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THE DOMESTIC FOUNDATIONS OF TOKYO'S CHANGING SECURITY POLICY STRATEGY
TOWARDS THE ASIA-PACIFIC IN THE 21ST CENTURY AND THE ROLE OF JAPAN'S FOREIGN
POLICY EXECUTIVE

Japan's changing security policy in order to expand its security policy by implementing new cooperation with Asia-Pacific states, while continuing to expand the U.S.-Japan alliance in the 21st century, presents a puzzle to existing IR theories. This dissertation applies a neoclassical realist approach to the analysis of Japan's changing security policy in the Asia-Pacific since the mid-2000s and suggests that due to a new threat perception among Japan's Foreign Policy Executive amid the changing determinants of the international system, Tokyo has implemented a more assertive regional security strategy.

The dissertation hypothesizes that Japanese elite-bureaucrats, particularly in MOFA and partly MOD, have sought to reach out to Southeast Asian countries in order to expand Tokyo's security strategy away from overly relying on the United States towards a more independent security strategy in the region by implementing new forms of bilateral and multilateral security cooperation. This hypothesis builds on the neoclassical realist assumption that the changing conditions of the international system presented by China's rising regional assertiveness have compelled elite-bureaucrats in Japan's MOFA, the Kantei and MOD to seek to implement a new strategy by cooperating with Asia-Pacific.

Since Japan's changing security policy after the Cold War has been subject to a wide range of political science research and various schools of IR, Chapter 1 of the dissertation analyses the existing research illustrative, focusing on the prominent schools of neorealism and constructivism.

Neorealism suggests that changes in the balance of power have compelled Japan to pursue a more assertive security policy by allying closer with the United States and gradually extending its contributions to this alliance. According to neorealism, the scarcity of security in East Asia and in particular the structural transformation of the security environment from the Cold War to the post-Cold War period forced Japan to depart on a path to transform its economic strength into military power. Within neorealism, several specific hypotheses exist that explain Japanese changing security policy.

Reluctant realism suggests that as a reaction to U.S.' rising expectations of Japan to contribute more than just financially to the bilateral alliance after the Cold War and succeeding pressure of by U.S. administrations to assume more military responsibility, *Gaiatsu* has become a decisive factor in Japan's security

considerations in the 21st century. This approach argues that Japan's rising assertiveness is caused by the growing consensus among *a new generation* of policymakers who are convinced that Japan must assert a new identity in its foreign policy.

Transitional realism has argued that due to the internalization of this *Gaiatsu* over the course of the 1990s, Japanese policymakers conceived national defense in a more realist light and the need for the U.S. to exceed external pressure had become less necessary in order to direct Japan towards contributing more substantially to the bilateral alliance. Conversely to reluctant realism, transitional realism assumes that this change had impacted Japan's security policy consensus as a whole and hence suggests that younger elites *do not* deviate from their elders on issues that would fundamentally change Japan's foreign policy. In fact, transitional realism is incapable of explaining the expansion of Japan's policy focus with new defense strategy in the 1970s with NDPO and the new U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines in 1978 that expanded the strategic scope of the bilateral alliance in the Asia-Pacific. The strategic change does therefore not present a particularity inherent solely to the post-Cold War era and rooted in the experiences of the Gulf War, as transitional realism argues.

Constructivism explains changes in Japan's foreign policy with transforming cultural and societal norms. Some constructivists suggest that Japanese security policy underwent only marginal changes and claim that even after the end of the Cold War, Japan had adapted only few changes in its antimilitarist posture. Accordingly, cultural norms in Japanese society, in particular pacifism, are diffused among policymaking institutions and the contemporary society widely, until they eventually produce and ingrain resistance to the state's use of military power.

Other constructivist claim that it is the structure of the Japanese state and society that explains the comprehensive character of Tokyo's security policy. This approach hypothesizes that Japan has developed a culture of antimilitarism in responds to the experiences of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War. Accordingly, the norms, based on which foreign policy behavior is conducted, had shifted after the end of the Cold War and caused Japan to assume a more active foreign policy within the context of multilateral organizations. In sum, by stressing the impact of norms on Japan's security policy, constructivist acknowledge that policymakers are influenced by competing international and domestic norms and cultures.

However, because policymakers often juggle multiple and conflicting identities, it becomes impossible to make a priori predictions about the state's foreign policy choices. Furthermore, constructivism does not explain under what circumstances societal and cultural norms can restrain assertive security policy – and when

they don't. The operationalization of norms thus is arbitrary and it becomes impossible to link any policy decision to the impact of norms.

In order to overcome the incapability of existing research, this dissertation suggests to apply neoclassical realism (NCR) to the analysis of Japan's changing security policy. NCR seeks to explain variation in the foreign policies of the same state over time. NCR assumes that 1) the international system is anarchic and that states must rely on themselves to ensure their survival; 2) that survival is the most important national interest in an anarchic realm and 3) that anarchy makes cooperation difficult, as it leads states to prefer relative over absolute gains. However, while the state first and foremost considers imperatives of the anarchic international system as its overriding priority (because failing to do so could jeopardize national security), NCR utilizes auxiliary domestic level variables as *intervening* variables between systemic constraints and national policy responses. NCR assumes that a state's top officials, the Foreign Policy Executive (FPE), are charged with the formulation of a nation's foreign policy strategy. The FPE consists of key societal elites that can adversely affect the threat assessment process and ultimately strategic adjustment. In the case of Japan, this FPE consists of the prime minister, his close advisors, the key cabinet members, ministers and elite bureaucrats in MOFA and MOD who conduct foreign and defense policies. NCR assumes that as these individuals are responsible for making the foreign policy choices, in particular the head of government, the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defense who are equipped with some degree of autonomy and power in foreign policy issues. These actors have a distinct impact on the course of a nation's foreign policy. Additionally, the FPE includes high-level bureaucrats, members of ministerial, subcommittee, or subcabinet sessions on foreign security policy, and therefore has determinative influence over foreign policy choices of the FPE in Japan, NCR needs to focus on the Kantei, the MOFA, and the JDA/MOD.

The dissertation hypothesizes that Chinese increasing military capabilities have compelled Japan's Foreign Policy Executive to seek to implement a change in Japanese security policy towards the Asia-Pacific. The more the threat of China's military expansion was perceived by Japan's FPE, the more Japan sought to expand its security cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries and the U.S. in the region. Hence, the dissertation assumes that these changes were not enacted by growing fears of abandonment or internalized gaiatsu, as transitional realism suggests, but exerted by the Foreign Policy Executive that perceived the systemic changes in East Asia as intervening variable and subsequently sought to implement the decisive strategy of securitizing Japan's security relations with Asia-Pacific nations as preferred policy option among many. Hence, the dissertation hypothesizes that the changes in Japan's security policy to assume a more assertive Asia-Pacific

strategy were caused by the intervening variable of the FPE that transcended systemic changes and acted appropriately.

The dissertation applies the method of process-tracing as an analysis of within-case data that provides information about the context, process, or mechanism that contributes distinctively to causal inference. The analysis examines concrete actions by the FPE that had an impact on security policies. The dissertation applies the explaining-outcome process-tracing method to the case study of the causal mechanisms that are embodied in the dynamics of the bilateral alliance and in the new security cooperation implemented by Japan's FPE in the Asia-Pacific since the mid-2000s.

The process-tracing analysis focuses on official publications by the Kantei, MOFA and MOD as well as institutions of the U.S. government. This survey is complemented by an in-depth analysis of personal accounts, oral history and other written forms of personal testimony by former elite-bureaucrats, politicians and academics that were involved in the policymaking process. In order to analyze these accounts, narrative interviews were conducted with elite-bureaucrats from MOFA and MOD, retired officers from all three SDF branches, as well as scientists and researchers affiliated with universities and think tanks.

Chapter 2 analyzes the hypothesized impact of three systemic factors as cause for Japan's changing security policy, the changing parameters of the U.S.-Japan alliance against the backdrop of its changing institutional basis over the course of the 1950s to the 2000s, the threat posed by North Korea since the 1990s and the impact of China's rise on Japan's security policy. Neorealist and constructivist analysis of this change were applied. Then, the neoclassical realist analysis of the role of the FPE and its impact in the distinct cases is analyzed.

Exemplified by the analysis of the processes that have led to the implementation of the U.S.-Japan security treaty in 1960, the analysis discovers that the constructivist claims of the stable anti-militarist norms, that have been implemented in the post-War era, could not be confirmed. Instead, realist convictions of the FPE in the 1950s and 1960s were decisive for Japan's security policy course and suggest that antimilitarist or pacifist norms did not prevent Japan from changing its security policy towards a gradually more assertive posture during the Cold War. While the institutionalization of the bilateral alliance through policies like the Security Treaty further expanded Japanese security policy, the necessary minimum of Japan's security contribution emphasized by the IKEDA administration, on the other hand, did not warrant neorealist interpretations. Instead, the analyzed agents of Japan's FPE, the Prime Minister and his cabinet, managed to resist demands from right nationalist and left idealists to abolish the security treaty and instead remained a pragmatic approach.

The analysis of the 1970s reveals the decisive impact of civilians within the JDA, such as KUBO Takuya, and politicians, like Liberal Democrat SAKATA Michita, on changes in Japan's national defense strategy. New policy measures, like the Standard Defense Concept and the Defense Study Group, suggest that Japan's FPE had a distinct impact on changing Japanese security policy. At the same time, the realized adjustments did not confirm neorealism's hypothesis of large scale armament despite rising threat awareness amid Soviet and Chinese forces. The NCR analysis rejected constructivism's hypothesis that the GNP 1 percent ceiling on Japan's defense expenditures serves as warrant for the validity of antimilitarist norms. At the same time, neorealism's emphasis on the sole impact of systemic determinants on security policy considerations of states could not be confirmed.

Instead, the NCR analysis confirmed availability of several options for Japan to respond to systemic changes and the decisive role of elite-bureaucrats in the JDA on choosing a moderately-assertive security policy strategy as the parameters of the bilateral alliance changed over the course of the post-war and cold war era.

The analysis of the Gulf War showed that the pacifist norms constructivism emphasizes, was in fact loosing its ability to restrain Japan's securitization. Especially MOFA bureaucrats were eager to aspire a greater international role and criticized the KAIFU administration's decision not to dispatch the SDF. Japan's inability to use a participation in the Gulf War as opportunity to "show the flag" and to balance externally, despite the demise of the bipolar system after and therefore the reduced restraints on Japan as alliance partner, present a puzzle for neorealism. Amid the new international situation Japan should have contributed to the alliance without the need to feel negative retaliation by Soviet capacities.

Neorealism thus does not explain why Japan, despite steady growth in its material power, continued to adhere to policies that deemphasized military instruments as a means of achieving national goals. The case did not only illustrate the insufficiency of constructivist norm-based explanations but also suggested NCR's focus on the diversity of strategic convictions among members of Japan's FPE, which neorealism's black-box approach does not account cannot explain.

The analysis of a possible nuclear threat posed by North Korea should have warranted neorealist explanations for Japan's expanding security policy. However, despite the increased possibility of a nuclear strike, Japan still did not acquire nuclear deterrence capabilities to balance threat. Instead, the tensions with North Korea and the advent of the KOIZUMI administrations provided the opportunity to engage deeper in Japan's Asia-Pacific diplomacy. Constructivism, on the other hand, would have argued that the generational change among members of the JDA and the "social and generational turnover" of Japan's security policy institutions

from within was somehow “automatically” responsible for Tokyo’s increasingly assertive strategy. However, this view does not consider the particular role of elite-bureaucrats and cabinet members who hold a distinct amount of power and are continuously exert this power in order to change the states foreign policy.

The analysis of the FPE with a focus on the JDA and MOFA made clear that the North Korean threat was acknowledged by Japan’s elite-bureaucrats. But while JDA bureaucrats were contradicting the JDA director’s threat assessment, particularly MOFA bureaucrats were successful in coordinating with Prime Minister KOIZUMI and advisors. These powerful agents of the FPE were thus responsible for choosing the diplomatic approach over the neorealist logic of larger balancing.

The analysis of Japan’s China policy presented problems for neorealist and constructivist analyses. Neorealism’s balance-of-power logic would assume that Japan seeks relative gains over absolute gains. Accordingly, Japan should have cut aid and investment and instead to implement counter-initiatives that would have actively stopped or halted China’s economic growth. Although Japan became gradually aware of the increasingly securitizing region due to Beijing’s economic and military rise, it did not seek to establish a full-armament balancing strategy. Instead, MOFA directed development aid to China and encouraged Beijing’s membership into the WTO. These developments reject neorealist assumptions.

Constructivists would also stress that the installment of semiofficial trilateral security talks with China and the United States had eased Sino-Japanese security relations since 1998 and that the integration of China into the World Trade Organization in on December 11, 2001 marked a symbolic step in affirming common norms as the basis for mutual cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. However, the emphasis of norm-based foreign policy and regionalism have not prevented increasing tensions between Tokyo and Beijing and did not stop Japan to further seek to balance Chinese military capabilities.

NCR suggests, considerations over the changing balance of power, caused by Chinese growing assertiveness around 2005, have compelled the FPE to perceive China with more caution. The analysis reveals the impact of the FPE’s intentions to expand Japan’s bi- and multilateral security cooperation with Asia-Pacific nations and to expand Japan’s U.S.-focused security. It was due to the differential assumptions of the diverse FPE in MOFA and the JDA that Japan eventually implemented a more careful strategy in order to meet China’s rise by gradually expanding capacities and security relations in the Asia-Pacific. These dynamics are overlooked by existing neorealist and constructivist research. Rather, NCR’s focus on the FPE enables the researcher to grasp a more accurate picture to answer the question why Japan expanded its security policy in the Asia-Pacific in the 21st century.

Chapter 3 analyzes Japan's security policy cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries, exemplified by the case studies of its relations with Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. Since the mid-2000s, Japan has successively sought to implement new security cooperation with these countries, that distinguishes from its long standing strategy of the bilateral alliance.

The cases present new forms of Japanese security policy, as these multilateral security arrangements exceed the frame of the U.S.-Japan alliance. As Japan has sought to engage with Asia-Pacific nations by establishing new security ties within and outside the bilateral alliance system, neorealism's hypothesis that Japan would only seek to balance within the mechanism of the U.S.-Japan alliance cannot account for this new strategic focus. These new forms of security cooperation do also not present a full-fledged militarization, which neorealism would have assumed. On the other hand, the new regional strategy exceeds Japan's traditionally cultural-oriented diplomacy and contradicts constructivist emphasis on Japan's anti-militarist norms. NCR therefor suggests that the FPE has sought to implement a more independent security strategy that has changed Japan's security policy strategy towards expanding its role within the bilateral alliance framework, while including a decisive new strategy of expanding Japan's security focus towards becoming a regional stakeholder.

Contrary to neorealism's suggestion, Japan's security cooperation with Jakarta in the 21st century did not involve a strong balancing policy, but aimed instead at expanding Tokyo's strategic options complementary to deepening the bilateral alliance. This framework was not integrated an institutionalized form or conducted as rule-based cooperation that either institutionalism or constructivism would suggest. Instead, the cooperation aimed at exceeding the narrow focus on counter-piracy efforts as one option to expand Japan's balancing strategy against China. The NCR analysis of the FPE, MOFA elite-bureaucrats in particular, demonstrate that considerations over the bilateral alliance, in particular neorealist assumptions of external pressure, did not play a role. Instead, it were elite-bureaucrats in MOFA that urged to expand security dialogues with South Asian and Southeast Asian countries in order to change Japan's security scope towards the region and within the bilateral alliance. Contrary to neorealism's *gaiatsu*-hypothesis, MOFA elite-bureaucrats tried to convince the State Department to *consider taking a lead* in implementing stronger multilateral security ties with Japan and Indonesia in the region.

The case study of Japanese-Filipino security cooperation revealed that this cooperation was facilitated and put forth by Japanese elite-bureaucrats in MOFA. Neorealism's hypothesis that these motivations stemmed from external U.S.' pressure or were caused by the decreasing trust in the efficiency of the bilateral alliance could not be confirmed. Instead of flocking to the rising hegemon or allying with a source of danger to gain benefits and ensure security at the expense of autonomy, Japan's FPE choose to expand security cooperation with

Manila while expanding its commitment to the bilateral alliance. Bilateral cooperation with the Philippines did not warrant a form of strong balancing in order to achieve greater security independence from the U.S. and thus did not confirm neorealist hypothesis. At the same time, the expanding Japanese-Filipino maritime cooperation rejects constructivism's claim that antimilitarist norms in Japanese culture are still restraining its security expansion.

The NCR analysis of the Japanese-Filipino security relationship revealed the variation among the FPE. Elite-bureaucrats in MOD and NIDS were concerned over Mindanao's instability, suggested to put on hold further expansion of bilateral security cooperation and had doubts over the feasibility of implementing maritime cooperation. Conversely, MOFA elite-bureaucrats advocated to implement a diverse strategy that continued strong alignment with the U.S. while significantly implementing new expanded security cooperation. While NCR allows to acknowledge variation among agents of the FPE, this case presents a puzzle to neorealism. The analysis revealed that although there was not an overall agreement on the feasibility to expand security cooperation present, new policies that manifested the strengthening of this cooperation prevailed anyway. NCR thus enabled the analysis to identify the causes of changes in Japan's specific regional security strategy amid the changing power balance in the Asia-Pacific and its impact on the intervening variable the FPE. This analysis offered, on the one hand, a more nuanced analysis of the varying degree in changes of Japan's strategy. On the other hand, the case demonstrated the varying degree of different elite-bureaucrats within the FPE, who advocated for implementing a more diverse regional security policy. Since neorealism cannot account for this variation as it treats states as black-box, and constructivism's focus on societal and cultural norms cannot explain Japanese-Philippines security cooperation, NCR offers a new theoretical approach that is fit to explain this new regional strategy.

The case study of Japan's cooperation with Vietnam revealed that MOFA elite-bureaucrats were increasingly concerned over Chinese military policy, while U.S. officials were less alarmed and did not press for the implementation of new security cooperation. The case did not support the hypothesis of internalized *gaiatsu* and contradicted transitional realism, since neither generational change nor concerns over the U.S.-Japan alliance had influenced long-serving career diplomats and elite-bureaucrats in their changed assessment on Japan's regional security strategy. In general Japan's FPE was much more alerted than U.S. officials about this Beijing's course and did suggest to expand security cooperation with Vietnam without external pressure. The case study stressed the FPE's role in its pursuit of new available strategy options apart from neorealism's limited bandwagoning, balancing or hedging strategies. Increased concerns among Japan's FPE, in particular among MOFA's Asia and Oceania

Bureau, led to elite-bureaucrats to seek to expand Japan's maritime security cooperation efforts with Vietnam in order to address Chinese regional maritime assertiveness and as an expression of the FPE's new strategic perception for Japan to assume greater regional responsibility. Therefore, the focus on the FPE's role in Japanese-Vietnamese security relations do warrant NCR's emphasis of considering this intervening variable in order to explain changes in Japan's security strategy in 21st century Asia-Pacific.

By focusing on the three regional cases, the neoclassical realist analysis in chapter three has revealed the inability of neorealist and constructivist theories to explain Japan's changing security policy towards the Asia-Pacific and instead demonstrated the need to consider the NCR's intervening variable of the FPE in order to explain Japan's new assertiveness in implementing new security cooperation with Asia-Pacific nations in the 21st century.

Chapter 4 applies the neoclassical realist analysis to the role of the fragmented FPE during the DPJ administrations between 2009 and 2012 in order to analyze the impact of elite-bureaucrats on the foreign policy decision-making process. As the long reign of the LDP was ended with the election of the DPJ, the strong relation between the LDP and the elite-bureaucracy ended and caused friction between bureaucrats and politicians. In the case of foreign policy making, NCR enables the analysis to identify the causes and the impact of this fragmentation and test NCR's hypothesis that elite calculations and perceptions of power play a key intervening role between systematic imperatives and the formulation of foreign and defense policies. The chapter analyses the diversion of Japan's FPE with politician-led government vs. elite-bureaucrats in MOFA under the HATOYAMA administration and demonstrates while the implementation of foreign policy failed, exemplified on the DPJ's administrative reforms, the case of the relocation of the U.S. Marine Base at Futenma and HATOYAMA's new foreign policy strategy of the East Asian Community. The chapter continues to analyze the continuation of the fragmentation under the KAN administration and finally turns to the efforts to reconnect the party politicians with the elite-bureaucracy in MOFA amid increasing tensions of amid the Senkaku Island conflict. The analysis relies on secondary accounts that are tested against leaked cables by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. These cables give detailed accounts over the distortion and fragmentation among Japan's FPE during the HATOYAMA administration. These documents are cross-examined by published testimonies of elite-bureaucrats as well as personal interviews by the author.

The analysis shows that Prime Minister HATOYAMA's promise in 2009 to terminate the power of the bureaucrats and civil servants presented a diversion of Japan's FPE with politician-led government vs. elite-bureaucrats in MOFA. By conducting this shift, HATOYAMA intended to conduct foreign policy by

circumventing elite-bureaucrats. Because of the inability to utilize adequate pre-existing resources to overcome the opposition by veto players among elite-bureaucrats in MOFA, however, the implementation of policy changes failed. When the HATOTAMA administration tried to replace the ironclad interconnections between Kantei politicians and MOFA bureaucrats and further tried to shut out MOFA bureaucrats from the policymaking process, the HATOYAMA administration failed to bind elite-cohesion.

With the war on bureaucrats, the HATOYAMA administration announced its intention to break the strong connection between Tokyo's bureaucracy, the LDP and the long-standing Japanese government. At the same time, HATOYAMA caused suspicion about his intention to redirect the bilateral alliance and caused concerns about Japan's commitment to the bilateral alliance among U.S. officials. In order to strengthen the bilateral alliance' cooperation on security policy matters, realist-envisioned elite-bureaucrats worked successfully against HATOYAMA's policies as MOFA officials continuously emphasized the need for deterrence capacities against Chinese buildups in back-channel talks with the U.S. State Department. These elite-bureaucrats worked towards strengthening the bilateral alliance, while indicating to Washington officials that Japan's FPE was convinced the HATOYAMA cabinet lacked proficiency in foreign policy matters and would be resigning soon.

The analysis demonstrates that MOFA's elite-bureaucrats in particular sought to convince U.S. diplomats regarding the stability of Japan's contribution to the bilateral alliance despite statements by the Prime Minister that sought to redefine the parameters of the bilateral alliance and redirect Japan's foreign policy role in the alliance caused U.S. officials to further lose confidence in the HATOYAMA administration. The particular case of HATOYAMA's East Asian Community approach has demonstrated this foreign policy did not evolve due to resistance elite-bureaucrats and high elite-fragmentation in the FPE, despite its decisive focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, because this proposal put less emphasis on security cooperation within the bilateral alliance framework and instead sought to implement new diplomacy efforts with China, it was not supported by other agents in the FPE, particularly among MOFA and MOD bureaucrats. The failure to implement this new regional strategy demonstrated the impact of elite-bureaucrats on shaping Japan's security policy. It also suggests that during times of a highly fragmented FPE policy changes are difficult to implement.

The FPE became more influential when KAN revised the inter-ministerial coordination between politicians and elite-bureaucrats in MOFA and the appointment of installment of former realist-oriented MOFA elite-bureaucrats as political advisors. KAN reversed this process and helped MOFA bureaucrats to regain power in foreign policy making, establishing first steps to overcome the gap between the KANTEI and elite-

bureaucrats in MOFA and MOD. These attempts further combined the two elements within the FPE, (1) the Kantei staff and the executive branch (PM and Cabinet) with (2) elite-bureaucrats in MOFA and MOD. Eventually, when the scarcity of security in the international system became apparent again with concerns over a militarized conflict around the Senkaku Islands under NODA, NCR demonstrated that the political expertise of elite-bureaucrats were stronger influencing Japan's strategy which directed Japan towards adapting a stronger strategy that focused on developing own strategies and capacities to address the changing security region that did expand simple bandwagoning while it did also not warranted for a neorealist assumption of strong armament. Thus, NCR is able to explain the decision for a more moderate, yet expanded strategy in the 2011 Guidelines while rejecting constructivist emphasis on pacifism. It similarly rejects institutionalist hypothesis since the natural gas reserves around Senkaku should have enabled cooperative exploitation and shared gains. Instead NCR showed that under the impression of great power rise with China, Japans FPE sought for a nuanced strategy that sought for regional security cooperation with Asia-Pacific nations.