

**The Competition over Soft Power in Asia  
under the Leadership of  
Xi Jinping: A Pseudo-panel Analysis**

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## Background

- ◆ This study investigates factors that determine how citizens in Asia evaluate China's influence during the Xi Jinping era.
- ◆ In particular, it assesses whether China's deployment of “hard power” has reinforced or inadvertently compromised and even contradicted its effort to upgrade its “soft power”.
- ◆ The study also evaluates the relative explanatory power of a number of hypotheses regarding how subjective perceptions are related to favorable or unfavorable views of China's influence in Asia.
- ◆ We also examine whether there has been a structural change during the transition from Obama to Trump.



## Outline

- ❑ Motive — Conflicting behavioral pattern of China's public diplomacy
- ❑ Research Question — What factors matter more to the recipient's perception.
- ❑ Hypotheses:
  1. Change of foreign policy (China under Xi, U.S. under Trump)
  2. Hard-power factors (East China Sea dispute, South China Sea dispute)
  3. Globalization (economic globalization, social globalization)
  4. Socioeconomic perception (economic benefits, social status)
  5. Regime evaluation (China's level of democracy, U.S.'s level of democracy)
  6. Liberal values (liberal democratic orientation, preferability of democracy)
  7. International relations (bandwagoning, Chinese model of development)
- ❑ Methodology — Three Waves of ABS, Natural experimental, Pseudo-panel analysis
- ❑ Findings:
  - Territorial disputes, economic opportunity and political values matter consistently
  - Trumpism triggers a structural change: eclipse of America's democratic edge; the "attractiveness" of Chinese model emerges as an important factor

## Asian Barometer Survey

The Asian Barometer Survey fills up an important void in our understanding of the dynamics of the competition over soft power in Asia and implications for policy makers.



- It was administered in fifteen Asian countries and territories on the basis of country-wide probability sampling and face-to-face interview.
- It can answer to what extent China's growing economic influence and its investment in public diplomacy might have been translated into greater soft power and how Xi's more assertive and ambitious foreign policy might have hampered its effort to prop up China's image in the region.

[www.asianbarometer.org](http://www.asianbarometer.org)

## Asian Barometer Survey Schedules (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>)

Code	Country	Wave 3		Wave 4		Wave 5	
		Period	Sample Size	Period	Sample Size	Period	Sample Size
1	<b>Japan</b>	2011.12	1880	2015.1-2	1000	2019.7-10	1045
2	<b>Hong Kong</b>	2012.9	1207	2016.2-3	1000		
3	<b>Korea</b>	2011.5	1207	2015.10-12	1200	2019.5-7	1268
4	<b>China</b>	2011.7-10	3473	2015.7-2016.2	4217	2019.7-12	4941
5	<b>Mongolia</b>	2010.4-5	1210	2014.6-9	1228	2018.7-8	1284
6	<b>the Philippines</b>	2010.3	1200	2014.7	1200	2018.12	1200
7	<b>Taiwan</b>	2010.1-2	1592	2014.6-10	1657	2018.7-2019.1	1259
8	<b>Thailand</b>	2010.8-12	1512	2014.8-10	1200	2018.12-2019.2	1200
9	<b>Indonesia</b>	2011.5	1550	2016.1	1550	2019.7	1540
10	<b>Singapore</b>	2010.4-8	1000	2014.10.-12	1039	2020.7-9	1002
11	<b>Vietnam</b>	2010.9-10	1191	2015.9-10	1200	2018.6-7	1200
12	<b>Cambodia</b>	2012.2-3	1200	2015.10-11	1200		
13	<b>Malaysia</b>	2011.10-11	1214	2014.9-11	1207	2019.4-5	1237
14	<b>Myanmar</b>			2015.1-3	1620	2019.9-10	1627
15	<b>Australia</b>					2018.10-2019.1	1630
18	<b>India</b>					2019.11	5318

Figure 1. Which country has the most influence in Asia now?

Figure 1a. China

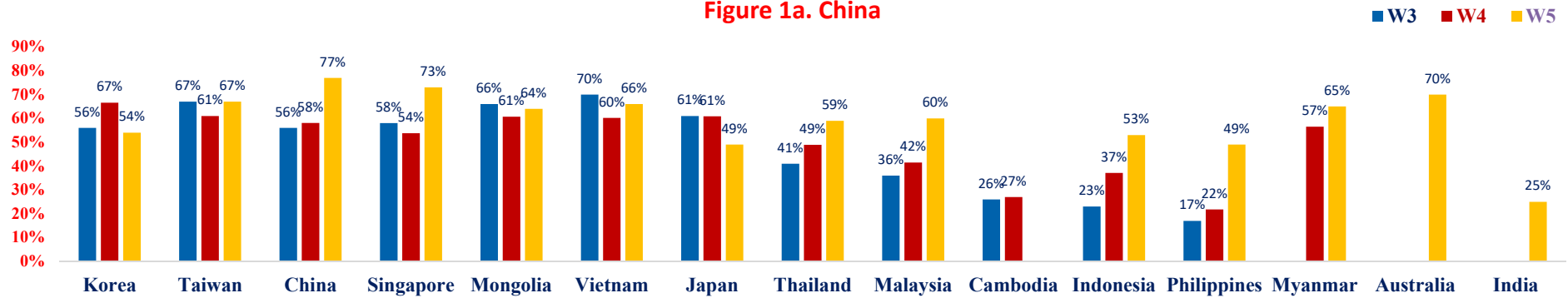
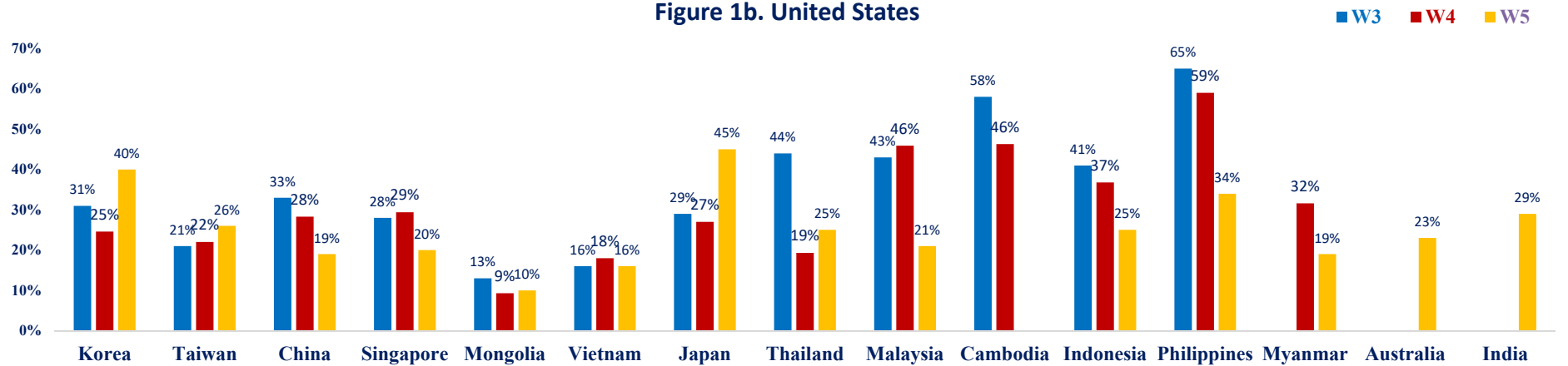
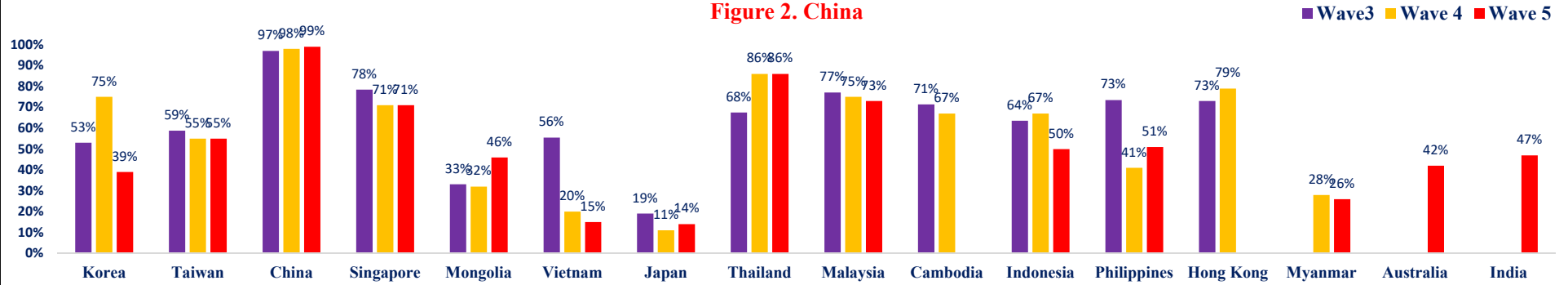


Figure 1b. United States



## Holding Positive View about the Impact of China and U.S. on the Region

**Figure 2. China**



**Figure 3. U.S.**

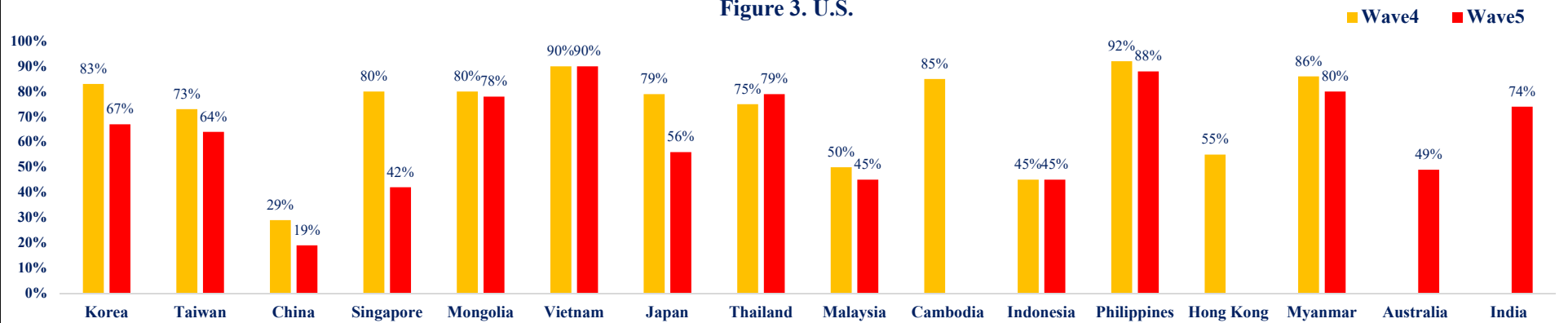


Table 4. Result Summary for Both Two-Wave and Three-Wave Panel Analysis (Based on Model 1.6 and 2.6)

Predictors	(Marginal Effect to China's Favorability)		Comparison
	W3 & W4	W3, W4, & W5	
<b>Hard Power</b>			
<b>South China Sea Claimants</b>	-12%	-12%	consistent
East China Sea Claimants	non-significant	non-significant	consistent but potentially not stable
<b>Time Variant Dummy</b>			
<b>Xi Period</b>	-17%	-16%	consistent
Trump Period	—	non-significant	could likely trigger structural change
<b>Globalization</b>			
Learning More from Other Countries	non-significant	non-significant	consistent
Doing More Trade with Other Countries	non-significant	non-significant	consistent
<b>Socioeconomic Perception</b>			
<b>Income Satisfaction</b>	16%	non-significant	possibly associated with structural change
Subjective Social Status	-4%	non-significant	possibly associated with structural change
<b>Economic Evaluation</b>	-16%	-11%	consistent
<b>Regime Evaluation</b>			
Demo. Dist. (Self from China)	non-significant	non-significant	consistent
<b>Demo. Dist. (U.S. from China)</b>	-5%	non-significant	possibly associated with structural change
<b>Liberal Value</b>			
<b>Liberal Democratic Attitude</b>	-27%	-33%	consistent
Preferability of Democracy	non-significant	non-significant	consistent
Priority of Democracy	non-significant	non-significant	consistent
<b>International Relations</b>			
China Most Influential in Future	non-significant	non-significant	consistent
<b>China Model</b>	non-significant	27%	possibly associated with structural change
U.S. Model	non-significant	non-significant	consistent