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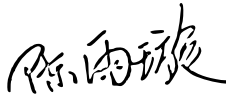
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Is Russia Becoming China's Other?
An Analysis of China's Foreign Policy Discourses Towards Russia

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.



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ABSTRACT

Having China's international identity as the research background, the special position Russia has in its relations with China created a myth for researchers to tackle. China frequently uses Othering in its domestic politics in portraying itself as a victim and a tendency of self-victimization due to historical sufferings. The reasons for China to see Russia as an Other are not untraceable with China losing Outer Eastern China to Russian Empire due to unequal agreement; however, China simply gave up the disputed area in exchange for a solidified land border and China-Russia relations are 'at its best' since the rapprochement. The partnership did not fall apart as previous scholar works predicted. The Crimean Crisis as a key event for analysis adds up to the myth that China as a sovereignty hawk was not weary of Russia's expansionist foreign policy which led to the annexation of Crimea; instead, China-Russia relations are brought up to the next level through efforts from both sides. The current geopolitical approach left this myth unaccounted.

This thesis sets out to shed lights on how China's identity construction of Russia have changed from March, 2013 after President Xi Jinping's incumbent until March, 2017 with the Crimean Crisis as the key event for comparison. Based on Hansen's theoretical framework that foreign policy discourses as the link between identity and foreign policies, this thesis conducts poststructuralist discourse analysis on Chinese official discourses and academic debate on Russia using the intertextuality research model 1 and 3B developed by Hansen (2006). The result has shown before Crimean, both official and academic discourses did not construct Russia as a radical Other but strongly linked with and supplement to the construction of China; after Crimean official discourses' which represent China's foreign policy attempts to create new linking to emphasize similarities of the identity construction of China and Russia upon the emergence of competing discourses in academic debate.

This research focuses primarily on how the identity construction have changed in the timeframe due to the key event. To unfold the myth, researches on why the identity construction and Chinese foreign policy have changed this way are encouraged. To present a more comprehensive overview of discourses, wider text selection including intertextuality research model 2 and 3A is another angle to tackle.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The relations between China's international identities and its foreign policies have been an intriguing research topic for scholars in the field of international relations. The relevance of China's foreign policies and its implications on the world order increased proportionally to China's rise initially as an economic power - ranked as the world's largest economy on Purchasing Power Parity basis in 2015 (The World Bank, 2017). Scholars focusing on China have written intensively on China's international identities and how these identities are coping with the rise and the external 'anarchy'. Such as Shambaugh (1995, 2007, 2011, 2013& 2016), Chan (2000, 2014), Medeiros (2009), Rozman (2013), Liqun Zhu (2010), Rex Li (2008) have attempted to explain China's behaviors in the world politics as a result of China's changing identity and its ever-evolving perception of the world power redistribution. While some focused on China's interaction with the U.S., the European Union, and the Asian countries, some in particular concentrated on the Sino-Russian challenge to the world order (Rozman, 2014) as well as China's effort with Russia as a partner to 'remold great power politics such that the international environment is overall friendly to its rise' (Deng, 2009). These debates necessitate the role 'other actors' play in China's identity. Suzuki (2007), Wirth (2009), and Shambaugh (2013) indicated the importance of 'others' in China's domestic politics debate and a tendency of 'othering' and 'self-victimization' due to historical sufferings in the Chinese political identity. On the contrary, this mindset of 'self-victimization' is rarely illustrated when it comes to Russia. The possibility of self-victimization is not untraceable: China lost Outer Eastern China to Russia in Qing Dynasty through unequal treaties and the Sino-Soviet split was a key event during the Cold War (Lüthi, 2010). The explanation to this contrast remains underdeveloped as the two countries cooperation in key security aspects increases: military exercise, arms sales, and energy trade.

Having scholars' debates on China's international identity and its relations with Chinese foreign policies as a background, I intend to contribute to the discussion by adding the dynamics of Sino-Russian relations into context. In particular, this research examines the constructions of China in juxtapositions of Russia in Chinese official discourses and

academic debates. The selected timeframe is Xi's incumbent until March, 2017 taking the Crimean Crisis as the key event for comparison. Scholars' work on Sino-Russian relations have focused solely on geopolitical interests and have neglected the importance of identity construction in foreign policy making. Few scholars who followed a social constructivist perspective focused mainly on the social context and ignored that constant dynamics between identity and foreign policy behaviors. Most importantly, the myth that Russia - not being projected as an Other but as a 'close neighbor' and 'a strategic, trustworthy partner' remains unaccounted in the current academic discussion. The selected timeframe takes President Xi's incumbent as the starting point because China's domestic political system empowers each leader's era to be distinctive. Sino-Russian relation has reached a new high after Xi assumed office. It is highlighted by widened cooperation areas, frequent visits of heads of states initiated by both sides, and the agreement of a \$400-billion gas deal in 2014. The Crimean Crisis was chosen as a key event which might result in 'instability' in official discourses and encourage the emergence of 'competing discourses' according to Hansen's theoretical framework (2006). The Crimean Crisis marks the point when Russia's relation deteriorates with the West and the turning to the East begins.

Adding to the myth mentioned above, China's reaction to the Crimean Crisis in which China, as a 'sovereignty hawk', did not follow the geopolitical approach to distant itself from Russia and took China-Russia partnership to a next level is not fully explained in the current scholar debate. This research adopts the approach of poststructuralism and intends to unfold the myth with a poststructuralist understanding of identity construction and its relation with foreign policy making. The contribution of the project in regards to methodology are first, an application of poststructuralist approach in demonstrating a contrast of Chinese discursive identity construction of China and of Russia, taking the Crimean Crisis as the key event for comparison; second, an application of Hansen's approach on processes of linking and differentiating in identity constructions; third, a reinforcement on Hansen's claim to 'move beyond the Other' and 'find various degrees of Otherness' (2006).

1.1. Research Puzzle

The rapprochement of China and Russia has gradually turned into a durable strategic partnership involving cooperation in many key security aspects. The criticism from scholars remains on the uncertainty which would cause the relationship to collapse in time of difficulty. Scholars on Sino-Russian relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union agreed on mutual benefits of the two in face of the U.S. hegemony; yet they diverged on two directions: “strategic partnership” (United Nations General Assembly, 1996) as the official discourse and “axis of convenience” (Lo, 2008) with the prediction that the partnership would fall apart in the time of hardship. Kaczmarek (2015) argued that the 2008 economic crisis pushed China and Russia into a new phase of “peaceful transition” where the partnership is still “mutually advantageous” but characterized by “increasing asymmetry”: China’s rise and Russia’s decline.

The Crimean Crisis seemed to have amplified the asymmetry. It did not tamper the relationship; instead, it speeded up the process: visits between heads of states continued; negotiations on bilateral cooperation and oil supply contract were proceeded; joint investments in research and educational projects; an 8-day joint naval exercise in South China Sea - key geopolitical interest area for China carried out successfully. The Crimean Crisis triggered vast criticisms and sanctions from the West against Russia. China responded in a double-fold manner that China “recognizes the complex historical dimensions of the situation in Crimea and remains committed to a diplomatic solution that considers the interests of all parties involved” (Zhang, 2015). China has been an upholder of the fundamental principles of international law – ‘the inviolability of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states’ since 1979. This determination has been well utilized by the One-China Principle in cases of Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Tibet as well as in the South China Sea disputes. In contrast to China’s tough image in upholding its sovereignty and territorial integrity principals, China avoided criticizing Russia openly and abstained from the UN resolution which “discouraged the recognition of any change in Crimea’s international statues” (Zhang, 2015). This approach of neither joining the Western side of wide criticism nor openly uttering support for Russia poses a question for scholars: what does China really think about the Crimean Crisis? What are the voices and concerns in China’s domestic discourses on Russia that are not represented

and carried out by China's foreign policy behaviors? This research intends to shed lights on the unrepresented voices in China's political debates on Russia to create a more comprehensive overview on how China sees Russia and how has the Crimean Crisis affected these views.

Shortly after Xi's incumbent, Xi proposed China's Dream that 'rejuvenation/great renewal of the Chinese nation has been the greatest Chinese dream in modern times ever since the Opium Wars in the nineteenth century... After more than 170 years of hard struggle since the Opium War, the Chinese nation has bright prospects, is closer than ever to reaching its goal of great renewal, and is more confident and capable of reaching the goal than ever' (National People's Congress, 2012). It is still unclear what is in Xi's definitions of China's Dream; whatever it might or will be would have an implication on the current world dynamics. The selection of the Crimean Crisis as the key event two major reasons. First, it marks the point of Russia's turning to the East due to the geopolitical tension from the West. Second, China has been advocating vocally on the principles of international law - the inviolability of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. These principles guided China in settling many of its territorial disputes. When the geopolitical tension in Ukraine accelerated, China did not join the West sanctions on Russia; instead China signed a \$400 billion gas contract with Russia. What are the implications of these foreign policy behaviors have on China's identity? Does China see Russia as a strategic alliance that China is willing to be under the spotlight of Western criticism? Or China thinks a weak Russia is not in advantage of the peaceful neighborhood China wants for its rise? A thorough examination on China's political discourses is necessary for answers of these questions.

Russia sees China as an important partner in formalizing the world order defined its vision. Unlike Russia, China often employs a soft, culture-centric discourse. With no significant deterioration in Sino-Russian relations after Crimea, does this mean China, who is reluctant to leave its bitter colonial experience behind, is tolerant of Russia's expansionistic activities? Does China really see itself as a part of Russia's vision on international relations? The mapping of discursive structures in the selected timeframe is to seek for potential shift in China's domestic discourse on Russia by comparing Chinese political elites as well as academic elites' discourses on Russia prior to the Crimea and post-Crimea in the selected

time frame. Due to the unique political context in China, the official discourse is seen as the dominant discourse; these two words will be used interchangeably for reading effect. The sources of political discourses are official texts on the topic of Russia and Sino-Russia relations. The sources of academic discourses will be leading academic journal on Russia studies.

As I mentioned above, the leading puzzle of this research is China's tolerance of Russia's aggressive and expansionist foreign policy in an event which led to the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and China's response of a strengthened cooperation with Russia in contrast with China's image as a 'sovereignty hawk'. The special status Russia enjoy in its relations with China singles Russia out from other players. This requires a further research into this tolerance and the uniqueness of Russia in China's identity on Russia.

1.2. Research Design

This tolerance and openness towards to Russia led researchers to the possibility of other voices in Chinese identity toward Russia. China is often associated with its self-victimization and its frequent use of 'Othering' in domestic politics. What are the non-official voices saying about Russia? Could Russia be or is becoming a radical Other for China in academic discourses? If Russia is not a radical Other, what is the degree of 'otherness'? In a research by Pew Research Center on "Chinese and Russian Views of Each Other" has shown a drastic turn on Russia favorability in China from 2013 to 2015. For almost 5 years (2009 - 2013), Russia scored from 46 to 49% favorability; in 2014, Russia scored 66% (34% higher than 2013); in 2015, favorability dropped to 51% (Pew Research Center, 2015. See Figure 1). Why a sudden bump in 2014?

To address these ambiguities, the primary research question is thus formulated as: *how have China's views of Russia changed in official discourses and academic debate before and after the Crimean Crisis during the selected timeframe.*

To answer the primary research question, sub-research questions are: *What was/were China's political and academic discourse on Russia before Crimea? What is/are China's official discourse/s on Russia after Crimea? How are identities of China and Russia constructed in China's political discourses and academic debate?*

To answer these questions proposed, the first step is to review literatures on China's international identity in the recent years as a background of solving the main research puzzle. In order to see how China's international identity is coping with the fast-evolving context, I map out the development of China's international identity according to its rise on the international stage as a background of this research. I intend for a comprehensive understanding of how China sees itself in the international world and how China perceives its own interactions with others players. Most importantly, I seek to find out if voices on China's international identity are synchronized or fragmented. Whether it is the former or the later could potentially indicate the overall picture of the perceptions of Russia - uniform or fragmented due to the connection between identity and foreign policy. The second step is to investigate the trajectory of Sino-Russian relations in recent years and whether it has any relations with the construction of identity discourse of Russia in China. This would offer an enhanced comprehension of the relations of various discourse of international identity within China as well as China's foreign policy towards Russia in correlation with China's international identity. By taking the Crimean Crisis as the key event for comparison, I seek to see compare the overall picture of Chinese political and academic discourses on Russia and whether changes occurred within China's identity towards Russia.

To contribute more to the discussion on Sino-Russian relations and to the researches on identity and foreign policy, I utilize the poststructuralist approach on identity - foreign policy nexus developed by Hansen (2006). I adopt poststructuralist ontological significance on language that only through language meanings are given and identities endowed. This ontological significance endows me a research focus on discursive structures instead of following geopolitical approach. This would allow me to examine the possibility of China's identity shifts towards Russia through the analysis of discourses which was underdeveloped in the previous studies. Further on, I follow the methodological approach developed by Hansen (2006) to conduct poststructuralist discourse analysis on selected research sample. I adopt Hansen's intertextual research model 1 and 3B as my research model (2006, 64). More specifically, I intend to conduct a number of basic discourses through reading the selected texts and pay special attention to clear terms that indicate identity construction. Based on these basic discourses constructed, I can demonstrate a construction of Russia and of China

in the selected texts through the process of linking and of differentiating. By comparing the identity construction of official discourse and of academic discourse, prior to the crisis and after the crisis, this researches indicates potential instability in the inter-linking of dominant discourses as a result of the key event or of the emergency of competing discourses. This would reinforce Hansen's proposal to 'move beyond the Other' and shed more lights on various 'degrees of otherness'.

The application of poststructuralist discourse analysis as well as Hansen's theoretical framework on foreign policy discourses as the link between identities and foreign policies could strengthen the poststructuralist approach in regards to studies of identity and foreign policy. This also offer a feasibility of explaining shifts in foreign policies using poststructuralist theory.

The selected timeframe is from March, 2013 until March 2017. The Crimean Crisis as the key event divides the timeframe in two parts: March, 2013 until March 2014 as the first part and April, 2014 until March 2017 as the second part. Elaborations on official discourses, on academic discourses, and on basic discourses would be presented separately for enhance comparison. The textual resources are policy statements and speeches made by Xi, policies papers and announcements published by FMPRC, as well as academic articles by leading Chinese journals on Russian studies and IR.

The structure of this thesis follows the timeline of Xi's incumbent and the crisis in Crimea. The first chapter is dedicated to introduction which includes research questions, research design and limitations of the thesis. The second chapter presents literature review, theoretical debates, and methodological approach as well as text selection. This is a result of the nature of poststructuralist approach which connects theories on identity and foreign policies closely. The methodology of poststructuralist discourse analysis is supported by its understanding of language and of political intertextuality. The third chapter maps out the discourse dynamics prior to the crisis within our timeframe; a construction of identity of China and Russia follows elaborations of basic discourses. The fourth chapter follows the same structure of Chapter III. It unveils the dynamics after the crisis and if any changes or shifts in order of discourses are discovered. The final chapter concludes the findings and theoretical contributions.

1.3. Limitations

There are two limitations with I would like to address for this research and encourage further related research to be conducted. First, this research is designed to answer a ‘how’ question: *how China’s views of Russia have changed in official discourses and academic debate during the timeframe*; in the attempts to present how China’s views of Russia have changed, several questions on this topic remain unanswered: i) why China’s views of Russia have transformed the way this thesis presents due to the event - the Crimean Crisis; ii) what are the implications of this transformation on China’s international identity; and iii) what are the implications for the West on China’s rise? I encourage further researches to be done taking the findings from this research into consideration.

Second, the time and resources I had for this work is limited; thus it limits my capability in combining wider research sample. This research has only touched partially upon Model 1 and Model 3B from Hansen’s framework by focusing on official texts and academic debate. To present a more thorough discourse on Russia from China’s perspective, a wider intertextual research model is encouraged in representing official discourses from other actors such as heads of international institutions and official statements made by international institutions, a wider foreign policy debate including political opposition, the media, and corporate institutions, as well as cultural representation and other marginal political discourses.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL, AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Review on China's International Identity

China as a rising power in the international community has gained many scholars' attention. How the rise of China is going to impact the global community is uncertain. China's rise can be 'difficult for the world to deal with' as Beijing exemplified a tough image, or rather 'truculent' towards some of its neighbors, the United States and the European Union. Question like whether the toughness would last and how shall other nations respond to increasingly assertive Beijing were raised (Shambaugh, 2011). The contradictories between these assertive or, to some extent, aggressive behaviors and what China officially states as its foreign policy principle can leave one puzzled. Officially, China 'unswervingly pursues an independent foreign policy of peace. The fundamental goals of this policy are to preserve China's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, create a favorable international environment for China's reform and opening up and modernization construction, maintain world peace and propel common development.' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of, the People's Republic of China, 2017) Is China merely defending its own interests - a favorable international environment for China's reform. How does this favorable international environment look like? What does it mean by 'maintain world peace' and how China is going to proceed with it? These contradictories serve as a glimpse of China's international identity/ies - a conflicted power.

Shambaugh identified China's new image as partially a product of an intensive ongoing debate domestically and it represents a consensus of the 'more conservative and nationalist elements to toughen its policies and selectively throw China's weight around.'(Shambaugh, 2011) Apart from official foreign policy actors: the CPC, the State Council, and the People's Liberation Army, other actors wishing to influence foreign policy making process emerged over the time due to many factors. The rapid-changing society has resulted in a diversity of interests and ideas. Jakobson and Knox attributed the changing mindset of foreign policy actors to the country's consensus-driven decision making method,

the society's significant attachment to personal and political relationships, and 'the impact of education (both at home and abroad) and CPC's interpretation of history (Jakobson and Knox, 2010). They have also identified foreign policy actors on the margins in China's context: business sector, local governments, research institutions and academia, lastly but biggest in size the media and 'netizens' (Jakobson and Knox, 2010). These new voices and actors pushed China into an unprecedented phase of a complex foreign-policymaking process. With various voices and new actors trying to be heard and to be identified, China's foreign policy is presented in a diverse and contradictory manner for the world to de-puzzle.

Western scholars have given China's international identity great attention and attributed it with many labels: major rising power or global power. While the West continues to see China as a rising threat, domestic voices in official, academic, and unofficial circles heatedly discuss the opportunities, challenges, and risk of being a major power (Zhu, 2010). Shambaugh offered a compressive illustration on China's identity as a conflicted major power with diverse domestic debates: some deny Chins is a major power but still a developing country; some argue China is at best a regional power. With these more conservative and traditional voices stay in official documents and speeches, many start to intrigue what kind of power China strives to become (Shambaugh, 2010).

Shambaugh developed the spectrum of Chinese Global Identities ranging from isolationists tendencies on the left end to full engagement in global governance and international institutions (Shambaugh, 2010). In total seven distinct Chinese perspective on China's role in the international community are identified: *nativist* - 'a collection of populist, xenophobic nationalists, and Marxists distrusts the outside world and international institutions'; *realists with Chinese characteristics* - 'take nation-state as their core unit of analysis, uphold the principle of state sovereignty above all else, and reject arguments that transnational issues penetrate across borders'; *'Major Powers' school* - 'China should concentrate its diplomacy on managing its relations with the world's major powers and blocs - the United States, Russia, perhaps the European Union'; *'Asia First' school* - 'if China's neighborhood is not stable, it will be a major impediment to the country's development and national security. Priority... a stable environment all around China's periphery.'; *'Global South' school* - 'China's main international identity and responsibility lies with the

developing world.’; *‘Selective Multilateralist’ school* - ‘China should expand its global involvements gradually but selectively, and only issues which China’s national security interests are directly involved’; and *Globalists* - ‘China must shoulder the responsibility for addressing a range of global governance issues commensurate with its size, power, and influence’ (Shambaugh, 2010). In Shambaugh’s later work, he additionally emphasized one stream of voice frequently articulated in publications is ‘that of historical victimisation and humiliation at the hands of other major powers’(Shambaugh, 2014).

As juxtaposed and multifaceted China’s global identities can be, these distinct perspectives are more complementary than contradictory. Rooted in Chinese traditional philosophy, scholars in international relations and officials tend to be eclectic meaning they do not stand directly against each other rather articulate thoughts and views associated with each other. Shambaugh acknowledged that labeling would be nice but ‘schools of thought crosscut institutions’ (Shambaugh, 2010). Under this specific context, one needs to take peculiar attention when constructing Chinese perspectives on Russia. One might expect various schools of thoughts contradicting and supplementing each other. Therefore, it is necessary to look into both scholar works as well as official discourse.

While both West scholars and domestic voices disagree what are China’s international identities, these are intrinsically linked with China’s foreign policy towards Russia. The connection between identity and foreign policy will be further elaborated in coming section. When it comes to Chinese identity vis-à-vis former imperialist powers, the country frequently emphasizes on historical sufferings inflicted by foreign invaders. Scholar like Suzuki identified a tendency of victimhood that in ‘Chinese leadership’s use of Japan’s imperialistic past as a tool for domestic and political bargaining’ (Suzuki, 2007). The cause of this victimhood the embedded negative memories within China; and Japan plays an important role as an ‘Other’ which enhances China’s self-image as a ‘victim’ (Suzuki, 2007).

What current scholarly works fail to rationalize is that Russia, as a former imperialist power, could easily fall into the category of ‘former imperialist power’ and become the Other for China. However, Russia does not seem to be the Other for China. In a presentation on Sino-Russian relations, Repnikova exemplified great popularity and affection of President Putin by Chinese youth and his close relationship with President Xi has been widely

applauded by the public (Repnikova, 2016). Kaczmarek finds that Chinese official discourses is generally positive about the current status of China - Russia relations. The closeness of the heads of states is frequently covered by media. Secondary discourse from academia and analysts have more various and critical concerns (Kaczmarek, 2015). On the contrary to the positive official discourse on Russia and Putin's popular public image among Chinese audience, the voice from academia is rather concerned with Russian economy. A concern that Russia is not a competent partner is widely expressed. In Kaczmarek's interview with Chinese experts conducted between 2010 to 2014, Chinese scholars do not have high expectation from Russia that 'Russia has failed to modernize and integrate into the global economy' (Kaczmarek, 2015). We have now fully explored China's international identity and seven schools of 'Chinese Global Identities'. To further fulfill the objectives of this research - whether Russia is becoming the Other in Chinese identity and if so, what kind of Other after the Crimean Crisis, a more comprehensive understanding of Sino-Russian relations and how it has evolved in the post-Soviet era is needed.

2.2. Research on Sino-Russian relations

Despite decades of bitter rivalry in the Cold War, the Sino-Soviet split seems to be buried deep down in history that the relation between Moscow and Beijing has become the best for almost three centuries (Leese, 2015). Scholars tend to divide in two major perspectives on interpreting Sino-Russian relations after the end of the Cold War. Kaczmarek argued that two narratives: the optimistic approach of 'strategic partnership' (in line with official statement) and the skeptical approach of 'axis of convenience' have led academia's understanding of Sino-Russian relations (Kaczmarek, 2015).

The optimistic vision is upheld by official statement. On a summit in 1994, Russia President Boris Yeltsin and then Chinese President Jiang Zemin announced that the two states have entered 'constructive partnership'. This was later documented in a United Nations document as 'the two sides hereby announce their resolve to develop a strategic partnership of equality, mutual confidence and mutual coordination for the twenty-first century' (United Nations General Assembly, 1996). Scholars who assert the strategic partnership discourse claim that the current relationship has been the warmest and closest in the Chinese-Russian

history. Proponents of this optimistic vision highlight the overlapping areas of the two countries' interest and their increasingly interdependency in various sectors: energy, trade, education, and military co-operation. Two levels of common interests were identified: global level of international politics and regional level of similar concerns (Kaczmarek, 2015; Lanteigne, 2013; Ferdinand, 2011; Menon, 2009; Yu, 2007). On a global level, Ferdinand argued that it was a result based on an evaluation of global strategic situation in which the concept of international order and the primacy of the US are intrinsic (Ferdinand, 2011). Ferguson identified a common political, not military, oppositions to the US predominance and named it as 'a soft-balancing' approach towards the US hegemony (Ferguson, 2012). There are also interpretations of it as a military alliance with a sole purpose of anti-US and anti-West (Gelb, Leslie H. & Simes, Dimitri K. 2013). The creation of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS are seen as organizational anti-West tools adopted by Russia and China. Since January 2007 Security Council's Agenda on Myanmar, China and Russian Federation as members of permanent five have casted negative votes together on a certain agenda in total for six times. The regions concerned by the agendas vary from Myanmar, Zimbabwe, and Syria (Dag Hammarskjöld Library, 2016). This implicates that the two countries, for reasons that are to be identified, though do not have formal alliance formed yet, act consistently on international arena.

On a regional level, similar regional security concerns drive the closeness of the two (Lanteigne, 2013). Jacobson identified that stability in shared neighborhood – especially in Central Asia is the mutual top priorities for cooperation. Nation recognized that economic interests and growing trade ties that serve the base for bilateral collaboration (Nation, 2010). Jacobson emphasized that China and Russia share a mutual interest in securing their domestic regimes respectively; thus the 'sanctity of sovereignty and nonintervention in internal affairs provides the glue for the relationship' (2011, 6-7). This posed necessity for one to inquire the dynamics of Sino-Russian relations before and after the Crimean Crisis as China and Ukraine have established diplomatic relations since 1992. Some scholars equate this partnership with 'normal relationship' and argue that Sino-Russian relationship is a result of practical needs on both sides: based on a foundation of mutual interests, accepted and crafted by both parties, and institutionalized by treaties and within the structure of SCO (Nation, 2007; Yu 2007).

Kaczmarek stated that ‘a collection shared interest’ is insufficient for a justifiable ‘strategic partnership’ and it is used as starting point for most scholars who take a critical standpoint with the topic (Kaczmarek, 2015). In Grant’s definition: ‘a real strategic partnership, as that between France and Germany, or Britain and the United States, involves partners doing things that they do not want to do, for the sake of overall relationship’ (2012, 96).

The critical approach to China-Russia liaison is represented by ‘axis of convenience’ school. Its name came from Bobo Lo’s book *The Axis of Convenience* where all critical and negative comments and interpretations are documented. The base of this criticism is the rising asymmetry between two countries with Russia gradually slipping into an inferior position. The hollowness of ‘strategic partnership’, apart from what mentioned above: ‘willing to do what they do not want to do for the sake of relationship’ not demonstrated by Sino-Russian relations, is also pinpointed by the difference on both sides’ priorities. For Russia, China is a top priority of its strategy - turning to the East whereas for China, Russia is merely a part of its many focuses in foreign policy.

According to Kaczmarek, the narrative of ‘axis of convenience’ sheds lights on ‘inherent tensions’ and constraints on the two countries’ relations; it can be categorized into four strands of voices (2015, 25). The first strand asserts closeness out of convenience will eventually fall apart with no mutual trust. The expedient nature of the relationship is characterized by lacking of foundation and proneness to instrumental abuse by both sides. For Kaczmarek, the language used by both leaders who tend to highlight the relationship as ‘the best in history’ provokes scholars critical approach (2015). President Putin and President Xi’s close personal ties highlighted by frequent state-level visit and high-level cooperation talk in key aspects also prompt scholar’s interests in locating the base and the core of the relations. Weitz identified that Russian officials constant statement that China’s rise does not pose threat to Russia and Russia is not afraid of inviting scholars to question the viability of such statements (Weitz, 2011). A superficial relation with no lasting and sustainable foundation would eventually fall apart in face of hardships and crises. Critics have also diagnosed lack of trust in this relationship and it represents a pragmatic and opportunistic choice (Popescu, 2011; Higgins, 2011). Because of this opportunistic and practical nature in

the relation ‘underpinned by historical suspicion and cultural prejudice’, Jakobson predicted that ‘China and Russia will continue to be pragmatic partners of convenience, but not partners based on deeper shared world views and strategic interests’ (2011, 45). For Jakobson, Moscow and Beijing’s worldviews divide deeply with Russia being West-oriented. But this is prone to change after the Crimean Crisis and Russia turning to East.

The second strand emphasizes the U.S. primacy in Post-Cold War environment. For Lo, the convenience started as both countries analyzed and responded to according its own geopolitical interests; and the first and foremost need is to strengthen its position in international frame respectively (Lo, 2008). This response primarily involves efforts to counter-balance of US-led unilateralist international order. In the 2000s, both states developed significantly in juxtaposition to the weakening but still assertive West. As mentioned above, the closeness was real but shallow (Lo, 2008). More specifically, ‘each was said to be using the other cynically to bolster its international standing particular towards the West and the US. This was not a relationship would last if put a serious test’ (Kaczmarek, 2015).

The third strand argues that China and Russia have conflicted core-interests and they will eventually become each other rivalry. Malle and Cooper claim that the disadvantageous power shift and the increasing asymmetry should be of Russia’s great concern thus Russia should be defensive on China’s rise ‘especially given China’s modernization and re-armament, its Central Asia policy, trade imbalance, and demographic superiority in the Far East (2014, 4). Grove argues that China’s interest in Russia’s resources leads to the indurability of the relation (2012). Scholar of this strand is convinced of a conflict between the two in mid-term or long-term out of Russia’s fear of stepping into an inferior position (Weitz, 2010). Russia cannot remain indifferent to an assertive China as it is challenging Russia’s ‘self-proclaimed privileged position especially in the Post-Soviet space’ (Blank, 2011; Buszynski, 2010).

The last strand asserts that conflicts between the two already exist and they ‘fiercely oppose each other’ (Daly, 2011; Hendrix, 2016). Blank claims that they compete with each directly over energy and influence in Central Asia, over the Northern Sea Route in the Arctic, and over a privileged position in relations with the US (Blank, 2011). With the US-Russian

relation fell to its new low since the Cold War over the election scandal, we need to see if the administration of President Trump will bring it back on track (Cornwell, 2016). Having 'over a privileged position in relation with the US' falsified by Russia's breakup with the West - both the EU and the US, triggered by the Crimean Crisis and the election hack in 2016, the significance of the Sino-Russian dynamics is enhanced in international relations.

For Kaczmarek, these two dominant narratives are underpinned by a set of implicit assumptions thus they are not accountable for the evolution of Russia-China relations in the aftermath of the global economic crisis (2015). Kaczmarek's recognized that since the global economic crisis, a power transition (peaceful power transition) proceeds with Russia and China redefining their respective interests:

'The power transition at the bilateral level is marked by closer co-operation in spheres that are more relevant for Beijing than for Moscow, and by Russia's growing dependence on China. At the regional level the most pronounced elements of the power transitions are Russia's acquiescence to China's growing presence in Central Asia and Russia's increasingly Sino-centric policy in East Asia on regional level. China's rising profile in the processes of global governance at the expense of Russia and the diminishing importance of the US factor for Russia-China relationship are among the most visible signs of the power transition at the global level' (2015, 165-166).

Kaczmarek claims that Russia's use of force against Georgia in 2008 or Ukraine in 2014 did not alter the process of power transition. Yet he acknowledges that to what extent the identities of Russia and China have evolved in the process of power transition remains open to further research (2015, 172-173). In Chinese domestic context, with new leadership going on the stage since 2013 and China becoming increasingly assertive in its spheres of interests, this linking between Chinese identity and its foreign policy towards Russia during the power transition period is yet to be unfolded. To achieve these objectives, we need to clarify some definitions on identity and its relations with foreign policy. The next section is dedicated to shed more lights on the conceptualizations these two key concepts and their relations with each other.

2.3 Theory on Identity, Discourse, and Foreign Policy from a Poststructuralist Perspective

2.3.1. Identity from a Poststructuralist Perspective

The discipline of international relations (IR) has seen an increase of interests in identity studies since the end of Cold War. The rise of constructivism largely facilitated the ‘discovery of identity’ in IR (Hopf, 1998). Major contributions include Ashley and Walker (1990), Bartelson, (1995), Campbell (1992, 1998), Connolly (1991), Der Derian (1987), Der Derian and Shapiro (1989), Doty (1993), Katzenstein (1996), Lapid and Kratochwil (1996), Lipschutz (1995), Weldes (1996), Wendt (1992), Weaver et al. (1993). Neumann elaborated fully on theories of identity formation by tracing down ideas about identity formation in the early stages of social theories and categorized them into four major paths: the ethnographic path, the psychological path, the continental philosophical path, and the ‘Eastern Excursion’ (Neumann, 1999). I tend to not inquire the philosophical origins of identity in social theories as it takes us further away from our proposed research puzzle. For David Campbell, ‘identity is an inescapable dimension of being. Nobody could be without it’ (1992, 9). For Hopf, ‘a world without identities would be a world of chaos, a world of pervasive and irremediable uncertainty, a world much more dangerous than anarchy’ (1998). Cronin notes ‘identities provide a frame of reference from which political leaders can initiate, maintain, and structure their relationships with other states’ (1999, 18). Burke claims that ‘there is no world politics without identity, no people, no states, no international system’ (2006, 394). While the importance of identity in international relations have been exemplified in many scholar works, so did the conceptualization of identity - this resulted in a variety of definitions. The more recent scholars have identified the ‘definitional anarchy’ on identity (Abdelal et al, 2006, 695) and the ‘significant proliferation of conceptualizations’ (Urrestarazu, 2015). This poses challenges to researchers on identity studies.

To tackle the overuse of identity, I start with a wide coverage on identity by scholars. Berenskoetter argued that previous researches on identity can be divided into two distinctive paths: ones that detangling essence of identity and ones that categorizing and compiling applications of identity in scholar works (2010). Be it exploring the core meaning or

summarizing previous researches, it is important for us to clarify the concept of ‘identity’ for research purpose - a shared understanding on China’s identity towards Russia instead of being misled by the overuse of the term. Therefore, this section would first explain why it is important to take a poststructuralist approach towards identity and the definition of identity this research adopts to untangle the research puzzle; secondly, based on poststructuralist definition that identity as ‘discursive, political, relational, and social’ and it can only be constructed or reconstructed through discourse, this section would proceed to explore the relations among identity, discourse, and foreign policy; lastly, an elaboration on poststructuralist methodological approach.

To explain why this research urges a poststructuralist perspective, it is important that we briefly go back to the roots of poststructuralism. Waltz’s work in the end of 1970s *Theory of International Politics* (1979) had laid out the ground of structuralism with a combination of positivist and causal epistemology. This text became crucial for the field of IR in the following decade and it provided opportunities for IR scholars to discover the ‘philosophical and political roots’ of IR both ‘as a discipline and a political practice’ (Hansen, 2006). This was the starting point of neo-realism or structuralism which primarily argues that the structure of IR gives states an impetus to seek security and whether the ultimate goal is to survive or to maximize relative power, scholars differ on this (See Waltz, 1979 and Mearsheimer, 2001). Richard Ashley gave credits to classical realism and criticized neo-realism for its unfairly criticism of history and ‘structural determinism’ (Ashley, 1984). Wendt introduced structure-agency debate into IR and criticized Waltz’s structuralism was ‘paradoxically dependent upon a particular construction of the individual state’ (Wendt, 1987). Der Derian explored diplomacy in an innovative way by following a different path that was ignored by traditional approaches and focusing on symbolization, language, and power. Through this new perspective, he demonstrated that diplomacy, though started as a convention for states to communicate and interact, is more than a practice in managing bilateral/multilateral relations but a ‘cultural practice’ through which ‘the foreign’ and ‘the strange’ are identified (Der Derian, 1987). In many works exploring language and politics, Shapiro argues that the making of foreign policies does not happen in an abstract neorealist structure, the process of making happens through the mobilization of certain political, racial,

and cultural identities (Shapiro, 1981&1988). In a presidential speech titled 'International Institutions: Two Approaches' to International Studies Association in 1988, Robert Keohane addressed two approaches in studying international institutions or even more broadly global phenomena: rationalists - including realists, neo-realists, liberalists, neo-liberalists, or game theorists; and on the opposite, 'reflectivists' who oppose accounts of rational choice in social studies and in general positivism. This speech gave a broad umbrella that covers scholars mentioned above who criticize structuralism (Keohane, 1988). For Keohane, reflectivists emphasize the importance of 'intersubjective meanings' in activities and behaviors of international institutions. Particular attention shall be paid to culture, institutional norms and regimes, identities and rules through an interpretive approach (Keohane, 1988). The reflectivism group later split into two groups: constructivist and poststructuralist with constructivist scholars more open to be labeled whereas few scholarly works claimed to be poststructuralist; thus the presence of this stream of works tend to exist in its critics' work as Hansen noted (2006). Few exceptions are noted in examples given in the beginning of this paragraph. These works are rooted in poststructuralist in the discipline of linguistics, social theories or literary theories look back to its roots in poststructural linguistics, social theory and literary theory. It is not exaggerating to claim that poststructuralism presents itself through its critics:

'In contrast to conventional and critical constructivism, postmodernism falls clearly outside of the social science enterprise, and in international relations research it risks becoming self-referential and disengaged from the world, protests to the contrary notwithstanding... Postmodernism has found many adherents both in the broader international studies field in the United States and in Europe where major journals and book series are dedicated to publishing the results of this work. Especially younger scholars of constructivist persuasion have experienced not so much a "turn" but an evolution of views that was rooted in the postmodernist challenge' (Katzenstein, Keohane, & Krasner, 1999).

Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, who claimed to remain an open attitude, could not refrain from the shortcomings of poststructuralism for not accounting the end of Cold War

and the missing causality to support why one is dominant discourse over others (1998). As every theoretical approaches in science, poststructuralism has its virtues and shortcomings. Which approach one takes should be determined by research puzzle. As Hansen summarized ‘...it pursues a particular set of research questions, centered on the constitutive significance of representations of identity for formulating and debating foreign policies, and it argues that adopting a non-causal epistemology does not imply an abandonment of theoretically rigorous frameworks, empirical analyses of ‘real world relevance,’ or systematic assessments of data and methodology.’

To compare Chinese discourse towards Russia prior to and post the Crimean Crisis, it requires us to follow the poststructuralist theory of discourse and its identity matters for foreign policy. Now let us unfold poststructuralist definition on identity.

Weber once noted ‘a mistake comes in... when one speaks of the state alone and not the nation’ (Poggi, 1978). This entails a conviction on those who neglect what does the nation represent and what is the core of the nation could end up on the wrong side of history - making a mistake. Speaking of mistakes, there were many successful use cases of constructing identity and mobilizing resources for inhumane actions. Berenskoetter asserts the importance of referencing ‘collective identity’ and claims that ‘attempts to mobilize nationalist sentiments are prominent in political discourses and popular culture from America to Asia, from Europe to Africa’... and this collective identity/national identity serves as a pertinent feature of state governance (2010). However, what exactly is this identity and how could it be utilized as an effective political tool? Some scholars even argue that this sense of collectiveness supports the ‘legal-institutional structures of the state’ and ‘legitimizes political leaders’ actions and make their pursuits justifiable and widely supported (Weldes, 1999; Hopf, 2002; Williams, 2005). Hansen started from the other side of spectrum - foreign policymaking. She claims the goal for foreign policy makers along with other actors who intend to influence foreign policy-making is ‘to present a foreign policy that appears legitimate and enforceable to its relevant audience’ (2006, 28). Indeed, a lonely politician who does not speak the ‘language’ used by his/her voters would not gain immense support. I argue, on the contrary to realist’s view, states are not simply structured entities with legitimate use of force in certain, refined spaces; how states act or ‘think’ is intrinsically

linked with how the community defines itself; and this ever-changing and evolving mirroring of oneself dictates states' behaviors as actors in the world anarchy.

Still, definition like identity is the way certain communities or collective groups perceive themselves is not concrete enough as a clarification to tackle our desired research puzzle. I argue that one cannot single out 'identity' as it is deeply connected with the community or collective group's foreign policy, Hansen noted that the relationship between identity and foreign policy is at the very core of poststructuralist research agenda as 'foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced' (2006, 1). In other words, identities and foreign policies rely on each other to exist. For poststructuralists, on one hand foreign policy is a 'discursive practice' thus 'foreign policy discourses articulate and intertwine material factors and ideas to such an extent that the two cannot be separated from one another' (Hansen, 2006). On the other hand, 'policy discourses are inherently social because policymakers address political opposition as well as the wider public sphere in the attempt to institutionalize their understanding of the identities and policy options at stake' (Hansen, 2006). The implication for researchers here is that if one is set to understand how does a state solve its problems and how does a politician gain support through campaigns, one is bound to tackle political discourses; and only through discourses, can one get close to a state's identity. This sets the tone for poststructuralist approach of foreign policy analysis based on the argument that 'identity is not something that states, or other collectivities have independently of the discursive practices mobilized in presenting and implementing foreign policy' (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993; Katzenstein, 1996; Laffey and Weldes, 1997; Hansen, 2006). Therefore, as Hansen argued, identity as a research variable cannot be separated from foreign policy and one cannot compare it with 'non-discursive material factors' (2006, 1).

Following poststructuralist approach, this research adopts the definition as Hansen did in her analysis of the Bosnian War that 'identity as a discursive, political, relational, and social' (2006, 6). Identity is political as 'arguing that representations of identity place foreign policy issues within a particular interpretative optic, one with consequences for which foreign policy can be formulated as an adequate response. (2006, 6)' Identity is discursive as it is constructed through discourses; this is to say that identities do not exist in 'extra-discursive'

formats and there are no ‘objective identities’ thus we cannot use identity as a variable to measure ‘behaviors and non-discursive factors’ (2006, 6). This means the only way to conceptualize identity is through ‘continuously rearticulated and uncontested by competing discourses’ (Anderson, 1983). Identity is relational means that identity is always in reference of the opposite of something. This is linked with what Hansen argues as process of linking and process of differentiation which will be further explained in the next section. An example can be that colonialists see themselves as developed, civilized, and lack of natural resources. In the opposition of these, the indigenous people would be underdeveloped, uncivilized, and abundant in natural resources. Identity is social, as Hansen argued, is to see identity as ‘established through a set of collectively articulated codes, not as a private property of the individual or psychological identities’ (2006).

2.3.2. Identity, Discourse, and Foreign Policy

Take into consideration of poststructuralist ontology of linguistic construction as we unfolded in the previous section, this research paper adopts the theoretical framework developed by Hansen (2006). Hansen followed Laclau and Mouffe’s conceptualization of meaning construction in two dimensions: ‘meaning is constructed through the discursive juxtaposition between a privileged sign on the one hand and a devalued one on the other leads to a conceptualization of identity in relational terms as being constructed along two dimensions’ (1985). In Hansen’s model, the process of identity construction take place in two-folds and simultaneously. Through a positive *process of linking* an identity is formed whereas in juxtaposition with (another) identity or other identities, a negative *process of differentiation* takes place; as identities are constructed through processes of linking and differentiation, it creates the possibility of destabilization that links between positive signs can become unstable and of positive signs being articulated as negative in other discourses (Hansen, 2006; 21). A discursive epistemology was adopted implying the focus of poststructuralist analysis is ‘on the discursive construction of identity as both constitutive of and a product of foreign policy’ (Hansen, 2006; 23). Having set our ontological emphasis on language, our practical epistemological focus on the articulation of identities and policies;

thus foreign policy discourses serve as our primary sources of analysis in presenting China's identity construction towards Russia.

Follow the theoretical model of combinability Hansen developed, the core of 'political activity is the construction of a link between policy and identity that makes the two appear consistent with each other'; thus the conceptualization of foreign policy discourse is a 'model centered on creating a stable link between identity and policy' (2006, 29). Discourses are not able to ever reach 'absolute fixity and stability'; therefore, there is no fixed or stable links between policy and identity. Albeit its instability, as identity is constructed through a large number of signs, we are able to analyze 'the relative ability' of a discourse to present a construction of identity as Hansen claimed (2006, 29). Just as the instability of identity, foreign policy is not isolated from social and political context; the implication of this as Hansen explained is that the internal stability of a policy-identity construction cannot be determined in isolation; therefore, to explore whether a discourse presents a stable connection between identity and policy, we can seek if the discourse is supported or criticized by other discourses (2006, 30). Hansen acknowledged the existence of *external constraints* and its potential impacts on the 'deliberation of identity as well as policy' (2006, 30). For Wæver, starting with the construction of identity, the external constraints on foreign policies discourses layout a certain field foreign policy to engage with; possibilities of contestations on existing identities and discourses exist but these contestations need to engage with dominant discourses or the dominant identities in place to be comprehensible enough to challenge the hegemony (1995, 45). As the result of potential external constraints, foreign policymakers are in a set of limitations on policies that can be promoted and representations of identities that can be articulated; potential external constraints can be 'military capabilities, institutional pressures from bureaucracies and the armed forces, the media, or recent experiences of humiliation or defeat' (Hansen, 2006).

Additionally, Hansen gave detailed guidance on how competing discourses are able to challenge dominant discourses. First, having the primary goal of introducing a different policy, competing discourse might confront and attack certain parts of the dominant model of policy and identity; therefore, it might attack and re-elaborate on the construction of identity. Secondly, competing discourse might tackle the policy side of the policy-identity

model by claim a policy being ‘unenforceable or ineffective’. Thirdly, competing discourse might challenge the link between the policy-identity through different readings of events and facts (Hansen, 2006). In faced of competing discourses, government – who creates the dominant model can response in three methods. First, a government might opt to change its policy-identity construction drastically; Second - a most common countermeasure, a government might acknowledge facts and seek ways to explain them within the policy-identity construction that is already in place; Third – the most difficult one to execute when facing ‘massive media coverage’ and ‘fierce criticism’, a government might seek to be silent and let the facts pass.

2.3.3. Poststructuralist Methodological Approach of Discourse Analysis

Continue with the theoretical framework elaborated in the previous section, Hansen provided four analytical steps to systematically examine identity construction. Instead of adopting the classical discourse on the national identity construction model elaborated by Connolly (1991), Campbell (1992), and Neumann (1996) in which states articulate external anarchy and the radical Others in contrast to its national Self to construct its national identities, Hansen urges for the necessity to move beyond the Self-Other dichotomy. For Hansen, both Campbell and Connolly’s conceptualization of national identity construction allow the possibility of state not constructing its identity through ‘the radical Otherness’ (2006; 39). One can find a number of example of foreign policies where ambiguity and complexity of differences in identity constructions; therefore, the representations of “less-than-radical Others” in foreign policy discourses ‘can be shown by how the Other is situated in a web of identities rather than a simple Self-Other duality’ (2006; 41). To fulfill this thesis research agenda, i.e. to define how Russia is constructed in China’s identity in its foreign policy discourses, an ontology that identity can be as flexible as the forms of identity construction in foreign policies might take place need to be adopted; if one is set of to define ‘a priori’ – a radical form of identity construction, unnecessary theoretical and empirical limitation would prevent a more fruitful engagement with contemporary foreign policy and result in a static view of foreign policy discourse (Hansen, 2006).

Methodologically, to analyze the process of linking and the process of differentiation, Hansen argued that necessity to identify terms that indicate ‘a clear construction of the Other and of the Self’; when analyzing these terms, a careful investigation of i) context in which these signs are situated, ii) how these terms are coupled to project a discursive stability, instability, or tendency of slips, and iii) how the same terms are used by competing discourses for different goals is the key goal of poststructuralist discourse analysis (2006, 42). More specifically in regards to this research project, in order to construct a representation of Russia in China’s foreign policy discourses, one needs to identify terms which clearly indicate a construction of the differences Russia projects in contrast to China’s own identity; through the process of linking of these terms, an identity of Russia as well as an identity of China in China’s foreign policy discourses are formed respectively; through the process of differentiating, one is able to analyze the degree of Otherness of Russia in China’s foreign policy discourses.

To further develop the use of discourse analysis in a poststructuralist approach, special attention need to be paid to three aspects in Hansen’s model. First, though identity is constructed relationally and the Self is always constructed in some degree of differentiation towards the Other, not all texts present a direct juxtaposition of the Self and the Other. Second, in foreign policy debates, a discourse might be established/dominant to a degree that certain texts do not need to make a detailed constructions of identity; Third, ‘discursive disappearance’ might happen take place meaning identities established at one point might no longer to relevant or important (2006, 44).

Hansen’s model provided this research project to look for spatial, temporal, and ethical constructions by analyzing the process of linking and differentiating. For Hansen, ‘spatiality, temporality, and ethicality have equal theoretical and ontological status; there is not one dimension which is more fundamental than the others which can be said to determine the other two’ (2006, 46). This research adopts the definitions of *spatially constructed identity* as an identity always relationally constructed and always ‘involves the construction of boundaries and thereby the delineation of space’; *temporally constructed identity* as identities focus on ‘temporal themes such as development, transformation, continuity,

change, repetition, or stasis’; *ethically constructed identity* as identities that imply ‘a concern with the discursive construction of ethics, morality, and responsibility’ (2006, 47-50).

Lastly, in order to identify a discourse from texts, this thesis uses Hansen’s development of *basic discourse* and six theoretical points related to it to present Russia in China’s foreign policy discourses. First, basic discourses can be identified through readings of texts as ‘analytical distinction of an ideal-type kind’; they provide a system where a number of different but connected representations and policies within a debate: second, basic discourses shall be built on key representations of identities which can be ‘geographical identities, historical analogies, striking metaphors, or political concepts’; third, once key representations are identified, one shall ‘draw upon available conceptual histories’ to create a comparison as well as ‘a genealogical reading’; fourth, one need present basic discourse and the Others and Selves it projects both ‘in how radical a relation of Otherness is constructed and in their spatial, temporal, and ethical constructions of identity’; fifth, a variety within the foreign policies basic discourses argue is expected as basic discourses may include very different Selves and Others, adding the interlink between various Selves and Others; sixth, it is possible that in a dynamic perspective, at least one basic discourse will manifest itself on foreign policy agenda whereas other basic discourses will articulated in a way that is in response to and criticizing this policy agenda (Hansen, 2006).

This research adopts the analytical focus of intertextuality model 1 and model 3B (Hansen, 2006: 64) by examining both official discourse and marginal political discourses. The object of analysis includes official texts and academic analysis. The primary goal of analysis on official texts is to examine the stabilization of official discourse through intertextual links as well as the response of official discourse to critical discourses as Hansen suggested (2006; 64); the primary goal of analysis on academic analysis is see if mode 1 hegemony exists in academic debate and to map out academic debates.

Through poststructuralist discourse analysis, this research aims to shed more lights on the role China’s identity towards Russia in the current dynamics of Sino-Russia relations. The anti-West alliance rhetoric does not fully explain China’s closeness with Russia especially it is the first time in centuries of history that China is the more competent partner in the relationship. In China’s case in particular, scholars have argued that the key to China’s

international identity lay in Chinese foreign-policy behaviors. Chan took on a social evolutionary approach and studied China's social interactions with the outside world to recognize the evolutions of its international identity/ies especially since the reform and the opening up in the late 1970s. In the late 70s and 80s, the theme was opening and reform; in the 90s, it was peacefully rising; and currently it is a 'responsible state' (Gao, 2013). The conclusion reached is that China's international identity is 'fast changing' (Chan, 2014). Two missing links were identified in terms of transition of China's one identity to another are 1) how do Chinese leaders perceive it and 2) how do they come to a consensus (Chan, 2014). These re-emphasized the request of a constant and up-to-date inquiry of China's identities – a way this thesis seeks to contribute.

2.4. Text Selection

The text selection of textual resources for analysis followed Hansen's (2006, 82) guideline of textual selection matrix. According to Hansen, two sets of considerations need to be taken into considerations when choosing texts that first, majority of the texts under study shall be within the intended time frame for study; and include only historical materials that 'traces the genealogy of the dominant representations'. In our case, the timeframe of the texts chosen for study is under the time frame proposed by our research question - texts President Xi's incumbent until the Crimean Crisis in comparison with texts after the crisis. Second, as Hansen suggested, the selected texts should include 'key texts that are frequently quoted... as well as a larger body of general material that provides the basis for a more quantitative identification of dominant discourses' (2006, 82). Poststructuralist approach gives epistemological and methodological priority to primary texts - presidential speeches, and interviews that involve official foreign policy. Wæver has also emphasized the importance of public texts in poststructuralist approach of discourse analysis (2002). This does not mean secondary sources - discussions of primary sources and academia's interpretation and presentations of foreign policies have no prominent status in poststructuralist discourse analysis. Secondary sources have all likelihood in turning into primary sources. This is intrinsic to the relations between foreign policies and identities. Therefore, based on these theoretical foundations, the materials for analysis involve both key texts and secondary

sources within the time frame of our research question. As for the quality of the materials, Hansen proposed three criteria: ‘clear articulations, widely read and attended to, and formal authority’ (2006, 83). Clear articulations facilitate discourse analysis; widely read texts reflects the dominance of the sources; and authority of the articulators reflects the power status of the sources.

The sources chosen to be reviewed for this these are in line with the criteria and principles mentioned above. Analyses are presented in two chapters to reflect the the periods within our time frame. Chapter III focuses on the time period after President Xi’s incumbent until the crisis. It first maps out the official discourses and then lays out academic discourses based on several key themes of how Russia was perceived in the time frame. It is shown in the literature review that the two countries’ leaders present a close bilateral partnership to the public; therefore, this research presents official discourses (key texts) and academic discourses (secondary sources) separately for a clear overview of the order of discourses on Russia. Chapter IV focuses on the discourse after the Crisis until 2017 and it follows the same structure of Chapter III.

For the key texts that represent official discourses, I analyze speeches, statements, and interviews conducted by President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, and state councilor Yang Jiechi from 2013 to 2017. In addition to these, speeches, statements, positions of FMPRC represented by spokesperson, Ministers of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, and Chinese Ambassador to Russia Li Hui under the same time line are also analyzed. In total 12 texts pre-Crimea represent official discourse and 29 texts post-Crimea were analyzed.

For the representation of academic debate, I selected texts on Russia published during our time frame from four distinguished Chinese journals which is either in the fields of IR or focus on Russian studies and Sino-Russian relations. These journals are *Journal of China and International Relations* (7 texts) and *Russian Studies* (25 texts). These two journals are chosen as they offered a comprehensive overview on China’s views on Russia and they included various topics.

CHAPTER III. CHINESE DISCOURSE TOWARDS RUSSIA AFTER XI JINPING'S INCUMBENT UNTIL THE CRIMEAN CRISIS (March, 2013- March, 2014)

Year 2013 marks a vital period for China in terms of its domestic politics and foreign policies. President Xi Jinping claimed office in March, 2013 and started the Xi era represented by political positions on the 'Chinese Dream', a more nationalistic and assertive image of China on the world stage on foreign affairs and security issues, an amplified role of the Communist Party in restructuring the country's large-scale economy through strict party discipline and anti-corruption campaign, and a hard line on censorship aim at Western values such as media independence or civil society (Buckley, 2013).

Under Xi's leadership, the phrase 'Chinese Dream' has become a key slogan to describe his overarching plans for China which are reflected in Communist Party's ideologues. The 'Chinese Dream' is merged as the distinctive quasi-official ideology of Xi's party leadership just as for his predecessors: the "'Scientific Outlook on Development' for Hu Jintao and the 'Three Represents' for Jiang Zemin. Unlike some publications' assumption that the 'Chinese Dream' as an inspiration for the American Dream (The Economist, 2013), the Chinese counterpart focuses not on individual success and self-achievement but carries a distinctive nationalist characteristic that in some occasions it was interpreted as the 'great revival of the Chinese nation' in official pronouncements. President Xi identified three fundamental elements: prosperity for the country, renewal of the nation and happiness for the people (Xi, 2013b).

Along with the 'Chinese Dream', a more nationalist and assertive image of China is recognized by scholars as well as journalists. Xi's era is marked by a new journey of diplomacy which was brought up frequently in official discourse. At the starting point of this new journey of diplomacy, the dynamics of China's relations with other actors have shifted: a more critical stance on North Korea was embraced; efforts on improving relationships with South Korea were made; relations with Japan went sour due to disputes over the Diaoyu islands and China declared an Air Defense Identification Zone in response to Japan's robust

stance (Osawa, 2013); Sino-US relations was remarked on China's side as 'a new type of great power relations' - an expression Obama administration refrained from and China embarked a critical stance on the US pivot to Asia; stronger relations with Russia as well as Xi's personal relations with President Putin were cultivated.

Hansen argued that 'the internal stability of a policy-identity construction cannot be determined in isolation from the broader social and political context within which it is situated' (2006, p 29), we include distinctive background of China's foreign policies in Xi's era in order to reveal a dynamic picture on China's foreign policy discourses on Russia, Chapter III presents Chinese official discourses and scholar debates on Russia prior to the Crimean Crisis. Follow the logic of politically contextualized analysis, we seek whether the official policy-identity constructions are being contested or supported by the academic domain. Special attention is paid to any set of external constraints or established identities that both enabling and constraining foreign policies as Wæver emphasized the necessity of competing discourses to engage with the dominant construction of identity already in place (1995, p45). Subtitles of Chapter III are major representations on the themes of Chinese discourses on Russia. In official discourse, Russia is part of Xi's major power relation discourse and a partner of win-win cooperation in China's neighborhood. In scholars' debate, attentions were attributed to Russian foreign policies and its military bases in the Middle East, Russian energy sector and its implications for China, and prospects on a new phase of Sino-Russian partnership.

3.1. Official Discourse: Russia as a Major Power in China's Neighborhood

Prior to the Crisis, official discourses on China's international identity are represented in three basic discourses. First, China is already a major power in the world and is now ready on its way to lead and participate in a new type of major power relations in which mutual respect and win-win cooperation are the key elements. Second, China is now on its starting point of great national revival to realize the Chinese Dream. Third, China is dedicated to promote peace and development in the world for a peaceful environment for China's rise. Official discourses on Russia can be categorized into four basic courses. First, Russia is

China's strategic partner in many key areas; second, Russia is a major power which shoulders the responsibility of world peace and development in China's neighborhood; third, Russia demonstrates the best major power relation model in its relations with China; fourth, Russia share's China's mission of great national revival.

President Xi Jinping's incumbent in 2013 started a new chapter for Chinese foreign policies and diplomacy. Apart from Xi's vision on the great revival of the Chinese nation, official discourses frequently envision 'a new journey of diplomacy' which is characterized by 'a new type of major power relations' based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation (Yang, 2013b). Powers that are equivalent to China itself and fall into the category of major power relations are Russia, the US, and the EU. China's proposal of new major power features no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. The U.S. has always enjoyed a unique position in China's diplomacy after the two countries rapprochement in the 1970s; yet President Xi took Moscow as the first leg of his overseas trip since becoming China's president. In a speech titled 'Follow the Trend of the Times and Promote Peace and Development in the World' at Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Xi proposed that the world has entered a place where 'peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit have become the trend of the times', 'no country or group of countries can dominate world affairs single-handedly', and 'countries are linked with and dependent on one another at a level never seen before' (Xi, 2013b). Xi claimed that Sino-Russian relationship is 'the best relationship between major countries' and this 'strong and high performance relationship' complements each other's national interests and serves as 'important safeguard' for international strategic balance, peace, and stability in the world (Xi, 2013b). In Xi's vision, both China and Russia are at its own 'crucial stage of national revival' and Sino-Russian relations has entered a new period with 'mutual provision of vital development opportunities and mutual serving as primary cooperation partners' (Xi, 2013b). This vision was later reinforced in Xi's response to his expectations on Russia hosting G20 summit:

'It is heartening to note that both sides are working hard to implement the cooperation consensus and agreements President Putin and I reached in Moscow, and bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, from economy, trade, investment, energy and

law enforcement, to strategic and security matters, military-to-military relations, defense technology, local exchanges, culture and international affairs, has yielded important results or made positive progress' (Xi, 2013c).

Echoed by President Xi's positivity and confidence on Sino-Russia relations, State Councilor Yang Jiechi reassured China's active practice in promoting relation with Russia. He noted that Xi made Russia the first leg of his first overseas visit as China's president 'strengthened bilateral cooperation in the economy, trade, energy and strategic security and consolidated the basis of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination' (Yang, 2013a). Yang explained the core of China's major power relations – the core of China's new diplomacy that 'it bears on world peace and wellbeing of mankind' (Yang, 2013b). China under Xi's administration sees itself as a major power with capabilities to shoulder the responsibility of world peace and development. The wellbeing of mankind goes hand in hand with China and Russia's national revival on the world stage; and China sees Russia as a key partner in realizing the Chinese Dream and China sees itself as a critical partner for Russia's revival. The two countries complement each other on its own paths to its vision through win-win cooperation and ever-lasting commitment to the building of a forward-looking relationship. On the gap between China and Russia in terms of capabilities, President Xi acknowledged that the two countries 'differ in realities and national conditions' and the way forward is by 'engaging in a close cooperation and drawing on each other's strengths to make up for respective shortcomings' then 'we can show to the world that one plus one can be greater than two' (Xi, 2013b). Here we see a clear stance that as long as the cooperation is mutually beneficial and fall in line with peace and development, China pledges its supports fully with Russia.

In contrast to what the West sees as an increasingly powerful and threatening China; China sees its progress in economic development as an essential make for a better world. China envisions a better world through 'win-win cooperation' - a type of cooperation which serves a strong impetus to the world's prosperity and development. This win-win methodology guides China's promotion of regional cooperation as well as regional development initiations. In an article of Foreign Minister Wang Yi on New Europe, Wang noted that China and Russia 'have set a good example of mutual trust and cooperation

between major countries by vigorously deepening their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.’ (Wang, 2014) The success of this strategic partnership was referred as a model for Sino-European cooperation in which programs of urbanization, industrialization, IT application and agricultural modernization work hand-in-hand with Europe’s economic recovery projects. Thus we can see that China urges and hopes to replicate the success with Russia in cooperation with other countries and on a greater scale through the methodology win-win cooperation. On a regional level - in China’s neighborhood, according to Wang, China ‘depends on its neighborhood for survival, development and prosperity’ (Wang, 2014). Using win-win methodology to guide its cooperation initiations, China believes in the principles of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness for a secure and prosperous neighborhood. One of the special treatment Russia enjoys in its relations with Russia we mentioned in the previous section of this thesis is that with some countries, China has territorial and maritime disputes; yet with Russia, both sides have committed to ensure ‘peace and friendship generation and generation along their 4,300-kilometer boundary’ (Wang, 2014). From this we can conclude that Chinese official discourses place Russia on a high pedestal in China’s vision on the world stage as well as on a regional/neighborhood level as in essence, the two share ‘a high complementarity in development strategy’ (Xi, 2013b) and commitments can compensate for differences in conditions and situations.

Chinese official discourses pledged high hope for Sino-Russian relation prior to the Crimean Crisis at the starting point of President Xi’s administration in which China and Russia are the best model of major power relation and are working closely and committedly for world peace, world development, and strategic balance. On regional level, the commitment to secured land border and the friendship from generation to generation among two countries’ people served as the foundation for ongoing cooperation as well as further deepening cooperation in key interest areas: economy, trade, energy and strategic security. The win-win cooperation in these fields have consolidated the comprehensive strategic partnership of the two countries. On long-term goals, Chinese official discourses reckon that both countries are on a critical stage of its national renewal. China does not see its rise as harmful to the world peace and development; rather China sees itself of a strong advocator of a more integrated world in which countries pursue win-win cooperation and mutual

respect. China sees its rise as integral to a better world where the Chinese Dream – the revival of the Chinese nation could be realized.

Based on the basic discourses prior to the Crisis, how China’s international identity and Russia constructed in China’s official discourses are demonstrated in Figure 3.1.

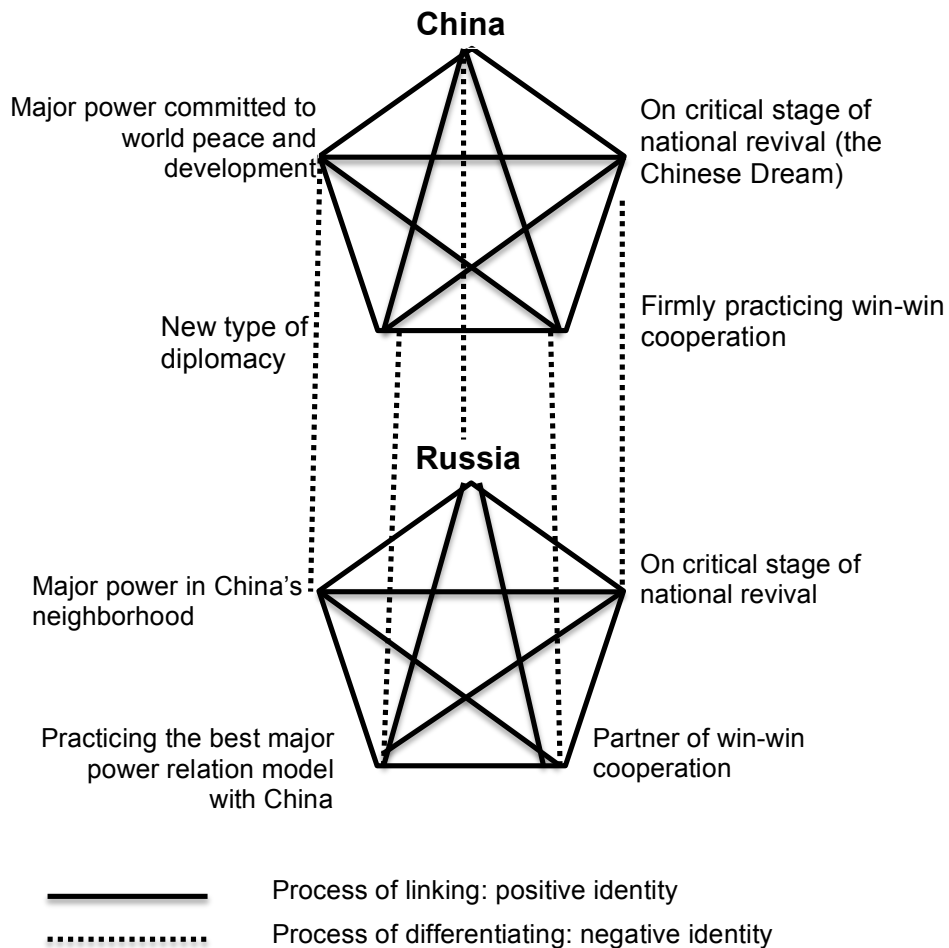


Figure 3.1 The linking and differentiation of China and Russia in Chinese official discourse prior to the Crimean Crisis.

3.2. Academic Debate: A Closer Look on Key Interests Areas

Scholars’ works on Russia and Sino-Russian relations offered a more thorough examination on key areas of bilateral cooperation. This section is presented in a manner featuring on

frequently discussed themes on Sino-Russian relations. Chinese scholars took interests on various topics regarding Russia. Ge studies the geopolitics in Ukraine in post-Cold War era and commented that on one hand it seems that Russia has lost interests in having to manage a vast empire and is no longer willing to carry other countries' security and military responsibilities. On the other hand, in response to the eastern enlargement of NATO and Ukraine's leaning towards the EU, Russia is no longer an empire without Ukraine (Ge, 2013). Feng examined the multilayer meanings of the year 2013 for Russia in the aspect of Russia's domestic politics and foreign policy and concluded that Russian domestic politics has entered a new stage in comparison with the previous state of flexible authoritarianism in order to preserve its legitimacy (Feng, 2013).

There are five basic discourses on China's identity on Russia related topics in academic debates. First, Russia as a major neighbor affects China's overall security and stability; second, China and Russia face a common notion of the West; third, China's strategic focus is on its peaceful rise and maintain a friendly environment for its peaceful rise; fourth, cooperation with Russia in energy sector could help China's dilemma in its energy supply and economic development; fifth, Central Asia as an overlapping area in the EEU and in B&R is an opportunity of cooperation for China and Russia.

There are four basic discourses on Chinese scholars' view of Russia prior to the Crisis, First, post-Soviet space and especially Ukraine has strategic significance in Russia's foreign policy focus. Second, Russia's mission of national revival is frequently discouraged by the U.S. led Western countries experience frustrations because the gap in how the U.S. sees Russia and how Russia sees itself. Third, Russia is not an energy empire as it projects itself to be but if Russia cooperates with China they might stand a chance against the global energy market regulated by the Western countries. Fourth, a further and deepened cooperation with China would be beneficial for Russia.

Based on the basic discourses prior to the Crisis, how China's identity on Russia related topics and scholars' view of Russia are demonstrated in Figure 3.2.

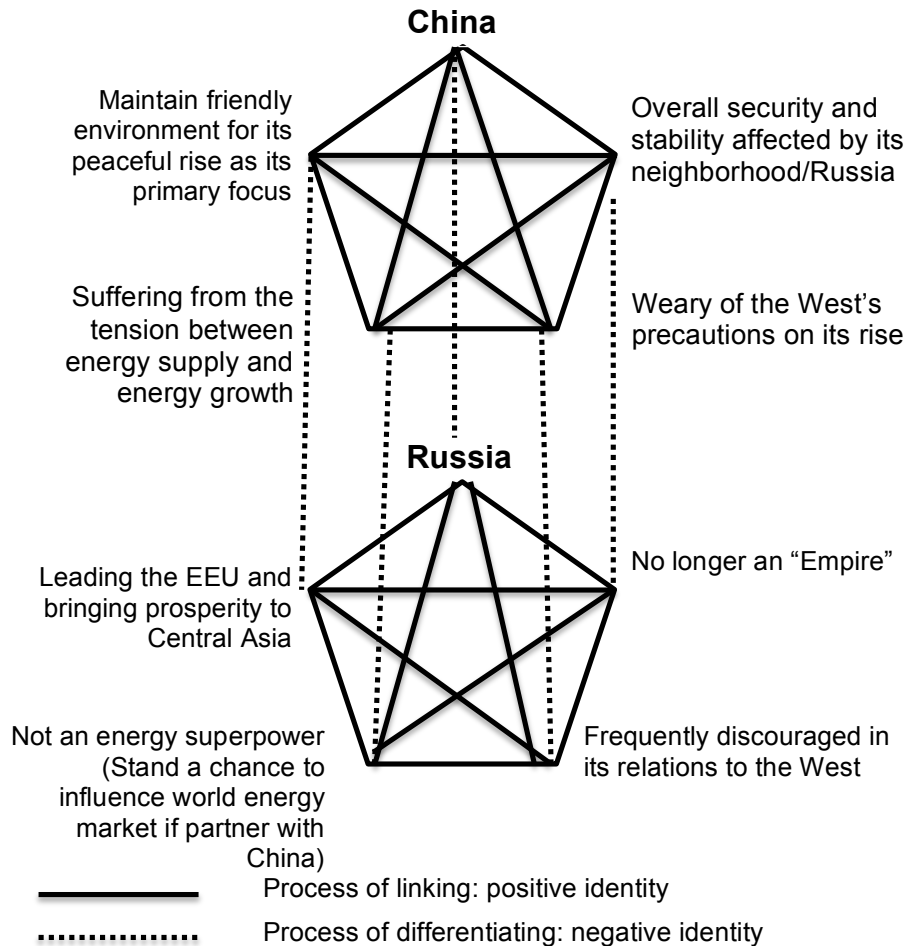


Figure 3.2 The linking and differentiation of China and Russia in Chinese academic debate prior to the Crimean Crisis.

3.2.1. *Russia Moving Away from 'Vast Empire': Foreign Policy and Military Base*

Russian foreign policy and its repercussions for China enjoyed popularity among Chinese scholars. There are three major directions Chinese scholars examine: Russia's foreign policy priorities, the U.S.-Russian relations, the implications of Russian foreign policy to China.

Huang reviewed 'Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation' (Russian MFA, 2013) and highlighted the followings. First, on one hand, Russia attaches strategic priority on developing relationships with countries in the post-Soviet space; it tires to

construct the EEU comprehensively; on the other hand, it attaches great significance to its relations with the Western countries led by the U.S. and is dedicated to deepen overall Sino-Russian comprehensive strategic partnership and further cooperation in many fields. Since the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia has set the U.S. as the priority of its strategic diplomacy. Yet the relations between the two has been unstable and uncertain: Russia's hope and effort in forming relationship with the Western countries have been significant however this aspiration has been discouraged over and over again (Huang, 2014). The reason of this frustration Russia experiences according to Huang is the discrepancy on how Russia sees the U.S. and vice versa. Russia sees itself as a major power who deserves respect and recognition from the U.S. and the U.S. at its best sees Russia as a minor partner as the UK (2014). Secondly, Huang sees the U.S.-Russia relations as the U.S. tries to prevent Russia becoming a challenge to the U.S. hegemony and has facilitated the eastern enlargement of NATO, color revolutions, and military bases in Central Asia. Russia's actions are simply countermeasures against the U.S.'s attempts to jeopardize Russia's national interests (Huang, 2014). Thirdly, for China, Russia is a major power politically, militarily, and economically and Russia's weight in the international community is implied. As China's biggest neighbor, every aspect of Russia's diplomacy affects China's overall security and developmental stability, especially China now in its high time of rise, the U.S.'s involvement in Central Pacific, and world power redistribution. Fourthly, Huang sees the current status of Sino-Russian strategic relation as a miracle and it is a combination of the "Chinese Dream" and Russia's aspiration in returning to its major power stage (2014).

Russia versus the West is a frequently mentioned concept in Chinese scholar literatures on Russian foreign policy. For our research purpose, a clarification of 'the West' is necessary. The West for Russia is slightly different from the West for China: while the West for Russia is the European Union and the U.S. whose movements symbolized by NATO, the West for China is the U.S., the EU, along with the allies of the U.S. in Asia-Pacific: Japan, South Korea, or even Taiwan. When Chinese scholars, the concept of the West for China and Russia is often used interchangeably indicating the U.S. and the EU. To omit confusion, this paper will interpret the West as Russia's West and omit allies of the U.S. in Asia-Pacific that sometimes act under the influence of Western powers. The West,

according to many scholars, shapes Russia's foreign policy in a manner of game theory that Russia adopts defensive mode or makes bold movements for the sake of symbolic triumph against the West (Sun, 2013; Ge, 2013).

This kind of passive aggressiveness is fully illustrated by Russia's actions in Syria. Sun noted that the Soviet Union strove and Russia strives to establish military bases in the Middle East to break through the strategic encirclement imposed by external marine powers. As a land superpower throughout the history with inherited insecurity towards its vast and various territory, Russia finds strategic significance in establishing military bases in the Middle East to realize its geopolitical and geo-economic interests which could potentially serve as a solid foundation for its political ambition as and reinforce its great power status in the region (Sun, 2013). Driven by its insecurity and its ideological struggle as part of Soviet legacy, military bases in Syria serves as major military power projection of Moscow to show its presence and to protect its practical interests in the region. The rationale behind using military base to affect the dynamics in the Middle East for Sun is that first, the economic recovery since the beginning of the 21st century has laid out the material ground for the leaders 'big power mindset' thus the aggressiveness in Russian strategic culture is becoming more and more obvious in its effort to prevent the West's leading role in the Middle East and to ensure that Russia's concerns are heard and recognized. Secondly, Russia needs to protect its profits in military and energy trades in the region as a direct result of the new and chaotic development of the Syrian Civil War. Thirdly, military bases functions as a critical leverage in Russia's protests against the West's humanitarian interventions which in Putin's definition are colonialist behaviors.

While scholar like Sun argue that Russia use military bases to project its military power to secure its geopolitical and geo-economical interests, others raised the critical significance of Ukraine in Russia's geopolitical interests. In an article studying Ukraine's' geopolitical thoughts published in October 2013 noted that in nearly 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many countries in the post-Soviet Space have become more pro-West by joining the EU and NATO. Russia did not exhibit strong protests against this transformation in the post-Soviet space that 'Russia seems to have lost interest in having vast empire as it seems Russia is no longer willing to carry the responsibility of other countries'

security or military responsibilities.’ (Ge, 2013) However, a twist comes when it is about Ukraine. Ge argues that Ukraine is the ‘geopolitical pivot’ for Russia by referring to what Brzezinski claimed:

‘However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia’ (1997).

From the above, we can conclude that Chinese scholars vary among its views on Russian foreign policies especially on its actions against the West and establishing military bases in the Middle East. One string of voice sees Russia as an aggressive victim of the U.S.’s attempts to jeopardize its national interest –simply using countermeasures to protect its national interest and struggling in returning to its major power status. Another string of voice sees Russia’s aggressiveness in establishing military base as necessity to protect its geopolitical as well as geo-economical interests in the Middle East. The premises of its geopolitical interests is protests against the West and the West ‘humanitarian intervention’ in the region. The aggressiveness here is not simply a projection of military power, but out of its intrinsic insecurity and the pressure of the West. Thus there is certain passivity denoted in Russia’s military power projection.

On Sino-Russian relations, scholars agree on Russia as major power in China’s neighborhood and common interests are identifiable. Russia and China do share a partially overlapped definition of the West - the U.S. and the EU. While Russia responds with establishing military bases and condemning the West’s humanitarian intervention in hope to maintain its great power status in the region, China focus on a peaceful rise and development. Chinese scholars did not bring up CCP’s stance against Western values as Burkeley argued; thus we cannot make this comparison. For Russia, the core of its geopolitical interests - the pivot point is Ukraine that without Ukraine, Russia is no long an empire. At the same time, Chinese academic discourse did not foresee Russia using military force to secure its geopolitical interests with the conclusion that Russia seems no longer willing to carry other countries’ security and military responsibilities. However, scholars acknowledge and agree

on severe implications Russian foreign policies and actions have on China's peaceful rise and development as Russia is a major power in China's neighborhood.

3.2.2. Energy Empire and its Implications for China

Russia's economy hooped on a high-speed train as a direct result of the world energy market in early 2000s. Many observers noted Russia's frequently use of its energy advantages to supplement its diplomatic toolkit that 'coercive energy diplomacy' is used to achieve its political purposes. The building of an energy empire is seen by Chinese scholar as initiated by Putin-led elite group's political ambition - to rebuilt the great Russia. Domestically, many companies facilitated nationalization of the industry thus this unique form of diplomatic tool became feasible. This high level of nationalization in Russia has united Russia's political elites and economic elites; thus a jingoistic trend becomes popular in both Russian foreign policies and economic sectors characterized by aggressive foreign investments (Zhang L, 2013).

Chinese scholars identify Russia's energy sector closely with 3 concepts: energy empire, energy superpower, and coercive energy diplomacy. First proposed officially by President Putin in a governmental speech in 2005 - becoming an energy empire/superpower is part of Russia's agenda (Baev, 2008). The conception of energy empire/superpower is based on three assumptions. First, Russia owns abundant energy resources to influence global energy market and energy policies; Second, Russia could reach and maintain its hegemony on world stage due to this abundance; third, Moscow has full control over energy corporations in order to achieve political and diplomatic goals through energy policy. Zhang in an article tackling these myths on Russia's ambition falsified the feasibility of Russia controlling international energy market prices and therefore use energy diplomacy in a coercive manner effectively (Zhang L, 2013). Seeing energy cooperation as an important component of Sino-Russia relationship with both sides took initiatives and invested in contract negotiation, what were the implications of Russia's aspiration of becoming energy empire for China and Sino-Russian relations prior to the Crimean Crisis?

For about over a decade, China and Russia have invested considerably in making progress in their cooperation in the area of oil and natural gas; and these progress promoted

economic developments in both countries and offered a chance for both sides to explore mutual interests which have been expanded through energy cooperation according to Yang (2013).

Chinese discourse on China and Russia's energy policies have identified a realistic component in their interactions in international relations. China's economy in the past 30 years has developed at a world-astonishing speed with the high price of energy consumption rate and severe environmental pollution. China has an abundant energy resources with a variety; however, the country's huge population makes energy storage per capita considerably low. These two factors compose the energy conflict in China's economic development. China is in the process of transforming into a sustainable and environmentally friendly economic development mode instead of focusing simply on its GDP growth speed. This transformation makes soothing the tension between energy supply and economic development an urgent task in China's energy policies. Russia became an attractive partner in energy sector for China under this context. Dependent on its abundant energy storage, Russia's economy grew out of the stagnation and decay of Soviet time and achieved steady growth. The major weakness in Russia's growth model is that the development is solely dependent on investment in energy sector and relevant energy export. The energy market itself is unstable; adding low technological investment and high pollution, this made the growth itself unsustainable. Additionally, Russia's economic growth was supported by the EU countries through energy export. The EU, out of its own security concerns, has been working on to multiply energy suppliers and routes to decrease its energy reliance on Russia. It is seen by Chinese scholars that Russia domestic economy stability, whether there is stability or not, is closely linked with its export to European energy market; thus it was a smart move for Russia to pivot its energy strategy to Asia-Pacific market as this would not only reduces its dependency on the EU, but could also effectively prevent the EU's common energy policy aiming to weaken Russia's geopolitical influence in Europe take place(Yang, 2013). China sees itself as the leading figure in energy market in Asia-Pacific thus for Russia, the necessity of Chinese energy market was implied. Entering Chinese market is seen as the one and only shortcut for Russia to survive its current economic dilemma and to reduce its dependency on the European market (Yang, 2013; Aslund, 2010).

After a thorough analysis on three different approaches on Sino-Russian energy cooperation: neo-liberal, neo-realistic, and social constructivist approaches, Yang reached a conclusion that Sino-Russian cooperation would further deepen and strengthen to release more potential from both sides in energy sector (Yang, 2013). The foundation of this cooperation is based on both sides motive to use energy as the key accelerator of economic development. As long as there is supply and need, cooperation could be realized through the gradual improvement of relevant organizations and institutions. On top of this interests-led foundation, both China and Russia are world superpower in a sense they could afford to play not according to the rules set by the Western powers. This means China and Russia's participation would affect the current world energy market. However, for the cooperation to work in long run, both sides need to pay extra attention in possible and inevitable conflicts and resolve them together. Yang advocates both sides to follow the principles of mutual trust, mutual respect, and understanding to build a solid and vibrant energy cooperation (2013).

We can conclude now though Chinese domestic discourses remained doubts in Russia's energy sector in its high consumption rate and low research and development investment. However, Russia's energy supply would contribute significantly to China's pursuit of sustainable and environmental-friendly economic development. Emerge of conflicts in both sides of interests are unavoidable but Chinese discourse remain optimistic on resolving these possible conflicts together with Russia. An impact on the institutions and rules of world energy market was predicted once China and Russia cooperate in the energy sector as both are big power and could afford to not play according to the norm set by the West.

3.2.3. New Phase of Sino-Russian Relations

Year 2013 was a critical year both for China and Russia respectively and for Russia itself according to Chinese academic discourse. Feng claimed that Russia demonstrated grand contrast in its economic development and its diplomatic actions (2013). In 2013, Russia's economy stagnation reached a new low characterized by minor improvement in comparison with 2012. What surprised Chinese academia was Russia was not held back by its unsatisfactory economic development; instead, Russia was very active in various areas:

global affairs, regional development, and bilateral relations. These demonstrated Russia's potential and influence as a "superpower" (Feng, 2013). Feng listed several 'outstanding' examples Russia's superpower diplomacy. First was Russia's initiatives on U.S.-Russia peace proposal to avoid large scale conflicts changed the dynamics in the Middle East; therefore, we could expect a peaceful resolution on Syria questions by the beginning of 2014. Second was Russia granting asylum to Edward Snowden in 2013 after leaking details on NSA surveillance programs and facing charges from the U.S. government. Third was Russia's movement regarding Ukraine issues in 2013. While Ukraine was going back and forth between the EU and Russia, Russia offered to purchase 15 billion dollars' worth of national debt from Ukraine and agreed to trim gas price by $\frac{1}{3}$; Ukraine thus turned its back on the EU's partnership framework(2013). This was seen as a smart move by Feng as this meant for a certain period of time the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union(EEU) would not face tremendous impact from the West and Ukraine could remain as a buffer zone for Russia (2013). As a small part of the whole big picture in Putin's plan to lead and maintain the balance and development in the space between the West and the East, Feng predicted that Russia would use its advantageous international status that has no meaning no direct external threat to its full potential (2013).

Year 2013 was a significant year for China. President Xi's assumed office and proposed the construction of 'Silk Road Economic Belt'. Based on ancient Silk Road, the initiative further developed its previous concept and looks forward to strengthen economic integration among countries situated in original Silk Road in Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The initiative aims for a cohesive economic area that would encourage cultural exchanges and increase trade activities through infrastructure building like transportation (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

As the target region Central Asia overlaps with the Russia-led EEU, Chinese academia tend to examine Russia's role in the initiative. In Chinese scholar's interpretation, Russia's vision and efforts in encouraging regional cooperation in post-Soviet space and in exploring the potential of post-Soviet infrastructure to increase regional investment and trades once realized is a beneficial for China. The EEU projects could improve the economic development and market economy in Central Asia therefore offer more cooperation

opportunities for China in long prospects. The Silk Road Economic Belt initiatives is based on a premise that respect the interests and sovereignty of Russia and former Soviet countries in Central Asia; it calls for further cooperation under the current framework rather than introducing a new framework that would limit the sovereignty of any participants. China sees the socioeconomic development of Central Asia essential to the stability and development of Xinjiang province. Chinese academic saw the Silk Road Economic Belt and the EEU offer a rare opportunity for enhance mutual understanding between China and Russia therefore taking Sino-Russian relation to the next step; it was also noted that investment in infrastructure and development in Central Asia could increase both countries' influence in international affairs.

Apart from the EEU and the Silk Road Economic Initiative, scholars showed great interests in the progress of bilateral cooperation. The two countries shared and demonstrated mutual understanding on questions like Syria, Iran and nuclear power on the Korean peninsula; both countries have announced respectively that they see each other as the priority of diplomacy (Yang, 2013). These all indicate the closeness between China and Russia reached a new level with the two countries reacted in a synchronized manner on international issues and on regional development initiatives.

CHAPTER IV. CHINESE DISCOURSE TOWARDS RUSSIA AFTER THE CRIMEAN CRISIS (2014-2017)

Shortly after the Crimean Crisis, China did not join the side of European countries who openly criticized Russia's violation of international law. Chinese official response has adopted an 'objective and just position' – 'We respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity' (Li, 2015). In Chinese academia academic debate, we witnessed a surge of interests on Ukraine and the aftereffect of the Crimean Crisis for China. Apart from this, discussions on the prospects and challenges of the EEU and the Silk Road Economic Belt Initiatives are elaborated, along with scopes on Central Asia integration and development, as well as Russian energy policies.

4.1. Official Discourses: Russia's Role in China's New Asian Security Concept

This section maps out major discourse Chinese officials expressed after the Crimean Crisis. A neutral stance on the Crimean Crisis in line with China's emphasis on peace and development was taken. Premier Li Keqiang emphasized 'an independent foreign policy of peace' and expressed China's hope for 'a negotiated settlement through dialogue', 'a harmonious coexistence between neighbors', and 'common development and win-win outcomes between Europe and other countries' (2015). Li believes that this is in the interest of all relevant parties including China.

Chinese official discourse recognized Sino-Russian strategic partnership and its solid progress in practical cooperation with an emphasis on the commonalities between the two countries. Premier Li highlighted on both countries' potential for innovation and entrepreneurship after co-chairing the 19th regular meeting of the prime ministers:

'both China and Russia have time-honored histories and profound cultures... both are strong in science and technology...both see the development of the other as its own opportunity...When scientific innovation and cultural creation are pursued in the context of mutual learning between civilizations, and when China's advantages in industry, financial resources and market are combined with Russia's advantages in

resources, science and technology and talents, it will generate a strong multiplying effect and spark a wildfire of innovation (Li, 2014)'

China sees its advantages complementing with Russia's advantages. Joint R&D were launched and progress on cooperating projects in energy, resources, aviation, space, information technology, telecommunications, energy conservation and environmental protection were noted. China also took keen interest in an active part in Russia's infrastructure development in high-speed railway and railway upgrades. This, in comparison with the Sino-Russian partnership, is a step forward to 'cross-holding of shares and upper- and lower- stream integration' and a step beyond 'buyer-seller relationship' (Li, 2014).

Chinese official discourses followed Sino-Russian strategic partnership as a good example for major power relations, Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin commented that this partnership is neither 'alignment nor targeted at any third parties' (Liu, 2014b); it also took on a historical discourse elaborating on the common history the two countries experience during the World War Two 'as two main theaters in Asia and Europe during World War Two, China and Russia undertook the important task of resisting the aggression of Japanese militarists and German fascists' (Liu, 2015). China sees a common destiny with Russia in upholding peace and justice as well as safeguarding world peace.

In the sphere of security, besides progress on strengthened Sino-Russian strategic partnership in widened areas such as space security in preventing weaponization and arms race, a new Asian security concept and Russia's role in Asia were brought into our scope. China has been actively upholding its voice on its new Asian security concept in which China perceives itself as a staunch force in preserving peace on a regional and global scale: initiating Shanghai Cooperation Organization and solving issues of land boundary disputes with neighboring countries. In Xi's vision, a new security concept China advocate features 'mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination' (2014). The Asia-Pacific peace and security initiative China and Russian jointly proposed 'has played an important role in strengthening and maintaining peace and stability in Asia-Pacific region' (Xi, 2014). On the Syria issue, China stood firmly together with Russia. When Russia was once again in rivalry with the West in 2016, Foreign Minister Wang Yi responded directly that Russia is a partner of China (Wang, 2016b). 'Relationship between China and the Soviet Union went through

ups and downs. There were tensions, confrontations and even local conflicts. Later the two sides learned lessons and built a more normal, friendly relationship on the basis of the fact that the relationship is not an alliance, nor is it confrontational or targeted at any third party' (Wang, 2016b). On its global mission, China is actively seeking cooperation with Russia to safeguard the legitimate rights and upholding justice.

In the sphere of economic cooperation, with the Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative being brought forth, China seeks opportunity to partner with Russia on 'win-win operation models for the Eurasian railways' (Yang, 2014). Chinese officials do not see the Belt and Road initiative competing with the EEU. China and Russia signed joint statement on coordinating development of the two initiatives and agreed that SCO would be the main platform to further coordinate the two's development strategies (Wang, 2015c).

In conclusion, Sino-Russian relation was not tampered in Chinese official discourses after the Crimean Crisis. In response to Russia facing sanctions from the West as well as Russia in rivalry with the West, the justification on enhanced cooperation with Russia is that 'the China-Russia relationship is not dictated by international vicissitudes and does not target any third party' and the two share 'strong strategic trust' (Wang, 2015a). The areas of bilateral cooperation have indeed been expanded: energy, aviation, space security were added to the list. Russia is seen as a key partner in China's proposal of new Asian security concept; and China looks forward to cooperation on the Belt and Road initiative with the EEU with SCO as a platform.

There are six basic discourses in the China's official discourses on China's international identity after the Crimean Crisis. First, China takes pride in the achievements and progress Sino-Russian strategic partnership; second, China is fully prepared and ready to further and deepen cooperation areas with Russia; third, China-Russia relation share strong strategic trust and this relationship is not affected by any international affairs; fourth, China needs Russia to be a strong partner in the B&R initiative in promoting economic cooperation in the post-Soviet space; fifth, China promotes solving conflicts via dialogue; sixth China and Russia experience common inflicts thus share a common destiny in upholding peace and justice.

There are four basic discourses in the China's official discourse on Russia after the Crimean Crisis. First, Russia actively participate in bilateral cooperation with China and Sino-Russia relations has indeed become the best example of major power relations with cooperation in many key interest areas. Second, Russia, just like China, has time-honored history and profound culture. Third, both Russia and China experienced the historical inflictions during the World War II and therefore the two share a common destiny in upholding world peace and justice. Forth, Russia share strong strategic trust with China and its relations with China will not be affected by any international affairs. A change in comparison with the basic discourses on Russia prior to the Crisis is that after the Crisis, few more basic discourses are based on the commonalities Russia share with China as well as the solidity of the China-Russia partnership.

Based on these basic discourses post-Crisis, how China's international identity and Russia constructed in China's official discourses are demonstrated in Figure 4.1.

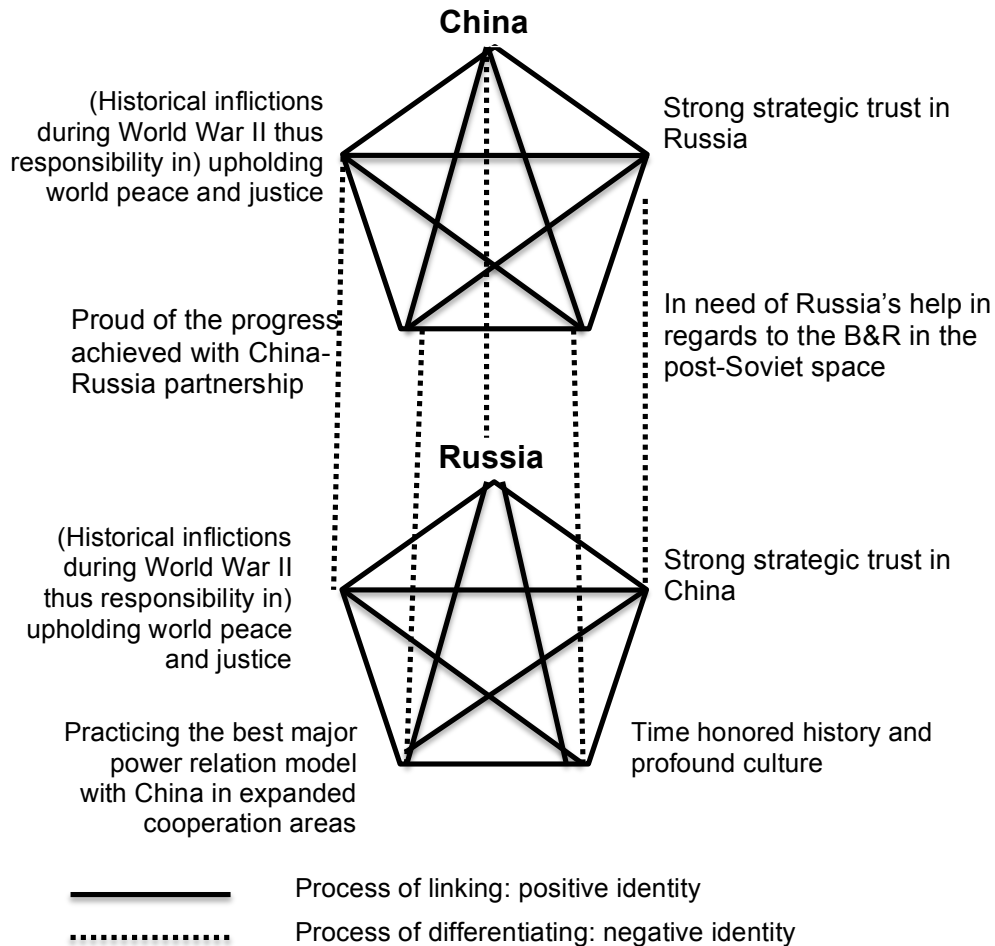


Figure 4.1 The linking and differentiation of China and Russia in Chinese official discourse after the Crimean Crisis.

4.2. Academic Discourse: Strategic Losses and Gains for China

Unlike the official discourses which did not comment on Russia's action in the Crimean Crisis and instead it took a rather defensive position in safeguarding and justifying China-Russia relations, academic discussions demonstrated a more diverse debate directly voicing concerns not on Russia's aggressive behaviors, rather on the strategic losses China experienced in regards to Ukraine and in tackling the Western commentators' claim that China turned out to be the biggest winner in the Crisis.

There are four basic discourses formed on China's international identity in academic debate after the Crisis. First, China experienced significant losses in the Crimean Crisis. Second, China is taking huge risk in its investments in Russia including the newly-signed 30-year gas contract. Third, the sanctions Russia experiences from the West and its worsened economy resulted in losses for Chinese companies. Fourth, a friendly and peaceful environment is still a priority for China; therefore, the B&R is a good opportunity for China's neighborhood and eliminate the doubts the West have on China's rise.

There are four basic discourses formed on Russia in China's academic debate after the Crisis. First, Russia is forced to turn to the East and in its expanded cooperation with China. Second, Russia is likely to find mutual ground with the U.S. in Asia Pacific; Russia being silent and being supportive of China is temporary. Third, Russia's increased participation through the B&R and infrastructure building projects are welcomed and good for China's rise. Fourth, Russia's worsened economy decreases its eligibility as China's strategic partner.

Based on these basic discourses post-Crisis, how China's international identity and Russia constructed in China's official discourses are demonstrated in Figure 4.2.

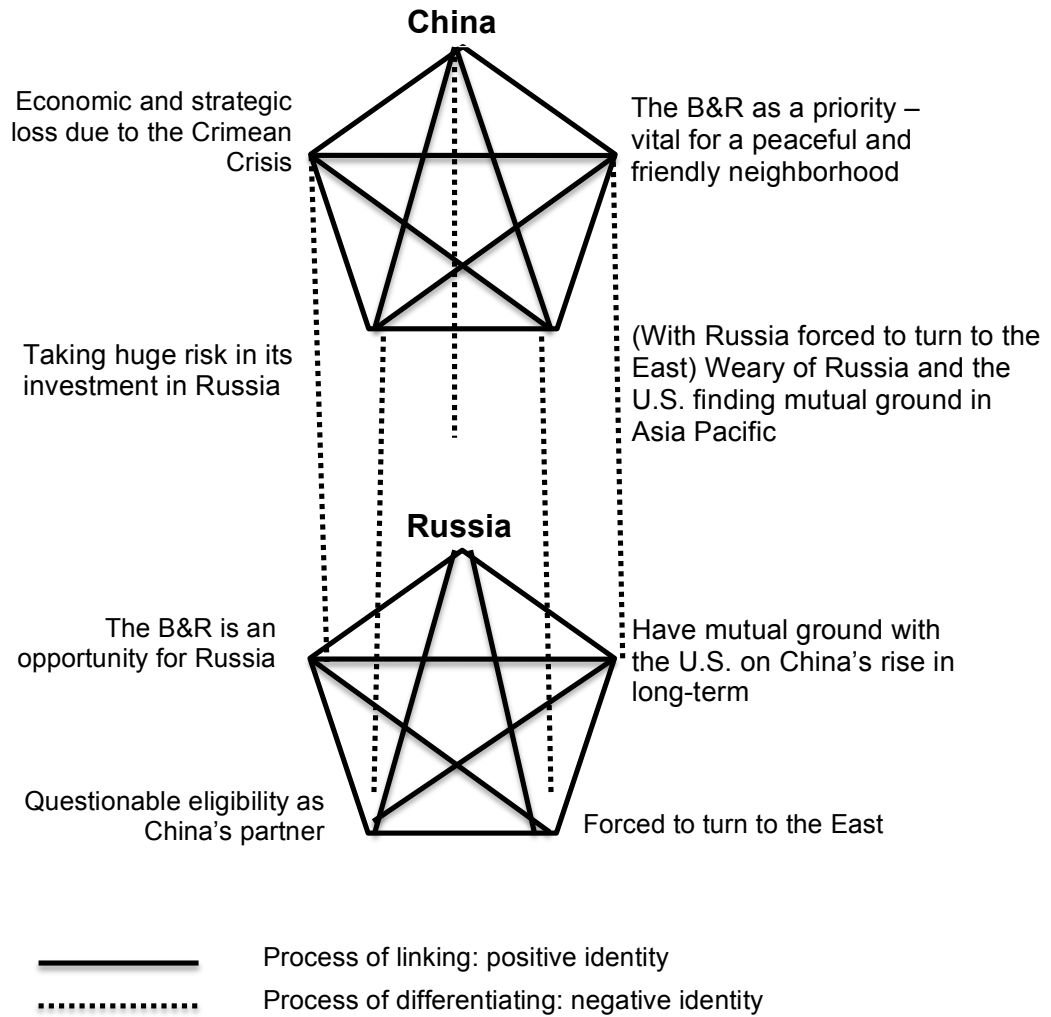


Figure 4.2 The linking and differentiation of China and Russia in Chinese academic debate after the Crimean Crisis.

4.2.1. The After Effect of the Crimean Crisis for China

The following sections map out Chinese scholars' approaches on Russian and on the China-Russia partnership. The first discusses Russia in China's major foreign policy interest: Central Asia and Asia Pacific after the Crimean Crisis. The second section presents Chinese scholars' voice on Russia's eligibility as China's partner as well as discussions on if Russia fits in China's international identity/mission. The last section elaborates on the two countries' visions on international arena according to Chinese scholars.

Russia was not the only one under the spotlight of the Western media in the mid of the Crimean Crisis, so was China. Numerous Western commentators deemed that China is the biggest winner of the Crimean Crisis (Gorst, 2014; Goldstein, 2014; Gabuev, 2015) Goldstein wrote

‘it has been conventional wisdom for some time among Western strategists that China is actually the biggest winner of the new and grave tensions in Eastern Europe. Not only has it benefited from a landmark gas agreement with Russia, but, so the logic goes, the new tension in U.S.-Russian relations may sap dynamism from the erstwhile Asia-Pacific rebalance, while encouraging Moscow to increase its cooperation in all respects with Beijing’ (2014).

Gorst commented ‘China is emerging as the winner in the Ukraine crisis even as Russia's relations with the US and the European Union go from bad to worse. It has secured a huge gas deal with Gazprom and is making strides towards greater involvement in the Russian oil and gas production’ (2014). Adding to the Western voice, several Russian scholars also claimed that China has gained enormous economic profits due to the deteriorating tensions in the Ukraine Crisis. In their perceptions, the hollowness left by the Western capital pushed Russia to re-evaluate energy supply to China; the bankruptcy of the Ukraine aviation industry as well as several other industries also brought huge potential for China. Chinese domestic discourses do not see China as a subject for the Crimean Crisis but indeed pointing out the positive influence for China but rarely pointing out the China's losses and the potential risk the crisis created for China (Li, 2015). Li argues the opposite of the Western voice. Prior to the crisis, China and Ukraine have already decided to construct strategic partner relationships in the spheres of trade, investment, science, aircraft, space security, agriculture, as well as

infrastructure building. Bilateral agreements signed by the Chinese and Ukraine government went ineffective due to the crisis. Chinese companies experienced huge losses, according to Li, as sanctions from the West and the devaluation of rubles (2015).

Not only Chinese scholars elaborated on the cost of the Crimean Crisis for China and this disturbance and interruption on China's peaceful rise, there are concerns over Russia's turn to the East. The Crimean Crisis has made Russia the target of sanctions from the West which paved the road for Russia's turning to the East - to China. Li perceives the crisis as a big challenge to Russia's policy of unity and Russia's attempts to retrieve its great power status was discouraged. Russia is not equipped with a strategically effective method to reconstruct the post-Soviet geopolitical space (2015). Russia's carrots-and-stick type of diplomacy in its neighborhood cause the unprecedented tension after the breakdown of Soviet Union. Russia was in a dilemma. that if Russia does not take any precaution against Ukraine leaning towards the West, this could not only have led to losing Ukraine but create a model that other CIS countries could replicate. But intervention in an aggressive behavior backfired on Russia: Ukraine is leaning towards the West; it created negative influence in CIS and damaged Russia's international image. To some extent, Russia's hard reaction is forced by the West's continuously 'East enlargement', it is not a strategically victory. Crimean Crisis worsened Russia's economy.

In the aftermath of the crisis, Chinese scholars adopted a critical and skeptical tone regarding Russia's turning to the East that Russia, being in a hostile position, was forced to make a detour from its planned state development strategy. The same approach was applied to Russia's stance in Asia Pacific regions as it would not want to offend China. Li does not settle on that being silent would be Russia's long-term strategy, but rather as a compromise Moscow had to take temporarily. In long-term, in regards to China's rise, Russia might find mutual ground with the U.S. (2015).

4.2.2. Russia's Eligibility as a Partner in Central Asia

Following the losses China experienced due to the crisis Li argued, the closeness China and Russia formed after the crisis might not turned out to be in China's interest (2015).

In Li's argument, this strategic partnership is not yet transformed into any tangible benefits for China and China's investments in Russia are of high risks:

‘Subjectively, if Ukraine Crisis has never happened, China sincerely wants to strengthen cooperation with Russia. Objectively, because of Crimean Crisis, China faced huge loss – especially the possibilities of military cooperation with Ukraine. Whether cooperation with Russia on military side could compensate this, is still in doubt. This (the Ukraine Crisis) is a victory for the US. The gas contract with Russia over a 30-year-term is a long period of time; thus it involves many risks. Many factors compose huge risk factors for China's investment projects in Russia: its worrisome economy, its facing sanctions from the West, or even hypothetically its reconciliation with the West in the future. Again, China is not the biggest winner of the Ukraine Crisis. This cannot be made up’ (Li, 2015).

Partially in response to commentators that China experienced losses due to the crisis, Li's comments revealed the doubt Chinese academic discourse hold on Russia's eligibility as China's partner that even though a deal was signed, it is a high risk investment for China with no return guaranteed. In Li's perception, China is doing Russia a favor in signing the gas deal

‘Russia needed the contract more than China did. Instead of claiming that China takes advantage of Russia in closing the deal, it is rather that Russia uses the contract as a leverage against the West and to protect itself. The price negotiation went on for about 10 years. Russian side, indeed, made compromises in its profit margins in receiving huge amount of deposit; China did leave space for profits. It is still in doubt if Russia could fulfill the contract; China is not monitoring the process closely either’ (2015).

Unlike official discourses which utter belief and progress, scholar discourse dig and question pragmatic benefits for China in its partnership with Russia. As the Belt and Road initiative and the EEU overlap on their focus on Central Asia, Chinese scholars debated vigorously on the prospects of pragmatic cooperation of the two initiatives. Xu argued that Post-Soviet space poses uncertainty for "The Silk Road Economic Belt". The Belt and Road has already achieved initial success and post-Soviet space is important for its further development; however, Putin proposed the idea of Eurasian Union in October, 2011 with

Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan signing and ratifying agreement on the EEU (2014). The initiation of the B&R and the development the EEU will definitely have overlapping proposals in Xu's vision:

‘Though Russia is not publicly against any proposals of the B&R and is not preventing China's pursuit of further and deeper cooperation in post-Soviet space, uncertainties remain. After the Crimean Crisis, Russia enhanced cooperation with China further and is now hoping to be involved in strengthen connection with the Korean Peninsula and Eurasia in aspects of infrastructure building and investment cooperation. However, the EEU led by Russia in its essence carries ‘closeness’; this is very different from China's active proposals and openness for regional cooperation. This gap in two countries strategy could bring many uncertainties to the future’ (Xu, 2015).

For Chinese scholars, China's vision on the B&R does not limit itself as a development strategy for specific industries and areas within China, but more of a new initiative actively seeking for cooperation with foreign countries. Furthermore, it is also a significant strategic initiative for China in its attempts of looking forward to a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and inter-regional cooperation. The end goal is to facilitate coordination and proactive integration both internationally and proactively. The guiding principles for the R&B are respecting rights of sovereign states, fostering common interests and cooperation culture in order to build an open, inclusive and sustainable cooperation order (Xu, 2014). Though these initiatives carry great ambition, Xu thinks the strategic concept faces complex external surroundings. The future relies on ‘active policy dialogues, shared ideas of cooperation, positive, interactive scale economic and trade activities, joint investment, cooperation mechanism and other practices’ (Xu, 2014). For Lian, the Chinese government attempts to construct a regional community in order to reconstruct new social relations among countries in this region. The proposal of the new concept as well as institutionalization of it require a specific social context; it faces the competition of multiple regionalisms in Central Asia and if China opts to root this cooperation in historical legitimacy, it needs to be enriched and Russia could be great potential help in this seek of recognition (Lian, 2014). China – Russia partnership under the framework of the R&B, instead of only on the platform of SCO could

eliminate the doubts Western countries hold for a ‘Sino-Russian military cooperation’ and this is in China’s favor of creating an image of peaceful rise (Lian, 2014).

To sum it up, Chinese scholars welcome Russia’s involvement in the R&B and perceive it as a great opportunity for legitimization of the concept the R&B trying to encourage in the post-Soviet space. The region is critical for China’s energy sector. China-Russia strategic partnership could be seen as a positive example of win-win cooperation for other countries in the region to follow. China could use Russia’s help and support in identity recognition. The promotion of economic cooperation and infrastructure building projects also form a friendly environment for China’s peaceful rise by eliminating the Western countries’ doubts and hesitations against the SCO as well as their suspicion on SCO as a Sino-Russian military cooperation.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

This research intends to investigate the change in the discursive construction of identity of China towards Russia taking the Crimean Crisis as the pivoting point. In order to achieve this goal, I formed one key research question: *how have China's views of Russia changed in official discourses and academic debate before and after the Crimean Crisis during the selected timeframe*. As for the timeframe of the research project, I opted Xi's incumbent of office in March 2013 until the referendum in Crimea (March 2014) as the first part; the second part the post Crisis era until 2017 as the second part of discourses representation. With the poststructuralist approach of discourse analysis, I attempted to present answers to both questions.

5.1. China's Discourses towards Russia Pre-Crimean: major power relations and the Chinese Dream

After Xi's incumbent and before the Crisis, official discourses in relation to Russia established China's identity as i) a major power committed to world peace and development, ii) promoting a new type of diplomacy, iii) on a critical stage of national revival in achieving, and iv) practicing win-win cooperation firmly. China's official views on Russia was established vis-à-vis China's identity construction: i) as a major power in China's neighbourhood, ii) practicing the best major power relation model with China, iii) just like China, on critical stage of great national revival, and iv) partner of win-win cooperation promoted by China. Though this research followed Hansen's research model and used process of differentiating as a construction of negative identity, in this case, not a radical other is created; instead, Russia's identity in Chinese official discourses is based on China's own identity. In other words, rather than Russia is projected as an Other, the existence of Russia's identity is like an extension of Chinese identity.

Academic discourses in relation to Russia established China's identity as i) maintain friendly environment for its peaceful rise, ii) overall security and stability affected by its neighborhood/Russia, iii) suffering from the tension between energy supply and energy growth, and iv) weary of the West's precautions on its rise. Russia in Chinese academic

debate are i) no longer an “Empire”, ii) leading the EEU and bringing prosperity to Central Asia, iii) not an energy superpower but stand a chance to influence world energy market if partner with China, and iv) frequently discouraged in its relations to the West. Once again, the views of Russia are created vis-à-vis China’s perceptions of itself.

Taking Russia as the first leg of overseas visits since Xi’s incumbent, Beijing pledged high aspiration for Sino-Russian relation prior to the Crimean Crisis. Beijing’s projections of identity followed ‘Major Power’ school proposed by Shambough through its initiation and development of ‘a new type of major power relations’. Beijing perceives its strategic partnership with Russia and the close personal relation of the heads of states as the best example of the new major power relations China intends to promote. This relation involves mutual trust and respect as well as commitment for world peace, world development, and strategic power balance the the world. Beijing attaches significance to the strategic partnership and reckon that both countries are on a critical stage of its national renewal. China’s long term goal is a friendly and peaceful environment for its rise on the world stage and realize the Chinese Dream. On the regional level, China sees Russia an important partner for a secured land-border and values the friendship between the two nations. This friendly and win-win bilateral relationship facilitates beneficial cooperation economy, trade, energy, security strategy.

Pre-Crimean academic discourses presented a more sector based examination on key areas of bilateral cooperation. Russia is seen as a key figure in the post-Soviet space and it seemed that Russia has lost its interests in having to manage a vast empire and is no longer willing to carry other countries’ security and military responsibilities. Russia was seen moving away from its vast empire with the eastern enlargement of NATO Ukraine’s leaning towards the EU (Ge, 2013). On Sino-Russian relations, scholars agree on Russia as major power in China’s neighborhood and common interests are identifiable. Russia and China do share a partially overlapped definition of the West - the U.S. and the EU; the two have different approaches in response to the West. While Russia responds with establishing military bases and condemning the West’s humanitarian intervention in hope to maintain its great power status in the region, China focus on a peaceful rise and development. Here we see a difference in the two countries’ key interest. For Russia, the core of its geopolitical

interests - the pivot point is Ukraine that without Ukraine, Russia is no long an empire; and Russia is struggling with its great power/major power status. For China, mutual respect and mutual benefits through win-win cooperation are China's core goals. Scholars acknowledge and agree on severe implications Russian foreign policies and actions have on China's peaceful rise and development as Russia is a major power in China's neighborhood.

Apart from the China-Russia partnership and the difference in terms of goals the two have, Chinese scholars paid great attention to Russia's energy sector and its implications for China. Energy is in China's key interests. Targeting on the myth – Russia as an energy empire, doubts remain on Russia's energy sector regard its high consumption rate and low research and development investment. However, scholars agree on that Russia's energy supply would contribute significantly to China's pursuit of sustainable and environmental-friendly economic development. Conflicts in terms of interest is seen as unavoidable but an optimistic perspective remain in resolving these potential disagreements with Russia. Scholars hold doubts the capability Russia has the institutions and rules of world energy market was predicted; however, the potential of China and Russia cooperate in the energy could afford to not play according to the norm set by the West.

Year 2013 was seen by Chinese academics as a critical year for China and for Russia; new hopes were projected for Sino-Russia partnership to deepen cooperation and widen partnership areas. Though Russian economy reached a new low, Chinese scholars still refer Russia as a superpower/ major power in China's neighborhood. With Xi's initiation of the B&R, the overlapping area it has with the EEU could be an opportunity for further bilateral cooperation. Scholars expressed hope for the China-Russia partnership entering a new phase.

5.2. China's Discourses towards Russia Post-Crimean: Focus Shift and Russia's Eligibility

After the Crimean Crisis, official discourses in relation to Russia established China's identity as i) shoulder responsibility in upholding world peace and justice due to historical inflictions during World War II, ii) strong strategic trust in Russia, iii) in need of Russia's help in regards to the B&R in the post-Soviet space, and iv) proud of progress achieved with China-Russia

partnership. In comparison with China's identity construction before the crisis, official discourses shifted focus from China's vision to the strategic significance Russia play in China's vision. A closer linking is found in the construction of Russia in China's official discourses: i) just like China, due to historical inflictions during World War II Russia holds responsibility in upholding world peace and justice, ii) Russia has strong strategic trust in China, iii) practicing the best major power relation model with China in expanded cooperation areas, iv) just like China, Russia has time-honored history and profound culture.

Academic discourses in relation to Russia established China's identity took a more drastic change than official discourses. China is seen: i) experienced economic and strategic loss due to the Crimean Crisis, ii) the B&R is a priority as it is vital for a peaceful and friendly neighborhood, iii) weary of Russia and the U.S. finding mutual ground in Asia Pacific as Russia is forced to turn to the East, and iv) taking huge risk in its investment in Russia. In contrast of the uniformity of official discourses, a competing identity in doubting China-Russia partnership emerged after the Crisis in academic debate. Russia's identity established in academic debate are: i) the B&R is an opportunity for Russia, ii) have mutual with the U.S. on China's rise in long-term, iii) the eligibility Russia has as China's partner is questionable, iv) Russia is forced to turn to the East. In comparison with the identity of Russia constructed by academic debate, a more negative identity of Russia is created through the process of differentiating.

Beijing refrained from criticizing openly on Russia's behaviors in Crimea; Beijing expressed its strong support and for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue. On Sino-Russia relations, Beijing highlighted that the partnership is not dictated by 'international vicissitudes and does not target any third party' and the 'strong strategic trust' shared by both sides. Official discourses identified the fruitful progress in ongoing cooperation and widened cooperation areas with energy, aviation, space security, joint R&D investments added to the list. Russia is seen as a key partner in China's proposal of new Asian security concept; and China looks forward to cooperation on the B&R with the EEU using the SCO as a platform.

Academic discourses expressed concern over the Crimean Crisis but not focusing on Russia's expansionist behaviors or be weary on whether it is a violation of international

norms. Instead, Chinese scholars discussed intensively on the loss China faced as a result of the crisis in response to the Western comment that China turns out to be the biggest winner of the crisis due to Russia's turning to the East and the gas deal signed between China and Russia. In Chinese scholars' perspectives, China lost the opportunity in formalizing bilateral relationships with Ukraine; the military cooperation China-Ukraine worked on was interrupted because of the crisis and it remains unknown if Russia is able to fill this gap; Chinese companies and enterprises suffered from major economic loss due to the devaluation of Russian ruble. Indeed, with the 30-year gas deal signed, Russia received huge amount of deposit and China seemed to be able to close a deal that lasted for 10 years; however, Chinese scholars sees huge risk in China's investment in Russia. For them, Russia is in a dilemma and is forced to turn to the East; a temporary supportive stance is taken by Russia in Asia Pacific as Russia cannot afford to offend China. They also see a potential of reconciliation between the U.S. and Russia in finding a mutual ground regarding China's rise; once this happen, China will no longer be in a strategically advantageous position.

Questions over Russia's role as China's partner in Central Asia were raised. Scholars adopted a more positive tone in discussion on the R&B and the EEU. Concerns over Beijing's promotion of the R&D to related countries as well as the legitimacy of the concept of cooperation in infrastructure building were brought forth. Under this perspective, Chinese scholars welcome Russia's involvement in the R&B and perceive it as a great opportunity for legitimization of the concept the R&B trying to encourage in the post-Soviet space. Central Asia region is of critical importance for China's strategic development. They see China-Russia strategic partnership could be seen as a positive example of win-win cooperation for other countries in the region to follow. China could also use Russia's help and support in identity recognition in the concerned region. These all contribute to China's pursuit of a peaceful environment of rise. The promotion of economic cooperation and infrastructure building projects also form a friendly environment for China's peaceful rise by eliminating the Western countries' doubts and hesitations against the SCO as well as their suspicion on SCO as a Sino-Russian military cooperation.

5.3. Theoretical Implications

The findings presented in this thesis suggested several theoretical implications. First, it has reinforced Hansen's theoretical model of the various degree of otherness and further emphasized on the need to go beyond the Self-Other dichotomy analyzing a country's national identity construction. My findings have shown that rather than showing Russia as a radical other in China's identity in official discourses, an attempt to 'de-othering' Russia is ubiquitous. Russia is as 'major power in China's neighborhood' and a 'strategic partner'; but Russia is more than that because Russia and China both had 'historical sufferings', have 'time-honored history', have 'profound culture' thus they share 'common destiny'. This attempt to de-other Russia is more obvious after the Crisis as to eliminate doubts and in indirect response to both external and internal doubts and to academic debate.

Second, it highlighted the necessity for researchers to examine the interlinking stability of hegemonic discourse on its readings of events. As in Hansen's elaboration that competing discourse might challenge the link between the policy-identity through different readings of events and facts. The identities of Russia as a 'strategic partner' and a 'major power in China's neighborhood' did not change due to the Crimean Crisis. But we have seen new discourses developed to justify and to stabilize the linking in order to support the identities constructed so as to minimize the effect the event – the Crimean Crisis has on these identities. This, again articulates the necessity for researchers to go beyond the Other and examine the various degree of otherness.

Third, it served as a use case of Hansen's theory of political identity constructions as three categories: spatial, temporal, and ethical constructions (2006, 46-51). Chinese official discourses and their inter-linking of identity constructions have demonstrated its efforts of simulating Russia as China: spatial identity as sharing the common neighborhood, temporal identity as active participant in the B&R and in the SCO, and ethical identity found in sharing common paths, sharing 'time-honored history', 'profound culture'; and therefore share the common destiny.

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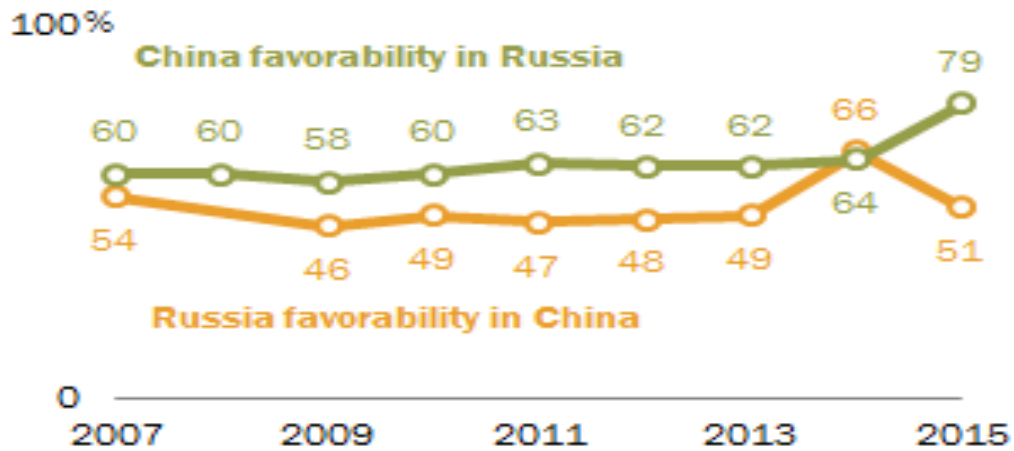
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Appendix II. LIST OF FIGURES

Chinese and Russian Views of Each Other Diverge



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12b, d.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 1. Pew Research Center. 2015. "Chinese and Russian Views of Each Other Diverge." Available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/08/05/russia-putin-held-in-low-regard-around-the-world/russia-image-04/>

Appendix III. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B&R – The Belt and Road

EEU - Eurasian Economic Union

FMPRC - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

IR - International Relation

R&D – research and development

Russian MFA - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization

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