

Overcoming the ‘Post-War Regime:’ Abe Shinzō and Japan’s State Identity

A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Date: *01-06-2017*

Wordcount: *15557*

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Introduction

*I will resolutely set forth bold policies to promote the creation of a "new Japan" led through true political leadership which is founded on mutual trust between politics and the public sector.*¹

Since the return Of Abe Shinzō as Prime Minister of Japan in 2012, some critics have claimed that Japan's state identity as an anti-militarist state has come 'under siege to a degree not seen since its creation over 50 years ago.'² Certainly, the Abe cabinet's revisionist push to reinterpret the country's 1947 'peace' constitution has only been rivalled by the 1954 interpretation that allowed for the creation of the Japanese Self Defence Forces (SDF). As such, Abe's stated desire to overcome the 'post-war regime' has again brought to the forefront the discussion regarding the future of what in Japan is described as its "pacifist" state identity. This is a debate whether either continuity and change are discernible in Japan's contemporary identity and the role of either the structural and material or ideational factors as the driving force in guaranteeing either stability or change. It is these questions that in recent years have shaped the debate between the constructivist schools of both norm- and relational constructivism—resulting into a schism between both approaches.

The current debate between both norm- and relational constructivists centres around the efficacy of ideational factors in ensuring identity change. Contemporary norm constructivists continue to adhere to the argument that only significant structural and material shocks can overcome the institutionalized norm of anti-militarism within Japanese society.³ Relational constructivists, however, reject such a notion, arguing instead that material factors do not have any exact meaning outside of the discourses within which they are constituted and that as such identity discourses can be rearticulated as to encompass remilitarizing practices.⁴ So, whilst norm constructivists remain indebted to a positivist epistemology their relational counterparts have abandoned this altogether—thus allowing for schism between both approaches to emerge. It is this dichotomy, which is based on the exaggerated notion of the efficacy of either the material or ideational in effecting identity change that this thesis will use as its point of entry for enquiry.

¹ Shinzō Abe, "Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe", *The Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*, 26 December 2012, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201212/26danwa_e.html.

² Andrew L. Oros, "International and Domestic Challenges to Japan's Postwar Security identity: 'norm constructivism' and Japan's new 'Proactive Pacifism'", *The Pacific Review* 28:1 (2015), 158.

³ *Ibid*, 157.

⁴ Linus Hagström and Ulv Hanssen, "War is Peace: the Rearticulation of 'Peace' in Japan's China Discourse", *Review of International Studies* (2015), 21.

To this end this thesis will turn to the theoretical and methodological insights of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as espoused by Norman Fairclough, as to incorporate a dialectical relation between the material and discursive into the conceptualization of Japan's state identity. Such an approach will allow for a more nuanced understanding of material and discursive factors in either enabling or restraining new discourses and policies to emerge. This enquiry will be guided by posing the question of: what discursive strategies did Abe Shinzō utilize as to overcome the restraints imposed by Japan's 'peace-loving' state identity as to effect the remilitarization of Japan? As to come to a conclusion, this thesis will utilize an interdisciplinary approach that combines International Relations (IR) insights on state identity with an understanding of political power as conceptualized by Antonio Gramsci and the critical engagement with discourse as theorized by Fairclough's' variant of CDA.

Such an interdisciplinary approach allows for a conceptualization of identity that provides a more nuanced understanding of the role of the discursive and material in the maintenance and contestation of Japan's state identity. Within this thesis, an identity is conceptualized as a hegemonic entity that through its 'directionality' either enables or restrains the emergence of new discourses and practices. These restraints govern both the 'social field' of security and the accompanying 'order of discourse' of security through the stable reproduction of legitimate discourse and practice by the 'discourse circles' that police the field. As such the hegemonic identity provides 'meaning in the service of power' that maintains social hierarchies and power relations within society. In order to successfully overcome the restraints imposed by the identity, a political entrepreneur is required to work from within the identity as to negate the political costs of contestation. This entails the formulation of a discursive strategy that through the re-articulation and creation of new discourses within an 'imaginary' seek to overcome, or appropriate the directionality of a hegemonic identity. However, this requires that such strategies are practically adequate, meaning politically feasible and legitimate as to be operationalized.

In order to critically engage with this process within Japan's identity politics this thesis will be structured as follows. First, it will provide an assessment of the current literature, critiquing, in particular, the current schism between norm- and relational constructivist works as to find a point of entry for this study. Following this critical discussion, a theoretical framework for the contestation of a state identity will be conceptualized. As a midway point this study will formulate its methodology of CDA and how this methodology engages with identity and political theory. The substantial chapters of this thesis will begin with a critical inquiry into the revisionist ambitions of Abe Shinzō by

engaging with his own speeches and writing as well as relevant literature. The second part will critically engage with Japan's first National Security Strategy (NSS) and posits this as a 'imaginary' for action. Within the third part the discourses unearthed in the second section will be traced 'real-time' as to see how these discourses were being operationalized. The study will conclude with a summary of, and a critical engagement with its findings.

Literature Review

Since the end of the Cold War the question of whether Japan was to remain a "pacifist" state – as many of its leaders, citizens and outside observers believed it had been after World War II – or should instead become a 'normal country,' has caused ample debate. In academic circles, some IR scholars using realist theories predicted Japan's imminent remilitarization and re-emergence as a great power. However, scholars adhering to the newly emerged school of constructivism professed a contrary opinion: Japan would remain a pacifist country on account of its state identity which was grounded in anti-militarist norms. Indeed, Japan was viewed as a central case study in early constructivist scholarship, given that it often appeared to harbour an extreme aversion to military solutions to international problems. However, in recent years scholars belonging to either norm- or relational constructivist schools have formulated contrary opinions on whether ideational factors provide a stable structure for identity or otherwise provide a catalyst through which identity change can be effected. This has led to a schism between both approaches regarding agency and structure, as well as positivist and post-positivist research methodologies.

As the Cold War ended and Japan's response to international calls to 'show the flag' in the 1991 Gulf War was deemed inadequate, positivist accounts started to increasingly predict Japan's imminent, although reluctant, 'normalisation' as a 'great power.'⁵ Such a development was, according to these authors, either unavoidable on account of the threat posed by structural changes to Japan's 'interest,'⁶ or otherwise as the result of U.S. pressure.⁷ However, the then emergent literature of what Nicholas Onuf would term 'constructivism' began to question the predictions made by the dominant positivist paradigms, realism and liberalism. This entailed a critique of the prime actor within IR: the nation-state. Whereas positivism posited the nation-state as constituted by its self-interest within an anarchic international system, constructivists such as Alexander Wendt instead argued that 'anarchy is

⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25:1 (2000), 33.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kenneth B. Pyle. *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1992), 3-5.

what states make of it' and that as such both nation-states and their perception of the 'anarchic' system were actually social constructs.⁸

Within the constructivist literature, Japan was presented as a case in point to the theorem's central assumption on account of its 'abnormal,' or 'reactive' foreign policy which failed to adhere to realist theoretical orthodoxy. According to scholars such as Peter Katzenstein and Thomas Berger, this was due to Japan having developed an 'identity' centred around a 'culture of anti-militarism,'⁹ or 'peaceful cultural norms.'¹⁰ This "pacifist," or more accurately anti-militarist, identity was the outcome of a process of political negotiation that followed Japan's defeat in World War II and the nation's politicians perception of this calamity.¹¹ This process had engendered a widespread distrust of the military within Japanese society which had ensured that anti-militarist norms had become institutionalized within Japan – thus ensuring Japan's peaceful international politics through the structure provided by the identity. Yet, despite these early norm constructivists adhering to critical theoretical assumptions, they retained a theoretical proximity to positivist theories by arguing that Japan's identity could only be altered by significant structural shocks – an assumption that would continue to reverberate to this day.¹²

In following decades works centred around identity as an independent variable that guided state action continued to proliferate. Although identity as a concept had been criticized of 'definitional anarchy,' IR scholars sought to save the concept by investing 'identity with the analytical rigor and methodological imagination needed to make it a measurable variable across the social sciences.'¹³ This resulted in works that sought to study the salience of different role identities in varying international contexts,¹⁴ whilst others sought to more rigorously conceptualize identity as to prevent a too deterministic application of the concept with regard to its influence over policy preferences.¹⁵ One of the most salient works that utilized identity as an independent variable was Andrew Oros's: *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity and the Evolution of Security Practices* (2008). Oros, a norm

⁸ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics," *International Organization* 46: 2 (1992), 395.

⁹ Thomas U. Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-militarism," *International Security* 17:4 (1993), 120.

¹⁰ Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, "Japan's national security: structures, norms and policies," *International Security* (1993), 104.

¹¹ Berger, "From Sword," 131.

¹² Ibid 147.

¹³ Rawi Abdelal, et al, "Identity as a Variable," *Perspectives on Politics* 4:4 (2006), 695, 696.

¹⁴ Amy Y. Catalinac. "Identity Theory and Foreign Policy: Explaining Japan's Responses to the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 U.S. War in Iraq," *Politics & Policy* 35 (2007), 91.

¹⁵ Kuniko Ashizawa. "When Identity Matters: State Identity, Regional Institution-Building and Japanese Foreign Policy," *International Studies Review* 10 (2008), 573, 575.

constructivist, argued that Japan possessed a 'security identity' of which the stability, despite constant contestation, could be explained by the identity being formulated around flexible principles which had become hegemonic within the Japanese state and evolved with time.¹⁶ Like earlier norm constructivists, Oros continued to adhere to the notion that in the absence of structural and material shocks Japan's security identity would remain unaltered.¹⁷ As such, it was not until the advent of relational constructivist works that Japan's identity was conceptualized as transforming on account of the alterations being made to the identity's discursive content.

Relational constructivism as a monistic method refuses to divide the social world into material and social spheres on account of the difficulty of separating 'material factors' from the discourses within which they are constituted as objects.¹⁸ Instead relational constructivism prefers to operate in the realm of social activity within which social constructs such as a state's identity are regarded as the 'ongoing accomplishments of practice.'¹⁹ This entails that the relational account of the social world, through its rejection of 'reality,' denies the existence of a constituting essence – consisting of norms – that informs a state's being – thus preferring the analysis of discursive agency over the empiricist analysis of normative structures.²⁰ This has engendered a methodology of postmodern discourse analysis, within which the constituting discourses of the 'Self' vis-à-vis the 'Other' are analysed as to discern changes in an identity's boundaries. The resulting body of text have been preoccupied with notions such as: 'reification,' 'securitization,' and 'exceptionalization.' In applying these concepts relational constructivists have endeavoured to demonstrate how, for example, discourses on Asia as a 'thing out there' that represents either a 'threat,' or an 'opportunity' reify pre-War discourses and engender a similar policy mindset.²¹ Whilst other works demonstrated how Japanese politicians have sought to frame China as a 'bully,'²² and North Korea as an 'aggressor,'²³ as to discursively justify the remilitarization of Japan.

¹⁶Andrew L. Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, identity and the evolution of security practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 1, 10.

¹⁷ Ibid, 188.

¹⁸ Hagström and Hanssen, "War is peace," 21.

¹⁹ Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Hegel's House, or 'People are states too,'" *Review of International Studies* 30:2 (2004), 285-286.

²⁰ Ibid, 284.

²¹ Taku Tamaki, "The persistence of reified Asia as reality in Japanese foreign policy narratives," *The Pacific Review* 28:1 (2015), 24, 41.

²² Shogo Suzuki, "The rise of the Chinese 'Other' in Japan's construction of identity: Is China a focal point of Japanese nationalism?," *The Pacific Review* 28:1 (2015), 106.

²³ Linus Hagström and Ulv Hanssen, "The North Korean abduction issue: emotions, securitisation and the reconstruction of Japanese identity from 'aggressor' to 'victim' and from 'pacifist' to 'normal'," *The Pacific Review* 28:1 (2015), 84-85.

Despite both norm- and relational constructivists having acknowledged an use for the methods of the other school, in recent works it seems that the positivist-post-positivist divide existing within constructivism has caught up with the study of Japan's state identity.²⁴ Norm constructivists have welcomed the analysis of discourse as possibly contributing to answers to the question of how 'the democratic process of organized politics interacts with self-other conceptions to result in both policy change and identity change.'²⁵ Similarly, early relational works have emphasized common ground with norm constructivists in arguing that the emergence of discourses 'is defined, inter alia, through the production and reproduction of discursively emergent norms and institutions.'²⁶ However, Linus Hagström and Ulv Hanssen's "War is peace: the rearticulation of 'peace' in Japan's China discourse" (2015) has moved away from this position. Within this work both authors postulated that Japan's identity centred around the master signifier of 'peace' has been rearticulated as to encompass remilitarizing practices.²⁷ Furthermore, the article abandons the notion that pacifist norms have informed Japan's anti-militarist identity, instead professing this to have solely been the outcome of discourses of the Self in relation to the Other.²⁸ As such a "pacifist" identity can allow for "pacifist" behaviour whilst simultaneously being commensurate with re-militarizing practices.

By arguing that the notion of a pacifist identity ensures pacifist behaviour was a mistaken assumption, Hagström and Hanssen have moved closer to postmodern orthodoxy than their earlier works did. In the past Hagström still argued that particular discourses were 'sedimented' and thus resilient to change.²⁹ However, Hagström's recent work instead focusses on the transitivity of signifiers, meaning that a signifier's meaning is derived from its relation to other signifiers and not from a referent object – as per Saussure's conceptualization of language.³⁰ This conceptualization is, however, problematic in conceptualizing how discursive changes are related to alterations occurring simultaneously in the material world. As a result postmodern discourse analysis has been criticized of 'noting the [discursive] construction and suggestively placing it within some context of an event,' without providing any argumentation as to how both discursive and material changes are

²⁴ Wendt, "Anarchy is what states make of it," 393.

²⁵ Oros, "International and domestic challenges," 158-159

²⁶ Linus Hagström and Karl Gustafsson, "Japan and identity change: why it matters in International Relations," *The Pacific Review* 28:1 (2015), 13

²⁷ Hagström and Hanssen, "War is peace," 6.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 19.

²⁹ Hagström and Gustafsson, "Japan and identity," 6.

³⁰ Hagström and Hanssen, "War is peace," 8.

related.³¹ This refusal to conceptualize discourse causality emerges from the transitive nature of discourse which entails that new or re-articulated discourses can emerge freely through the ‘play of difference’ as the outcome of discourse transitivity.

Nevertheless, this conceptualization of discursive emergence has been criticized by Critical Discourse Analysts who argue that it idealises discursive emergence and ‘ignores the dialectical interpenetration of semiotic and non-semiotic facets of social events. The play of difference is materially, socially and psychologically constrained.’³² Both the failure to account for discourse causality and the restrained nature of discursive emergence has affected Hagström and Hanssen’s work in that its longitudinal approach simply noted the change in discourse without tying this meaningfully to extra-discursive changes. Furthermore, through the rejection of a material ‘reality’ both authors also fail to explain whether the emergence of these new discourses are likely to garner the legitimacy within society needed for their sustained invocation.

As such it will prove prudent to conceptualize the discursive and material as existing in a dialectic relation as professed by CDA. It then becomes possible to move past the exaggerated notion of postmodern discursive emergence whilst opening up the space to conceptualize how this dialectic renders discourse as a causal mechanism through the restrictions it imposes.³³ Another advantage of such an approach is that it also rectifies norm constructivist exaggerations regarding the efficacy of material factors such as: ‘substantial changes in material factors combined with observed actor conduct be reasonably understood to change actor perceptions (...) without a lengthy evaluation of discourse.’³⁴ This completely disregards the role that discourse plays within the process of generating and altering such perceptions through a variety of discursive practices such as reification and re-articulation, thus excluding an important aspect of the social world from analysis. As such this thesis regards a CDA methodology as being well suited to move past both norm- and relational constructivist exaggerations of the material and discursive respectively by instead conceptualizing both factors as existing in a dialectic relation. Thus allowing a more nuanced understanding of the role both factors play on constituting and contesting Japan’s state identity.

³¹ Benjamin Banta, “Analysing discourse as a causal mechanism” *European Journal of International Relations* 19:2 (2012), 394.

³² Norman Fairclough, *CDA: The Critical Study of Language* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), 215.

³³ Banta, “Analysing discourse,” 381.

³⁴ Oros, “International and domestic challenges,” 145

Theory: Identity and Contestation

The stability of Japan's state identity is often attributed to the social construct's supposed hegemony. Despite the efficacy of this concept, both norm- and relational constructivist have failed to conceptualize a theory of hegemony that corresponds to both the discursive and material facets of this construct, instead preferring either a material or discursive focus respectively. Nevertheless, to fully comprehend a state's identity's production, maintenance and contestation it is important to subject both material and discursive factors to analysis. To this end this section will draw on CDA and Critical Realist insights as to conceptualize Japan's state identity's stability as related to the dialectic between the discursive and the material. Subsequent to this conceptualization this section will engage with how identity entrepreneurs can overcome the restraints imposed by the existing hegemony as to effect their desired identity changes.

Hegemony, according to Norman Fairclough, can be best understood as 'intellectual and moral leadership' that through the construction of alliances and integration of subordinate groups seeks to establish a 'unstable equilibrium' a momentary and fragile consensual relation of domination of one group, or more likely, a coalition of groups, over all others.³⁵ Hegemony is the outcome of what Antonio Gramsci termed the 'War of Position.' This war is a discursive struggle that seeks to render the views of a particular coalition as 'historically true' and thus 'naturalizing' these views within society as to legitimate the power-relations and social hierarchies that are the outcome of this struggle.³⁶ As such, once a hegemony has been effected this social construct provides 'meaning in the service of power' and is a such ideological.³⁷ This illustrates that hegemonic struggles are discursive in that they draw on discursive practices as to effect policy changes, whilst at the same time the meaning of these discourses are being disputed.³⁸

Within a stable hegemony discourse provides a framework that allows the continued cooperation of a variety of actors within society. The stability of a hegemonic construct, such as an identity, then requires the maintenance of the 'unstable equilibrium' by continuing discursive labour and political negotiation as to uphold the structure. This process is, according to CDA scholars, facilitated by a dialectic between the discursive and the material. This dialectic is best described as the 'internalization' of discourse within practice and *vice-*

³⁵ Norman Fairclough, *CDA*, 61-62, 128.

³⁶ Benedetto Fontana, "Hegemony and Power in Gramsci," in *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion*. Howson and Kyle ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 93.

³⁷ ³⁷Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (New York: Longman, 1989), 91.

³⁸ Fairclough, *CDA*, 129-130.

versa, with ‘internalization’ meaning that both discourse and practice are ‘different but not discrete’ from one another.³⁹ This internalization should, however, not be mistaken for the norm constructivist concept of identity and action mutually constituting one another. Since the maintenance of a hegemony requires constant discursive labour and negotiation there exists no certainty that an identity centred around, for instance “pacifism,” will always produce “pacifist” behaviour. According to CDA adherents treating something as if it were x can ‘in varying degrees, depending on the situation succeed in making them x.’⁴⁰ As such “pacifist” behaviour of a “pacifist” state is never more than a *disposition*—not a given.

As such, the stability of a state identity requires that actors within society continue to subscribe to the existing power-relations. Within this process the existing hegemony facilitates the maintenance of these relations by providing the existing structure with legitimacy through ‘naturalized’ and ‘internalized’ discourses. This means that the power to act is legitimate in that: ‘(a) it conforms to established rules, (b) the rules can be justified by reference to shared beliefs, and (c) there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation.’⁴¹ Within Japan’s state identity discourses centred around “pacifism” possess all three of these tenets, after all, power-relations and social hierarchies have been accepted and discourses and laws regarding Japan’s “pacifist” behaviour are widely internalized.⁴² With regard to the last two this entails that “pacifist” discourses convey ‘legal-rational’ legitimacy, namely: the understanding of the legality of patterns of rules and the right of those in power to issue commands under these rules; and ‘value-rational’ legitimacy, or the virtue of the rational belief in an absolute value.⁴³ A failure to articulate discourses within this field of legitimacy will ensure: illegitimacy, a legitimacy deficit, or delegitimation, respectively.⁴⁴

It is these value and legal restraints that CDA adherents refer to when they argue that the emergence of discourse is restrained by social and material factors—as such anything can be stated but not legitimately so. Furthermore, CDA posits these restraints as a discourse’s ‘directionality,’ or a discourse’s causal power.⁴⁵ Discourse causality is a controversial subject, yet can perhaps be best understood through the Critical Realist concept of ‘emergence.’ The

³⁹ Norman Fairclough, “Critical Discourse Analysis”, in *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, James Paul Gee and Michael Handford ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), 11.

⁴⁰ Banta, “Analysing discourse,” 391.

⁴¹ Fairclough, *CDA*, 493.

⁴² Oros, *Normalizing Japan*,

⁴³ Fairclough, *CDA*, 493-494.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Banta, “Analysing discourse,” 391.

concept of ‘emergence’ entails that the properties possessed by a whole are not possessed by its parts.⁴⁶ With regard to discourses this entails that the ability of a particular discourse to enable or restrain certain policy, emanates from ‘discourse circles,’ or a ‘group of positioned individuals who act and speak in a way that a discourse becomes “endorsed and enforced.”⁴⁷ These ‘discourse circles’ are comprised of political actors, institutions and organizations that inhabit the different ‘social fields’ which are ‘social domain[s] obeying a specific logic,’ one such a field being for instance that of security.⁴⁸ By drawing on discourses that are deemed legitimate, discourse circles can either enable or restrain action whilst at the same time safeguarding the existing power-relations and hierarchies that both value- and legal-rational legitimacy uphold.

The above illustrates that any actor that seeks to contest this hegemony will have to engage with the vested interest of various institutions and organizations of which society is comprised, as well as the values and laws that govern both the political- and social spheres. Needless to say, any discourse or policy that fails to subscribe to conventions deemed legitimate, may require the excessive usage of political capital which could result in failure. After all as William Connolly noted: ‘align[ing] oneself to closely with difference is to render oneself incomprehensible to one’s own community.’⁴⁹ As such, contestation requires that an actor relies not only on political force as to impose changes to the material composition of society, but also that new discourses are articulated and old ones delegitimized or re-articulated. This requires that an actor, or identity entrepreneur, engages with the relevant ‘orders of discourse’ that either enable, or restrain, the desired reforms. An ‘order of discourse’ is the grouping of discourses that constitute social fields, institutions and organizations as networks of social practice.⁵⁰ It is through discourse creativity—the imposition of discourses from other social fields, the articulation of new discourses and the re-articulation of existing ones—that an identity entrepreneur can seek to alter the order of discourse as to overcome, or negate, its directionality.⁵¹

Within Japan this could entail that an identity entrepreneur like Abe Shinzō could attempt to replace Japan’s “pacifist” state identity by altering the order of discourse that

⁴⁶ Elder-Vass, *The Causal Power of Social Structures*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 4.

⁴⁷ Banta, “Analysing discourse,” 393.

⁴⁸ Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 72.

⁴⁹ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic negotiations of political paradox* (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 44.

⁵⁰ Fairclough, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” 11.

⁵¹ Jorgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis* 71-72.

governs the field of security, as to allow for Japan to become a more ‘normal’ country. Nevertheless, since remilitarizing practices are highly controversial within both Japan’s political and civil society, replacing “pacifist” discourses with, for instance, ‘realist’ discourses would likely fail or cost excessive political capital. This indicates that within Japan the needed ‘practical adequacy’⁵² for such a discursive strategy is missing in that the political agents involved do not possess the needed power to bring them into being and that the imagined reality is not possible. The current state of affairs might as such require that a ‘displaced’ discursive strategy is articulated, which is the act of replacing a strategy that is desired but lacking in public conviction with another strategy that does resonate within civil society.⁵³

A displaced strategy is thus essentially a surreptitious attempt to affect the outcome of the desired, yet controversial strategy, by presenting it as desirable strategy to civil society—thus appropriating public consent and also legitimacy. Operationalizing a displaced strategy thus requires that the objective envisioned within it resonates with the public as to secure the desired outcome. This will require that such a strategy partially upholds and re-articulate existing discourses with the relevant order of discourse, whilst also introducing new discourses aimed at corroding the very order within which these discourses are articulated. This entails that a displaced strategy might outwardly resemble discursive stability whilst actually attempting to contest the social order. When Andrew Oros, with regard to Japan’s 2013 National Security Strategy, noted that: ‘the NSS adopted by the allegedly ‘hyper-nationalist’ cabinet of Abe Shinzō (...) proclaims repeatedly Japan’s long-standing ‘peace-loving’ policies,’ he mistakenly believed this to be an indication of continued stability within Japan’s state identity.⁵⁴ Instead, the NSS could arguably be considered as an ‘imaginary’ which functions as an integral part to a displaced strategy.

An ‘imaginary’ is a ‘pre-figuring of a possible and intended reality, which includes an objective (...) and the means to achieve it,’ and forms an integral part of discursive strategies.⁵⁵ For the construction of an imaginary strategic documents, such as Japan’s 2013 NSS, are ideally suited. Through a strategic document’s problem-solution construction a “threat” can be articulated that requires security reforms as to negate the “threat”. Furthermore, by construing a “threat” as posing an existential threat to both peace and prosperity an imaginary can attempt to redraw the boundaries generated by both value-

⁵² Fairclough, *CDA*, 480.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 501.

⁵⁴ Oros, ‘International and Domestic Challenges’, 140.

⁵⁵ Fairclough, *CDA*, 480.

rational- and legal-ratioanl legitimacy. To this purpose an ‘imaginary’ contained within a strategic document can articulate a “threat” from which a particular referent object—for instance the ‘peace and prosperity’ of Japan—needs to be secured through extraordinary political means, thus suspending particular legal mores that stand in the way of effecting the goals of the displaced strategy. In other words the issue at hand is ‘securitized.’⁵⁶ The discourses espoused within such a document can then subsequently be appropriated by relevant discourse circles and disseminated to the public as to garner their conviction and construct legitimacy. For instance, by arguing that Japan’s ‘peace’ is under threat it could arguably become possible to re-articulate Japan’s “pacifism” and through this process depart from both the value-rational- and legal-rational legitimacy that restrain remilitarizing practices. If conducted successfully the displaced strategy will have succeeded in partially effecting the outcome desired in a strategy that lacks practical adequacy—namely the ‘normalization’ of Japan. It is exactly this process as it has been occurring under the second Abe cabinet that this thesis will engage with.

Critical Discourse Analysis as Methodology

As to adequately analyse the process of contestation of Japan’s state identity this thesis will employ CDA as its chosen methodology. Discourse analysis has come a long way from having previously being regarded as the ‘dangerous’ science of a ‘deviant community.’⁵⁷ Especially the postmodern variant of discourse analysis based on the conceptualizations of Laclau and Mouffe has inspired recent relational constructivist inquiry. However, based upon the critique of postmodern discourse analysis this study will instead turn to CDA as espoused by Norman Fairclough. In drawing from Fairclough’s understanding of discourse as existing in a dialectical relation with the material this thesis will seek to analyse how the Abe cabinet sought to overcome the directionality of Japan’s state identity through the articulation and operationalization of a ‘proactive pacifism’ discourse as contained within Japan’s 2013 National Security Strategy.

CDA differs from other forms of discourse analysis in that it is a form of normative and explanatory critique and that it is theoretically presupposed on a critical realist understanding of the social world. CDA is normative in that it evaluates how existing realities

⁵⁶ Ole Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization” in *On Security*, Ronnie D. Lipschutz ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 54-57.

⁵⁷ Jennifer Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods,” *European Journal of International Relations* 5:2 (1999), 227.

interact with their presupposed value systems; and the critique is explanatory in how it seeks to demonstrate that such realities are the outcome of different structures, mechanisms and forces.⁵⁸ As alluded to earlier, the critical realist perspective is demonstrated in the understanding of discourses existing in a dialectical relation with a material reality. Furthermore, CDA is an inherently interdisciplinary undertaking that draws from, and integrates different theories so as to gain a more complete understanding of the different structures, mechanisms and forces at play. This is represented in this thesis by drawing on IR identity theory; Gramsci's political theory; and Fairclough's understanding of discourse as a 'moment in the social process'.⁵⁹

Drawing on the conceptualization of Japan's state identity as a hegemonic construct and the process of contestation as conceived in the previous section this thesis will seek to analyse how the Abe cabinet overcame these restraints in the following way. First this thesis will conduct a modest genealogy of Abe's revisionist agenda by demonstrating that the antecedents to this revisionism reside in the legacy of his grandfather Kishi Nobusuke; furthermore, this section will demonstrate how a lack of practical adequacy prevented the operationalization of this revisionist agenda during the Cold War and then demonstrate how from the 1980's onward this practical adequacy gradually came into being, thus facilitating Abe's revisionist ambitions. Subsequently, the thesis will briefly engage with the question of how Abe during his first and second term as Prime Minister of Japan engendered the discourse circles needed for the operationalization of a displaced discursive strategy.

For the second step an analytical focus on a single landmark document will be conducted. To this end, this thesis will analyse Japan's first National Security Strategy (NSS) of 17 December 2013. The discourses contained within the NSS can be regarded as part of a 'imaginary', or representations of how the world ought or could or should be.⁶⁰ By scrutinizing how the NSS is situated – through its position in an existing order of discourse – and how it interacts with that order, it becomes possible to ascertain how the NSS as a part of a displaced strategy seeks to contest Japan's current state identity. To this end this thesis first identifies the NSS as belonging in the intertextual chain of previous strategic documents, such as the National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG), and then establishes how the NSS imposes, re-contextualizes and removes elements of the order of discourse. The new discursive configurations unearthed through this approach are then subsequently analysed and

⁵⁸ Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis," 9.

⁵⁹ Fairclough, *CDA*, 213.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 266.

critiqued on account of how their arguments compose the securitization of a re-articulated “pacifist” discourse that seeks to appropriate value-rational legitimacy as to overcome the restraints of Article 9.

The third and final step of analysis will be the tracing of this ‘proactive pacifism’ discourse in real-time by seeking out confrontational political events within which these discourse were interjected and leveraged as to achieve the Abe cabinet’s revisionist ambitions. Fortunately, Abe Shinzō’s second term as Prime Minister of Japan is replete with such occasions. This means that the political and public debate that surrounded the 2013 Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets; the 2014 reinterpretation of Article 9; and the 2015 enactment of the Law for Peace and Security will provide the ‘textual events’ from which the operationalization of discourses can be sampled. This will entail a scholastic interaction with speeches, interviews and Diet debates within which Prime Minister Abe Shinzō turned to these discourses as to legitimate and bring about his sought after reforms.

Abe Shinzō and Japan’s Protracted Revisionism

Japan’s anti-militarist state identity has been contested ever since it became a hegemonic construct in the early 1960’s, when the adoption of the ‘Yoshida Doctrine’ by Japan’s political elite ensured relative stability for the remainder of the Cold War. However, the end of this geopolitical struggle has enabled a loosening of the identity’s restraints – thus allowing revisionist politicians to gradually and incrementally effect the practical adequacy needed to operationalize a strategy of contestation. Especially Prime Minister Abe Shinzō has drawn on the emergence of this practical adequacy as to effect his revisionist ambitions by engendering new discourse circles that have espoused new and re-articulated discourses in order to overcome the restraints imposed by Japan’s state identity. This section will engage with the origins of Abe’s revisionist ideology, by tracing it back to the political thought of Abe’s grandfather: Kishi Nobusuke, and will subsequently analyse how practical adequacy has emerged from the 1980’s onward. Finally, the section will conclude by illuminating how Abe has appropriated this practical adequacy as to operationalize a strategy of contestation.

When Abe Shinzō became Prime Minister of Japan in 2006 he vowed to ‘make a clean break with the post-war regime’ and endeavour to construct a ‘beautiful Japan’.⁶¹ This

⁶¹Shinzō, Abe “Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after the Closing of the 165th Session of the Diet”, *Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*, 19 December 2006: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/abespeech/2006/12/19kaiken_e.html.

‘post-war regime’ refers to Japan’s anti-militarist state identity which, according to Abe, is a U.S. imposed political order that restrains Japan’s true national identity and vigour and thus prevents the country from again rising as a great power.⁶² The foundation of this imposed order are formed by the 1947 Constitution of Japan and especially Article 9, which prohibits Japan from using military force as to solve international disputes as well as the maintenance of a conventional military. Abe’s desire to revise the Constitution of Japan as turn Japan into a ‘normal country’ demonstrates marked similarities with the political thought of Abe’s maternal grandfather and Japan’s Prime Minister from 1957-1960: Kishi Nobusuke. As a revisionist politician Kishi had sought to effect Japan’s re-emergence as an independent state and equal partner of the U.S. by revising the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and through constitutional revision.⁶³ Although Kishi did succeed in the former this success came at a high political cost – Kishi was forced to step down which effectively ensured that the issue of constitutional revision would remain dormant during the Cold War.

It is the frustrated revisionism of Kishi that Abe has actively been pursuing throughout both his terms as Prime Minister of Japan (2006-2007 and 2012-present). Although the influence of Kishi’s politics on Abe’s revisionist ideology remains controversial, it seems likely that there is indeed a connection between both grandfather and grandson. For instance, in his book *Towards a Beautiful Country* (2006), Abe directly refers to his grandfather as a formative influence.⁶⁴ Moreover, Abe has often turned to Kishi’s political legacy, especially the controversial revision of the Japan-U.S Security Treaty, as to legitimize his own security reforms.⁶⁵ This proximity of Abe’s agenda to that of his grandfather has ensured criticism that claims Abe’s ambitions to be ‘anachronistic’ and ‘devoid of ‘a systematic analysis of various policy options.’⁶⁶ Although describing Abe’s politics as ‘anachronistic’ misses the nuances of Abe’s politics, it does however seem probable that Kishi’s legacy has had a direct and guiding influence on Abe’s desire to turn Japan into a ‘normal’ country.

⁶² Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan’s foreign and security policy under the ‘Abe Doctrine’: New dynamism or new dead end?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 9-10.

⁶³ Kitaoka Shinichi, “Kishi Nobusuke: Frustrated Ambition,” in *The Prime Ministers of Postwar Japan, 1945–1995*, ed. Akio Watanabe, et al. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 107.

⁶⁴ Reiji Yoshida, “Formed in childhood, roots of Abe’s conservatism go deep,” *The Japan Times*, 26 December 2012: http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/12/26/national/formed-in-childhood-roots-of-abes-conservatism-go-deep/#.WS5_ankIHVI.

⁶⁵ Shinzō Abe, “Shinzo Abe talks to The Economist: An interview with Japan’s prime minister,” *The Economist*: 5 December 2014: <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21635693-interview-japans-prime-minister-shinzo-abe-talks-economist>.

⁶⁶ Takamichi Mito, “Japan’s Constitutional Revision Debate under Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and its Implications for Japan’s Foreign Relations,” *Japan Studies* 28:1 (2008), 61.

The protracted nature of Japan's revisionist politics is the outcome of Kishi's failure to effect constitutional revisionism and the subsequent solidification of Japan anti-militarist state identity from the 1960's onward. Within the Cold War the centrist '1955 system' had successfully won the War of Position that was waged from 1945 to 1960, which ensured that Japan's foreign policy was mainly effected through an economic focus as to facilitate the economic revival of Japan as per the 'Yoshida Doctrine.' Within this equilibrium the 'mainstream' of the Liberal Democratic Party ensured political control through co-opting the revisionist 'anti-mainstream' by offering them security related reforms. Nevertheless, these reforms were accompanied by the instalment of new 'brakes (*hadome*),' something which the mainstream argued was needed to acquiesce the political left, which desired a disarmed and neutral Japan as a 'peace state (*heiwa kokka*).' This process of 'reach, reconcile, reassure' ensured not only a legitimate process of effecting reform, but also demonstrated how discourse circles ranging from political parties, ministries such as the Ministry of International Trade and Technology (MITI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), as well as grass-roots groups could ensure adherence to Article 9 by using "pacifist" discourses as to force adherence to Article 9.⁶⁷ The directionality of this "pacifist" discourse was so effective that it necessitated that reform was effected surreptitiously through the accumulation of *fait accomplis* known as *kiseijijitsu no tsumiage*.⁶⁸

From the 1980's onward these restrains did, however, start to gradually loosen. It was under the revisionist Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro that discourses regarding Japan making an 'international contribution' started to emerge. This eventually resulted in Japan making civilian contributions to United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO).⁶⁹ Civilian participation in UNPKO was, however, as far as Nakasone's revisionist 'grand design' would go on account of resistance of the bureaucracy and mainstream politicians against more visible military profile for Japan.⁷⁰ This illustrates that whilst discursive creativity allowed a revisionist identity entrepreneur to modestly overcome the restraints of Japan's identity, it could not overcome the vested interest provided by the hierarchies of Japan's hegemonic state identity. Nevertheless, the 'international contribution' discourse was the beginning of a gradual and incremental process within which new discourses successfully enabled new policy and laws.

⁶⁷ Oros, *Normalizing Japan*, 33.

⁶⁸ Berger, "From Sword to Chrysanthemum," 142.

⁶⁹ Hugo Dobson, *Japan and United Nations Peacekeeping: New Pressures, New Responses* (London: Routledge, 2003), 57.

⁷⁰ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 276.

This dialectic became especially apparent with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent 1991 Gulf War. The perception of structural shocks occurring around Japan allowed for old ‘realist’ discourses to re-emerge; such discourses revolved around the need for Japanese statesmen to keep in line with the ‘trends of the world’ as to ensure Japan’s stability—a notion that was amplified by international criticism regarding Japan’s failure to ‘show the flag’ during the Gulf War.⁷¹ As a result these discourses could legitimately inform an increasingly public debate regarding Japan’s future role—and thus identity—in the international community. Within this debate there arose voices that called for Japan to become a ‘normal country’ that could apply its military force internationally under UN auspices.⁷² As a result of this debate gradual and incremental changes started to occur with regard to Japan’s security policy – a process which was facilitated by the end of the 1955 system following the 1994 elections combined with the gradual decline of the political left. This process started with the 1992 ‘Law on Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping and Other Operations’ and the subsequent deployment of the SDF to Cambodia to support UNPKO. Other such changes included the 1996 Revised Defence Guidelines and the joint development of ballistic missile defences with the US.

As such the end of the Cold War had functioned as a catalyst through which ‘realist’ and ‘international contribution’ discourses were internalized within Japan’s security policy, thus ensuring an increasing legitimacy for such discourses within policy circles. This dialectic arguably came to a head with the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Law in 2001 and the Emergency Law and Iraq Special Measures Law in 2003. The latter of these laws allowing the unprecedented dispatch of SDF troops to non-combat areas during the Iraq War. This deployment demonstrated how ‘realist’ discourses had sufficiently corroded ‘pacifist’ related discourses within the political arena, a trend that has continued into the present the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), vying for supremacy in an ongoing debate on who’s realism is most realist.⁷³ Despite practical adequacy having emerged in the political sphere, on the level of civic society the deployment of the SDF reawakened appreciation for Article 9 and ensured that the SDF mission fell short of ‘crossing the Rubicon.’⁷⁴

This reaffirmation of Article 9 notwithstanding, civil society also witnessed changing

⁷¹ Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 52.

⁷² Ichiro Ozawa, *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1994), 91.

⁷³ Yukiko Miyagi, ‘Foreign Policy Making Under Koizumi: Norms and Japan’s Role in the 2003 Iraq War,’ *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5 (2009), 362;

⁷⁴ Dennis T. Yasutomo, *Japan’s Civil-Military Diplomacy: The banks of the Rubicon* (London: New York, 2014), 170.

perceptions beneficial to the emergence of practical adequacy. For instance, within civil society the once publicly taboo subject of constitutional revision was increasingly debated by the public. This had been the achievement of liberal politicians, such as Hatoyama Yukio, which ensured public support for liberal revision initiatives whilst remaining suspicious of their conservative counterparts.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the 2000's witnessed an increasing public appreciation for the SDF, a development that was accompanied with increasingly negative perceptions of neighbouring states such as China and North Korea.⁷⁶ This signalled that whilst conservative revisionist initiatives still lacked the conviction needed within civil society, practical adequacy had emerged to an extent. This development combined with conviction and practical adequacy being present in the political sphere ensured that Abe Shinzō as Prime Minister of Japan found himself relatively less restrained as to effect a revisionist strategy, albeit a displaced one, than his predecessors.

During Abe's brief first term as Prime Minister of Japan he was only able to achieve the minimum of his revisionist goals on account of his inability to match his leadership style to public expectations and his embroilment in political scandals.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, despite failing to effect constitutional revision, Abe did succeed in turning the Japan Defence Agency (JDA) into the Ministry of Defence (MOD), thus raising it to the full status of ministry.⁷⁸ This raised the status of MOD employees which made them the equals of their counterparts in other ministries and thus giving them a more authoritative voice in determining Japan's security policy. This creation of the MOD and that of "expert" panels, such as the 'The Advisory Panel on the Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security,' would allow the Abe during his second term as Prime Minister from 2012 onward to gradually create new 'discourse circles' that vocalized and sought to legitimize Abe's revisionist strategy.

Abe's disrupted attempts at revisionism continued when he returned as Prime Minister of Japan in 2012. Despite depicting himself as a pragmatist concerned with economic reform through his 'Abenomics' program, Abe remained intent on effecting constitutional revision, or failing that reinterpretation. To this end Abe sought to engender new discourse circles and co-opted existing ones, whilst suppressing discourse circles that

⁷⁵ Mayumi Itoh, "Japanese Constitutional Revision: A Neo-liberal Proposal for Article 9 in Comparative Perspective," *Asian Survey* 41:2 (2001), 322-323.

⁷⁶ Richard Wike et al, "Global Opposition to U.S. Surveillance and Drones, but Limited Harm to America's Image: Many in Asia Worry about Conflict with China," *PewResearchCenter*, (2014), 37-41; "Outline of 'Public Opinion Survey on the Self-defence Forces (SDF) and defence Issues,'" *Cabinet Office*, (2012), 5: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/others/pdf/public_opinion.pdf.

⁷⁷ H.D.P Envall, "Abe's fall: leadership and expectations in Japanese politics", *Asian Journal of Political Science* 19:2 (2011), 156.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

opposed him as to render his goal of a normalized Japan a reality. Within the political sphere, Abe effected this by strengthening the position of the executive branch (*Kantei*) and the MOD in determining defence strategy and its accompanying policy. Historically, the executive branch and officials from the JDA had enjoyed relatively little policy influence on account of a lack of staff for the *Kantei* and because of the status of the JDA as an agency as opposed to a ministry.⁷⁹ Under Koizumi Junichirō (2001-2006) the *Kantei* gradually accumulated more power vis-à-vis the bureaucracy and parliament, whilst the creation of the MOD ensured equal status for defence officials in relation to their civilian counterparts.⁸⁰ Abe sought to build on these reforms through the creation of a National Security Council as to further increase the grip of the *Kantei* and the MOD of defence affairs.

To this end Abe reinstated the ‘Council on the Strengthening of the Function of the Prime Minister’s Office Regarding National Security,’ on the recommendation of which Japan’s National Security Council (NSC) was established in December 2013. The NSC replaced the old Security Council which had been hampered by inter-ministerial sectionalism on account of its 9-minister format, which effectively rendered it a ‘mere rubber stamp.’⁸¹ Although the NSC’s 4-minister format, consisting of the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief Cabinet Secretary, arguably streamlined the decision making process in times of crisis, it also allowed for a greater role for the *Kantei* and the MOD in security affairs at the expense of other ministries. As such officials from the *Kantei* and MOD could now speak with more authority on the subject of security on account of their increased power and access to information and intelligence which is not publicly available as a result of the 2013 State Secrets Law. As such it can be argued that the NSC constituted a new and powerful discourse circle that could speak with legitimacy on the subject of security on account of its expertise as well as access to information. This authority was immediately appropriated by the publishing of Japan’s first National Security Strategy on 17 December 2013.

Whilst the Abe cabinet would continue to loosen civilian control of the military by abolishing the MOD’s Bureau of Operational Policy, the Prime Minister also sought to ensure discursive dominance in other areas.⁸² Within his second term as Prime Minister, Abe sought

⁷⁹ Glenn D. Hook, et al. *Japan’s International Relations: Politics, economics and security* (London: Routledge, 2012), 47, 49.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 49.

⁸¹ Shinichi Kitaoka, “A “Proactive Contribution to peace” and the Right of Collective Self-Defense: The Development of Security Policy in the Abe Administration,” *Asia-Pacific Review* 21:2 (2014), 4.

⁸² Mark Craig, *The Abe Restoration: Contemporary Japanese Politics and Reformation* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 67

to ensure positive public approval as to prevent the plummeting ratings that had marked his 2006-2007 tenure. To this end, Abe entrusted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide with establishing an informal body that monitored ratings and provided Abe with strategies to positively influence public opinion.⁸³ The Abe cabinet went a step further by actively placing fellow revisionists to media related boards and committees as to ensure positive coverage, as was the case with Momii Katsuto as Director-General of Japan's state media outlet NHK.⁸⁴ Such unconventional methods did lead to criticism and questions being raised about the press-freedom in Japan. Nevertheless, instead of assuaging such fears the Abe cabinet sought to further repress negative coverage by forcefully effecting the departure of journalists that posed critical questions to government officials regarding Abe security reforms.⁸⁵ In another instance of media repressions the Abe cabinet stressed the broadcasting law during elections, which required broadcasters to give balanced political coverage.⁸⁶

The above demonstrates how from the 1980's onward the restraints of Japan's state identity were gradually loosened. This process originated with the creative discourse's of an 'international contribution' which used the perception of a changing international structure, and re re-emergence of 'realist' discourses, as to legitimately internalize itself within Japanese security policy. The ensuing dialectic between discourse and practice eventually ensured that practical adequacy was attained within the political sphere. Abe Shinzō has subsequently sought to extend this practical adequacy to the civil sphere by constituting new and co-opted discourse circles as to appropriate the legitimacy and conviction needed effect his desired normalization of Japan. A process within which the 'imaginary' of the National Security Strategy played a vital role.

Japan's National Security Strategy as an 'Imaginary' for Revisionism

The publishing of Japan's first National Security Strategy on 17 December 2013 was lauded as a defining strategic document in that it provided unified guidance for the nation's security and diplomacy.⁸⁷ Because of this status ample attention has been paid to the strategic

⁸³ Giulio Pugliese, "The China Challenge, Abe Shinzo's Realism, and the Limits of Japanese Nationalism," *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 35:2 (2015), 46.

⁸⁴ Mariko Oi, "Is Japan's Public Broadcaster under Threat?," *BBC*, 20 March 2014: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26403639>.

⁸⁵ Justing McCurry, "Japanese TV anchors lose their jobs amid claims of political pressure," *The Guardian*, 17 February 2016, : <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/17/japanese-tv-anchors-lose-their-jobs-amid-claims-of-political-pressure>.

⁸⁶ "Intimidation via the broadcast law," *The Japan Times*, 11 February 2016: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2016/02/11/editorials/intimidation-via-broadcast-law/#.WPJbs8klHVI>.

⁸⁷ Kitaoka, "A "Proactive Contribution," 6.

efficacies pronounced by the NSS. However, the document has not received similar analytical attention as a component of a discursive strategy—or ‘imaginary’. As such it will prove fruitful to discuss the parties and process by which the document came into existence; how the NSS as a component of a discursive strategy functions; and how the tensions, contradictions and omissions that reside within the document relate to and influence the goal of making Japan more secure and prosperous. In doing so, this paper can elucidate and critique both the impact of the NSS on Japan’s society as well as its state identity.

The publishing of the National Security Strategy coincided with the establishment of the National Security Council and can as such be traced back to the period of the first Abe cabinet. The responsibility for drafting the document resided with the ‘Council on Security and Defence Capabilities’ which was chaired by Kitaoka Shinchi, then head of the International University of Japan. Like other “expert” panels convened by the Abe cabinet, it appears that participating members all shared similar ‘realist’ inclinations towards security. This is illustrated by statements made by Kitaoka, such as: ‘a balance of power is necessary for peace in the real world: the idea that disarmament is the road to peace is, as a rule, a delusion.’⁸⁸ Such statements demonstrate that the drafting of the NSS was predominantly guided by ‘realist’ thinking, which runs perpendicular to the norms espoused by Article 9 of the Constitution.

The realist inclination of this panel together with the revisionist ambitions of Prime Minister Abe give credence to the hypothesis that the NSS is more than the strategic document it proclaims to be; instead it likely forms a preconceived notion of a desired and possible reality, containing objectives and the means to achieve it—the NSS forms an ‘imaginary’. This entails that the goals and policies espoused to achieve it have dual meaning: as an actual strategy for securing Japan and as a means of bringing about a new social order by realigning power relations within society. It is because of this displaced second strategy that the policies espoused by the NSS require scrutiny as to establish how its proposed methods to render Japan more secure relate to the democratic values it seeks to safeguard.

As a document that exists within, and reproduces particular elements of, the order of discourse of security the NSS displays a high degree of intertextuality. In terms of structure as well as language the NSS can clearly be positioned within the intertextual chain comprised by the National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG) of 1976, 1995, 2004, 2010 and 2013.

⁸⁸ Kitaoka, “A “Proactive Contribution,” 6.

Interestingly enough the Abe cabinet's NSS reproduces many of the initiatives of the DPJ's 2010 NDPG and other DPJ initiatives, by modestly altering terms such as 'dynamic defence' to 'dynamic joint defence' and 'Peace Creating Country' to 'Proactive Pacifism (*sekkyokuteki heiwashugi*).'⁸⁹ Proactive Pacifism is also referred to as 'A Proactive Contribution to Peace,' which Oros regards as more properly conveying 'the spirit of the phrase to a foreign audience.'⁹⁰ Contrary to this opinion, it seems much more likely that the Abe cabinet strategically utilized translation as to stress the desired 'contribution' to a foreign audience, whilst assuaging fears of remilitarization by a domestic audience by including 'pacifism.'

This is not the only instance of flexible language use in the NSS since it actively alters, re-contextualized and integrates discourses that previously underpinned Japan's continued adherence to Article 9. This is best illustrated by a section of text which has been stably reproduced in all published NDPG's since 1976. This section conveys the restrictions and principles that Japan adheres to on account of Article 9, the full section reads:

Under the Constitution and in line with basic principles such as maintaining an exclusively defence-oriented policy and not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, Japan will continue to uphold its basic defence policies, such as securing civilian control, maintaining the three non-nuclear principles, and building a modest defence force.⁹¹

Despite having been stably reproduced in a variety of defence related documents this is not the case in the 2013 NSS. Although the NSS maintains such statements regarding 'not posing a threat to other countries' and adherence to 'the non-nuclear principles,' it alters the composition of this section by abandoning allusions to a 'modest defence force' and, more importantly, by replacing any reference to 'the Constitution,' instead replacing it with Japan as having 'consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation.'⁹² Despite the accompanying NDPG of 2013 still referring to the Constitution it seems that within Japan's more long-term strategic thinking Japan's Constitution will not figure dominantly as an influencing factor. Thus arguably signalling the desire of the second Abe cabinet to abandon

⁸⁹ "National Defence Program Guidelines: for FY 2011 and Beyond (NDPG 2011)," *Security Council*, 17 December 2010, 6: http://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/d_policy/pdf/guidelinesFY2011.pdf; "Japan's Visions for Future Security and Defence Capabilities in the New Era: Toward a Peace-Creating Nation," *The Council on Security and Défense Capabilities in the New Era*, August 2010, 14: http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/shin-ampobouei2010/houkokusyo_e.pdf.

⁹⁰ Oros, "International and domestic challenges," 159.

⁹¹ "NDPG 2011," 2.

⁹² "National Security Strategy (NSS)," *Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*, 17 December 2013, 3: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/documents/2013/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/18/NSS.pdf

the supreme law's restrictions on remilitarization.

These references to Japan's supposed 'peace-loving' nature as opposed to the pacifism implied by allusions to the Constitution is related to the re-articulation of 'pacifism' as a signifier. This re-articulation seeks to depict Japan's "pacifism" since 1945 as a 'negative pacifism (*shoukyokuteki heiwashugi*)' which stands in opposition to the Abe cabinets desired proactive pacifism—alternately ready as 'positive pacifism (*Sekkyokuteki heiwashugi*).' This negative/passive pacifism entailed, according to Kamiya Mataka, a military solely for the use of Japan's territorial defence and the denial that there was a role for the military in the maintenance of peace.⁹³ This concept of pacifism is subsequently critiqued, by Kamiya, by invoking the realist orthodoxy that 'in reality, peace and order cannot exist without force,' leading to the conclusion that Japan must use military force proactively to ensure peace.⁹⁴ Such a re-articulation thus draws on the need for a 'balance of power' through 'deterrence' as the guarantor of peace. Such a re-articulation does, however, run perpendicular the war renouncing clause of the Constitution, namely Article 9.

Anticipating such critiques, the NSS co-opts the preamble of the Constitution as a means of contesting it. According to Kitaoka Shinichi, the phrase 'a proactive contribution to peace,' is in accordance with the preamble which 'proposes that Japan should not ignore the international community.'⁹⁵ This notion is, however, problematic. The preamble states that Japan should be: 'striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth,'⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the inclusion of the phrase in the preamble means that it places no legal implications on the Japanese government to act towards that goal, unlike the anti-militarist clause of Article 9 whose inclusion into the main text of the Constitution places actual legal restrictions on the Japanese government.⁹⁷ As such by tying the re-articulation of 'pacifism' to the preamble of the constitution the NSS seeks to appropriate the absolute value of 'pacifism,' and thus its value-rational legitimacy, as to overcome the legal-rational legitimacy of Article 9.

Nevertheless, such a re-articulation would likely encounter resistance on account of the public's preference of Article 9 as the guarantor of Japan's peace and prosperity.

⁹³ Kamiya Mataka, "Preface: A Nation of Proactive Pacifism: National Strategy for Twenty-First-Century Japan," *Discuss Japan—Japan Foreign Policy Forum* 18 (2014):

<http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/archives/diplomacy/pt20140120123844.html>.

⁹⁴ Mataka, Preface: A Nation of Proactive Pacifism," 1.

⁹⁵ Kitaoka, "A "Proactive Contribution," 7.

⁹⁶ "The Constitution of Japan," *The Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*:

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html.

⁹⁷ Bryce Wakefield, "Abe's Law: Domestic Dimensions of Japan's Collective Self-Defence Debate," in: Goto S. ed. *Japan's Vision for East Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars), 50.

Furthermore, a more ‘proactive’ foreign policy could, and has, invoked public fears of Japan becoming embroiled in foreign conflicts and thus ensuring opposition to such a re-articulation. As to overcome such concerns the NSS first seeks to ‘naturalize’ a proactive role for Japan and further seeks to depict it as a necessity in the light of emerging “threats” – thus turning to securitization practices. The naturalization of Japan’s role as a ‘proactive pacifist’ state is accomplished by demonstrating its antecedents within Japan’s post-war history. To this end the NSS depicts Japan’s involvement in economic growth, human security and trade and investment in a variety of international locales as an indication that Japan has always proactively sought to engender security by economic development. Furthermore, according to the NSS, Japan’s involvement in UNPKO has ‘garnered significant praise and respect’ globally and as such ‘Japan must continue these steps’ as to further strengthen its image as a ‘peace-loving’ nation.⁹⁸ Although it is a fact that Japan has been actively involved in engendering regional economic growth it remains to be debated if this was solely out of charitable motives, or solely to facilitate Japanese economic growth.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the question remains that if this model was so successful, why would the Abe government want to alter it by introducing an increased military role for Japan – which could possibly raise regional fears regarding Japan’s intentions.

As to justify the departure from a passive pacifism to a proactive pacifism, the NSS turns to the invocation of a multifarious and international threat as to render the constitution’s re-articulation coercive and palatable. Within the problem-solution structure of the NSS, Japan becoming a ‘proactive pacifist’ state forms the solution to the problem of an ‘increasingly severe security environment.’¹⁰⁰ Japan’s ‘increasingly severe security environment’ consists of a multitude of different “threats” ranging from the regional: China’s assertive altering of the post-war status quo and North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile development program, to the global: international terrorism and economic interdependence through globalization.¹⁰¹ This “threat” can thus be categorized within two threat categories: a ‘realist’ category, changing power balances, and a ‘neo-liberal’ category, economic interdependence. The complicated and international character of this “threat” requires, according to the NSS, far-reaching security reforms as to allow the Government of Japan to effect its ‘primary responsibility,’ namely: ‘maintaining the peace and security of Japan and

⁹⁸ “NSS,” 3.

⁹⁹ Hook, et al, *Japan’s International Relation*, 222.

¹⁰⁰ “NSS,” 1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 7, 8, 11, 12.

ensuring its survival.¹⁰²

Such reforms would include a strengthening of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, deepening intelligence sharing, broadening the capabilities and responsibilities of the SDF and increasing international cooperation for UNPKO.¹⁰³ Although these reforms might seem benign they have had a profound impact on Article 9 of the Constitution. After all, deepening the U.S.-Japan Alliance and UNPKO capabilities both required the ‘unconstitutional’ reinterpretation of Article 9 as to allow for, for instance, collective self-defence.¹⁰⁴ As such whilst the document reaffirms Japan’s commitment to democracy and the rule of law internationally, the NSS itself allows the Japanese government to undermine both democratic procedures and laws by evoking that an extraordinary “threat” requires extraordinary reforms. After all, ‘these threats, irrespective of where they originate in the world, could instantly have a direct influence on the security of Japan’, and ‘Japan cannot secure its own peace and security by itself’.¹⁰⁵ In articulating these “threats” as global and complicated the NSS seeks to invoke a sense of urgency as to render its desired reforms more coercive and legitimate. As to legitimize these reforms the NSS draws on re-articulated value-rational legitimacy, whilst combining this with the legitimacy engendered by the analytical efficacy that ‘realist’ and ‘neoliberal’ discourses pertain to carry within their respective scientific field.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, the actual threat posed by the “threat” articulated in the NSS remains to be debated. Certainly, China has continued to increase its defence spending by double digits; North Korea remains unwilling to relinquish its nuclear- and missile programs; and international terrorism and failed states could pose a challenge to Japan. However, it remains to be seen whether such challenges pose as immediate a threat that requires the suspensions of ordinary deliberative politics and the rule of law in Japan. Furthermore, the defence and diplomatic solutions that the NSS proposes could arguable negatively influence Japan’s peace and prosperity. With regard to China, the NSS seeks to formulate a diplomatic strategy of containment by increasing defence ties with countries that uphold the same ‘universal values’.¹⁰⁷ At the same time the NSS requires Japan to strengthen its deterrence by deepening

¹⁰² “NSS,” 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 15, 18, 20, 30.

¹⁰⁴ “Abe guts Article 9,” *The Japan Times*, 2 July 2014:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2014/07/02/editorials/abe-guts-article-9/#.WS2Gi3klHVI>

¹⁰⁵ “NSS,” 7, 3.

¹⁰⁶ For discussions regarding the hegemonic status that both ‘realist’ and ‘neoliberal’ discourses enjoy within their respective fields, see: Anna M. Agathangelou and L.H.M Ling, “The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Posies of Worldism,” *International Studies Review* 6:4 (2004) and Ray Kiely, *Empire in the Age of Globalisation; US Hegemony and Neoliberal Disorder* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ “NSS,” 23.

U.S.-Japan cooperation and improving Japan's military capabilities. Yet, the wisdom of encircling and excluding Japan's number one trading partner hardly seems to contribute to the peace and prosperity of resource poor Japan. Moreover, China regards the U.S. as a disruptive force in the region and as such a deepening of defence ties between the U.S and Japan could result in an increase in tensions. Similarly, regional weapons modernization programs by South Korea and Japan as well as U.S. pressure have, according to Gaertner, contributed to the DPRK's insecurity, thus ensuring the continuation the North's nuclear weapons program as opposed to its termination.¹⁰⁸ Finally the wisdom of dealing with international terrorism through military means should have been discredited by the disastrous effects of the War on Terror.

As such it seems that the challenges and threats discerned by the NSS might be better served through diplomacy, dialogue and economic investment and do not require the far-reaching defence reforms espoused by the NSS. Such a conclusion demonstrates that the NSS purposefully exaggerates the "threats" that Japan faces as to utilize these as a coercive argument, in which the re-articulation of Japan's 'passive pacifism' to a 'proactive pacifism' can be legitimately facilitated by appropriating value-rational legitimacy. If successful, the "threat" and the appropriated value-rational legitimacy then allow for the Abe cabinet to garner the conviction and legitimacy needed to overcome the legal-rational restraints imposed by Article 9 – as to ensure the re-emergence of Japan as a 'normal state.'

Tracing the National Security Discourse in Japan's Security Debate: 2012-2015

Subsequent to the publishing of the National Security Strategy, the Abe cabinet sought to render the policy objectives as set forth in this imaginary a reality. Exploiting the practical adequacy that had emerged over the preceding decades and the discourse circles that he had engendered, Abe Shinzō pushed for various security reforms aimed at corroding Article 9. Nevertheless, public opposition to the Abe cabinet's security reforms continued. This demonstrated that whilst the Abe cabinet might have enjoyed relative dominance within the Diet, this dominance—not to mention intellectual and moral leadership—failed to materialize on the level of civil society. So whilst politically Abe was capable of effecting the desired security reforms, the ability of these reforms to engender a new state identity for Japan remain dubious in that they lack public conviction—signalling the failure of Abe's re-

¹⁰⁸ Heinz Gaertner, "North Korea, deterrence and engagement," *Defence & Security* 30:4 (2014), 337.

articulated ‘peace’ discourse to garner the legitimacy and consent needed for a new hegemony.

Throughout the period of 2012-2015, the Abe cabinet effected a series of security reforms that constituted, in the words of one critic, ‘a movement to increase pressure on the constitution by pushing for reinterpretation and passing unconstitutional laws.’¹⁰⁹ Indeed the process, which began with the 2013 establishment of the National Security Council and was followed by the ‘Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets (Hereafter: State Secrets Law),’ the 2014 re-interpretation of the constitution’s Article 9, and finding its culmination in the 2015 enactment of the ‘Legislation for Peace and Security,’ posed some of the most far-reaching reforms of the post-Cold War era. However, Abe’s willingness to break political ‘taboos’ through assertive methods put him at loggerheads with the public and opposition parties. As to negate criticism and possibly gain the conviction of a wider segment of civil society, Abe turned to the ‘proactive pacifism’ discourse; seeking to leverage the ‘threats’ construed in this document as to render the suspension of ordinary deliberative politics palatable—thus legitimizing the Abe cabinet’s securitization practices.

Within its ‘semiotic moment’ the Abe Cabinet’s security reforms were accompanied by the invocation of the NSS’s ‘proactive pacifism’ discourse. On a variety of occasions, and to a varying degree, the Abe cabinet turned to the emergence of ‘threats’ that illustrated the logic of the NSS, thus legitimizing the document’s proposed objectives. One of the main ‘threats’ the Abe cabinet referred to as to demonstrate the ‘reality’ of Japan’s increasingly severe security environment was Tokyo’s continuing territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku islands. Prior to the establishment of the NSC and the enactment of the State Secrets Law, China had declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the Senkaku’s airspace in November of 2013. Within the ongoing dispute, the declaration of the ADIZ formed another gradual escalation against the backdrop of the nationalization of some of the Senkaku islands from “private ownership” by the government of Tokyo during the preceding year. This tit-for-tat escalation was, however, conveniently forgotten by the Abe cabinet: declaring the ADIZ an ‘unilateral escalation.’¹¹⁰ This labelling illustrated the Abe cabinet’s willingness to use its territorial tensions with Beijing as a means of operationalizing the NSS imaginary by exaggerating diplomatic disputes into a security affair. To this end Abe stressed how this ‘escalation’ emphasized the need for a NSC and greater intelligence sharing

¹⁰⁹ Usaki Masahiro, “What Japan’s Designated State Secrets Law Targets,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 12:1 (2014), 6.

¹¹⁰ “China establishes ‘air-defence zone’ over East China Sea,” *BBC*, 23 November 2013: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25062525>.

between Japan and the U.S as to prevent such ‘grey-zone’ incidents from occurring.¹¹¹ The opportunistic nature of this ‘threat’ was made clear when the ADIZ quickly faded from government discourse and consciousness, having now become a part of the accepted status quo in the region, to hardly be heard of at all.

The 2013 ADIZ incident was to be the first of multiple attempts by the Abe cabinet to frame its territorial and diplomatic tensions with Beijing as existential threats. In the following years, Abe continued to draw on Chinese encroachment through ‘grey zone’ incidents as to justify its security reforms. This included the publishing of data about the increasing amount of Chinese fishery, coastguard and military incursions into Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the number of Air Self-Defence Force (ASDF) fighter scrambles in response to Chinese incursions into Japanese airspace.¹¹² In a similar vein to the 2013 ADIZ incident, the Abe cabinet, during the 2015 Legislation for Peace and Security debate, published data regarding Chinese drilling rigs close to Japanese border waters as to underline the continued threat posed by China.¹¹³ The publishing of such data and the invocation of the China threat often correlated with the debate about, or the enactment of, controversial security reforms. This correlation suggest that the Abe cabinet sought to appropriate tensions with China for its own domestic political gain at the expense of Chinese condemnation.

The Abe cabinet’s appropriation and escalation of territorial and diplomatic disputes with China were mimicked in a variety of other incidents ranging from regional threats such as China and North Korea to Islamic terrorism in North Africa and the Middle East. These threats were—in-line with NSS doctrine—depicted as not simply bilateral security issues, but instead as fluid and global threats requiring a multilateral response. As such Chinese revision of the post-war status quo, entailing the curtailing of rights of free passage; the increasingly global reach of North Korea’s nuclear- and missile programs; and international terrorism, were all drawn upon and depicted as requiring a more muscular and cooperative international response. If Japan would fail to meet this challenge, it would risk abandonment from its partners—thus losing the deterrence that, according to Abe had guaranteed Japan’s post-war

¹¹¹ Shinzō Abe, “Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe,” *Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*, 9 December 2013: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201312/09kaiken_e.html.

¹¹² “ASDF scrambles against China planes at record number,” *The Japan Times* 19 October 2015: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/10/19/national/politics-diplomacy/asdf-scramble-china-planes-record-number/#.WPJgXMkIHVI>.

¹¹³ “China has 16 rigs near disputed sea border: Japan,” *The Straits Times*, 23 July 2015: <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/china-has-16-rigs-near-disputed-sea-border-japan>.

security.¹¹⁴ By drawing on the international and complicated nature of the ‘threat’ and the consequences of inaction, Abe sought to legitimize the objectives sought after by the NSS. After all, the extraordinary measures of the NSS required and equally extraordinary threat as to legitimize not only the envisioned reforms, but also the political means by which these reforms were effected.

Drawing on the immediate nature of the threat, as well as his political responsibility to secure the peaceful livelihood and prosperity of the Japanese public, Abe turned away from more democratic methods. This often meant that Abe relied on his majority in the Diet as to ensure the passing of legislation through political force, as opposed to consensus gained by deliberation. This was the case with the enactment of the 2013 State Secrets Law and the 2015 Legislation for Peace and Security, which were criticised as having been ‘railroaded’ without proper public debate.¹¹⁵ In case of the 2014 reinterpretation of Article 9 as to allow for collective self-defence, Abe broke with convention by choosing Komatsu Ichiro as the head of the Cabinet Legislative Bureau (CLB). The CLB had previously opposed reinterpretation, arguing that only a constitutional amendment by referendum was constitutional; under Komatsu, however, the CLB abandoned this position and reinterpretation as recommended by the ‘Advisory Panel on the Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security’ was enacted by the cabinet.¹¹⁶ The reinterpretation was immediately criticized by legal scholars as ‘unconstitutional,’ whilst Abe’s politics were regarded undemocratic even by his former mentor, Koizumi Junichirō, labelling them as ‘forceful.’¹¹⁷

Although Abe depicted his actions as a ‘responsible’ reaction to regional developments that enjoyed the mandate of the public, such claims seem at a disconnect with actual public sentiments. Abe drew upon election victories and relatively stable public approval ratings as to illustrate his ‘mandate’ received from the electorate.¹¹⁸ Although, Abe’s approval has been relatively stable, this stability likely emanates from his economic reform program as well as a lack of a credible political alternative to LDP rule. The fragile

¹¹⁴ Shinzō Abe, Plenary Session, *House of Representative*, 17 May 2015:

<http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/syugiin/189/0298/18905270298003a.html>

¹¹⁵ Toko Sekiguchi, “Japan’s Government Railroads Controversial Secrets Bill,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 December 2013: <https://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2013/12/05/japans-government-railroads-controversial-secrets-bill/>.

¹¹⁶ Bryce Wakefield, “Abe’s Law: Domestic Dimensions of Japan’s Collective Self-Defense Debate,” in: Goto S. ed. *Japan’s Vision for East Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars), 45.

¹¹⁷ “Ex-Prime Minister Koizumi slams Abe’s ‘forceful’ approach”, *The Japan Times*: 10 December 2015: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/10/national/politics-diplomacy/former-prime-minister-koizumi-slams-abe-for-forceful-approach/#.WFmbgGravVI>.

¹¹⁸ Shinzō Abe, “Policy Speech by Prime Minister Shizno Abe to the 189th Session of the Diet,” *Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*, 17 February 2015: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201502/policy.html.

nature of Abe's mandate is further illustrated by a drop in approval ratings following security reform episodes combined with mass demonstrations. Abe's approval ratings dropped below 50 percent during the 2013 State Secret debate and 2014 reinterpretation, even falling to a mere 37 percent following the enactment of the Legislation for Peace and Security in 2015.¹¹⁹ Public discontent was more tangibly demonstrated by mass demonstrations that accompanied the security debate, growing into a national protest movement, with crowds surrounding the Diet reaching into the thousands during the summer of 2015.¹²⁰

The criticism that the public and the political opposition directed at the Abe cabinet was related to both its discursive- and material practices. On the discursive level, Abe's sought to depict a more 'proactive pacifism,' centred around collective self-defence, as a necessity for guaranteeing Japan's security through a credible deterrent. Nevertheless, the invocation of the 'threat' of Japan's deteriorating security environment seemingly failed to garner the consent needed for the re-articulation of Japan's pacifism. This was made adamantly clear with the public and opposition labelling Abe's 'Peace Bill' as the 'War Bill'—thus signalling the failure of Abe's re-articulation of pacifism. One of the main reasons this re-articulation failed was that the public seemingly feared entrapment in wars of foreign making more than abandonment by the U.S.¹²¹ Whilst Abe sought to convince the public that Japan's peace and security had not been guaranteed by Japan's "pacifism," but instead by the deterrence provided by the U.S-Japan Security Treaty, the public remained sceptical. This is reflected in the low approval ratings for his security initiatives, with the Legislation for Peace and Security gaining only 29 percent of the public's support.¹²²

Taking note of the opposition that accompanied his security reforms, Abe would often, after such an episode had occurred, declare that he would 'humbly' accept such criticism and explain his endeavours more carefully in the future.¹²³ Such explanations would be given in a variety of media from newspapers, television shows and explanatory YouTube videos. Such efforts notwithstanding the public's reaction to such appearances remained sceptical at

¹¹⁹ "Cabinet Approval Rating," *Japan Macro Advisor*, accessed 5 April 2017:

<https://www.japanmacroadvisors.com/page/category/politics/cabinet-approval-rating/>.

¹²⁰ Tomohiro Osaki, "Thousands protest Abe, security bills at Diet rally," *The Japan Times*, 30 August 2015: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/30/national/thousands-protest-abe-security-bills-diet-rally/#.WPJhcklHVI>.

¹²¹ Kanako Takahara, Daisuke Kikuchi and Magdalena Osumi, "Japanese voice frustration, resignation over security shake-up," *The Japan Times*, 19 September 2015: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/09/19/national/japanese-voice-frustration-resignation-over-security-shake-up/#.WPPQKcklHVI>

¹²² Osaki, "Thousands Protest."

¹²³ Shinzō Abe, "Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe," *Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet*, 9 December 2013: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201312/09kaiken_e.html.

best.¹²⁴ In another attempt to appear to be upholding proper deliberative politics, the Abe cabinet spend over 200 hours debating the Legislation for Peace and Security. However, following Abe's visit to Washington D.C.—a move intended to demonstrate the international support for his revisionist agenda—the MOD published new Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defence Cooperation, within which Japan already committed itself to collective self-defence measures. This resulted in widespread public outrage as the legislation allowing collective self-defence was still being debated within the Diet and this cart-before-horse approach ensured an increasingly sceptical public that the democratic process at play was simply window-dressing.¹²⁵ As a result, the eventual passing of the Legislation for Peace and Security appeared as another instance of Abe's heavy-handed reliance on political force.

As the above illustrates Abe's invocation of the 'threat' posed by Japan's worsening security environment failed to rhetorically garner the consent needed for the re-articulation of Japan's pacifism to a 'proactive pacifism.' The 'threat' of these developments and the need for a cooperative response as to render Japan secure, failed to supplant public fears about entrapment in foreign conflicts. As such Abe was unable to re-articulate the absolute value of Japan's "pacifism" as to gain value-rational legitimacy. This failure, ensured that a departure from the legal restraints of Article 9 would still come at the expense of political capital in that a re-articulated pacifism that enjoyed the public's consent could not be turned to as to engender a new legal-rational legitimacy based on a re-interpretation of Article 9. Despite these failures, and perhaps because of them, Abe turned to more authoritarian politics as to ensure the outcome he desired.

However, in turning to such practices, Abe arguably reignited public fears regarding his revisionist bent and the impact this would have on not only Article 9, but also on Japan's democratic institutions. Certain vocal sections of the public clearly opposed the departure from Japan's former "pacifist" tenets—and thus identity—on account of it being 'unconstitutional' and undemocratic. This is illustrated by the emergence of new grass-roots groups such as the Student Emergency Action for Democracy (SEALDs) which sought to protect Japan's liberal democratic values.¹²⁶ As such, it can be argued that in seeking to effect a new identity as a 'proactive pacifist' state for Japan, Abe failed to engender both value-rational- and legal-rational legitimacy, ensuring that his initiatives suffered from a legitimacy

¹²⁴ "Abe mocked on Internet over 'raw meat' fire model," *The Japan Times* 23 July 2015:

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/23/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-pm-mocked-on-internet-over-raw-meat-fire-model/#.WPPScMklHVI>.

¹²⁵ Jennifer Lind, "Japan's Security Evolution," *Policy Analysis* 788 (2016):

<https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/japans-security-evolution>.

¹²⁶ "SEALDS eng" accessed 15 April 2017: <http://sealdseng.strikingly.com/>.

deficit at best and illegitimacy at worst. So whilst Abe might, through political dominance—have succeeded in engendering a new proactive policy in the realm of politics, these actions might very well have undermined the emergence of a new ‘proactive pacifist’ state identity in engendering new forms of public opposition.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to contribute to the current debate regarding either the continuity or change apparent in Japan state identity. Arguing that both norm- and relational accounts of identity change relied on an exaggerated understanding of the efficacy of either the material or the ideational on identity change, this thesis sought to conceptualize a state identity’s stability as related to the dialectic between the discursive and the material. In doing so it attempted to elucidate the question regarding what strategies Abe Shinō utilized as to overcome the restraints imposed by Japan’s ‘peace-loving’ state identity as to effect the remilitarization of Japan?

To this end, this paper conceptualized a state’s identity as a hegemonic entity that provided ‘naturalized’ discourses that inhabit the social field of security’s order of discourse. Subsequently it demonstrated that through the internalization of discourses within practice and vice-versa a state’s hegemonic identity was able to restrain the emergence of new, or re-articulated discourses, through its ‘directionality’—a process within which the institutions and organizations that inhabit the social field play a key role as ‘discourse circles.’ The efficacy of this CDA and Critical Realist conceptualization in relation to relational constructivism are that: a) it allows for the conceptualization of discourse as a causal mechanism; b) it remedies the idealized notion of discursive emergence as envisioned by postmodern scholars. Whilst arguably positioning itself closely to norm constructionism in acknowledging a place for social structures, it differentiated itself by providing a conceptualization of the role of discourse in the contestation of identities—something which had been lacking in norm constructivist accounts of identity change.

Drawing on this conceptualization of a state’s identity this thesis simultaneously provided a theory of how political entrepreneurs could overcome the restraints of the hegemonic state identity. This was achieved by applying Norman Fairclough’s concepts of displaced strategies and the role that imaginaries play within these strategies as a means of gaining public conviction through garnering legitimacy. As to demonstrate this process this thesis critically interacted with Prime Minister Abe Shinzō’s revisionist ambitions. This was achieved through first demonstrating how practical adequacy had emerged since the 1980s

thus allowing Abe the political power and worldviews needed to bring a revisionist strategy into being. Nevertheless, an overt revisionist strategy, presupposed on rendering Japan a ‘normal country,’ lacked public conviction on account of this strategy being diametrically opposed to both value- and legal-rational legitimacy. As to counteract the illegitimacy and legitimacy deficit inherent within this strategy, Abe turned to newly engendered discourse circles as to operationalize a ‘displaced’ strategy in the form of Japan’s 2013 National Security Strategy—which formed an ‘imaginary’ for action. Within the imaginary of the NSS it was established how this document sought—by re-articulation and securitization—to effect the desired strategy, through a displaced strategy centred around Japan’s deteriorating security environment. By invoking the ‘threat’ of Japan’s deteriorating security environment the NSS sought to legitimize the re-articulation from ‘negative pacifism’ towards a ‘positive pacifism.’ This new pacifism conveniently required the gradual undermining of the legal stature of Article 9 of the constitution as to ensure Japan’s security. As such, the NSS sought to appropriate value-rational legitimacy as a means to gain consent and legitimacy needed for the departure from Article 9 and democratic procedures and thus legal-rational legitimacy.

The discursive creativity of the NSS notwithstanding, the securitized and re-articulated pacifist discourse contained within it failed to garner both consent and legitimacy within civil society. Whilst regional developments could credibly be depicted as threatening and despite enjoying political dominance, Abe’s departure from established democratic procedures and legal norms ensured public opposition. As such it can credibly be argued that Abe failed to turn the directionality of Japan’s state identity against itself on account of his displaced strategy failing to gain the legitimacy and consent needed for a new hegemony.

Nevertheless, despite Abe’s failure to gain the public’s conviction, he did effect the security reforms he sought to effect—meaning that the goal of his displaced strategy was achieved, namely a departure from Article 9 legal restrictions. However, this outcome was ensured through a reliance on political force alone, which might very well entail a problem of sustainability. After all, the stability of Japan’s pacifist state identity was effected because it enjoyed both value- and legal-rational legitimacy in both the political- and civil sphere, which granted it hegemony through the dialectic between discourse and practice. Although, the successful passing of, for instance, the Legislation for Peace and Security, could dialectically ensure that Japan’s proactive identity becomes internalized in discourse – thus gradually altering the content of Japan’s state identity, it remains to be seen if this will materialize. Furthermore, the lack of legitimacy that Abe’s security reforms enjoyed within the civil-sphere could mean that in order to for Japan to behave as a ‘proactive pacifist’ state will

require continued political dominance as to ensure that a proactive security policy successfully displaces Japan's disposition towards 'negative pacifist' policies. In conclusion it can then be stated that Abe through successfully effecting material changes has moved Japan a little closer to becoming a 'normal country' but on account of his failure to engender a new hegemony through public consent – effected through discourse – has failed to generate a new 'proactive' state identity for Japan.

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