

【論文】

Differences in Impression Formation Towards China, North Korea, and Russia Between Japan and the United States

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the differences in impression of China, North Korea, and Russia between Japanese and American respondents, focusing on the impact of historical narratives, mass media, and social influences. Based on prior research, I hypothesized that Americans tend to separate governments from citizens in their perceptions, while Japanese respondents are more likely to view them as a unified entity. Using survey data from 100 Americans and 104 Japanese participants, I found that the hypothesis was supported. These findings highlight the need for media literacy education in Japan and balanced reporting globally. Future research should refine measurement tools and explore interventions to reduce the negative transference of impressions from governments to citizens.

Keywords: Impression Formation, Japan-US Comparison, Government and Citizen Perception

日本人とアメリカ人の 中国・北朝鮮・ロシアに対する印象形成の違い

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概 要

本研究は、日本人およびアメリカ人の回答者が、中国、北朝鮮、ロシアに対して抱く印象の違いを探り、歴史的な物語、マスメディア、社会的影響がそれに与える影響に焦点を当てている。先行研究に基づき、アメリカ人は政府と市民を分けて認識する傾向があるのに対し、日本人はそれらを一体として捉える傾向が強いと仮説を立てた。100名のアメリカ人と104名の日本人を対象に調査を行った結果、この仮説は支持された。本研究の結果は、日本におけるメディア・リテラシー教育の必要性や、世界的にバランスの取れた報道の重要性を示唆している。今後の研究では、測定手法の精緻化や、政府に対する印象が市民に転移する現象を軽減するための介入策の検討が求められる。

キーワード：印象形成、日米比較、政府と国民の認識

1. Introduction

In the international community, impressions of other countries play a crucial role in shaping diplomatic relations and fostering mutual understanding among citizens. Japan and the United States, with their distinct cultural backgrounds, provide a compelling case for comparison in the context of impression formation. Among the countries that hold significant importance for both nations, China, North Korea, and Russia stand out due to their historical, political, and economic relationships. Japan and the United States differ in terms of cultural values and societal diversity. The United States, as a multiethnic nation, emphasizes individualism and tends to separate perceptions of governments from those of citizens. Conversely, Japan, characterized by its relatively homogeneous society, values harmony within groups and often views governments and citizens as interconnected. These cultural differences may influence how impressions of other countries are formed, making this comparison particularly intriguing. To prevent political tensions from hindering mutual understanding between nations, it is essential to examine how impressions are formed and the underlying factors that contribute to this process. This study focuses on three key factors influencing impression formation: historical context, the impact of mass media, and the influence of social environments. By conducting a survey among Japanese and American respondents, this study explores how these factors shape impressions of China, North Korea, and Russia.

The findings of this research are presented as follows: first, the impressions of China, North Korea, and Russia in Japan and the United States are outlined. Next, the factors influencing these impressions in each country are analyzed. Finally, the implications for international relations and citizen exchanges are discussed, followed by practical recommendations for promoting mutual understanding.

2. Literature review

2.1 Cultural Differences Between Japan and the United States

Research on cultural differences between Japan and the United States has produced varying perspectives. While Takano (2008) argues that there is no significant difference in collectivism or individualism between the two nations, many studies have suggested that Japanese society tends to be collectivist, whereas American society leans toward individualism (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). These cultural differences influence the behavior and perceptions of individuals in each society.

For instance, research comparing social media posts found that Japanese users often share

photos showcasing group activities or social harmony, while American users prioritize personal expression and privacy, rarely posting group photos (Omori & Allen, 2014). Similarly, a study on police norms reveals that individualism in the United States justifies assertiveness, sometimes leading to conflicts between law enforcement and society. In contrast, Japan emphasizes social order and adopts a community-focused, collectivist approach (Katrina, 2017). Furthermore, a study on success experiences indicates that Americans often attribute success to personal effort, whereas Japanese individuals tend to attribute it to external factors such as luck or circumstances (Imada & Ellsworth, 2011). A research on parenting practices also highlights that Japanese parents emphasize teaching children to prioritize group needs and harmony, while American parents encourage individuality and self-expression (Baldeomar, 2009).

It is important to exercise caution when making definitive statements about the cultural characteristics of Japan and the United States, as doing so may contribute to the formation of stereotypes, fostering prejudice and discrimination. However, previous research suggests that cultural differences between Japan and the United States may significantly influence how impressions of other countries are formed. Moreover, it can be hypothesized that Americans, who tend to value individuality, are more likely to distinguish between their perceptions of a foreign government and its citizens, whereas Japanese, who regard individuals as integral parts of a collective society, may integrate their impressions of a government with those of its citizens. To test this hypothesis, it is crucial to understand the historical and political relationships that both Japan and the United States have developed with other nations. Relations with China, North Korea, and Russia are believed to play a significant role in shaping public perceptions in both countries. The following section reviews these relationships and clarifies the contextual factors influencing impression formation in Japan and the United States.

2.2 Relationships with China, North Korea, and Russia

Japan and the United States have distinct historical and geographical relationships with China, North Korea, and Russia, which significantly influence the impressions held by their citizens. In Japan, tensions with China are rooted in historical issues, such as Japan's wartime aggression and territorial disputes over the Senkaku Islands (Pramaiseilla, 2023). Despite these tensions, China remains Japan's largest trading partner, reflecting a complex relationship of political conflict and economic interdependence (Rusdy, Muhamad, & Seniwati, 2016). Similarly, Japan's relations with North Korea are dominated by concerns over abductions and nuclear development, prompting efforts to address these issues through sanctions and diplomacy (Jeong, 2012). Meanwhile, disputes over the Northern Territories continue to strain Japan-Russia relations, preventing the conclusion of a peace treaty (Akimoto, 2024).

Subsequently, the relationships between the United States and China, North Korea, and Russia are explored. While the United States and China maintain a close economic relationship, tensions persist due to trade conflicts, the Taiwan issue, and military activities in the South China Sea (Ahhammad, 2024). Regarding North Korea, negotiations over nuclear development have been a long-standing issue, with U.S.-North Korea summits attempting to foster dialogue, though fundamental solutions remain elusive (Kharchuk, 2020). Meanwhile, relations with Russia have further deteriorated due to historical conflicts during the Cold War, as well as recent sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine and heightened tensions with NATO (Batyuk, 2023).

These relationships are considered critical factors influencing the perceptions of Chinese, North Korean, and Russian governments and citizens in both Japan and the United States. While Japanese perceptions are shaped by historical events and geographical proximity, U.S. perceptions are often influenced by security concerns and the broader context of international politics. To investigate these differences, it is essential to clarify the factors that contribute to perception formation. The subsequent section discusses the mechanisms underlying perception formation and the potential influence of various factors.

2.3 Mechanisms of Impression Formation

Factors influencing the formation of impressions toward other countries include political divisions, historical military conflicts, information from news and entertainment media, the influence of family and friends, and personal experiences. Among these, news and entertainment media play a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions of foreign nations. The content and tone presented by news media directly affect audiences' knowledge and emotions, potentially leading to the formation of stereotypes through biased reporting (Kleppe, Mossberg, & Grønhaug, 2014; Valkenburg et al., 1999). For instance, frequent viewing of variety shows in Japan has been linked to more emotional and aggressive stereotypes toward Chinese people, suggesting a media-driven influence on perception (Hagiwara, 2012). Specifically, Hagiwara pointed out that coverage of incidents such as the Senkaku Islands collision involving a Chinese fishing vessel contributed to a worsening image of China and Chinese people.

Historical events also serve as significant factors in shaping impressions toward other countries. Past military conflicts and political divisions have lasting effects on public sentiment and perceptions (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Borisenko & Grigoryeva, 2015). These historical contexts are transmitted across generations through education and shared collective memory, contributing to the construction of national identity. Such experiences often reinforce stereotypes and emotional attitudes toward specific nations. In addition, the influence of individuals' social groups and communities should not be overlooked. The values and attitudes held by these groups can affect

how individuals perceive other countries (Sinclair et al., 2005). Factors such as family opinions, school education, and workplace interactions may shape one's impressions of foreign nations. Furthermore, direct contact with individuals from other countries can reduce stereotypes through increased familiarity, fostering more nuanced and flexible perceptions (Bruner & Perlmutter, 1957). These social factors play a critical role in the formation of impressions toward other nations.

This study aims to investigate how these factors influence perceptions of China, North Korea, and Russia in Japan and the United States. Through a survey, participants were asked to evaluate their impressions of each country, and the contributing factors underlying these impressions were analyzed. As suggested by previous research, historical factors such as political conflicts and wars, media exposure through news and entertainment, and social influences from personal communities are key elements that may affect impression formation. By examining these factors, this study seeks to clarify the differences between Japanese and American perspectives.

3. Data Collection

This study conducted a survey from October 4 to October 24, 2022, targeting 100 Americans and 104 Japanese participants. American respondents were recruited through the language exchange app *Hello Talk*, selecting users who identified as American in their profiles. Japanese respondents were recruited from university students in Japan. Participants were first asked for their consent to participate in the survey. The survey focused on impressions of China, North Korea, and Russia, assessed through three perspectives: historical context, mass media influence, and social environments. Using a semantic differential (SD) method, participants rated their impressions on a six-point scale, where 1 indicated a “positive impression” and 6 indicated a “negative impression.” Table 1 shows the survey items.

Table 1. Impression Formation Survey Items

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1. What impression did you have of the Chinese government when learning about history in school?
 2. What impression did you have of Chinese people when learning about history in school?
 3. What impression did you have of the North Korean government when learning about history in school?
 4. What impression did you have of North Korean people when learning about history in school?
 5. What impression did you have of the Russian government when learning about history in school?
 6. What impression did you have of Russian people when learning about history in school?
 7. What impression do you have of the Chinese government based on mass media (variety shows, news programs, newspapers, internet)?
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8. What impression do you have of Chinese people based on mass media (variety shows, news programs, newspapers, internet)?
 9. What impression do you have of the North Korean government based on mass media (variety shows, news programs, newspapers, internet)?
 10. What impression do you have of North Korean people based on mass media (variety shows, news programs, newspapers, internet)?
 11. What impression do you have of the Russian government based on mass media (variety shows, news programs, newspapers, internet)?
 12. What impression do you have of Russian people based on mass media (variety shows, news programs, newspapers, internet)?
 13. What impression do you have of the Chinese government based on stories or attitudes from your family and people around you?
 14. What impression do you have of Chinese people based on stories or attitudes from your family and people around you?
 15. What impression do you have of the North Korean government based on stories or attitudes from your family and people around you?
 16. What impression do you have of North Korean people based on stories or attitudes from your family and people around you?
 17. What impression do you have of the Russian government based on stories or attitudes from your family and people around you?
 18. What impression do you have of Russian people based on stories or attitudes from your family and people around you?
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4. Analysis Methods

Given the ordinal nature of the data, collected through a six-point SD scale, and the independent samples (Japanese and American respondents), this study used the Mann-Whitney U-test, a nonparametric method. This statistical test is suitable for comparing medians between two independent groups and does not require normal distribution assumptions (McKnight et al., 2010).

The analysis involved two steps: 1) Comparing raw impression scores between Japanese and American respondents across the three categories (history, media, social environments) for governments and citizens. 2) Calculating the “impression difference scores” for governments and citizens by subtracting citizen scores from government scores. This process assesses whether respondents viewed governments and citizens differently. The Mann-Whitney U-test was conducted at a 5% significance level, with p -values and effect size r calculated. Following this, the distributions of scores for Japanese and American participants were examined by determining the median, minimum, and maximum values to evaluate differences between the two groups. Additionally, the statistical analysis was performed using the HAD 13.010 program (Shimizu, Murayama, & Daibo, 2006).

5. Results

Among Japanese respondents, 46% identified as female, 52% as male, and 2% chose not to disclose their gender. Among American respondents, 34% identified as female, 64% as male, and 2% chose not to disclose. In both groups, 70–80% of participants were in their teens or twenties, reflecting a younger demographic. Table 2 summarizes the impression scores (median [minimum, maximum]) for each item.

Table 2. Comparison of Scores Between Japanese and American Respondents

Medium	Target	Americans	Japanese	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
History	Chinese gov.	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	4.00 [2.00, 6.00]	.783	-.019
	Chinese people	3.00 [1.00, 6.00]	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	<.001**	-.532
	North Korean gov.	6.00 [1.00, 6.00]	6.00 [2.00, 6.00]	.008*	.187
	North Korean ppl.	3.00 [1.00, 6.00]	5.00 [2.00, 6.00]	<.001**	-.444
	Russian gov.	5.00 [2.00, 6.00]	4.00 [2.00, 6.00]	.013*	.174
	Russian people	3.00 [1.00, 6.00]	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	.004*	-.203
Media	Chinese gov.	5.00 [2.00, 6.00]	5.00 [2.00, 6.00]	.049*	.138
	Chinese people	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	5.00 [2.00, 6.00]	<.001**	-.362
	North Korean gov.	6.00 [1.00, 6.00]	6.00 [3.00, 6.00]	.107	.113
	North Korean ppl.	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	5.00 [2.00, 6.00]	.013*	-.175
	Russian gov.	6.00 [1.00, 6.00]	6.00 [3.00, 6.00]	.661	-.031
	Russian people	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	.162	.098
Social influence	Chinese gov.	5.00 [1.00, 6.00]	5.00 [1.00, 6.00]	.571	.040
	Chinese people	2.00 [1.00, 6.00]	5.00 [1.00, 6.00]	<.001**	-.631
	North Korean gov.	6.00 [1.00, 6.00]	6.00 [3.00, 6.00]	.009*	.182
	North Korean ppl.	3.00 [1.00, 6.00]	5.00 [1.00, 6.00]	<.001**	-.522
	Russian gov.	6.00 [1.00, 6.00]	6.00 [1.00, 6.00]	.376	.062
	Russian people	3.00 [1.00, 6.00]	4.00 [1.00, 6.00]	<.001**	-.326

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Note: Mann-Whitney U-test was applied. The values in the table represent the median [minimum, maximum].

The analysis of Table 2 highlights the differences in how Japanese and American respondents perceive the governments and citizens of China, North Korea, and Russia. It also examines which media sources have the strongest influence on negative impressions.

First, regarding the targets toward which Japanese respondents hold more negative impressions compared to Americans, the citizens of China, North Korea, and Russia stand out. Based on impressions shaped by historical education, Japanese respondents reported significantly more

negative impressions of Chinese citizens (4.00 [1.00, 6.00]), North Korean citizens (5.00 [2.00, 6.00]), and Russian citizens (4.00 [1.00, 6.00]) than American respondents (Chinese: 3.00 [1.00, 6.00]; North Koreans: 3.00 [1.00, 6.00]; Russians: 3.00 [1.00, 6.00]). These differences were statistically significant (Chinese: $p < .001$, $r = -.532$; North Koreans: $p < .001$, $r = -.444$; Russians: $p = .004$, $r = -.203$). In terms of impressions formed through mass media, Japanese respondents exhibited more negative impressions of Chinese citizens (5.00 [2.00, 6.00]) and North Korean citizens (5.00 [3.00, 6.00]) compared to Americans (Chinese: 4.00 [1.00, 6.00]; North Koreans: 4.00 [1.00, 6.00]), except for Russian citizens. These results were statistically significant for Chinese citizens ($p < .001$, $r = -.362$) and North Korean citizens ($p = .013$, $r = -.175$). Regarding impressions shaped by social influence, Japanese respondents also reported significantly more negative impressions of Chinese citizens (5.00 [1.00, 6.00]), North Korean citizens (5.00 [2.00, 6.00]), and Russian citizens (4.00 [1.00, 6.00]) compared to Americans (Chinese: 2.00 [1.00, 6.00]; North Koreans: 3.00 [1.00, 6.00]; Russians: 3.00 [1.00, 6.00]). The differences were statistically significant (Chinese: $p < .001$, $r = -.631$; North Koreans: $p < .001$, $r = -.522$; Russians: $p < .001$, $r = -.326$).

Conversely, American respondents were found to hold more negative impressions than Japanese respondents toward the governments of China, North Korea, and Russia. For impressions shaped by historical education, American respondents reported significantly more negative impressions of the North Korean government (6.00 [2.00, 6.00]) and the Russian government (3.00 [1.00, 6.00]) compared to Japanese respondents (North Korea: 5.00 [2.00, 6.00]; Russia: 4.00 [2.00, 6.00]). These differences were statistically significant (North Korea: $p = .008$, $r = .187$; Russia: $p = .013$, $r = .174$). In impressions shaped by mass media, American respondents held more negative impressions of the Chinese government (6.00 [3.00, 6.00]) compared to Japanese respondents (5.00 [3.00, 6.00]), with statistical significance ($p = .049$, $r = .138$). For impressions shaped by social influence, American respondents reported more negative impressions of the North Korean government (6.00 [1.00, 6.00]) than Japanese respondents (6.00 [3.00, 6.00]), with statistical significance ($p = .009$, $r = .182$).

A comparison of the median scores ([minimum, maximum]) for each media type revealed notable differences in impression formation between Japanese and American respondents. Japanese respondents were found to receive the strongest negative impressions from mass media, regardless of whether it pertained to governments or citizens. Social influence was the second most significant factor, followed by historical context, which had a relatively smaller effect. This suggests that in Japan, mass media plays a particularly influential role in impression formation, often portraying governments and citizens as a unified entity in a negative light. In contrast, for American respondents, mass media and social influence had the greatest impact on negative impressions of governments, while historical context had a smaller effect. However, when it came to citizens,

mass media emerged as the most influential factor, while social influence and historical context had minimal negative effects. These findings suggest that while Americans generally separate governments and citizens in their impressions, mass media tends to blur this distinction, leading to more negative perceptions of both.

To further examine this distinction, the differences between impressions of governments and citizens were analyzed using a calculated score (difference score), derived by subtracting the impression score for citizens from the score for governments. This approach allowed for an evaluation of whether perceptions of governments differed significantly from perceptions of citizens in each group. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of “Government and Citizen Impression Differences” Across Four Countries by Nationality

Media	Item Country	Americans 100	Japanese 104	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
History	China	2.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	0.00 [−2.00, 3.00]	<.001**	.434
	North Korea	2.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	0.00 [−2.00, 4.00]	<.001**	.503
	Russia	2.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	0.00 [−1.00, 4.00]	<.001**	.307
Mass Media	China	1.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	0.00 [−2.00, 3.00]	<.001**	.443
	North Korea	1.00 [0.00, 5.00]	1.00 [−2.00, 4.00]	.002*	.217
	Russia	1.00 [−2.00, 5.00]	1.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	.229	−.084
Social Influence	China	2.00 [−2.00, 5.00]	0.00 [−4.00, 4.00]	<.001**	.651
	North Korea	3.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	0.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	<.001**	.532
	Russia	2.00 [−2.00, 5.00]	1.00 [−1.00, 5.00]	<.001**	.333

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Note: Mann-Whitney U-test was applied. The values in the table represent the median [minimum, maximum].

The results showed that Japanese and American respondents differ significantly in how they perceive governments and citizens of the three countries. For impressions based on historical education, Japanese respondents generally viewed governments and citizens similarly (difference scores near zero). However, American respondents tended to have more favorable perceptions of citizens compared to governments for China (difference score: 2.00 [−1.00, 5.00]), North Korea (2.00 [−1.00, 5.00]), and Russia (2.00 [−1.00, 5.00]). These differences were statistically significant ($p < .001$ for all three countries). For mass media-based impressions, Americans were more likely than Japanese respondents to distinguish between governments and citizens for China and North Korea, with citizens perceived more favorably (China: $p < .001$, $r = .443$; North Korea: $p = .002$, $r = .217$). For Russia, the difference scores were not statistically significant ($p = .229$). This

result suggests that, for Americans, the media coverage of Russia may contribute to a negative perception not only of the Russian government but also of the Russian people. The lack of a significant difference indicates that Americans tend to form similar negative impressions of both the Russian government and its people when exposed to media content. Regarding social influences, Japanese respondents showed minimal differences between their impressions of governments and citizens for all three countries. In contrast, American respondents consistently viewed citizens more favorably than governments, with significant differences for China ($p < .001$, $r = .651$), North Korea ($p < .001$, $r = .532$), and Russia ($p < .001$, $r = .333$).

6. Discussion

This study examined the differences in perceptions of the governments and citizens of China, North Korea, and Russia between Japan and the United States. The study specifically focused on the influence of three factors: historical narratives, mass media, and social influence. The hypothesis, based on prior research, suggested that Americans tend to distinguish between governments and citizens, while Japanese people are more likely to view governments and citizens as a unified entity. The results of this study supported this hypothesis. As highlighted by Kleppe, Mossberg, & Grønhaug (2014), the tendency for media to simplify information and depict governments and citizens as a single entity likely plays a significant role in this phenomenon. Moreover, as Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997) noted, Japan's collectivist culture may act as a factor that weakens the perspective of separating governments from citizens.

On the other hand, in the United States, opportunities for exposure to diverse nationalities and cultures through social environments likely foster a perspective that distinguishes governments from citizens. Additionally, individualistic cultural values play a crucial role in supporting this separated perspective. The findings revealed that while the media and social environments strongly influenced negative impressions of governments among Americans, historical narratives and social environments had a relatively weaker negative impact on their impressions of citizens. These results align with Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), who suggested that individualistic cultures, like that of the United States, promote the separation of government and citizen perceptions. Furthermore, the content of history education in the United States, which critically evaluates national policies while emphasizing diversity at the individual level, may also contribute to these tendencies.

One of the significant contributions of this study is the comparison of the effects of different factors—historical narratives, mass media, and social influences—on impression formation. The fact that Japanese participants did not differentiate between the government and the people across

all three factors may be attributed to the characteristics of a collectivist culture. In contrast, the observation that American participants only failed to differentiate impressions of the government and people in the case of Russia through media exposure suggests that mass media plays a significant role in shaping negative perceptions not only of foreign governments but also of their citizens.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis was limited to three countries—China, North Korea, and Russia—whose unique historical and political contexts might have influenced the results. Additionally, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used in this study were not thoroughly examined. Therefore, this study serves as a preliminary investigation, and future research should employ more rigorous measurement tools for validation. Practically, in the context of international relations and citizen exchange, this study suggests that history education in Japan should aim to foster a perspective that separates governments and citizens. Social studies curricula should include discussions on the pros and cons of specific government policies to encourage students to analyze their impacts from diverse perspectives. For example, when teaching about issues such as the Senkaku Islands or North Korean abductions, Japanese education should highlight that not all citizens in these countries uniformly support their governments' policies. In the United States, addressing topics like the Cold War or Russia's invasion of Ukraine should include clear distinctions between government actions and the diverse opinions of Russian citizens, to reduce stereotypes.

Furthermore, the media bears a responsibility to provide balanced reporting that reflects not only governmental actions but also the diverse perspectives of citizens. For instance, critical reporting on specific governments should also include narratives about the everyday lives and opinions of the people in those countries. Using social media and online platforms to share examples of citizen-level interactions and cooperation could also be an effective way to promote mutual understanding among people from different nations. The results of this study demonstrated how impressions of governments could transfer to citizens. Future research should aim to measure the specific impacts of such interventions and develop detailed practical guidelines for implementation.

7. Conclusion

This study analyzed the differences and factors influencing the perceptions of foreign countries between Japan and the United States. In Japan, mass media was identified as the most significant factor contributing to negative impressions of both governments and citizens, followed by social influence and historical narratives. All three factors appeared to contribute to a unified perception of governments and citizens. In contrast, in the United States, while mass media played the largest

role in shaping negative impressions of governments, Americans tended to differentiate between governments and citizens regardless of the influencing factors. Among these factors, mass media was found to have the greatest potential to blur this distinction.

These differences between Japan and the United States are likely rooted in cultural values, such as collectivism versus individualism, as well as variations in exposure to diverse nationalities. Despite these cultural differences, it is essential to remain aware of the significant influence of mass media. Specifically, when reporting critically on governments, it is crucial to present a wide range of opinions about the citizens of those countries. Avoiding one-sided reporting that portrays entire populations negatively is essential for balanced perception formation.

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