Topic-Setting Program to Advance Cutting-Edge

Humanities and Social Sciences Research

（Global Initiative）

Progress Report

（Summary of Final Report）

[Collaborative Research on Political Information Transmission: CROP-IT]

Core-Researcher: Atsushi TAGO

Institution: Kobe University

Academic Unit: Graduate School of Law

Position: Professor

Research Period: FY2013 - FY2016

1. Basic information of research project

Research Area	Empirical Studies on International Publicity and Transmission in Japan
Project Title	Collaborative Research on Political Information Transmission: CROP-IT
Institution	Kobe University
Core-Researcher (Name, Academic Unit & Position)	Atsushi TAGO Professor, Graduate School of Law
Project Period	FY2013 － FY2016
Appropriations Plan (¥)	FY2013 10,000,000 JPY
	FY2014 20,000,000 JPY
	FY2015 17,800,000 JPY
	FY2016 8,400,000 JPY

2. Purpose of research

"CROP-IT" is a JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) funded advanced social science research initiative to foster international collaborative studies on political information transmission. A variety of projects were started in February 2014 to March 2017. Key Approaches of CROP-IT could be summarized as follows:

  Comparative Content Analyses on Foreign Policy Communications

  Comparative Lab./Internet Experiments on Politics and Information

  Mixed Method Approach of Content Analysis and Experiment on Politics and Information

For instance, one of our teams would collect and accumulate the data of regular foreign policy communications of major countries and compare them to see what are similarities and differences between the countries. Not only the regular press statements but also public speech at key international venues such as the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council will be collected and analyzed by using content analysis techniques.

3. Outline of research (Including study member)

The PI of "CROP-IT" is Atsushi TAGO, Professor, Graduate School of Law, Kobe University (http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~tago/), who is responsible for overall management of the entire project. Kazunori INAMASU (Associate Professor, School of Sociology, Kwansei-gakuin University (http://researchmap.jp/read0144481/)) and Shoko KOHAMA (Associate Professor, Department of Law and Politics, Hokkaido University (http://lex.juris.hokudai.ac.jp/~skohama)) are two Co-PIs; Inamasu is responsible for content analysis and Kohama is responsible for experiment.

　　　In addition, numerous scholars including Yutaka ONISHI (Professor, School of Law, Kobe University), Ken MASUJIMA (Professor, School of Law, Kobe University), Kaoru KURUSU (Professor, School of Law, Kobe University), Steven PICKERING (Assistant Professor, School of Law, Kobe University until 2015 and now Lecturer at Brunel University in London), Daina Chiba (Senior Lecturer, Department of Government University of Essex), Taku YUKAWA (Associate Professor, Graduate

School of International Public Policy), Seiki TANAKA (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam), and Kazuto OHTSUKI (Assistant Professor, Waseda University) join our team.

For the activities of past 4 years, we devoted first one and half years to conduct content analyses on Japanese political and diplomatic information emission. We picked up variety of agenda topics like Olympics games, fighter jet scramble, comfort women issue, womenomics, Abenomics, Japanese ODA, territorial disputes, gathered data via web-scraping techniques and measured how favorably Japanese information is treated by international media [see Figure A and B]. After the content analysis phase, we moved onto experiment and run numerous experiments (mainly by online web based) to find out what kind of political and diplomatic information could change peoples' perception significantly.
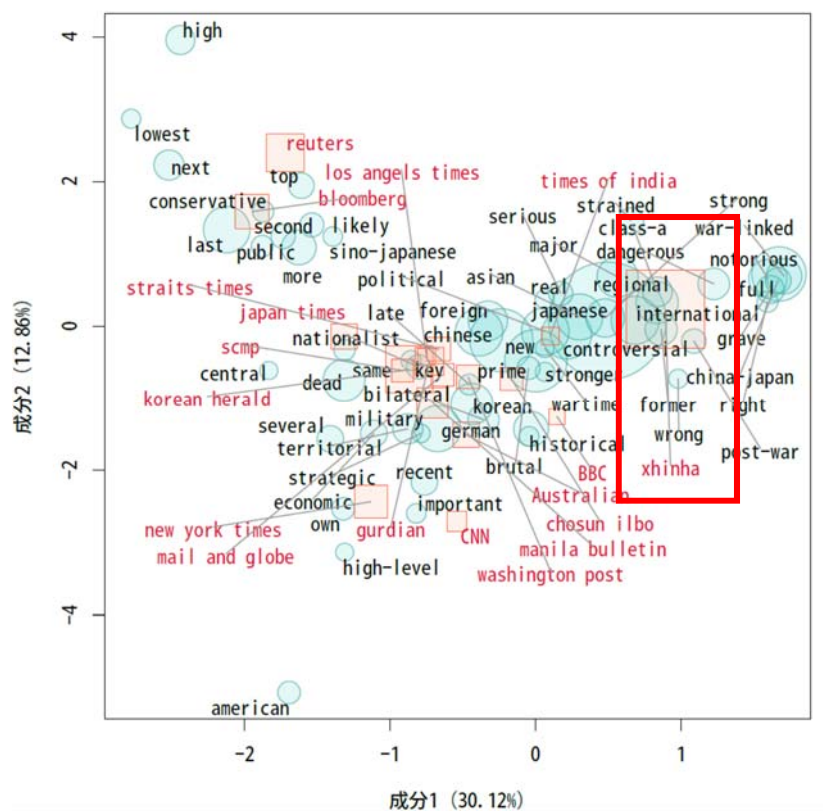

Figure A   International Media Attention on Yasukuni Visit by Prime Minister Abe
（2013.12.19-2014.1.2）

Note: Red letters show media and black letters show key words. In this figure, as red box suggests, Xhinha --- Chinese state media --- is somehow isolated in right hand side and Japanese media are located closer to other international media. This can be also confirmed in Figure B.
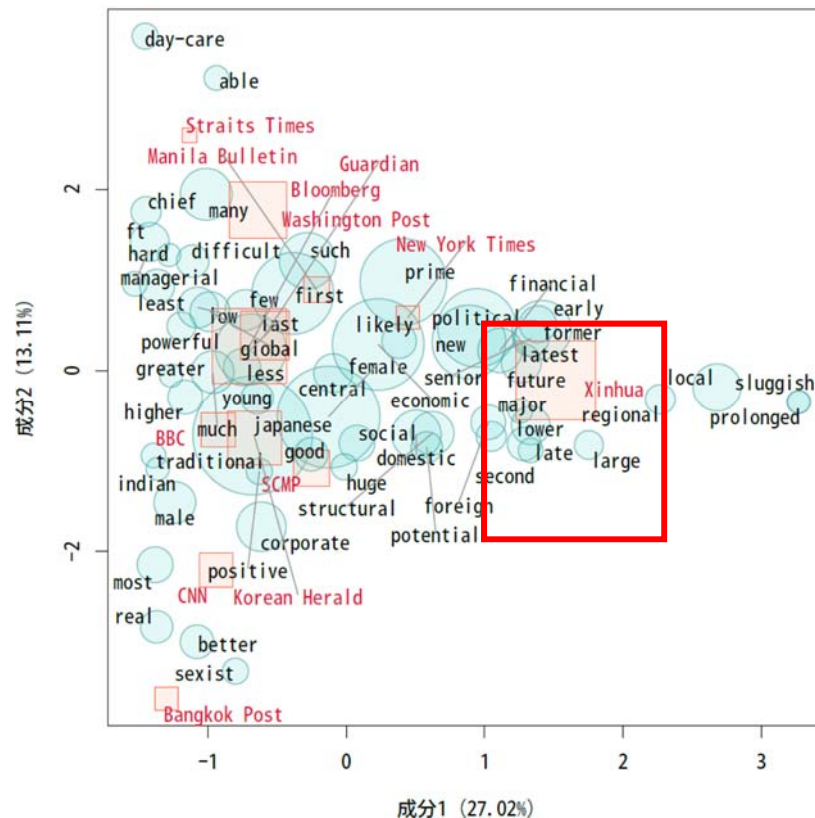
Figure B International Media Attention on Womenomics
（2012.12.26～2014.12.12）

4. Research results and outcomes produced
Our research outcome can be seen from the following sources.

1. Shoko Kohama, Atsushi Tago and Kazunori Inamasu (2017) "Information Sharing in Early-Stage International Disputes: How China and Japan Communicate" In Suzuki M. and Okada A. eds., *Games of Conflict and Cooperation in Asia* New York, NY: Springer, pp. 57-82.

"This study explores the mechanism by which countries share information through international and domestic media in the early stages of international disputes. Despite the rich theoretical literature on crisis bargaining and widespread concerns over various sources of conflict in the Asia-Pacific region, early stage disputes have not been fully modeled. We theorize them in a framework in which countries do not seek immediate redistribution of goods at stake and restrain themselves from escalating the dispute while pursuing an advantageous standing. In the model, two countries simultaneously choose the amount of input in provocative actions with one-sided unknown cost of input and, in advance, a country possessing private information chooses the degree to which it reveals the private information to the counterpart and the domestic public. We demonstrate that exogenous agencies, such as domestic and international media, who are able to verify information, incentivize countries to share private information and provide even greater incentives when these agencies incur a favorable bias in information transmission. Conversely, countries surrounded by hostile international media and relatively uncontrollable domestic media

are likely to send noisy signals, which undermines the quality of information transmission. In early stage disputes, therefore, the international news environment and domestic freedom of the press greatly affect information sharing between disputants. To illustrate this mechanism, we analyze governmental statements and subsequent news articles publicized during the Sino-Japanese aircraft scrambling incidents in 2014 using the quantitative text analysis (QTA) method."

2. **Seiki Tanaka, Atsushi Tago and Kristian S. Gleditsch (2016) "Seeing the Lexus for the Olive Trees? Public Opinion, Economic Interdependence, and Interstate Conflict,"** *International Interactions* **(forthcoming; published online first in 2016)**

"Many scholars argue that economic interdependence and more extensive economic ties between countries decreases the risk of violent conflict between them. However, despite considerable research on the "capitalist peace" at the macro or dyadic level, there has been less attention to its possible individual-level microfoundations or underpinnings. We argue that public perceptions about economic ties with other states and the costs of conflict should influence the expected constraints on the use of force for leaders. Actual high interdependence and potential economic costs may not suffice to create political constraints on the use of force if people are unaware of the degree of interdependence or fail to understand the benefits of trade and the likely economic costs of disruptive conflict. We examine the linkages between individual perceptions about economic interdependence and their views on conflict and peace through a survey experiment, where we ask respondents in Japan about approval for belligerent actions in a territorial dispute with China and varying information about economic ties. Our findings indicate that greater knowledge and information about economic interdependence affects attitudes about territorial disputes and increases support for peaceful solutions with China."

3. **Shoko Kohama, Kazunori Inamasu and Atsushi Tago (2016) "To Denounce or Not To Denounce: Survey Experiments on Diplomatic Quarrels,"** *Political Communication.* **(forthcoming; published online first in 2016)**

"Despite widespread concern over heated diplomatic debates and growing interest in public diplomacy, it is still incompletely understood what type of message is more effective for gaining support from foreign public, or the international society, in situations where disputing countries compete in diplomatic campaigns. This study, through multiple survey experiments, uncovers the effect of being silent, issuing positive justification, and negative accusation, in interaction with the opponent's strategy. We demonstrate that negative verbal attacks "work" and undermine the target's popularity as they do in electoral campaigns. Unlike domestic electoral campaigns, however, negative diplomacy has little "backlash" and persuades people to support the attacker. Consequently, mutual verbal fights make neither party more popular than the other. Nevertheless, this does not discourage disputants from waging verbal fights due to the structure similar to the one-shot prisoner's dilemma. We also find that positive messages are highly context-dependent— that is, their effects greatly depend on the opponent's strategy and value proximity between the messenger and the receiver."

Other than that, we have contributed to professional blog posts like **Tago, Atsushi and Inamasu, Kazunori (2016) "Obama's visit to Hiroshima is viewed as "a sort of" apology by the people of Japan."** *USApp – American Politics and Policy Blog* **(25 May 2016)** and **Kohama, Shoko, Kazunori Inamasu and Atsushi Tago (2016) "Why Putin and Obama use fighting words when they don't want to fight"** *Washington Post Monkey Cage*, **(28 September 2016)**. Given the fact those blog posts are recently becoming to a popular tool to publicize academic research in the field of political science and international relations, our team should be commended for those activities to explain in plain words what is the core message of our research.