

“The History Problem, Identity Distance, and Worsening Sino-Japanese Relations”

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Mr. Ryu argues that in Northeast Asia the salience of the so-called "history problem" widened the identity distance among the regional countries, while in Southeast Asia the process of building a regional identity and the ASEAN Community narrowed the regional identity distance. As a result, regional conflict became more frequent and intense in Northeast Asia, while it decreased in frequency and intensity in Southeast Asia. The analysis of the original multi-country surveys of the political elite reveals that identity distance correlates with key variables that would affect interstate conflict such as threat perception, regional security cooperation, and the willingness to settle disputes. Furthermore, the content analysis of major newspapers in the two regions shows how the identity distance evolved in opposite directions in the two regions.

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Commentator: Hiro KATSUMATA, Assistant Professor, WIAP

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