

## Anti-Japanese Public Attitudes as Conformity to Social Norms in China: The Role of the Estimated Attitude of Others and Pluralistic Ignorance

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This study investigated whether Chinese anti-Japanese public attitudes involve conformity to perceived anti-Japanese social norms from the perspective of pluralistic ignorance. We surveyed attitudes toward Japan/China among Chinese/Japanese university students. The results revealed that Chinese participants perceived the attitudes of other Chinese toward Japan as more negative than their own private attitudes. In addition, publicly expressed Chinese attitudes are influenced both by perceptions of others' attitudes and private attitudes. In contrast, among Japanese participants, public attitudes were influenced less by others' estimated attitudes even though pluralistic ignorance was seen in Japan as a self-other discrepancy effect. These findings suggest that the Chinese conform to anti-Japanese social norms based on exaggerated perceptions and thus do not express positive public attitudes about Japan in front of other Chinese.

**key words:** pluralistic ignorance, social norm, anti-Japanese sentiments, anti-Chinese sentiments, Japan–China relations

Japan and China are geographically close, and due to recent, profound cultural and economic exchanges in the two countries, there is a need for mutual cooperation between them. However, Japanese attitudes toward China, as well as Chinese attitudes toward Japan, have been negative (Genron NPO, 2015; Nippon Research Center, 2007; Cabinet Office of Japan, 2015). During World War II, Japan was a perpetrator and China a victim, and this historical distinction has caused strong tensions between these countries. In addition, the recent territorial dispute over the islands known in Japan as Senkaku and in China as Diaoyu has frayed the countries' relationships with each other.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand the psychological processes by which these negative attitudes are formed and perpetuated. However, with a few exceptions (e.g., Huang, Nawata, Miyajima, & Yamaguchi, 2015; Nawata & Yamaguchi, 2012; Takemura, Hamamura, & Suzuki, 2013; Yokota & Li, 2012), few studies have investigated attitudes about Japan–China relations from a psychological perspective. To improve the relationship between Japan and China, this study investigated the expression of anti-Japanese attitudes by the Chinese in terms of pluralistic ignorance (Katz & Allport, 1931; Miller &

Prentice, 1994) and conformity to an anti-Japanese social norm.

Psychological studies related to international relations have demonstrated that individuals' personalities or attitudes affect their behavior toward foreign countries or foreigners. Most psychological studies of Japan–China relations (Huang et al., 2015; Nawata & Yamaguchi, 2012; Takemura et al., 2013) investigated relations among individuals' variables. For example, Nawata & Yamaguchi (2012) showed that nationalism facilitated support for intergroup aggression in Japanese students through collective victimhood and intergroup anger. Although these studies on internal processes are very important, studies on social influence suggest that the attitudes of others significantly impact and alter individual behavior, even when individuals have no wish to behave in a particular manner. A similar situation arises in the expression of attitudes toward international relationships. That is, among Chinese or Japanese, personal interactions may promote the expression of unintended public attitudes. Based on this perspective, the study examined whether anti-Japanese public attitudes among the Chinese involve pluralistic ignorance.

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### Pluralistic ignorance

Social influence impacts behavior through people's perceptions of group norms or of others' opinions. In other words, group norms can affect individual behavior only after they have been perceived as group norms. Thus, erroneous perceptions of a group norm can cause one to conform to a nonexistent "majority." When most group members misperceive the group norm, all group members behave differently from the group members' average intentions. This phenomenon is called pluralistic ignorance (Katz & Allport, 1931; Miller & Prentice, 1994). Pluralistic ignorance is defined as "a psychological state characterized by the belief that one's private attitudes and judgments are different from those of others, even though one's public behavior is identical" (Prentice & Miller, 1993, p. 244). For example, a group may have planned a trip, but if it rains heavily on the scheduled day, every individual will want to cancel the trip because of the rain. However, all the group members may believe that the others want to continue with the trip. Thus, despite each member's individual wish, the trip continues as planned because the members conform to an erroneous perception of the majority attitude. Erroneous perceptions of other members' attitudes lead to group behavior not desired by any individual member. Past studies have demonstrated that pluralistic ignorance can emerge in many situations, such as helping behavior in an emergency (Latané & Darley, 1968), drinking on campus (Prentice & Miller, 1993), and establishing romantic relationships (Vorauer & Ratner, 1996).

#### Process of maintenance of a social norm unsupported by individuals and pluralistic ignorance

Previous studies pointed that social norm was defined as two sides: externalized expectation or standard and internalized beliefs (i.e., Kitaori, 2000). From the perspective of the former definition of externalized expectation or standard that others have, this study defined social norm as "the collective belief and knowledge of what others should do or should not do." If a person deviates from the social norm, others may punish or exclude him/her. Pluralistic ignorance can lead to maintenance of a social norm; moreover, maintenance of a social norm can lead to pluralistic ignorance. Thus, there is a cyclical

process in this relationship, which mainly includes two phases. In the first phase, members of a social group have a cognitive bias toward the erroneous belief that others' attitudes differ from their own. This self-other discrepancy is often narrowly defined as pluralistic ignorance (Miller & Prentice, 1994). In the second phase, by assuming and acting upon an erroneous perception of others' attitudes, members of entire groups engage in behavior that they do not personally support. This conformity is not due to informational but rather normative social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). This estimation of others' attitudes is recognized as a social norm that is a compelling force for group members. This cyclical process maintains the social norm without the support of individuals. In the current study, we define "pluralistic ignorance" as cognitive bias in the self-other discrepancy, and "conformity to perceived social norm" as conformity to erroneous perceptions of others' attitudes.

Pluralistic ignorance occurs in small groups and at a broader social level. Vandello & Cohen (2004) indicated that pluralistic ignorance can explain Caucasian males' violent behavior in the Southern United States, which is called a "culture of honor." Similar to males in the North, males in the South do not favor male aggression. Yet, only Southern males overestimated others' approval of male aggression. Similarly, Hashimoto (2011) showed that Japan's interdependent culture has persisted not because of individual preferences but because of people's overestimation of the general Japanese attitude toward interdependent behavior and adaptation to the social niche. The violent culture of Caucasian males in the Southern United States and the interdependent culture of Japan are maintained by social or cultural norms, although these norms are not supported by individual members of society.

When people perceive the behavior of others as complying with a social norm, they regard it as normal and conform to the norm. Moreover, the norm may not become internalized as an individual preference. Conformity to the majority thus maintains the status quo in a group or society. Pluralistic ignorance perpetuates social norms that individuals do not support personally.

### Anti-Japanese attitudes in China as pluralistic ignorance

Pluralistic ignorance can manifest itself as prejudice in intergroup relations. O’Gorman (1975, 1979) and O’Gorman & Garry (1976) studied attitudes toward racial segregation and demonstrated that Caucasians overestimated other Caucasians’ support for it. That is, even people who personally opposed racial segregation perceived that most others agreed with the policy. This suggests that conformity to an overestimated discriminatory majority may promote the expressions of racial discrimination that most individuals do not actually support.

Similarly, the expression of negative attitudes among the Chinese may also emerge as a result of pluralistic ignorance. One reason why an anti-Japanese social norm emerged in China may be that, from the Chinese perspective, Japan was the perpetrator of World War II, and Japanese brutality and violence have been emphasized in Chinese history education (Seo, 2009). This could lead to the formation of a social norm in which the expression of anti-Japanese attitudes is acceptable.

Once an anti-Japanese norm is shared in Chinese society, it may perpetuate itself, and it may be more negative than the average private attitude among the Chinese. Some individuals in China may actually have positive attitudes toward Japan. However, due to the anti-Japanese norm, it is difficult for many Chinese to express positive views toward Japan, at least on the surface, because of perceived pressure to conform to the social norm. Therefore, they may see the majority of others conforming to the anti-Japanese norm, and thus their belief that others besides themselves dislike Japan is reinforced. Conformity to the anti-Japanese norm is thus self-perpetuating. From this perspective, expressions of anti-Japanese public attitudes among the Chinese may be interpreted as pluralistic ignorance and conformity to an erroneously assumed anti-Japanese norm in Chinese society.

Yokota & Li (2012) conducted pioneering work on pluralistic ignorance in Japan–China relations. Adopting the methodology of previous pluralistic ignorance studies, they compared Chinese anti-Japanese emotions with Chinese beliefs about others’ anti-Japanese feelings. The results indicated that the Chinese believed the anti-Japanese emotions of

others to be stronger than their own personal anti-Japanese feelings. In contrast, in Japan, the self-other discrepancy was not observed after controlling for participants’ attitudes toward a third nation in considering a self-serving bias effect. These results suggest that Chinese expressions of anti-Japanese feelings include an element of pluralistic ignorance.

Yokota & Li’s (2012) study provided suggestive evidence for pluralistic ignorance in Japan–China relations. Not only in that study but also in most previous studies on pluralistic ignorance, individual attitudes were compared with beliefs about the attitudes of others (Taylor, 1982). Of course, it is important to clarify the self-other discrepancy. However, to understand the processes by which social norms are maintained, it is necessary to investigate not only pluralistic ignorance narrowly defined as the self-other discrepancy but also conformity to erroneous beliefs about others’ attitudes. Thus, by measuring public attitude as conformity to others, we examined the effect of perceived anti-Japanese attitudes of others on the public expression of attitudes by the Chinese, and corroborated Yokota & Li’s (2012) findings on social norms and conformity.

### Overview and hypotheses

This study comprised two surveys in China and Japan and tested three hypotheses, H.1–H.3. In the first survey, we examined Chinese attitudes toward Japan. The item of this survey included two types of “others”: close friends and national society, which is different in social distance and scale from the participants.

People conform to strong social norms. Deviants are rejected by other group members under strong social norms. To avoid rejection, people would show conformity to the perceived attitudes of others. We applied the same socio-psychological processes to Japan–China relations and hypothesized H.1–H.3.

Many literature have noted that the anti-Japanese attitudes is strong in China. Thus, Chinese people perceives strong anti-Japanese social norm in China. On the contrary, anti-Chinese social norm in Japan was less widespread than anti-Japanese social norm in China. We tested this phenomenon quantitatively.

*H.1.* The perceived anti-Japanese social norm in China is greater than the perceived anti-China social norm in Japan.

Next, we investigated Chinese attitudes toward

Japan. If there is a strong anti-Japanese norm in China, Chinese people may express negative attitudes about Japan in front of other Chinese to conform to other Chinese. We predicted that perceptions of others' attitudes toward Japan would be more negative than the participants' own attitudes. This is the same prediction made by Yokota & Li (2012). Furthermore, we postulated that people would deliberately express more negative attitudes toward Japan to conform to their erroneous perceptions of others' attitudes toward Japan. Furukawa (2013) noted that some Chinese do not buy Japanese products because of pressure to conform to the subjective social norm. This is a typical example of pro-Japan actions being constrained by conformity to others' perceived negative attitudes. In China, we predicted that others' perceived attitudes would correlate positively with public expression of attitudes toward Japan.

*H.2a.* In China, estimates of others' attitudes toward Japan are predicted to be more negative than participants' own attitudes.

*H.2b.* In China, the public expression of attitudes in front of others is predicted to be affected not only by private attitudes but also by the perceived attitudes of others.

In the second survey, we investigated Japanese attitudes toward China. No studies have found a clear anti-Chinese norm in Japan. Under the weak anti-China norm, public discrimination is undesirable, and hate speech is treated negatively in Japan, at least in public. We hypothesized that the self-other discrepancy would not be observed in Japan, and Japanese people conform only slightly to the perceived negative attitudes of others.

*H.3a.* In Japan, participants' estimates of others' attitudes toward China are predicted not to differ from participants' own attitudes.

*H.3b.* In Japan, publicly expressed attitudes are predicted to be influenced largely by private attitudes, but slightly influenced by the perceived attitudes of others.

## Methods

### Participants

*Chinese sample.* In China, Chinese university students participated in the survey using a web-based survey tool provider, SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com). To recruit participants, the second

author, who is Chinese, sent a recruitment e-mail to her Chinese acquaintances at universities and requested them to forward it to students. Participants responded in November and December 2011. After excluding the surveys containing incomplete responses, 153 surveys were used in the analysis (66 female, 83 male, 4 unspecified). The average age of the participants was 21.26 years ( $SD=1.94$ ). The locations of the participants' universities were distributed as follows: 44 in northeastern China, 21 in eastern China, 20 in northern China, 10 in central China, 4 in southwestern China, 3 in northwestern China, and 32 unspecified. The information about participants' majors was not collected, but we did not recruit only participants who majored in Japanese language or Japanese culture.

*Japanese sample.* In Japan, Japanese university students participated in the survey using SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), as we did in China. To recruit participants, the first author, who is Japanese, sent a recruitment e-mail to his Japanese acquaintances at universities and requested them to forward it to students. Participants responded in November and December 2011. After excluding the surveys containing incomplete responses, 98 questionnaires were used in the analysis (59 female, 38 male, 1 unspecified). The average age of the participants was 21.08 years ( $SD=1.64$ ). The locations of the participants' universities were distributed as follows: 91 in Kyushu, 2 in Chugoku, 1 in Hokkaido, 1 in Kanto, 1 in Kansai, 1 in Shikoku, and 1 unspecified.

For ethical reasons, participants were informed on the first page of the questionnaire that their participation was voluntary, and that they could quit the survey at any time. All participants in our analyses agreed to participate in this survey. In addition, participants were notified on the final page of the questionnaire that the survey did not intend to promote anti-Japanese prejudice, but rather aimed to understand the psychological mechanism underpinning prejudice and provide a strategy for future international cooperation.

### Measures

The following items is in the survey toward the Chinese participants. In the survey for Japanese participants, the terms referring to China and Japan were reversed. In consideration of social desirability bias, we used items for positive attitude toward Japan.

**1. Private attitude toward Japan.** *Private attitude toward Japan* was measured by the item "I like Japan."

**2. Perception of others' attitudes toward Japan.** (2a) *Perceived attitudes of friends toward Japan* was measured by the item "My friends like Japan," and (2b) *Perceived attitude of Chinese society toward Japan* was measured by the item "Chinese society approves of Japan."

**3. Public expression of attitudes toward Japan.** (3a) *Public expression of attitudes toward Japan to friends* was measured by the item: "In front of my close friends, I would say 'I like Japan'," and (3b) *Public expression of attitudes toward Japan in front of Chinese society* was measured by the item "I would say 'I like Japan' if I were to give a media interview for Chinese society."

We measured the five items above, which were rated on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (strongly).

**4. The perceived anti-Japanese norm.** This study defined "social norm" as the collective belief and knowledge of what others should do or not do.

To measure the perception of an anti-Japanese norm on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (strongly), participants rated their agreement with the following three items: "If someone likes Japan, he/she must not say this aloud in China"; "People who say 'I like Japan' are disliked by other Chinese"; "The average Chinese person thinks it is appropriate to say 'I dislike Japan'." The average score of the three items ( $\alpha = .84$ ) was used for the analysis.

These items were initially written in Japanese. The second author and a collaborator, who are native Chinese speakers, translated the items into Chinese, paying careful attention to conveying the same meaning in both languages and checking it by back-translation. For Japanese participants, we reversed the placement of the references to China and Japan.

## Results

Table 1 (Chinese samples) and Table 2 (Japanese samples) show descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables in China ( $N=153$ )

	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	1	2a	2b	3a	3b
1 Private attitude toward Japan	3.61	(1.71)	1.00				
2 Perception of others' attitudes toward Japan							
(2a) Perceived attitudes of friends toward Japan	3.07	(1.52)	.50**	1.00			
(2b) Perceived attitude of Chinese society toward Japan	2.83	(1.63)	.16*	.53**	1.00		
3 Public expression of attitudes toward Japan							
(3a) Public expression of attitudes toward Japan to friends	3.18	(1.73)	.63**	.55**	.49**	1.00	
(3b) Public expression of attitudes toward Japan in front of Chinese society	2.95	(1.68)	.53**	.53**	.59**	.72**	1.00
4 Perceived anti-Japanese norm	3.04	(1.00)	-.04	-.15 <sup>†</sup>	-.13	-.08	-.16*

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables in Japanese ( $N=98$ )

	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	1	2a	2b	3a	3b
1 Private attitude toward China	3.92	(1.65)	1.00				
2 Perception of others' attitudes toward China							
(2a) Perceived attitudes of friends toward China	3.81	(1.52)	.56**	1.00			
(2b) Perceived attitude of Japanese society toward China	2.69	(1.21)	.34**	.47**	1.00		
3 Public expression of attitudes toward China							
(3a) Public expression of attitudes toward China to friends	3.64	(1.84)	.78**	.57**	.37**	1.00	
(3b) Public expression of attitudes toward China in front of Japanese society	3.60	(1.81)	.68**	.62**	.37**	.71**	1.00
4 Perceived anti-Chinese norm	1.99	(0.87)	-.37**	-.39**	-.41**	-.28**	-.27**

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$

**Differences in perceived Anti-Japanese/Anti-Chinese norms between China and Japan (H.1)**

The perceived anti-Japanese norm in China ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.00$ ) was significantly higher than the perceived anti-Chinese norm in Japan ( $M=1.99$ ,  $SD=0.87$ ),  $t=8.52$ ,  $df=249$ ,  $p<.001$ , Cohen's  $d=1.12$ . The result supported H.1.

**The self-other discrepancy in Anti-Japanese attitudes in China (H.2a)**

We conducted a one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) on the three items measuring attitudes toward Japan, (1), (2a), and (2b). The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect among the three items,  $F(2, 304)=9.41$ ,  $p<.001$ . Shaffer's multiple comparison tests were then conducted and showed that (2a) *Perceived attitudes of friends toward Japan* ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=1.52$ ,  $t=3.75$ ,  $df=304$ , adjusted  $p<.001$ ) and (2b) *Perceived attitude of Chinese society toward Japan* ( $M=2.83$ ,  $SD=1.62$ ,  $t=5.42$ ,  $df=304$ , adjusted  $p<.001$ ) were significantly more negative than (1) *Private attitude toward Japan* ( $M=3.61$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ).

Thus, Chinese participants estimated that other Chinese held attitudes more negative than their own. In other words, pluralistic ignorance as a self-other discrepancy occurred both among friends and among members of Chinese society in general. The result supported H.2a.

**The self-other discrepancy in Anti-Chinese attitudes in Japan (H.3a)**

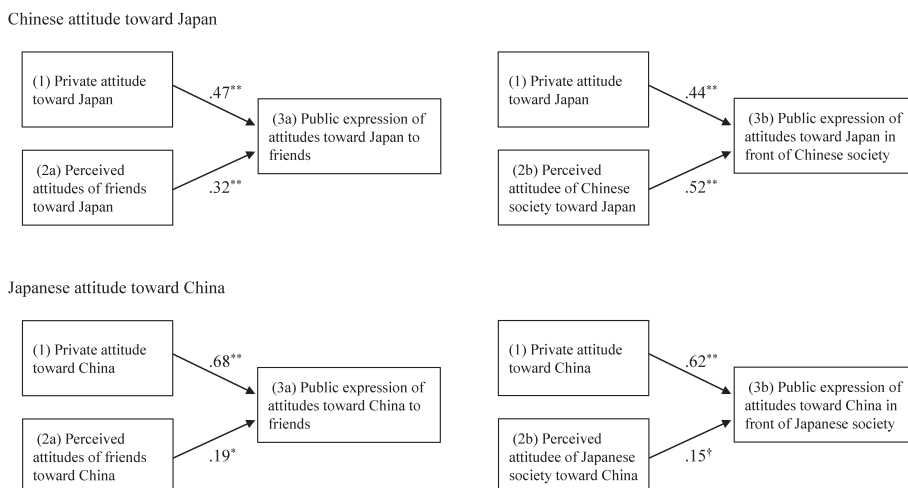
We conducted a one-way ANOVA on the three

items measuring attitudes toward China, (1), (2a), and (2b). The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect among the three items,  $F(2, 194)=37.95$ ,  $p<.001$ . Shaffer's multiple comparison tests were then conducted and showed that (2b) *Perceived attitude of Japanese society toward China* ( $M=2.69$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ) was significantly more negative than (1) *Private attitudes toward China* ( $M=3.92$ ,  $SD=1.65$ ,  $t=7.23$ ,  $df=97$ , adjusted  $p<.001$ ), and (2a) *Perceived attitudes of friends toward China* ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=1.52$ ,  $t=7.23$ ,  $df=97$ , adjusted  $p<.001$ ).

In Japan, friends' attitudes toward China were not perceived as negative, but the attitudes of Japanese society in general toward China were perceived as more negative than participants' private attitudes. This reflected pluralistic ignorance as a self-other (social level) discrepancy in Japan. The result partially disproves H.3a.

**The effect of perceived attitudes of others on public expressions of attitudes (H.2b, H.3b)**

Finally, we examined the effect of the perceived attitudes of others on the public expression of attitudes. Private attitudes and the perceived attitudes of others were regressed on public expressions of attitude among Japanese and Chinese participants (Figure 1). The results showed that for the Chinese, their own private attitudes influenced their public expressions of attitude (friends,  $\beta=.47$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Chinese society,  $\beta=.44$ ,  $p<.001$ ). In addition, the perceived attitudes of others had an effect on the public expression of attitudes (friends,  $\beta=.32$ ,



**Figure 1** Antecedents of public attitudes expressed to other Chinese/Japanese  
 Note:  $**p<.01$ ,  $*p<.05$ ,  $†p<.10$

$p < .001$ ; Chinese society,  $\beta = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Tests on the difference of regression coefficients showed a non-significant difference between the effect of perceived attitudes of others and private attitudes (friends,  $Z = 0.673$ ,  $p = .50$ ; Chinese society,  $Z = 0.128$ ,  $p = .90$ ). The impact of perceived attitudes of Chinese others was as large as that of their own private attitudes.

However, among the Japanese, private attitudes had quite a strong effect on public expressions of attitudes (friends,  $\beta = .66$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Japanese society,  $\beta = .63$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The perceived attitudes of others had a relatively small effect on public expressions of attitudes in front of others (friends,  $\beta = .17$ ,  $p = .031$ ; Japanese society,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $p = .051$ ). Tests on the difference of regression coefficients showed that the effect of the perceived attitudes of others was significantly smaller than that of their personal attitudes (friends,  $Z = 3.91$ ,  $p = .002$ ; Japanese society,  $Z = 3.11$ ,  $p = .01$ ).

These results suggested that the intention to publicly say "I like Japan" is as greatly influenced by perceptions of others' attitudes toward Japan as their own personal attitudes among Chinese. Conversely, the impact of the perceived attitudes of others on intentions to publicly declare "I like China" was low in Japan. These findings confirmed H.2b and H.3b.

### Discussion

We tested the hypotheses that the Chinese expression of anti-Japanese attitudes involves conformity to a perceived anti-Japanese norm.

First, we compared anti-Japanese and anti-Chinese norms. The perceived anti-Japanese norm among the Chinese was greater than the perceived anti-Chinese norm among the Japanese. Therefore, the perceived social norm to exclude those who express positive sentiments about the other country was stronger in China than in Japan.

Next, Chinese attitudes toward Japan were examined. Chinese participants perceived their friends and Chinese society in general to have more negative attitudes toward Japan than their own personal attitudes. Moreover, among the Chinese, public expressions of attitude were influenced not only by their private attitudes but also by the estimated attitudes of other Chinese. These results indicated that because the Chinese perceive others' attitudes toward Japan to be more negative than their own, they

refrain from publicly expressing positive attitudes toward Japan.

The perceived anti-Chinese social norm among the Japanese was much lower than the perceived anti-Japan social norm among the Chinese. Therefore, there is no strong anti-China norm in Japan. Although pluralistic ignorance as a self-other, particularly self-society, discrepancy was found in Japan, regression analysis showed that the perceived attitudes of others had a relatively small effect on public expressions of attitudes. These findings indicated that while the Japanese perceive others' attitudes toward China to be more negative than their own, they do not conform to the perceived attitudes of others.

### Conformity to the perceived attitudes of others in China

These results suggest that the public expression of anti-Japanese attitudes in China does not always reflect actual Chinese attitudes toward Japan. These results also imply that even individuals who do not have anti-Japanese attitudes may express them to conform to the perceived anti-Japanese social norm in China. Under this anti-Japanese social norm, people who approve of Japan cannot freely express their views. Therefore, statements by those who hold anti-Japanese attitudes may account for a large proportion of the publicly expressed sentiments about Japan in Chinese society. A spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1993) thus seems to surround anti-Japanese attitudes, and expression of these attitudes is perpetuated and reinforced as a self-fulfilling prophecy in Chinese society. In addition, the result of the self-other discrepancy found in the study suggested that the perceived negative attitudes of others reflects pluralistic ignorance.

The underlying cause of the anti-Japanese norm is not important for it to be perpetuated; this is the result of society's conformity to a perceived norm. Regardless of the reason, once anti-Japanese attitudes became a social norm, their expression is perpetuated. This is considered similar to the "culture of honor" in Southern United States, which emerged in the era of cattle breeders but is still maintained today (Vandello & Cohen, 2004).

To create a harmonious relationship between Japan and China, anti-Japanese public attitudes that emerge from social norms must be reduced. This raises the question of exactly how to reduce confor-

mity to the perceived attitudes of others. Previous studies on pluralistic ignorance have shown that when individuals recognize that a perceived norm reflects pluralistic ignorance, pluralistic ignorance decreases (Schroeder & Prentice, 1998). This suggests that making the Chinese aware that not many Chinese sincerely harbor negative attitudes toward Japan may reduce the anti-Japanese norm. However, the effectiveness of this strategy is limited only to reducing pluralistic ignorance. A different strategy would be needed to correct genuinely internalized anti-Japanese attitudes. That is, psychological studies must understand both types of anti-Japanese attitudes among the Chinese: genuinely internalized anti-Japanese attitudes and public attitudes conforming to the perceived attitudes of others. Few studies have examined the latter, and future research is required to develop a more concrete strategy for resolving pluralistic ignorance in intergroup conflicts.

#### **Less conformity to the perceived attitudes of others in Japan**

In contrast to Chinese attitudes toward Japan, conformity to an anti-Chinese norm was not found in Japan. This may be due to the absence of a clear anti-Chinese norm in Japan. The results showed that the perceived anti-Chinese norm was very low; the average score was 1.99 on a 1–7 point scale. There are many various social norms; anti-discrimination might be a dominant norm in Japan. That is, because the anti-Chinese norm is not a dominant force in Japan, participants might not feel pressured to conform to the perceived anti-Chinese attitude of others. Although the score of (2b) *Perceived attitude of Chinese society toward Japan* among the Chinese was similar to the score of (2b) *perceived attitudes of Japanese society toward China* among the Japanese, the effect on the expression of personal sentiments was larger in China than in Japan. The findings supported this interpretation. It should be noted that this survey was conducted at a time when the Japan–China conflict was not a critical issue in Japan. If a survey had been conducted during a period of intense conflict, for instance, during the territorial dispute, anti-Japanese norms might also have become salient in Japan, resulting in pluralistic ignorance and conformity to the perceived attitudes of others, like the results for China in the current study.

#### **Limitations**

The present research has some limitations that should be addressed in future studies. First, there are some possibility of self-serving bias that people think their negative attitude is more moderate or lower than the others. In Yokota & Li's (2012) study, attitudes toward a third country served to control any effects of self-serving bias. However, in the current study, attitudes toward a third country were not measured, so there was no such control. Future research should measure and control this.

Next, the results showed perceived attitude of others had a relatively small impact on expression of public attitudes among the Japanese. We interpreted these results as the dominance of an anti-discrimination norm rather than an anti-Chinese norm. However, because we did not measure perceived anti-discrimination sentiments, it is not well understood at this time whether or not an anti-discrimination norm was actually more dominant than an anti-Chinese norm. Therefore, further research is necessary to measure the anti-discrimination norm in Japan and confirm the validity of the interpretation.

Third, answers about private attitudes may contain the influence of the norm. It is difficult to eliminate this effect only by improving the methodology for self-reported answers. Thus, for understanding the effect of purely private attitudes, controlling for the effect of the perceived norms or attitudes of others is also necessary.

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