

Analyzing the Dilemma of the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area from a National Identity Perspective

Ziqi Zhan¹, Xiaoying Zhu²

¹ History (teacher-training) at the department of liberal art and law, Science and technology college Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou, Jiangxi, 341000, China

² Department of Art, Shenyang Normal University, Shenyang, Liaoning, 110034, China

Abstract. In the current era, China, Japan, and South Korea, as significant economies in Asian, play an important role in economic cooperation for the entire East Asia and international trade. However, the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (CJKFTA) among the three countries has been delayed. This paper utilizes the theory of national identity to discuss how China, by adopting the national identity of a responsible great power, actively promotes the negotiation of the CJKFTA and reasons why the CJKFTA has yet to be concluded. This research will not only enhance the way international relations theory is applied in the context of economic cooperation but also provide useful references and suggestions for promoting economic cooperation and integration among China, Japan, South Korea, and even the entire East Asian area.

Keywords: China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area, National Identity Perspective, in-ternational relations theory, economic cooperation.

1. Introduction

As major East Asian economies, China, Japan, and South Korea have enormous influence over the Asia-Pacific region's economic growth and the shift of the global economic scene in the framework of globalization. The concept of the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area (CJKFTA) was first proposed in 2002, with negotiations officially commencing in 2012. However, the process has experienced multiple stagnations. The Joint Declaration of the Ninth Leaders' Meeting between South Korea and Japan in 2024 states the three countries have explicitly stated their commitment to continuing discussions on accelerating negotiations for the CJKFTA, to achieve a free, fair, comprehensive, high-quality, reciprocal, and intrinsically valuable free trade area.

However, issues such as existing trade barriers and insufficient political trust in reality have posed obstacles to the progress of CJKFTA. Against this backdrop, this essay aims to provide fresh perspectives on the current state of affairs by investigating the reasons why the CJKFTA has not yet been finalized from the distinct viewpoint of national identity. This paper attempts to utilize Alexander Wendt's constructivist theory to analyze whether China's active projection of its image as a responsible great power in recent years has hindered the progress of the CJKFTA. This analysis aims to delve into the delicate relationship between national image-building and the advancement of economic cooperation, providing an alternative perspective for comprehending the intricacy and difficulty of the CJKFTA discussions.

Alexander Wendt's Social Theory of International Relations serves as the foundation for this study's theoretical framework, particularly its elaboration on the interplay between structure and actors, as well as the four levels of national identity theory. The authors intend to treat the regional economic collaboration formed among China, Japan, and South Korea as a structural entity and use this as a starting point to explore the economic behaviors of these three countries beyond the national identity of China as a responsible superpower. Furthermore, it will examine how Japan and South Korea's understanding of this image of China has become an obstacle to the advancement of CJKFTA. Drawing on the constructivist perspective of national identity, this research contends that the perceptions of Japan and South Korea regarding China's foreign policy, which seeks to position itself as a responsible global power, are hindering the formation of the CJKFTA. This research employs text analysis and case study analysis as the two primary research methods. On the one hand, it screens

government announcements, agreement texts, speeches by key leaders, official news, and other materials for text analysis, exploring the different viewpoints and understandings of China's identity as a responsible great power among China, Japan, and South Korea. From these texts, it demonstrates the blocking effect of trust crises, identity deficits, and other negative impacts caused by Japan and South Korea's misunderstandings of China's identity as a responsible and powerful country on the formation of the CJKFTA. Meanwhile, using case study analysis, it selects multiple international events to explore the impact of China's identity that is a responsible great power country on the economic behaviors of China, South Korea and Japan.

2. Literature Review

The development of China's identity as a responsible big power has been extensively studied in the literature. Studies on the shaping of China's image as a responsible great power, such as *China's Identity Construction as a "Responsible Great Power" and Its Development Process*, *Communicative Action, Strategic Dialogue, and China's Identity Construction as a Responsible Great Power* and *A Responsible Great Power: China's New Identity Positioning*, all trace the evolution of China's national identity from various perspectives and analyze the process of establishing its identity as a responsible great power, the practical achievements of its foreign policy, and the influencing factors ((Xue, 2018; Zhao, 2017; Chen, 2016). Furthermore, *Shanghai Cooperation Organization and G7 Summits: China's Responsibilities as a Responsible Great Power in a Comparative Perspective* and *Supply of Global Health Public Goods: China's Role and Its Paths* delve deeper into the specific manifestations and roles of China's identity as a responsible great power on the international stage (Shao, 2018; Song and Fu, 2021).

While much of the existing literature emphasizes China's identity as a responsible global power and its international role, there is comparatively less attention given to how this identity is reflected in the economic interactions among China, Japan, and South Korea. Meanwhile, although there are numerous studies on the dilemmas faced in economic interactions among China, Japan, and South Korea, such as 'The East Asian Community' and the 'New Cold War' : Centering on China Japan-ROK Relations and U.S.-Japan-ROK Relations Shock of Trade Protectionism Policy of the Trump Administration: Opportunities and Challenges of CJK FTA, it delves into the evolving dynamics among the pivotal nations of China, Japan, and South Korea within the context of the East Asian Community (Li and Tian and Dong, 2024) . It also examines how shifts in U.S. policy towards East Asia impact the trilateral relations among these three countries. The study provides a comprehensive explanation of the external factors influencing the relationships between China, Japan, and South Korea, as well as the intricate interplay among Japan, the United States, and South Korea. The *Development, Dilemmas, and Prospects of China-Japan-South Korea Cooperation* and 'Trust Deficit' in East Asian Regional Economic Cooperation: Evolution and Causes, these studies analyze issues such as the direction of trilateral relations, factors influencing the progress of free trade agreements, and the trust deficit (Ba & Zuo, 2024; Jiang, 2022). Nevertheless, in-depth exploration is scarce from the perspective of China's identity as a responsible great power.

It is noteworthy that although some studies, such as *Shock of Trade Protectionism Policy of the Trump Administration: Opportunities and Challenges of CJK FTA*, the benefits and drawbacks of American economic policy regarding collaboration between China, Japan, and South Korea are examined in this paper (Jin & Lian, 2019). It also draws attention to how China is now advancing the CJKFTA in the context of the changing global environment, which presents both opportunities and challenges. The *Dilemma and Solution of the Trilateral Cooperation, Analysis of the Characteristics, Opportunities, Challenges, and Trends of China-Japan-South Korea Cooperation Mechanisms* have conducted in-depth analyses of the dilemmas, opportunities, and challenges in China-Japan-South Korea cooperation (Gu, 2020). *Why It Is More Difficult to Build Economic Cooperation Institutions in Northeast Asia than in Southeast Asia: An Explanation Based on Collective Memory*, this paper posits that the key reason why cooperation in Northeast Asia is more challenging than in Southeast

Asia lies in the contrasting collective memories of the regions (Zhang, 2022). Unlike Southeast Asia, which is deeply influenced by a sense of "Asian" identity, the key countries of Northeast Asia—China, South Korea and Japan—have a collective memory rife with conflict and painful history. These collective memories create significant obstacles to regional cooperation. They similarly fail to adopt the unique perspective of China's identity as a responsible great power.

In summary, there is a vast amount of literature that has explored the dilemmas faced in economic interactions among China, South Korea, and Japan and China's role as a responsible great power, research that combines the two remains inadequate. Therefore, this study will delve into the impact of China's identity as a responsible great power on the stagnation of the CJKFTA from this unique perspective, aiming to provide new insights and inspiration for research in this field.

3. Research Question

By focusing on China's proactive stance in advancing the CJKFTA process and its leading role in numerous high-level leader meetings, this research aims to dissect how China leverages its identity as a responsible great power to effectively facilitate the establishment and development of the free trade area. This perspective will uncover how China exercises its leading and catalytic role through diplomatic strategies, economic cooperation initiatives, and policy coordination, paving the method for the construction of CJKFTA. On the other hand, addressing challenges and dilemmas encountered during the promotion of the CJKFTA project, this study will shift its focus to analyzing the cognitive deviations held by Japan and South Korea regarding China's policy as a responsible and powerful country and the ensuing lack of identity recognition issues this triggers. These misunderstandings can not only weaken the political trust and economic cooperation foundation among the three countries but also become crucial obstacles hindering the smooth progression of the CJKFTA. By closely examining the stances, concerns, and differing interpretations of China's role held by Japan and South Korea, this research will reveal how these cognitive differences translate into practical obstacles, affecting the negotiation process and the ultimate result of CJKFTA.

4. The Positive Role of China as a Responsible Great Power

China has signed 23 Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with 30 areas or countries. Taking the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) as an illustration, it is well known that China, as a resilient and accountable nation, encourages the procedures of such agreements. As early as 1997, during the Asian Financial Crisis, China responded swiftly and provided crucial and efficient assistance to its Southeast Asian partners in distress. Through the framework of the International Monetary Fund and bilateral channels, China extended a helping hand to countries such as Thailand and Indonesia. Especially in August of that year, China urgently provided a \$1 aid package to Thailand, setting a new record for a single foreign aid disbursement since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. According to statistics, China's total assistance to Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, exceeded \$4 billion, accounting for about one-sixth of the total international assistance. In addition, China provided a total of approximately \$5 billion in import-export credits and emergency medical assistance to countries such as Indonesia. During this period, the Chinese government adhered to the position of stabilizing the RMB exchange rate. President Jiang made a clear commitment at the informal China-ASEAN Summit, and subsequently Premier Zhu reiterated at a press conference, that the RMB would not be devalued. Actually, throughout the financial crisis, the exchange rate between RMB and the US dollar remained steady at around 8.27. This crucial decision provided essential support for economic stability and development not only in Southeast Asia but also across the entire Asian region. Apart from providing bilateral assistance, China took the initiative to advocate and drive forward regional financial cooperation. By joining hands with Southeast Asian countries, China made joint efforts to surmount difficulties. China put forward three initiatives, during a significant meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). These initiatives included

strengthening international cooperation, reforming the international financial system, and respecting each country's independent right to choose its own crisis-response strategies. The Chinese government reiterated its optimistic outlook for Southeast Asia multiple times and jointly issued statements with ASEAN countries expressing a strong willingness to deepen cooperation and exchanges. These successive initiatives not only garnered extensive acclaim from the international community but also manifested China's identity as a responsible major power and its economic prowess. They laid a firm groundwork for the final establishment of CAFTA. In 2002, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations signed the Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation with the leaders of the ten ASEAN countries in a ceremony. Eight years later, China and ASEAN successfully established the Free Trade Area, and after its establishment, both parties implemented zero tariffs on more than 90% of products, greatly promoting trade liberalization and facilitation. Simultaneously with the FTA setting up, China also introduced a preferential system for ASEAN countries with relatively less-developed economies, such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. More specifically, China has actively cooperated with ASEAN countries in the joint development of the Mekong River basin, as well as in the Trans-Asian Railway and Trans-Asian Highway. These efforts were aimed at further assisting the economically underdeveloped countries within ASEAN in promoting their economic development. In addition, China and ASEAN countries identified agriculture, human resource development, information technology, investment, and Mekong River basin development as key areas of cooperation at the beginning of the new century. Cooperation in these areas not only helped narrow the development gap among countries but also effectively promoted the smooth development of the CAFTA. Significantly, China also granted Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) treatment to ASEAN members that are not WTO members and clearly stipulated in the Framework Agreement that China should grant MFN treatment to all ASEAN member countries that are not WTO members in accordance with WTO rules and regulations. This initiative not only manifested China's support for and respect towards ASEAN countries, but also laid an even more strong basis for economic and trade collaboration between China and ASEAN.

When it comes to promoting the CJKFTA, China has also shown its responsibilities as a major nation. During multiple China-Japan-South Korean leaders' meetings, China expressed a positive vision for the CJKFTA. On May 23, 2010, the Seventh China-Japan-South Korea Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Seoul, South Korea. Chinese Minister of Commerce Chen Deming attended the meeting and stated that in 2009, the economies of China, South Korea, and Japan all withstood the global financial crisis. While implementing their respective economic revitalization policies, the three countries further strengthened coordination and cooperation within bilateral and multilateral frameworks. The trade and economic alliances between China and Japan, and between China and South Korea, have increasingly been consolidated and developed. At present, the CJKFTA has entered the joint study phase involving governments, industries, and academia. Negotiations on a trilateral investment agreement are progressing step by step, and exchanges and cooperation among the business communities of the three countries are continuously deepening and developing. In the next step, it is necessary to address possible disagreements that may arise during the joint study of the trilateral free trade area with a more flexible and pragmatic spirit. Strive to conclude the study before the tripartite leaders' meeting in 2012. People should also strive to expedite substantial progress in the trilateral investment agreement negotiations and reach a balanced, practical, and mutually beneficial trilateral investment agreement at an early stage. Additionally, it is of great significance to further enhance communication and coordination among the three countries within multilateral frameworks like the G20 and APEC. Given that the global economic situation is still fraught with numerous uncertainties, further strengthening trade and economic cooperation among three countries is not only beneficial to the economic development of the Asian region but also conducive to the recovery and prosperity of the world economy. During this meeting, the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Kim, expressed his gratitude for China's strong support in ensuring the smooth convening of this trilateral ministerial meeting on trade and economic cooperation held in Korea (Press Office of the Ministry of Commerce, 2010). In the same year, the

13th ASEAN Plus Three Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Economic Cooperation was established in Da Nang, Vietnam. Based on the consensus reached by the ASEAN Plus Three leaders last year, China proposed an initiative to carry out trade facilitation actions within the framework of ASEAN Plus Three, hoping to systematically strengthen cooperation among ASEAN Plus Three countries in trade facilitation over the next five years, effectively reduce trade costs, and create a better trade environment. A Minister of the Ministry of Commerce stated at a lunch meeting that China holds an open attitude towards various initiatives and mechanisms emerging in East Asian economic integration, as long as they are conducive to countries' development and common prosperity in this area (Press Office of the Ministry of Commerce, 2010). During his keynote address at the Chinese International Import Expo in November 2018, the President suggested accelerating the CJKFTA negotiation process (Press Office of the Ministry of Commerce, 2019).

5. Reasons for the Stagnation of CJKFTA

However, since the proposal of this project, the CJKFTA has remained under negotiation. The reasons for this stagnation can be traced back to both historical factors and current realities. This article analyzes and explains these reasons from three perspectives.

Firstly, political factors. In 2010, after a collision between Chinese and Japanese vessels near disputed islands and the subsequent arrest of the Chinese fishing boat captain by Japan, Sino-Japanese relations entered a frozen period. Since 2012, Sino-Japanese relations have successively encountered severe conflicts due to issues related to the Diaoyu Islands and the Yasukuni Shrine, while Japan-South Korea relations have been tense over forced labor compensation cases, and Sino-South Korea relations have been at a standstill due to the THAAD issue. The tense and confrontational political relations have stagnated the meetings among the leaders of the three countries and made the CJKFTA negotiations among them always lack strong political leadership, facing a dilemma of insufficient momentum.

Secondly, national status factors. In today's world, competition among great powers and the resurgence of camp confrontation, trade protectionism, and anti-globalization are on the rise. The United States is striving to promote strategic competition with China, intensifying inducements and pressures on Japan and South Korea, and striving to build an international production and supply chain that excludes China and a "small yard with high walls"-style anti-China technology alliance, objectively posing resistance to Northeast Asian regional integration. Moreover, Japan has also become a key negative factor. In recent years, the ruling authorities and political elites in Japan and South Korea have had negative perceptions of China, and their vigilance towards China's status as a great power has increased, leading to a negative shift in policy orientation (Xiang, 2024).

Thirdly, external factors and public opinion factors. These are largely reflected in the attitudes of citizens of each country towards other countries in the region. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2020, the "anti-China" sentiment among the younger generation (18-29 years old) in South Korea is stronger than that among older people (over 50 years old), reflecting an increasingly resistant attitude of South Korean citizens towards China's development in the new era. Regarding this situation, Professor Kim of the Korea National Diplomatic Academy analyzed that the main reason is that amid China's rising national strength and the backdrop of Sino-U.S. strategic competition, Chinese citizens' pride in their own culture and system has increased significantly, and national satisfaction has steadily risen, while South Korean citizens' pride has not increased correspondingly during this period. The main reason is that China's rapid development has led to fundamental changes in the power balance and international political status of both countries. "Japan is not ready to accept and view a new China (Zhang & Zhang, 2023)." From the official standpoints of South Korea and Japan, although South Korea and Japan have expressed their hope for cooperation with China since the beginning of the CJKFTA plan, there has been no substantial action, while China has been pushing forward the negotiations. There have even been voices expressing concerns about deepening economic dependence on China after cooperation. For example, if the Korea-China FTA

is signed and Korean investment in China becomes active, Korean capital will become a "pillar" in northeastern China. Expanding exports will promote economic cooperation among South Korea, North Korea, and China. The influence of cooperative stagnation brought on by China's standing as a great power is evident from national leaders to public opinion in South Korea and Japan.

The above viewpoints are analyzed and illustrated in this case. On December 1, 2014, Japanese media reported that Japan had rejected a proposal by China and South Korea, and negotiations on the CJKFTA had reached a deadlock. The deadline for reaching the CJKFTA may be postponed for a year. On November 28 in Tokyo, Japan, the sixth round of working - level negotiations on the CJKFTA wrapped up after five days. As reported by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, on the first day of the negotiations, based on the consensus reached between them, China and South Korea put forward a target for the liberalization rate (the proportion of zero - tariff items) to Japan. The China - South Korea FTA pledges to abolish tariffs on over 90% of categories within 20 years, yet specific categories are seldom specified. Japan turned down the proposal from China and South Korea, claiming that the "level of liberalization is excessively low," and the setting of a target for the liberalization rate was deferred. Chen Zilei, the director of the East Asian Economic Research Center at Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, analyzed that Japan's liberalization rate is relatively high, standing at around 94% or higher. The possibility of compromise in the FTA is not non-existent, but it mainly depends on the political decisions made by the leaders of the three countries. In addition, Liang Yanfen, also commented on this, stating that generally speaking, the negotiations on a free trade area agreement mainly focus on tariff concessions for hot products and the degree to which respective markets can be opened, but the influence of real political and economic backgrounds cannot be overlooked. The CJKFTA negotiations came to a halt when Japan rejected the offers from China and South Korea in the sixth round of talks. When the Japanese political government took office, it aggressively pushed the "economic security strategy," tightened security measures against China, and actively followed and collaborated with the US in limiting China in order to preserve Japan's industrial competitiveness. Upon analyzing the sixth round of negotiations, it becomes evident that the political factor stemming from China's image as a great power stands out as the most conspicuous reason for the stalemate in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations. Enhancing soft power, such as ideology, society, and national image, is as crucial to the development of an exceptional power as strengthening hard power, especially as financial might and general national strength. From an economic perspective, China, Japan, and South Korea are the world's second-, fourth-, and thirteenth-largest economies, respectively, based on the 2023 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rankings. The aggregated GDP of these three countries amounts to approximately \$23.7 trillion. (National Bureau of Statistics Website, 2024). Although the combined size of their economies is still only 88.0% of that of the United States, it is already considerable (National Bureau of Statistics Website, 2024). China is without properly a doubt the most significant market among South Korea, Japan, and China. In terms of GDP, China accounted for about three-quarters of the total GDP of the three countries in 2023, with Japan accounting for about 17.7% and South Korea for about 7.3% (National Bureau of Statistics Website, 2024). Over the past ten generations, there have been various changes in the commercial connections between the countries of China, Japan, and South Korea, according to data from the United Nations summit on commercial and Development (UNCTAD).

The dominance of China in South Korea's and Japan's international commerce has risen significantly while there have been modifications in the standing of South Korea and Japan in China's imports and exports. Second, it is impossible to undervalue China's overall strength as an integral power. As an illustration, China has greatly boosted its investment in research and technology throughout the reform and opening-up. In 1995, China's R&D expenditure was only 4.18 billion, whereas in 2023, it reached 469.8 billion, with the intensity of R&D expenditure increasing to 2.64%, close to the average level of 2.7% among OECD countries (National Bureau of Statistics Website, 2024). Between 2013 and 2023, China produced 58,000 highly cited international papers across various disciplines,

accounting for 30.8% of the global share, ranking second in the world after the United States with 77,000 papers (National Bureau of Statistics Website, 2024). In 2013, China's overall innovation index ranked 35th globally, but by 2023, it had leaped to 12th, becoming the only economy in the upper-middle-income country group to enter the top 30 and reaching the median level of G7 countries (National Bureau of Statistics of China website, 2024). Consequently, the China-Japan-South the Republic of Korea free trading agreement (CJKFTA) is progressing cautiously against the backdrop of China's perceived position as a significant power. China has developed rapidly in recent years and gradually established itself as a global power. It is precisely due to China's image as a major power that negotiations and progress on the CJKFTA have stagnated, considering political, economic, geopolitical, and external factors. Although Japan and South Korea are both important developed countries in East Asia, leading in economy and certain industries respectively, they have competitive relationships and a wariness of China's influence as a major power further intensifying in future cooperation, which has hindered substantial progress in CJKFTA negotiations.

6. Conclusion

In the process of advancing the CJKFTA, China has consistently portrayed itself as a responsible global player, actively fostering regional economic integration and multilateral collaboration. Utilizing its economic clout and diplomatic initiatives, China has shown a clear commitment to driving negotiations and supporting the establishment of the CJKFTA. This approach aligns with China's broader goal of strengthening regional stability and economic interdependence, a key pillar of its foreign policy in East Asia. Nevertheless, the negotiation process has encountered substantial obstacles rooted in historical conflicts, concerns over national standing, external pressures, and domestic sentiments.

Historically, strained relations among China, Japan, and South Korea, particularly regarding wartime disputes and territorial disagreements, have created a complicated context for negotiations. These historical tensions frequently reemerge, fueling mistrust and diplomatic strain. Moreover, the evolving national positions of the three nations, especially China's rapid ascent as a global power, have intensified sensitivities and strategic competition, particularly between China and Japan. External influences, such as the United States' involvement in regional matters and its alliances with Japan and South Korea, have added further complexity, often amplifying doubts and misinterpretations.

On the domestic front, public opinion in all three countries has significantly influenced the negotiation process. In China, nationalist attitudes and aspirations for greater regional influence have occasionally conflicted with the practical demands of cooperation. Similarly, in Japan and South Korea, public distrust of China's motives, shaped by media narratives and political discourse, has reinforced the view of China as a strategic rival rather than a collaborative partner. These intertwined factors have created a difficult environment for CJKFTA negotiations, significantly hindering progress and underscoring the necessity for trust-building initiatives and diplomatic strategies to address the gaps in mutual understanding.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

References

- [1] Ba, D.J., & Zuo, T.Q. 2024. Development, Dilemmas, and Prospects of China-Japan-South Korea Cooperation (English). *China International Studies* (02), 41-68+2.
- [2] Chen, X. 2016, Responsible Great Power: China's New Identity Positioning. *World Economics and Politics Forum*, (06): 33-50.

- [3] China Free Trade Area Service Network FTA Connection. 2014. Japanese Media: Japan Rejects China-South Korea Proposal, China-Japan-South Korea FTA Negotiations Reach an Impasse.
- [4] Gu, W. 2020. Dilemmas and Solutions in Trilateral Cooperation. *Northeast Asian Forum* (05), 116-126+128.
- [5] Jiang, FF. (2022). "Trust Deficit" in East Asian Regional Economic Cooperation: Evolution and Causes. *Contemporary Asia-Pacific* (06), 64-97+166.
- [6] Jin, X. D., & Lian, X.M. 2019. The Impact of the Trump Administration's Trade Protectionism Policy: Opportunities and Challenges for China-Japan-South Korea FTA Negotiations. *Northeast Asian Forum*, 28 (05): 92-101+128.
- [7] Li, Z.Y., Tian, X.L. & Dong S.B. 2024. "Community" and "New Cold War" in East Asia: An Analysis Centered on "China-Japan-South Korea" and "US-Japan-South Korea". *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* (05), 89-101+148.
- [8] National Bureau of Statistics Website. 2024. Comprehensive National Strength Has Leaped Significantly, and International Influence Has Been Enhanced Remarkably — The Tenth Series of Reports on China's Economic and Social Development Achievements in the Past 75 Years.
- [9] Pang, Z.P. 2018. Analysis of the Characteristics, Opportunities, Challenges, and Trends of China-Japan-South Korea Cooperation Mechanisms. *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* (05), 30-36.
- [10] Press Office of the Ministry of Commerce, The Seventh China-Japan-South Korea Ministerial Meeting on Economy, Trade, and Finance Held in Seoul, (2010-05-24), 2024-01-12, http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/article/chinarihan/chinarhnews/201005/26794_1.html.
- [11] Press Office of the Ministry of Commerce, The Thirteenth ASEAN Plus China, Japan, and South Korea Ministerial Meeting on Economic Cooperation Held in Da Nang, Vietnam, 2010-08-26, 2024-01-12, http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/article/chinarihan/chinarhnews/201008/3233_1.html.
- [12] Press Office of the Ministry of Commerce, The Fifteenth Round of Negotiations for the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area Held in Japan, 2019-04-12, 2024-01-12, http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/article/chinarihan/chinarhnews/201904/40290_1.html.
- [13] Shao, F. 2018. SCO and G7 Summits: China's Responsibility as a Great Power from a Comparative Perspective. *Contemporary World* (07), 8-11.
- [14] Song, X.F. & Fu D.G. 2021. Global Health Public Goods Supply: China's Role and Path. *Socialist Studies* (01), 131-137.
- [15] Xiang, H.Y. 2024. Difficulties and Prospects of the Construction of the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area. *World Knowledge* (13), 28-30.
- [16] Xue, X.P. 2018. The Construction and Development of China's Identity as a "Responsible Great Power". *Theoretical Horizon*, (12): 71-76.
- [17] Zhang, C. 2022. Why Is It Harder to Build Economic Cooperation Mechanisms in Northeast Asia Than in Southeast Asia? — An Explanation Based on Collective Memory. *Northeast Asian Forum* (02), 97-111+128.
- [18] Zhang, Y. & Zhang C. 2023. Analysis of the Necessary Political Conditions for Constructing the China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area. *Contemporary China and the World* (01), 115-123.
- [19] Zhao, Y. 2017. Communicative Action, Strategic Dialogue, and the Construction of China's Identity as a Responsible Great Power. *World Economics and Politics*, (02): 77-105+158-159.