



The New Type of Great Power Relations between China and U.S.: A Complex Constructivist Perspective

Liu Yangyue*

National University of Defense Technology

Abstract

The new type of Sino-U.S. relations has been gaining increasing academic attention, as a result of intensive interactions of the two countries' leadership. Since there is no precedent for the new-type great power relations, traditional (mainstream) paradigms in international politics are much less powerful in explaining this emerging phenomenon. By contrast, the theory of complex constructivism, based on binary complementarity and emphasizing dynamic process, provides a useful perspective. Drawing insights from complex constructivist ideas, this paper attempts to identify the key social conditions that facilitate the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship. It also gives advice on how this relationship can be maintained and strengthened.

Keywords: *Sino-U.S. relations, complex constructivism, binary complementarity*

JEL Classification: *F51, F53, F55, F59*





1. Introduction

Despite concurrent government turnovers in both countries in 2012, political leaders in China and U.S. retain the important consensus on a stable, cooperative Sino-US relationship, reached by their predecessors. Their extensive interactions and speeches have expressed a strong desire to forge a “new type of great power relations” between China and the United States. While for China this “unprecedented and inspiring” relationship calls for “promoting equality, mutual trust, inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutually beneficial cooperation” (Hu, 2012), for U.S. it entails “a stable and mutually acceptable balance between cooperation and competition” (Clinton, 2012). The top leadership of the two countries is reaching a consensus on the Sino-U.S. political architecture – to avoid the seemingly predestined “tragedy of great power politics” and to find a feasible way of cooperative co-existence between declining and rising powers. This consensus crystallizes into the notion of “new type of great power relations”, which not only defines the long-term prospect of Sino-U.S. relationship, but also has strategic significance for maintaining global order and constructing a harmonious world against a backdrop of the international structural transformations.

That said, an important question remains unanswered. To what extent is the new type of great power relations effective and realizable rather than rhetorical and hypothetical? The unraveling of this question requires close investigations of the properties and nature of new-type great power relations. It also demands theoretical and empirical evidence that convincingly supports this new model. Since the notion of new-type great power relations is historically unprecedented, traditional (mainstream) paradigms of international relations theory provide only limited clues for the nascent subject. Meanwhile, based on ideas of binary complementarity¹ and evolutionary process, complex constructivism (Dong, 2012) may supply a useful perspective on how this new model forms. This paper begins with a brief review of how traditional theoretical frameworks interpret Sino-U.S. relationship and why they fail to understand its changing nature. It then draws insights from complex constructivism and analyses the key social conditions under which the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship develops. The last part





discusses the strategic implications for strengthening the cooperative process between China and the United States.

2. What Do Traditional Paradigms Say about the New-Type Sino-U.S. Relationship?

One of the core issues in the study of international relations focuses on the power transitions between declining and rising powers and their political consequences. Pessimistic rationalists believe that the rise of state power is often accompanied by the broadening of national interests and aggressive foreign policies. In this scenario resource competitions between status-quo and revisionist states escalate and worries about survival among the former intensify. The anarchic nature of the international system determines that, as John Mearsheimer (2001: 2) early on noted, the ultimate goal of great powers “is to be the hegemon – that is, the only great power in the system”. In this sense, it is an inevitable political tragedy that systemic power transition brings about conflicts and wars.

Widely acknowledged, the rise of China within the U.S.-led unipolar system has been impressive over the past several decades. The power dynamic is déjà vu-ish – reminding people of the great power struggles in history – which leads to pessimistic predictions about the Sino-U.S. relationship. It is believed that a rising China would mount severe challenges against the current international order and its institutional arrangements. Arguments alike regard China’s economic and cultural outflows as part of a strategic master plan to contend with U.S. for resources and soft power, while China’s contentions with U.S. allies over a number of territorial and historic issues further cloud the prospect of the Sino-U.S. relation (Friedberg, 2005:16-24). These “structural conflicts” (Tang and Lu, 2007) make a recurrence of great power struggles seemingly unavoidable. The views that the Sino-U.S. conflict is doomed not only pervade many bestsellers, but also have a place in some academic studies (Friedberg, 2012; Goldstein, 2013). They consider great power relations as a zero-sum game and conflicts repetitive. Therefore, such a perspective leaves almost no room for





discussing how the Sino-U.S. relation could make historical progress.

Not all the rationalists are haunted with gloomy thoughts. Some scholars downplay China's national strength and argue that China has to deal with a series of internal crises before it can supersede the U.S. hegemony (Shambaugh, 2013a). Henry Kissinger (2012) calls attention to the changing historic conditions that may make Sino-U.S. relations less conflict-prone than people thought. But such broad, historic transformations do not explain the constant fluctuations in the bilateral relationship. By contrast, other positive views highlight the role of economic interdependence and international institutions. In general, they suggest that economic interdependence has greatly expanded the shared interests of China and U.S. and heightened the cost of damaging their relationship. Moreover, the diffusion of international institutions has provided them with a significant platform for dialogues and building mutual trust. From this perspective, the Sino-U.S. relation is defined by their anticipation of effective benefits through cooperative actions, rather than a security dilemma created by fears for survival. However, this perspective is still not without problems. It treats China as an outsider of the present international order without any consideration of the irrationality of this order per se (Johnston, 2007; Ikenberry, 2008: 23). In other words, the West-centric order is used as the standard in assessing China's international behaviours. As previously mentioned, the new type of great power relations should be based on equality, inclusiveness and mutually beneficial cooperation which necessitate a democratic and unbiased international system. In this sense, the key to the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship cannot be found among these theories either.

Moreover, rationalism often underscores the role of material factors, making its explanations static and inflexible. It can hardly embrace the normative and evolutionary meanings embedded in the notion of new-type great power relations. On this score, constructivism complements the weaknesses of rationalist views. It pays much attention to the impacts that ideational factors, such as norm, culture and identity, have on international conflict and cooperation (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, 1996). It argues that international actors behave according to logics of appropriateness rather than logics of consequences. With the





idea that social relations are malleable, constructivists see the possible transformation of Sino-U.S. relationship from “rivals” to “friends”. Such a change may take place when interactions between two countries deepen and their perceptions of the bilateral relation and each other’s intentions converge. Collective identities of trust and cooperation could be established eventually (Pardo, 2009). Nonetheless, constructivist theories seldom identify the conditions – internal or external – under which “enemies” would evolve into “friends”, and vice versa. In addition, the bias similar to that of liberalism still exists. Accepting Western values as universal ones, these theories explore how China socializes international norms and principles and ameliorates its tensions with the United States (Yee, 2010). But when China’s own traditional values are at odds with those of U.S., Chinese behaviours guided by such values are likely to be deemed aberrant and unacceptable without unprejudiced judgment.

Therefore, neither rationalism nor constructivism provides an effective framework for understanding the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship. In fact, more and more studies in international relations have noticed the defects of any singular theoretical paradigm in explaining real-world phenomenon. Some attempt to borrow from more than one paradigm and incorporate ideas from different research traditions into new and comprehensive frameworks. Terms such as realist constructivism (Barkin 2010), complex security theory (Buzan and Waever, 2003), analytic eclecticism (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010) and cosmopolitan power (Gallarotti, 2010) have exemplified these efforts. On this score, a Chinese scholar, Dong Qingling (2012), has raised a concept of “complex constructivism”. It argues that the idea of binary opposition, dominant for long in the Western philosophy, should be replaced by a binary complementarity derived from traditional Chinese philosophy. In specific, it regards material and ideational factors in international relations as a complementary and mutually constructive pair, thus rejecting the common proposition that treats material and emotion as separated and independent variables. As this framework suggests, “within different complex structures constructed collectively by material and ideational elements, actors would choose different





modes of identity construction (divergent identities vs. convergent identities) and resort to different paths of socialization. Therefore (these complex structures) would have impacts on how the international system evolves and which norms and values diffuse” (Dong 2012:132). Although this new framework has its own flaws, such as being too all-inclusive to generate effective causal mechanisms, its core conceptions – especially the complex interaction between material and ideational factors – contribute to our understanding of international relations². As a result, this paper draws lessons from complex constructivism to analyse the key social conditions that support the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship and attempts to understand the evolution of this relationship from a process-focused approach.

3. What Is the Empirical Foundation of the New-Type Sino-U.S. Relations?

According to complex constructivism, what determines the overall trajectory (toward conflict or cooperation) of international system is the complex structure constructed collectively by material and ideational elements. As Dong (2012) put it, “with different combinations of material and ideational structures, actors will adopt different approaches of socialization, internalize different structural norms, and construct and reinforce their preferences.” Specifically, the key social conditions that lead to international conflicts/collaborations include the containment of violent and the extent of identity cohesiveness. The former variable refers to “the extent to which structural power controls and inhibits the use of force among actors” (Dong 2012), while the latter relates to the distinction between divergent and convergent identities. Meanwhile, these social conditions do not function in a static way. The analysis of these conditions should be made with attention to the context of the “structure-agent-process” tripartite interactions. Against this backdrop, this part investigates the social conditions that foster the development of the new-type Sino-U.S. relation and explores the evolutionary process of this development.



3.1. Containment of Violence

The containment of violence in the international system hinges on external factors that inhibit and decrease the likelihood of the use of force. For Sino-U.S. relations, the primary inhibiting factor is the overall feature of the international system. Deng Xiaoping has insightfully pointed out in the 1980s that “peace and development are the major themes in the context of the present era”. This claim remains true today. One important feature of the current international system is the prevalent hope for peace and stability. In fact, at least since the end of the Cold War, armed conflicts between great powers have not been seen. Empirical evidence also supports a peace-inclining world. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), organized violence, including armed conflicts, non-state conflicts and one-sided violence, has witnessed a general decline during 2001-2010 (Themner and Wallensteen, 2012). In addition, the Global Peace Index also reports signs of improvement in all the regions except Middle East and North Africa (Schippa and Hyslop, 2012). It is interesting to notice that China and the United States rank in adjacent places (being 89th and 88th respectively among 158 countries), indicating that the two countries may have similar perceptions of and strategic reactions to international affairs. In general, the themes of peace and development have provided positive environment for the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship.

The second factor relates to the multilateral and bilateral cooperative institutions between U.S. and China. The *Yearbook of International Organizations* (Union of International Associations, 2013) has identified more than 66,000 IOs, with an annual growth rate of 1,200. For Sino-U.S. relations, the major function of these institutions is to serve as a mediator or arbiter when disputes and tensions emerge between the two nations, rather than to compel China to accept and comply with international norms. For instance, since China joined the World Trade Organization, both China and U.S. have increasingly resorted to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism (DSM). As one scholar observed, “the growing utilization of the DSM in the past decade may have helped to channel the tensions surrounding the bilateral trade relationship to the multilateral forum and to prevent intense interest



group pressure from impairing overall United States-China trade relations” (Zeng, 2013: 59). In this sense, the actions of using the DSM contribute to, rather than undermine, the stability of Sino-U.S. relationship. Moreover, bilateral dialogues and institutions have provided a direct platform for enhancing mutual trust and ameliorating tensions. Statistics show that there are over 90 dialogue mechanisms between China and U.S., covering various fields such as politics, economy, security, trade, technology, energy and culture. Twelve meetings between the heads of state have been held since Obama was first elected (Yuan, 2013). While it is over-optimistic that these institutionalized interactions could eradicate in the short term the cleavages between the two nations, they can contain their disputes within the institutional cage. The U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogues, for example, have been regarded as having effects of controlling risks and promoting leadership communications (Jin and Dai, 2013). When the cyber security issue became contentious recently, a working group on cyber security between the two countries was established. It demonstrates that bilateral institutions also count for in addressing new problems of the bilateral relationship.

The gradual stabilization of some critical issues also contributes to the containment of violence in Sino-U.S. relations. Most salient is the issue of cross-Strait relations. The Taiwan independence movements have been, to some extent, on the wane since Ma Ying-jeou was sworn in, which has greatly reduced the uncertainties in the Sino-U.S. relationship. In fact, George W. Bush, in his meeting with then-Premier Wen in 2003, has made public his opposition to the Taiwanese independence. This event has been interpreted as a milestone for the progressive side of the bilateral relations (Yuan, 2012). However, the development of a single event can also undermine the inhibition of violence. For example, sovereignty disputes in the East and South China Sea may spill over into Sino-U.S. collisions. Even more worrisome is that the U.S. has been taking measures to militarize and weaponize the outer space and cyberspace, thus inducing an offense-defense imbalance in the new strategic domains. These efforts would fundamentally weaken the violence controllability in Sino-U.S. relations. Therefore, while the





containment of violence has significantly strengthened the new-type Sino-U.S. relationship, this condition is not permanent and unchangeable. Uncertainties around some critical issues still pose threat to the bilateral relationship.

3.2. The Extent of Identity Cohesiveness

While containment of violence serves as an external (material) condition for the new-type Sino-U.S. relations, identity cohesiveness has a direct impact on the intersubjective dimension. Convergent identities between the two countries stem primarily from a strategic consensus that the two sides have reached on the bilateral relationship. Leaders in both countries have increasingly recognized the importance of stable relations on their national interests, regional peace and stability, as well as solutions to various global issues. In 2005 then-U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick, introduced the idea of encouraging China to be a “responsible stakeholder”, which probably indicates a paradigmatic shift of how U.S. government interprets Sino-U.S. relations. In his speech, Zoellick (2005) described a convincing scenario to his audience:

“If it isn’t clear why the United States should suggest a cooperative relationship with China, consider the alternatives. Picture the wide range of global challenges we face in the years ahead – terrorism and extremists exploiting Islam, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, poverty, disease – and ask whether it would be easier or harder to handle those problems if the United States and China were cooperating or at odds.”

This view was also acknowledged by his Chinese counterparts. In a visit to U.S. in 2006, Li Zhaoxing, foreign minister at that time, suggested that China and U.S. were not only stakeholders, but constructive collaborators as well. The following development of Sino-U.S. relations has not been immune to quarrels and fissures, especially in the wake of the U.S. strategic policy of “Pivot to Asia”. But these cleavages barely altered the agreement and consensus on a stable, collaborative relationship. For instance, the China-U.S. Joint Statement,





made during President Hu's visit, emphasized that the two countries "committed to work together to build a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit in order to promote the common interests of both countries and to address the 21st century's opportunities and challenges"³. In 2012 Xi Jinping claimed that a 21st-century new-type relationship between China and U.S. was "irresistible, irreversible, and according with the will of the people" (Xi, 2012). On the other hand, President Obama clearly recognized the importance of bilateral collaboration by stating that the rise of China was in the interest of U.S. and the two countries should seek for "new cooperative models". These statements demonstrate the shared perceptions of Chinese and U.S. leadership – the new era in international politics calls for cooperation instead of antagonism. Convergent rather than divergent identities can be inferred from these observations, since they point to common interests and mutually inclusive cognition.

As public opinion plays an increasingly important role in leveraging foreign policy-making, analysis of identity cohesiveness should not be bound to the elite-level. In this regard, a positive trend towards cohesive identities can be observed within the Sino-U.S. public. The 2012 survey on Sino-U.S. relations, conducted jointly by Gallup and the *China Daily*, showed that 80 per cent of ordinary Americans and 88 per cent of opinion leaders preferred a closer bilateral relationship. Among the perceived factors that obstruct the progress of bilateral relations, lack of trust (75 per cent of interviewees ranked it the first place) outweighed any other reason such as trade imbalance, political differences and China's military modernization (Gallup, 2012). This finding indicates that the majority of U.S. respondents do not follow the realist logic when they think of China. Instead, they see the benefits and necessity of building mutual trust. Meanwhile, polls launched by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs depicted a trend among U.S. public of steadily improving perceptions of China. According to its recent data, the average proportion of U.S. citizens who saw China's rise as a fundamental threat has dropped evidently from 52.5 per cent during 1990-2002 to 38.7 per cent during 2004-2012. A total of 48 per cent of respondents in 2012 defined Sino-U.S. relations as partnership, moving



up from 41 per cent in 2006, while the percentage of suggesting a rival relationship declined from 49 to 47 per cent accordingly (Smeltz, 2012). In addition, the improved perceptions of China were reflected by how U.S. citizens responded to the issue of Asian alliances. On this score, people who prioritized relationship with China, even if it might undermine U.S. relations with traditional Asian allies, accounted for 40 per cent in 2012, much higher than the figure in 2010 (31 per cent). By contrast, the ratio of people holding opposite views declined by 5 per cent (from 58 per cent in 2010 to 53 per cent in 2012) (Smeltz, 2012). Although voices of “China threat” have not been fading among U.S. academics and strategists over the past decade, statistics above showed American people’s increasing perceptions of China as a partner and collaborator rather than an enemy or threat.⁴

A similar trend exists among Chinese people as well. According to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ 2010 survey, people attaching importance to Sino-U.S. relations greatly outnumbered those underrating the relationship by about 90 to 1. As for the prospect of Sino-U.S. relations, most Chinese respondents (68.2 per cent) envisioned a progressive path, though recognizing the potential setbacks at the same time. In general, 77.5 per cent of interviewees estimated an overall progress of bilateral relations, while 16.5 and 5.9 per cent gauged a status quo and a regression respectively (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2010).

As discussions above illustrate, convergent political identities have been forming at both elite and general-public levels. This is encouraging for Sino-U.S. relations, because ideational factors are closely related to the fundamental logic political actors used to understand foreign relationship. To better explain how social conditions construct an evolving process of Sino-U.S. cooperation, the following part will further elaborate on the interactions between material and ideational factors and the impacts on Sino-U.S. relations.

3.3. The Basis of Sino-U.S. Cooperation

Material and ideational structures do not function in an isolated, independent manner. On this score, Buzan and Wæver (2003) have



pointed out that a regional security complex is composed of both power relations and patterns of amity/enmity. However, their theory attributed the formation of amity/enmity to various background causes including history and culture. In this way, patterns of amity/enmity become highly path-dependent and unchangeable. This paper differs from their arguments in that political identities can be shaped by constant containment of violence. When violence between states is kept under control by factors such as supranational authorities, international institutions or public opinion, and this control is deemed effective in the face of emergencies and accidents, positive perceptions of “conflict being avoidable” and “cooperation being feasible” can be gradually developed and reinforced between actors involved. This hypothesis is, to some extent, validated by Sino-U.S. relations. Due to the principle of “struggle without breaking” that both China and U.S. have followed in managing the (post-Cold War) bilateral relationship, temporal fluctuations of Sino-U.S. relations are always overtaken by long-term, strategic stabilities. Political elites and the general public of China and U.S. have steadily constructed rational and moderately optimistic perceptions of their relationship, which boosts the improvement of political identities. When asked about attitudes and policies towards China, less and less Americans chose the answer of “no idea” or “no comment” (Smeltz, 2012). This may reflect the ever-maturing side of their knowledge and judgment about China.

On the other hand, the improvement of identity cohesiveness may in turn constrain the use of force. According to Dong (2012), “the higher the identity cohesiveness between actors is, the likelier they would interpret the power structure in a positive way”. In other words, convergent identities propel actors into accepting and actively constructing norms and institutions that keep power relations within bounds and thus institutionalize the containment of violence. Following this logic, China and U.S. have increasingly resorted to dialogues and consultations when a crisis takes place. For instance, in the face of growing tensions and disputes around the cyber-security issue, the two countries have built a working group on cyber issues, in order to “enhance trust, facilitate cooperation, and construct a peaceful, secure,





open and collaborative cyber domain”⁵. Its actual effects aside, the behavioural pattern of seeking communication and understanding embodies a key element in the new-type Sino-U.S. relations.

The dynamic interaction of violence containment and identity cohesiveness has driven Sino-U.S. relations into a process of increasing collaborations. The ideal outcome of this process is to shape through “persuasive socialization” a new model of relationship based on “equal consultation, rational communication, and non-violent persuasion” (Dong 2012). It is too early to attach to Sino-U.S. relations such an idealist tag. But a trend towards stability and cooperation can still be found. In this regard, by reanalysing the quantitative data of China’s foreign relations, Alastair Iain Johnston (2011) discovered that although the score of Sino-U.S. amity/enmity fluctuated constantly during 1989-2008, the annual average of absolute deviance witnessed a striking decline. It indicates that the volatility of bilateral relations has been on the wane in the past two decades. Moreover, the two countries have expressed willingness to cooperate in more and more global and regional challenges, with a global public opinion holding more and more expectations of Sino-U.S. collaborations. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the violence containment and identity cohesiveness are collectively shaping a process of new-type great power relations.

4. What Should Be Done To Strengthen the Process of Sino-U.S. Collaborations?

As discussed above, the new-type Sino-U.S. relations do not stop in a mere vision of futurity. There are empirical evidence and theoretical foundations that support a new model of Sino-U.S. relationship. From the materialist perspective, the use of force between the two countries has been constrained by the overall nature of international system as well as the institutional framework shaped by multilateral and bilateral interactions. On the ideational side, meanwhile, political identities become convergent and cohesive, as positive perceptions of the bilateral relationship are being formed at both elite and general-public levels. Material structure and ideational structure construct a mutually





constitutive and mutually influential relationship. The positive complex (amalgam) of these structures drives Sino-U.S. relations into a cooperative path. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the process of Sino-U.S. collaborations is hardly irreversible. Although the key social conditions that support the new-type great power relations are being consolidated, they can still be undermined by potential Sino-U.S. rivalry in some emergent strategic domains (outer space and cyberspace, for example). In the long run, these conflicts may entirely reverse the path towards cooperation. Therefore, a key element of developing the new-type Sino-U.S. relations lies in the further consolidation of the cooperative process.

First of all, China and U.S. should make efforts to expand and strengthen the bilateral, multilateral and multi-dimensional institutions that inhibit the use of force. The major difference between the new type and traditional model of great power relations is that the former is not built upon a realist balance of power or mutual deterrence. Instead, the new-type great powers cooperate in a non-violent, non-conflicting environment. This environment requires communication platforms for all-round, multi-area dialogues that can be routinized in managing bilateral relations. These consultative and dialogical mechanisms are particularly valuable in emerging strategic domains such as the outer space and cyberspace. The rapid transformation of technologies has largely increased the uncertainties of these burgeoning domains. Besides, norms and institutions often lag behind technological development, making it more likely to arouse strategic misjudgments and mutual suspicions. Transparency measures can also contribute to the containment of potential violence. For instance, the latest Defense White Paper of China omitted the usual utterance of “no-first-use” of nuclear weapons, which caused widespread paranoia among U.S. strategists. This event, in fact, reflects the deep caution and anxiety of U.S. about the possible decline of violence controllability. Feasible ways of enhancing transparency include institutionalized news release, notification for military actions, and weaponry registration (Chen, 2013).

Secondly, convergent identities give rise to positive perceptions and understandings of the power relations. The development of the new-type





Sino-U.S. relations, therefore, relies heavily on boosting identity cohesiveness. Cohesive identities are formed not only through political consensus between elite decision-makers, but also through positive interactions between non-government, especially social, actors. In addition to various exchange programmes, often promoted by state efforts, in culture, education, research and technology, other kinds of non-governmental, civil interactions and public diplomacy should be facilitated. On this score, China may draw lessons from other countries that have developed successful and sustainable public diplomacy activities in foreign relations with the United States (Yu, 2002). Meanwhile, information technologies have offered new possibilities for multi-level interactions. Online track-two forums (such as the East Asia Forum) as well as micro-blogs can be novel ways of deepening Sino-U.S. relations in a bottom-up approach.

Last but not least, the two countries should commit themselves to maintaining the overall stability of the cooperative process. As previously mentioned, the path towards a new-type great power relationship between China and U.S. still risks backsliding. It necessitates rational reactions to, and overly negative interpretations of, potential emergencies and crises in the bilateral relationship. It is rightly in these crises that the wisdom and capability of political leadership in both countries will be tested. How to strike a balance between safeguarding national interests and stabilizing the cooperative process becomes an important task in the future development of Sino-U.S. relations. As David Shambaugh (2013b: 5) said in his recent collection, “the overriding policy task for Washington and Beijing is to manage the competition and maximize the cooperation, so that the relationship does not lurch decidedly in an adversarial direction”.

Notes

- * Dr Liu Yangyue 刘杨钺 is a Lecturer at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, National University of Defense Technology, China. He is also affiliated with the Center of International Studies at NUDT. He obtained his Ph.D. from the Department of Asian and International Studies at the City University of Hong Kong. His research interests include cyber





politics, international relations and Asian politics. He thanks Professor Xu Nengwu and two anonymous reviewers for their comments. <Email: yangyuliu2@gmail.com>

1. According to complex constructivism, the idea of binary complementarity (*eryuan hubu* 二元互补) is drawn from traditional Chinese philosophy as well as recent development in quantum mechanics. It rejects the common idea of binary opposition that treats two contrasting terms, such as material and emotion, as mutually exclusive and separated. Instead, binary complementarity regards material and ideational structures as mutually constitutive. In this way, it bypasses the ontological debate among mainstream IR paradigms and focuses on both material and ideational factors and the way they interact.
2. Recent theory-bridging efforts among Western IR scholars are still trapped, to some extent, in the ontological debate concerning material and emotion. An example of this argument can be found in the responses to Barkin's realist constructivism, presented as a special issue edited by Patrick Jackson (2004) of the *International Studies Review*.
3. The full text of China-U.S. Joint Statement (19th January 2011) is available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-01/20/c_121001428.htm
4. However, it should be noticed that the Pew Global Attitudes Project on U.S.-China Security Perceptions shows a mixed result. Its recent survey has found the share of Americans who regard China favourably falling significantly in the past two years, probably due to the questioning of its survey which has explicitly listed the specific threats of China, including the loss of U.S. jobs to China. Meanwhile, the same survey also shows that 65 per cent of Americans consider relations with China as being very good or somewhat good. The detailed result is available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2012/09/US-Public-and-Elite-Report-TOPLINE-QUESTIONN AIRE.pdf>
5. This expression is quoted from the Foreign Ministry's press release on 13th June 2013, available at: http://www.china.com.cn/international/txt/2013-06/13/content_29115589.htm

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