of outbidding depends on the respective position of public opinion, the leadership, and the possible outbidders on a continuum between cooperation and conflict with the rival. If public opinion is closer to wanting conflict with the rival than the leadership, then the outbidders have their opportunity and the leadership needs to move to the same position and act and speak aggressively against the rival, in order not to be outbid. The leadership can fear being tossed out of office after all if it is seen being too soft on the rival (Colaresi 2005, 17). This represents high outbidding in Colaresi's model, and the leadership must react by escalating the

rivalry. If, on the other hand, public opinion is closer to favoring cooperation, then the leader can pursue whatever policy it wants without being outbid by the domestic opponents. In this case, we can say that outbidding is low and de-escalation or maintenance is possible (Colaresi 2005, 30). A case in which there are no effective domestic political opponents also counts as low rivalry outbidding.

When the rivalry escalates, the public will probably move closer to the conflict end of the spectrum due to in-group/out-group processes. In such a case, rivalry outbidding is high and the leadership has to react strongly to the rival by reciprocating escalation. In general, the feedback mechanism of escalation is such that it can sink the rivalry into a spiral that is more difficult to de-escalate from, depending on how the other state reacts. Feedback "constrains opportunities for de-escalation...Likewise, an attempt to cooperate with a rival will echo into the future" (Colaresi 2005, 21-22). Leaders will need to "show some tangible reduction in threat to weaken hard-liners" (Colaresi 2005, 22), or enough time will have to pass for the public's anger and perception of threat from the rival to subside.

The two independent variables interact in the following way: When rivalry outbidding is high, the leadership is predicted to escalate the rivalry because their number one priority it to hold on to power. High rivalry outbidding results in escalation of the rivalry regardless of the expected future costs of the rivalry. When rivalry outbidding is low, there will be no escalation of the rivalry, only de-escalation or maintenance (unless reciprocating the escalation coming from the rival). When rivalry outbidding is low but expected costs of the rivalry are high, then the motivation is to de-escalate the rivalry, since it will become more costly to carry on and there is no domestic political motivation pulling the leader toward escalation. When rivalry outbidding and expected costs are both low, then there is no motivation to change the status quo, and the result will be maintenance of the status quo.

Figure 1 presents the following 2x2 matrix, a revised version from Colaresi (2005, 23). It represents the relationship between the two independent variables, rivalry outbidding and expectations of future rivalry costs (showing up as the headers of the rows and columns) and the values of the dependent variable, escalation, de-escalation,

and maintenance.

Figure 1 The Model

Rivalry Outbidding	Expected Future Costs: High	Expected Future Costs: Low
High	Escalation	Escalation
Low	De-escalation	Maintenance

Using this description of the argument, we can return to the example described above to glimpse a brief explanation of the turn of events in each case. The potential for rivalry outbidding started to decline in mid-2010s as Xi Jinping prosecuted his Anti-Corruption Campaign, which he used to remove all of his rivals for power in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In this way he was able to consolidate power in Beijing in the run-up to the 19th Party Congress in 2017. With no potential opponents in the CCP to outflank him on China's Japan policy, Xi was able to calm the tensions with Japan. The trade war with the U.S. in 2018 raised expected costs for continuing the rivalry with Japan, handing Xi a firm incentive to sign agreements with Japan making their detente official. In Tokyo, Abe Shinzō faces low or no rivalry outbidding because he has placed himself ideologically on the far right with regard to China relations. There is practically no room to outflank Abe. So when he sits down to reciprocate China's conciliatory moves, it is reminiscent of Nixon going to China.

For empirical support, I present a small portion of the one of the empirical chapters from the book. This covers the Sino-Japanese between 2010 and 2018. First, there is a section on the independent variables; this is followed by a section on the actions taken in the rivalry – the dependent variable. These two small empirical sections give the reader a sample of the rest of the book.

Domestic Politics and Expected Costs in the 2010s

Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and President of

the People's Republic of China, succeeded Hu Jintao at the 18th Party Congress in 2012. Hu handed over power more quickly than Jiang Zemin had done for him, leaving on November 14, 2012 and March 14, 2013 the four key positions of General Secretary of the Party, President of the PRC, Chairman of the Party's Central Military Commission, and Chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission. Xi's first few years in office have been largely marked by a ruthless consolidation of power. Xi applied the lessons he learned from watching Hu's early problems with internal rivals by purging many rivals for power through what has been officially labeled an Anti-Corruption Campaign (Chan 2015; Lorentzen and Lu 2018). CMC Vice-Chairman Gui Boxiong was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment (Gui's fellow Jiang loyalist at the CMC, Xu Caihou, was going to be arrested as well but he died of cancer). Xi had the head of domestic security and the third most powerful official in China, Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang, arrested in late 2014. Zhou was associated with Bo Xilai, the Party Secretary of Chongqing and Politburo member arrested for corruption in Hu Jintao's last year in power. Politburo member Sun Zhengcai, Bo's successor in Chongqing and once seen as Xi's likely successor as China's next leader, was arrested in 2017 and sentenced to life in prison in 2018. He has also purged 18 members and 17 alternates of the Party Central Committee (*BBC* 2017). The military top brass has not escaped either. In October 2017, two top generals, General Fang Fenghui, the chief of the army's Joint Staff Department, and Gen. Zhang Yang, the director of the military's political department, were removed from power. Yang committed suicide a month later and Fang was expelled from the CCP in October 2018 (Needham 2017; Lei 2018). In addition, Xi has led the purge of hundreds of thousands of lower level officials throughout the country. By the end of 2014, two years after becoming General Secretary, around 266,000 party members had been arrested or punished for corruption (Anderlini 2014). By 2018, that number stood at over 1.5 million party members (Korporaal 2018). The Anti-Corruption Campaign has not officially ended but will probably continue as a defining theme of Xi's rule.

Aside from purging Jiang's allies in the Politburo, Xi has also manipulated the Party's rules and the Standing Committee's membership in order to extend his hold on power past the ten years that Jiang and Hu served. In late October 2016, the

Party named Xi a "core" leader, a designation that puts him on par with Mao and Deng. Then, a year later, at the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, Xi cemented his hold on power by naming a seven member Standing Committee composed entirely of men in their 60s who will be forced to retire at the next Party Congress. By not appointing any obvious successors, including those considered to be his protégés, China watchers indicate that Xi might be setting up to rule past 2022 – past the now customary two five-year terms that his two predecessors held to. In addition, the Party enshrined Xi governing philosophy "Xi Jinping Thought" into the constitution, alongside Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory, an honor which raised him above Hu and Jiang, further indicating his hold on power (Frayer 2017).

Hu Jintao still led China during the first two years of this period, 2010-12. Rivalry outbidding is coded as low during Hu's final five years (2007-2012), so that still applies to 2010-12. Rivalry outbidding is then coded as high for Xi Jinping while he conducted his purge between 2013 and 2017. Though the Anti-Corruption Campaign is still ongoing, most of Xi's rivals for power have already been deposed, thus consolidating Xi's hold on power. Rivalry outbidding is low for 2018, the final year for this study.

In Japan, the DPJ took over the premiership in August 2009 and held it through to the start of Abe's second Cabinet in December 2012. The DPJ was considered weak on foreign policy throughout their three cabinets, with conservative and mainstream media and the opposition LDP lambasting their every move (Smith 2015, 226-227). Abe's position is dominant from 2013 onward. The conclusion is that rivalry outbidding was high from 1998 to 2000, low from 2001 to late 2006, and then high again as the opposition became more competitive in 2007 and remaining high through the DPJ cabinets until December 2012. Under Abe's resurgence and the opposition's collapse after 2012, rivalry outbidding has been low, similarly to Koizumi's time in office, since Abe is considered conservative, particularly in his foreign policy with China.

With regard to expected future rivalry costs, I code China as having low expected

costs from 2010 through to 2017 by its continued economic and military growth and the increasing gap between Chinese and Japanese military spending. China surpassed Japan as the second largest economy in the world in 2010. Japan consequently has high, expected future costs. U.S. President Barack Obama's "Asian Pivot" (2011-2016) could have increased expected future costs for China, since it was initially largely perceived as a China Containment Strategy, but it never truly materialized due to a lack of cohesion and funding (Green 2016; Tisdall 2016). The U.S. failed to prevent China's militarization of the South China Sea, and funding for the pivot was frequently interrupted by domestic politics. In the end, the pivot amounted to little more than a redistribution of U.S. Marines to northern Australia. Expected costs for China do increase in 2018, the final year of the analysis, due to the U.S.-China trade war. U.S. President Donald Trump announced tariffs against Chinese goods initially in the spring of 2018. When China announced retaliatory tariffs against U.S. goods, Trump increased the amount of Chinese goods that would be subject to U.S. tariffs. China reciprocated, only for Trump to increase his figure again. This back and forth continued throughout 2018 until a three-month ceasefire was announced in December 2018. The trade war had already started to affect China's economy by fall 2018 however, with its growth falling to its lowest level since 2009 (AP 2018). Like a military conflict with a third party, the trade war makes it more costly for China to maintain a rivalry with Japan, raising its expected costs for the rivalry. Figure 2 summarizes the values of the independent variables for this period and the model's predictions of the dependent variable.

Figure 2 Predictions of the Dependent Variable, 2010-2018

	China	Japan
2010-12	Low rivalry outbid	High rivalry outbid
	Low expected costs	High expected costs
Prediction	Maintenance	Escalation
2013-2017	High rivalry outbid	Low rivalry outbid
	Low expected costs	High expected costs
Prediction	Escalation	De-escalation
2018	Low rivalry outbid	Low rivalry outbid
	High expected costs	High expected costs
Prediction	De-escalation	De-escalation

The Rivalry in the 2010s

Though the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute had popped up on everyone's radar in jumps and spurts in the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, the dispute truly escalated to a new level on the morning of September 7, 2010, when a Chinese fishing boat captain who had steered his boat in Japanese waters rammed his ship into two Japanese coast guard vessels, which led to his ship's boarding and the arrest of the captain and his crew. Officials soon released the crew but the Japanese government, under the relatively new cabinet of DPJ PM Kan Naoto, announced that the captain would be prosecuted for the damage to the coast guard ships. China protested the arrest and demanded for the captain's release, but the Japanese refused and stated that he would have to be prosecuted. A diplomatic standoff ensued, with anti-Japanese demonstrations breaking out around China and protests raging on the internet. On September 19, Japan decided to extend the captain's detention another ten days. After this, Beijing reciprocated in two ways: First, on September 20 Beijing ordered the arrest of four Japanese Fujita Corporation employees who were in China as part of an ongoing project to safely recover undetonated Japanese explosives and chemical weapons from the war (Smith 2015, 191). They were charged with entering a military zone. Then, on the same day, Beijing decided to escalate the situation further by unofficially ordering an embargo on the export to Japan of rare earth minerals. China produces 97% of the global supply of rare earth metals, which are used in computers and other electronics goods as well as advanced military equipment. Japan had been standing its ground during the dispute, but with the

embargo it capitulated and had the captain released from custody in Ishigaki on September 24. The Fujita employees were released September 30 and October 9. Anti-Japanese protests continued in China in October while anti-Chinese protests started by nationalist groups raged broke out in Japan (Smith 2015, 217; Kokubun at el. 2017, 181). On October 4, PM Kan and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao agreed to cool tensions and return to mutually beneficial relations; this conclusion was affirmed in talks between Kan and Wen again on October 30 and between Hu and Kan on November 13 (Kokubun et al. 2017, 181).

We can see evidence of outbidding on both sides. The new cabinet of Kan Naoto, at the head of a party that was inexperienced in governance, was subject to heavy outbidding from the LDP and the news media (Smith 2015, 209, 217-218, 221). On top of the way the arrested captain's case was handled, there was a bungled release of coast guard video of the incident that led to more criticism (Smith 2015, 193). China's initial reaction was to maintain the status quo. Hu was slow to respond to the arrest, but was pushed by public opinion expressed on the Internet and public demand to be allowed to protest to take on a heavier approach with Japan (Kokubun et al. 2017, 180). China initially restrained the anti-Japanese protests, keeping the numbers of protesters small and ordering more police than usual to the areas of protests (Weiss 2014, 170-174). China probably assumed the captain would be released more quickly, as Japan had done in the past (Weiss 2014, 168). However, as news spread of anti-Chinese protests in Japan in October, larger anti-Japanese protests in China started again, occurring this time in more cities; Weiss writes that it is unknown whether these October protests were allowed (Weiss 2014, 179-180). Kokubun and co-authors state that the protests in October in China appear to be related to the rise of "conservative factions in the intra-party power structure... [opposed to] the Hu/Wen mainstream faction...that compromised with Japan on strategic mutually beneficial relations" (Kokubun et al. 2017, 181). If true, despite coming after the release of the captain, this belated outbidding would show that dissatisfaction was growing within the CCP with Hu and Wen's approach to Japan.

For these two years, 2010-2012, the model predicts that Japan would escalate and China would maintain the rivalry. We see efforts to escalate the situation in the

Japanese decision to arrest the caption rather than release him as they had done on previous occasions, as well as the subsequent decision on September 19 to escalate the arrest by holding him longer. China on the other hand, initially tried to maintain the rivalry by keeping protests restrained and by not being too heavy-handed. They only changed their stance and reciprocated Japanese escalation as a result of growing pressure from the public and later from within government. China's quick drawdown after the captain's release supports that they wanted to maintain the status quo.

Sino-Japanese relations made a brief upswing as a result of the 3.11 Triple Disaster. China responded quickly to the disaster, sending a rescue team and other assistance. The Chinese people contributed through donations as well. The Chinese media hailed the contributions, saying it was reciprocation for Japanese assistance after the Great Sichuan Earthquake (Kokubun et al. 2017, 182). Premier Wen visited the area in May and expressed admiration for the Japanese people; these feelings were matched by those of Chinese netizens. Such reciprocity is reminiscent of concept of "disaster diplomacy": the warming of relations between two rival states after a natural disaster (Streich and Mislan 2014).

However, the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute returned in the late summer of 2012, erasing all the good will that had been building after 3.11. The government of DPJ PM Noda Yoshihiko (the third DPJ prime minister in three years) was placed in the awkward position of having to nationalize three of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands by buying them from their private owners. The Kurihara family, which had bought three islands from the original owners, the Koga family (Smith 2015, 132-133), decided to sell the islands that the Japanese government had been leasing since 2002. When the government balked at the idea, the right-wing governor of the Tokyo, Shintarō Ishihara, announced his intention to buy the islands in the spring of 2012 and incorporate them under Tokyo's jurisdiction; Ishihara, who has long been involved in nationalist organizations and causes, had been interested in such a deal since the late 1980s when he was Diet member (Smith 2015, 218-219). The center-left Noda Cabinet, judging that Ishihara purchasing the islands would only make relations with China worse, decided it had no choice but to purchase the islands so its blocked Ishihara's plans in July and proceeded to begin deliberations on the purchase. Tokyo paid the

Kurihara family US$26.5 million on September 11 to take ownership (Kokubun et al. 2017, 184). Even before the purchase was made, the mere deliberation over the issue unleashed a month of anti-Japanese protests between mid-August and mid-September. More Chinese activists landed on one of the islands on August 15, and were promptly detained and returned to China. The protest began the next day, with Japanese firms sustaining US$120 million in property damage and Japanese car sales dropping 50% (Pugliese and Insisa 2017, 82). Beijing also raised the pressure on Japan starting in September 2012 by increasing the number of intrusions into the territorial waters surrounding the islands. Ships from China's Marine Surveillance agency, coast guard, PLA Navy and fishing fleet have intruded regularly into Japanese waters since the nationalization of the islands was announced – the intrusions have continued on a monthly basis to the time of writing of this book (Japan Coast Guard 2018).

Like the 2010 episode, the 2012 incident matches the model's predictions. Japan committed an unforced error and escalated the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute all by itself, without any initial Chinese action. Similar to 2010, outbidding by nationalists such as Ishihara and right-wing LDP politicians left another center-left cabinet in a position it did not want to be in (Smith 2015, 228-229). Anti-Chinese protests once again broke out in Japan and LDP politicians and the news media bombarded the Noda Cabinet with daily attacks (Kokubun et al. 2017, 186). The Chinese for their part released the restraints on anti-Japanese protests they had imposed in September 2010 (Weiss 2014, 189). Kokubun et al. (2017, 185-186) draw a connection between the decision to allow protests and activist attempts to visit the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the upcoming 18th Party National Congress, at which Xi Jinping would be elevated to General Secretary. Protests had not really taken place until mid-August, though the deliberations to nationalize the islands had been taking place since the spring. Conservative factions criticized Hu Jintao's reaction to the crisis, and so Hu had to react to this rivalry outbidding by taking a heavier approach with Japan, much in the same way he did in September 2010 (Kokubun et al. 2017, 185-186). So the Japanese escalated the situation. The Chinese attempted to maintain the rivalry but eventually had to reciprocate Japan's actions. Both the 2010 and the 2012 incidents are exemplar cases of rivalry outbidding on the Japanese side. Both incidents represent the escalatory actions of a center-left government, new in power, under pressure from

the right to (reluctantly) escalate the rivalry. The center-left cabinets were not in full control in either incident, and found that it could not help but escalate the situation for domestic political reasons.

The rivalry seemed to stay to a new escalated level after September 2012. First, a Chinese Y-12 surveillance plane from the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) flew into Japanese airspace over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands on December 13, 2012; the SOA overflights occurred 13 more times by March 2014 (Japan Ministry of Defense 2016). More troubling episodes took place in January 2013, in what is possibly the closest the two sides have come to actual fighting. On January 19, a Chinese *Jiangkai* I-class frigate locked its fire-control radar onto a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense forces (MSDF) helicopter in the vicinity of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Just in case anyone thought this was an error, it was repeated eleven days later when a *Jiangwei* II-class frigate did the same to an MSDF destroyer (Yoshida and Aoki 2013). Finally, in November 2013, China announced the introduction of a new Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea covering an area that includes the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. All aircraft flying through the ADIZ are required to report their flight paths to China beforehand and identify themselves if called upon, or risk "emergency defensive measures" by the Chinese military.

These events in December 2012 and throughout 2013 occurred with a new General Secretary, Xi Jinping, taking charge in China in November and a new prime minister, Shinzō Abe taking charge starting in late December. In China, Xi became the leader of the CCP at the 19th Congress in mid-November, and then he took on Chinese presidency and military chairman position in mid-March 2013. As explained above, he needed to weed out political opponents during these first two years, so this is coded as high rivalry outbidding and the model predicts escalation from China. The actions in December 2012 and throughout 2013 definitely fit the description of escalation.

Abe on the other hand had a commanding majority in the Diet after the DPJ's collapse in the December 2012 elections. He started off with support from the public as well, and he is positioned on the right-wing ideologically, so his term in office is coded as having low rivalry outbidding, with high expected costs, and the model

therefore predicts de-escalation from Japan for 2013-onward. It is difficult to call Japan's actions during December 2012 and throughout 2013 de-escalatory however. They have not been escalatory though; maintenance of the rivalry in reaction to Chinese actions around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands is a more fitting description.

2015 and Onward : More Intrusions and Detente

More recently, China's official statements on Japan as a threat have ebbed and flowed due to international events. China's most recent white paper, issued in May 2015, focuses on what China calls "active defense" but only explicitly cites Japan once: "Japan is sparing no effort to dodge the post-war mechanism, overhauling its military and security policies" (State Council Information Office 2015). However, Chinese officials in October 2015 started to ring bells about Japan's accumulation of nuclear material that sounded eerily reminiscent of early international warnings about Iran's nuclear program. Fu Cong, China's Ambassador for Disarmament, has noted that,

> "Japan has accumulated a huge amount of sensitive nuclear materials, giving rise to grave risks both in terms of nuclear security and nuclear proliferation. At present, Japan possesses about 1200 kilograms of highly-enriched uranium (HEU) and about 47.8 tons of separated plutonium...enough to make 1350 nuclear warheads...Japan does not need that much enriched uranium for producing nuclear energy. So we are suspicious for any ulterior motives by the Japanese government." (China Ministry of National Defense 2015)

This could be a new route that China embarks on in the future as it tries to shape international views of Japan along the lines of its perceptions.

Naval intrusions are still ongoing. In fact, the quantity of the intrusions may be declining (Fravel and Johnston 2014), but their quality has been changing. On December 26, 2015, armed Chinese coast guard ships enter Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, an escalation over the usual, unarmed government ships (Kondalamahanty 2015). Then, on June 9, 2016, an armed Chinese PLA Navy frigate encroached into Japanese contiguous waters around the Senkaku/

Diaoyu Islands, drawing protests from Tokyo (Mie 2016). This was followed in August 2016 by the first of many "swarms" of 200-plus Chinese fishing boats with coast guard escorts. These MIDs count as an escalation by China (and maintenance for Japan). While Chinese naval incursions into the Senkaku/Diaoyu territorial waters have dropped since October 2013, the number of Japan's Air SDF interceptions of Chinese air intrusions increased to record numbers in 2015 (*Japan Times* 2015). Still, serious incidents have declined such that the island disputes seems to be quieter story these days, particularly compared to the South China Sea disputes, where China and the PLA seems to be concentrating most of its effort in recent years.

As both Xi and Abe have consolidated their positions, and probably as China (and the media) has largely shifted its attention away from the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and toward the South China Sea, a rapprochement has slowly developed. Some positive, high-level communications and meetings between officials initially took place in 2014. These encouraging signs led to the first (albeit awkward) meeting between Japan's Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and China's President Xi Jinping at an APEC conference in November 2014 (Takahara 2014). More high-level bilateral meetings took place in April and November of 2015 and in February and April of 2016. Abe and Xi met again during the April 2015 meeting, leading journalists to posit that a detente was possibly forming (*Japan Times* 2015), and again in September 2016 in China before a G20 summit.

While meetings have continued between officials and business leaders from the two countries, Abe and Xi have drawn closer, particularly since the 2017 inauguration of the U.S. President Donald Trump, who pulled the U.S. out of the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership free trade area, isolated the U.S. from its allies, and started his trade war with China. Xi and Abe met in Germany on July 8, 2017, and then again on November 11, 2017 in what the *Sankei Shimbun* labeled "smiling diplomacy." At the November meeting, Xi stated, "This meeting marks a new start for Japan-China relations," to which Abe replied, "I agree completely" (Takita 2017). The *Sankei* writer Takita warns though that Xi's compatible attitude has an ulterior motive: to stop Abe's attempt at constitutional revision.

Xi and Abe held two meetings in the fall of 2018. They met on September 12 in Vladivostok, and Abe then traveled to Beijing to meet Xi on October 26, 2018, the first visit to the capital by a Japanese PM in seven years (Akita 2018). Marking the 40th anniversary of the signing of the 1978 China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the two practically gushed over each other. Xi stated:

> "The healthy, steady and long-term development of China-Japan ties is in the fundamental interests of the two countries' people, and represents common expectations of the international community...With concerted efforts by both sides, China-Japan ties are back on track and gaining positive momentum... [China and Japan should] stick to the general direction of peace and friendship, continue their joint efforts in mutual beneficial cooperation and further develop bilateral ties..." (Xinhua 2018)

Abe in return expressed his "willingness to intensify exchanges with China to lay the social foundation to improve bilateral ties." He called on both states to make joint efforts to maintain regional stability and prosperity: "It is hoped that...the two sides will usher in a new era when 'competition is transformed into coordination'... cooperating in a mutual-beneficial way and never posing a threat to each other" (Xinhua 2018). On the economic front, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced that China and Japan had signed agreements to further cooperation as well as more than 500 business deals, including an agreement to create a framework for managing maritime accidents (Qiuyu 2018). The fact that Beijing-approved publications are pushing this is of course significant, as it further indicates this is Xi's policy toward Japan going forward.

The fact that the two are meeting much more often leads some analysts to believe the talks demonstrate the thawing of relations, particularly since "both nations face trade frictions with the United States" (Qiuyu 2018). The South China Morning Post labeled the late October meeting a "historic turning point" and "a major effort to reset the tumultuous relations" while questioning whether the goodwill would hold for long (Jiangtao 2018). Meanwhile, the conservative Nikkei Asian Review described the meeting with the headline, "Xi vents frustration toward trade war to Abe: Japanese leader walks tightrope balancing relations with Washington and Beijing" (Shigeta 2018). I code this as de-escalation for both China and Japan, starting in 2018,

specifically the October summit in Beijing, when significant agreements detailing cooperation and new business deals were first signed. The trade war with the U.S. clearly is having an effect on Sino-Japanese relations, for the better. Coincidentally, the Japan Coast Guard's data for monthly Senkaku/Diaoyu territorial water intrusions shows that the intrusions were cut in half in the last four months of 2018 (Japan Coast Guard 2018). Figure 3 summarizes the results of the model's performance. The model scores 75% (6 out of 8) for the period 2010-18.

Figure 3 Performance of the Model, 2010-2018

Event	Action	As Predicted?
1. Senkaku disputes	China: Maintenance	Yes
	Japan: Escalation	Yes
2. 2013 MIDs	China: Escalation	Yes
	Japan: Maintenance	No
3. Dec 2015-Aug 2016 MIDs	China: Escalation	Yes
	Japan: Maintenance	No
4. 2018 Detente	China: De-escalation	Yes
	Japan: De-escalation	Yes

Conclusion

The model shows a high level of success for this decade by accurately predicting 75% of the Chinese and Japanese actions in their rivalry. This is actually better than the model's overall success in the book. The model's predictions of Chinese and Japanese behavior in the full book, spanning two periods of rivalry (1874-1945 and 1990-2018), show a respectable level of success. The model has a prediction success rate of 67.4% (29 correctly predicted actions out of 43 possible) for the earlier rivalry and a rate of 63.6% (14 of 22) for the contemporary rivalry. This provides support for the contention, at least within the context of Sino-Japanese rivalry, that domestic rivalry outbidding and perceptions of costs do indeed have some distinctive level of influence on rivalry decision-making.

As far as future research goes, I intend to conduct further research with the model on other pairs of rivals. I will likely try to fine-tune the model more in order to make it more accurate. It would be interesting to contrast the model between different

ideologies of governments – either right-wing or moderate/left-leaning. We might think that right-wing governments are more likely to have more chauvinistic reactions to the rival on average, but they are also less likely to be outbid by a domestic opponent because they are already at the extreme end of the rivalry outbidding spectrum.

The model could also be tested with more authoritarian regimes, particularly those that are considered more absolutist. These will be "hard" cases for the rivalry outbidding variable, since one can assume perhaps that domestic political opponents will be less likely to exist. Do such states escalate and stay in rivalries shorter than more pluralistic states?

Finally, it would be interesting to integrate the concept of reciprocity into the model. We know reciprocity is a reason for acting in an escalatory manner. State leaders can be expected to meet escalation from a rival with escalation. If a state leader does not reciprocate escalation, it makes it more likely for that leader to face high rivalry outbidding (Colaresi 2005, 21-22, 30). So reciprocating the rival's escalatory acts, as well as reciprocating de-escalation à la IR neoliberal theory (Axelrod 1984), would make a helpful addition to the model. It may help to provide insight into why so many rivalries last so long, another key question in the rivalry literature.

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