

Master Thesis

The Interdependence between Japan and the United States

A Case Study on the Contemporary Security

Posture of Japan

By

FAVRE Pascal Francois

51116603

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## Abstract

This study aims at answering the question “how is Japan still tied to its alliance with the U.S., in respect of its foreign security?”. To provide a tentative answer, the researcher formulates two hypotheses. The first assesses the influence of the United States over Japanese security posture, in terms of interdependence. The second relates to the influence of social actors and interactions over Japanese security posture.

To conduct the study, the researcher chose the concepts of interdependence, power, and interaction, and the process tracing methodology.

The analysis part follows such a development. In the first section, the causal factors of the evolution of the Japanese security posture are outlined. They are of two sorts, the modification of the external and the internal environment of the US-Japan alliance. The changing internal environment is evaluated as a modification of the power balance within the alliance. The section ends with the explanation of the assumed causal mechanism, giving a general direction to the causal factors. In the second section, the validity of the supposed causal mechanism is assessed. To do so, the researcher developed a chronological narration of the events that led to the current Japanese security posture. Nonetheless, the causal mechanism was defined as “ultimately unobservable” (George and Bennett, 2005, p.137). Hence, the researcher proceeded to “uncover traces within a context” (Bennett & Elman, 2006).

The conclusion shows that Japan and the United States are still interdependent, but the power distribution is changing, with a Japan being less dependent.

## Declaration of Originality

I, Pascal Favre, hereby declare that the contents of this Master Thesis are original and true, and have not been submitted at any other university or educational institution for the award of degree or diploma. All the information derived from other published or unpublished sources has been cited and acknowledged appropriately

Pascal Favre



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

From the atomic bomb to the economic boom, from ukiyo-e to anime, Japan has been molded by diverse, and somewhat contradictory flows through its modern history. From being an enigmatic archipelago, sheltered from the outside by the surrounding sea, to ending up as a major touristic destination, Japan has not been spared by the vagaries of history. The image of Japan conveyed by travel brochures as the country of extremes, where traditions and latest technologies coexist in harmony, may seem obsolete or exaggerated. But yet, it emanates from a real past. And these aspects of the past still impact the current state of affairs.

When Prime Minister Shinzo Abe tried to abolish the Constitution's Peace Clause, it provoked a public outcry. To grasp the meaning that lies behind this public disapproval, having an idea of the late flux and contradictions in Japanese History is important. This paper will not debate the nature of Japan or the discrepancies embedded in the country; instead, it will focus on more recent evolutions of Japanese security's stance.

## 1.2. Research Question

Due to the fact that Article Nine of the Constitution has yet to be abrogated, Japan is currently unable to possess anything more than a defensive military force, theoretically



preventing them from attacking any other nation. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Abe is putting much effort into making the Japanese citizens accept the idea of modifying the Constitution. But the transformation currently underway runs deeper than that. Indeed, the mere modification of the constitution would constitute only the tip of the iceberg of what some authors have called “Japan’s remilitarization,” (Hughes, 2008b, p.99) “Japan’s increasingly assertive military stance,” (Kallender and Hughes, 2018, p.1) or, more broadly, a revamping of “the country’s foreign and security policy” (Envall, 2018, p.1). Studies on this debate have divided scholars into two distinct camps. On the one hand, advocates of the first approach emphasize the incremental nature of changes. For Leif-Eric Easley, “Japanese security policy has maintained a course towards normalization rather than remilitarization” (2017, p.78). Adam P. Liff, in turn, acknowledges that Japan’s security policy has changed, but according to him it remains “far more self-restrained than any other major economic power” (2015, p.89). On the other hand, proponents of the second approach assert the actual situation as departing from the old patterns and practices. Christopher W. Hughes assesses the “mounting signs of Japanese remilitarization” (2016, p.115) and Michael Austin evokes the distance “from its postwar pacifism” (2016, p.125) that Japan has taken with Shinzo Abe.

Moreover, since the end of the Second World War, the United States has been “overwhelmingly central in Japan’s security policy” (Midford, 2018a, p.407). However, recent transformations have challenged the strength of the allies’ bond. In 2011, Tokyo, which had previously made “21 U.S. exceptions” (Hornung & Mochizuki, 2016, p.106), “lifted its ban on military hardware co-development, production, and export with non-US partners” (Midford, 2018a, p.408). Additionally, Tokyo has started bilateral security dialogues with different partners, such as India, Australia, or the European Union (Idem.,

p.407). Conversely, the recent changes have taken place while the alliance of the two countries seems to strengthen the security ties between Japan and the U.S. (Idem.). The 2013's National Security Strategy (NSS) mentioned the enhanced alliance with the United States as "the cornerstone of Japan's security" (Cabinet Office Japan, 2013, Dec 17th, p.26). Similarly, influential scholars and organizations have supported a strong alliance through guidelines and recommendations. In January 2018, James L. Schoff and Sugio Takahashi published an article through the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) where they defended the deterrence strength of the alliance as a "high priority" (2018, p.3). In October of the same year, the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) published a paper called "The U.S.-Japan Alliance: More Important Than Ever". Examples abound of the changing nature of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Correspondingly, the research question will touch upon the influence of the U.S. to the Japanese security posture. In other words, how is Japan still tied to its alliance with the U.S., in respect of its foreign security?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Intro

When it came to finding paths to solve the previously stated research question, the first obstacle to overcome was to see which perspective to adopt. Indeed, with a different angle of view, different solutions emerge. To get an early grasp of an answer, the researcher investigated numerous scholars, looking at the general relationship of Japan and the United States. What has emerged from this former exploration is that a wide panel of theories has influenced writings on the matter. If some of the authors emphasize the importance of actors at stake, most of them focus on a pattern that underlines the interdependence between the two countries.

The subsequent section of this paper will first reflect on this part of the literature. Doing so, it will see that mainly two concepts are underlying the discussion; interdependence and power. The interdependence between Japan and the United States was applied to analyze a broad array of Japanese foreign policies. The focus will be shifted thereafter to security, which concerns the present study more in particular. But when interdependence takes place effectively among two stakeholders, it is also affected by individuals and their actions. Therefore, a section has been devoted to the debate between structural and interactional approaches in social sciences and international relations.

## 2.2. Gaiatsu

What is Gaiatsu?

When the first occurrence of the word appeared, it was to qualify Japan in the 1980s. The country was then viewed as a dominant power and a current and future leading actor of international relations. The state was performing outstandingly in economic sectors going from high technology products such as computer or communication-related fields to the production of iron and steel or car manufacturing. Japan was so competitive that U.S. industries started to feel threatened by Japanese domestic production. As a result, friction arose from export to the United States concerning “textiles, steel, televisions, and automobiles” (Flath, 1998, p.1).

Ultimately, a solution came from the Japanese government itself. Indeed, in car production, the year 1981 saw “the government of Japan announcing that it would adopt measures to restrict the export of Japanese automobiles to the United States” (Matsushita & Repeta, 1982, p.47). Furthermore, a long-lasting solution was found when “the government of Japan agreed to voluntarily restrain exports of the disputed items” (Flath, 1998, p.1). Having said that, Japan wouldn’t have come up with self-restraining policies if the country was not facing a strong American outcry. American lobbyists, manufacturers, and the government found a way to remedy the situation. International negotiation and pressure eventually led to “more liberal trade policies” (Idem., p.3).

How can the influence of various American actors on Japanese foreign policies be categorized? In literature, it is mainly defined as a form of pressure. The outside pressure applied to the case of Japan, the so-called Gaiatsu, “signifies the demands and requests of other states for Japan to institute various policy adjustments to satisfy external interest” (Mulgan, 1997). And amongst these other states, “the dominant source of foreign pressure (...) has been the United States” (Mulgan, 1997). However, the two countries are officially allies; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) mentions that friendship is “traditionally existing between them” (MOFA, 1960) in the “Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security” signed with the United States. One could think that “what is good for the United States is good for Japan” (Miyashita, 1999, Cooney 2007) does it for instance in his book “Japan’s Foreign Policy Since 1945”. But Miyashita exposes the fact that the interest of both countries “do not always converge” (1999).

A plausible reason for this could be that the relationship between Japan and the U.S. works asymmetrically. In other words, when contention in their relations emerges, the two sides’ arguments are not worth the same weight. Therefore, Washington tips the balance of power in its favor. Overall, the relationship lacks parity principally in 3 areas – politics and ideology, economics, and military. The subsequent part will detail how the relationship is uneven in the three dimensions above.

Origins of the Gaiatsu

### *Politics and Ideology*

In the 1980-1990s, the Japanese political class was not strongly united under the same banner. Indeed, the political leadership wasn’t assumed by a predominant actor but

instead shared by multiples actors. For instance, the role of the prime minister – head of the Japanese executive power – is characterized by the imprecision of its definition. It represents the cabinet, but it is not clearly defined in the Constitution if he can also “control and supervision over the executive branch independent from the cabinet” (Tomohito, 1995). Therefore, vagueness surrounds its role. Here, “Japanese resistance to outside pressure is compromised by its weak capacity for political leadership” (Mulgan, 1997). Moreover, since the end of the Second World War, Japan has feared isolation on the world stage. Indeed, the heritage of war still affects the country’s susceptibility to external criticism. As a result, the country does not base its actions upon a strong ideology. “The fear about isolation leads Japan to accept foreign pressure more easily.” (Mulgan, 1997)

### *Military*

After the Second World War, under the impulse of General MacArthur, Japan enacted what will later become its actual Constitution. If scholars are still debating about the width of its American inspiration and influence – mainly defined by America (Tuman & Strand, 2006), “allegedly imposed” (Williams, 1965), it has certainly changed the face of the country and its army. One of the new constitution’s significant outcomes is the specific reference to how Japan should promote international peace. Indeed, Article 9 states that “the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. (...) Land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potentials, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”. Having been deprived of its right to own an army capable of more than defense, Japan became militarily dependent on the US. “The American

ability and Japanese inability to defend its overseas assets and investments” represents the “bottom line in the US-Japan relationship” (Mulgan, 1997).

To summarize, Japan has to cope with American military protection that is de facto present in the country. But in return, Japan is not compelled to assist the U.S. in case of an attack on American soil. The military balance of power is therefore favorable to America.

### *Economics*

“Yet there is a dichotomy between Japan’s military dependency and its economic prowess.” (Tuman & Strand, 2006). In all the powers held by Japan, the biggest one is economical (Nye, 1992). During the 1980s, Japan was the second largest world economy, leading in both technology and fine manufacturing fields (Kang, 2003). Despite this, the U.S. also has an advantage in their economic relations. America buying a significant part of Japanese exports, far bigger than vice versa (Nye, 1992) is the main reason invoked. Hence, Japan needs to access the American domestic market to sell their products. Specifically, the US high-technology market is the only one capable of taking in the Japanese production (Miyashita, 1999). To conclude, even if prima facie the cards seems equally distributed – Japan was at that time the second largest economy in the world, coming right after the United States (Kang, 2003) – the resources were engaged in a way favoring the latter.

Outcomes of the Gaiatsu

All things considered, the relations between Japan and the United States generally benefits the latter. Indeed, gaiatsu “is always accompanied by demand or request that Japan change in some way” (Mulgan, 1997). At first glance, gaiatsu could be considered as a catch-all term. It includes topics from “extracting billions of dollars to help pay for the Gulf crisis” to “trying to set market quotas on semiconductor chips” (Lewis, 1991).

Putnam (1988), provides a paradigmatic example of how international pressure works in pushing a state to adopt new policies. A few years after the first oil shock, the leading economies of the planet met in Bonn, Germany, hoping to grease the wheels of a moribund economy. Many contentions had to be addressed, concerning each of the three countries present, namely the United States, Germany, and Japan. What was asked to Japan was to rebalance exports and imports in favor of the latter. Nonetheless, the Japanese Ministry of Finance opposed a “stubborn resistance” (Idem., p.430) and rallied most of the opinions within the country.

But the rather small domestic opposition constituted a stepping stone for the acceptance and further implementation of the agreements. Indeed, Putnam’s findings demonstrate that the agreements were made possible “only because a powerful minority within each government actually favored on domestic grounds the policy being demanded internationally” (Idem., p.428). If no negotiation had taken place, the outcome would have been different.

Furthermore, Putnam’s case study shows that international pressure has to meet a domestic demand to be effective. Altogether, when a state exerts pressure toward another, it has to meet some domestic approval to be efficient. In other words, the demands from



the United States are more likely to succeed when they reach “key domestic interests in Japan” (Mayer, 2017). The next section will explain how Japan benefits from the *gaiatsu*.

### *Gaiatsu as Benefiting Japan*

The overall relations between the two countries is most of the time depicted as benefiting the United States. Indeed, the total amount of power held and how it is used favors the U.S. But in spite of this, Japan also takes advantage of the relation. Firstly, they have a free market in the United States since the middle of the last century. They have built ties that guarantee a commercial outlet. Secondly, they can make the domestic public opinion more prone to accept policies when it is said that it comes from external demand. The consent would have been harder to reach if the initiative was emanating merely from the Japanese domestic actors. Leonard J. Schoppa develops a similar explanation in his book “Bargaining with Japan: What American Pressure Can and Cannot Do” (1997).

Nevertheless, a broad range of commenters qualified Japan as a “reactive state” (echoing the argument of Kent E. Calder, 1998), which means the country has been affected by American pressure to such extent that it cannot engage in change without an external impetus (Mulgan, 1997). “As Japan has risen to become a world economic power, its foreign policy has come under increasing scrutiny. The dominant view of Japan's international behavior is that it is essentially reactive; Japan is portrayed as passive, risk-avoiding, and ineffective in conducting foreign policy. Only when Japan faces international pressure, it is suggested, does Tokyo change its diplomatic course.” (Hirata, 1998)

More recently, the behavior of Japan as a reactive state has been called into question. In 2003 already, David Potter and Sudo Sueo questioned the current state of Japan. After having reviewed some books on the topic, they reported other ways of seeing the allegedly reactive nature of Japanese foreign policy, which could also be “innovative and at times strategic” (Potter & Sueo, 2003). In 2006, Christopher W. Hughes told us that the situation among scholars is currently transforming. He analyzed the international sanctions toward North Korea by the intentional community, and how they are comprising Japan. According to him, before the general trend was to depict Japan as a “secondary submissive actor (...) and generally bending to US strategy” (Hughes, 2006, p.445).

But more recently, “academic commentators and policy practitioners have shown a new awareness that Japan’s own bilateral agenda and domestic political conditions are rising in importance relative to international factors in determining its overall policy orientation toward the North” (Idem). Four years later, the Canadian James Manicom published a paper called “Japan Ocean Policy: Still the Reactive State?” (2010), in which he assesses the stance of Japan toward disputes involving islands on the East China Sea. Japan became more assertive and passed new legislation pushing toward “the full realization of Japan’s maritime rights and responsibilities” (Manicom, 2010, p.307). But, according to Manicom, the latest evolution toward more empowerment was triggered once again by foreign incentives but coming from the east this time. Indeed, China’s shifting maritime policy compelled Japanese authorities to deviate a little from their usual “policy inertia” (Idem, p.309), or their tendency to pursue the status quo. In short, Japan has waited until the external pressure reached a certain level to implement a more active maritime policy. As depicted above, this case portrayed well the duality of the Japanese Foreign Policy.

### 2.3. Security

Recent developments raised concerns about a particular dimension of Japanese foreign policy, its foreign security. Indeed, a heated debate was raised after the relatively long ongoing mandate of Shinzo Abe as head of the government. Indeed, scholars argue about the nature of contemporary Japan's security stance. Predominantly, two schools of thought face each other. If both sides agree that "the tone of discussion and content of Japan's security policies have shifted considerably since the Cold War and the early post-Cold War period" (Oros, 2008, p.170), the major contention concerns the nature of the shift. The first group stresses the incremental nature of changes, while the second group defines the evolution as "a radical break with past practices" (Gustafsson and al., 2018, p.139).

"Japan remains the most dovish of the world's great powers" (Lind, 2016, p.7). Abe and his predecessors have pursued incremental changes to bolster deterrence" (Liff, 2015, p.80). Leif-Eric Easley (2017), Hiroshi Nakanishi (2015) or Jefferey W. Hornung and Mike M. Mochizuki (2016) can be cited among the many authors bearing a similar perspective. On the other hand, Michael Auslin states that since 2012, "Abe has pushed through a series of institutional, legal, diplomatic, and military reforms that are reshaping Japan's national security posture and that promise to enhance Japan's regional role over the coming decade" (2016, p.125). The evolution seems even more severe from the perspective of Christopher W. Hughes, who warn against the "remilitarization" of Japan.

Lind writes that “the most recent national security reforms conform to this familiar pattern: Japan continues to buck-pass, but as its threat environment grows increasingly dangerous because of a more powerful and more assertive China, Japan has accepted a larger role within the alliance (with the U.S.)” (Idem., p.1). Japan’s security stance evolves therefore naturally due to a change in its environment while staying on the same path.

#### 2.4. Interdependence and Power

The above discussion on the relationship between the United States and Japan highlighted the prevalence of two concepts, namely Interdependence and Power. The researcher will hereafter develop how they were theorized in the literature, in order to solve what issues they were utilized in and in what sense it will be brought into the analysis.

##### Power for Realists

Following the Second World War, the realist approach on International Relations got the edge and thereupon prevailed for about three decades. The notion of power took a significant place in their explanations. The book “Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace” published by Hans J. Morgenthau a few years after the end of the second worldwide conflict, provides a good example. According to Morgenthau, “statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power” (2006, p.5). Later on, “power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man” (Idem, p.11). Morgenthau asserts that if politicians seek a host of goals, such as

freedom or security, they will nonetheless “all chose power to achieve these ends” (Idem, p.29).

In the arena of international relations, states are the fundamental actors. The core of international relations is the aim of each state to keep or modify the actual international “balance of power” (Idem, p.179). Besides, when activities undertaken by states do not affect power, they cannot be considered as political. However, power in the realist perspective must be distinguished from the pure physical violence, which constitutes only one way that one’s mind can take the upper hand over another’s.

#### Power for Neoliberalists

In the 1970s, the notion of power lost its exclusive link to the military, to instead shift toward a broader acknowledgment. In the wake of Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane’s works, the definition of power became more extensive and started to encompass diverse activities, such as economic or artistic ones. Power changed shape to become a “power-over” others (Jaquette, 1984), which would compel them “to do something they otherwise would not do (and at an acceptable cost to the actor). Power can be conceived in terms of control over outcomes.” (Keohane & Nye, 2001, p.10).

Consecutively, power becomes more elusive than in its earlier interpretation, and its appraisal is no easy task. It could either be measured through “initial power resources”

assessment or through the “influence over patterns of outcomes” (Idem). But both measurements have their shortcomings. On the first hand, if country A owns more resources than country B, it does not lead automatically to an advantage in terms of power. Resources are a potential, rather than a safe mean to possess power. On the other hand, factual influence over outcomes is hard to judge precisely. Moreover, “there is no single hierarchy of power resources, and states vary in their capacities to influence outcomes by issue area” (Milner, 2009, p.12). To sum it up, there are many sorts of power, and that cannot be ranked.

#### Complex Interdependence for Neoliberalists

In the 1970s, the authors witnessed a world where flows of goods and people, as well as communication, were accelerating and crossing states boundaries more easily. The increased connection and its quickened pace bring states closer together. Researchers started to talk about interdependence among countries when the costs and constraints complemented the aforementioned flows. Otherwise speaking, the interruption of flow should somehow impact the stakeholder negatively to be in the presence of interdependence. For instance, “a country that imports all of its oil is likely to be more dependent on a continual flow of petroleum than a country importing furs, jewelry, and perfume (even of equivalent monetary value)” (Keohane & Nye, 2001, p.8).

When such flux links two or more countries, and have mutual effects on them, it is a case of international interdependence. Even though “there is nothing new about certain kinds of interdependence among states” (Idem, p.26), the new perspective brought by the authors of power and interdependence is important because it brings a new panel of actors

on the international relations' stage and diminishes the overall prevalence of military as a source of power.

Three crucial facets of interdependence can be found in the work of Keohane and Nye (2001). First, a plethora of channels connects two interdependent countries. For instance, formal and informal bonds between elites of the two countries, economical transnational transactions and so on. The state acquires a more in-depth definition, notably being more complex than the "unitary state" (Rana, 2015, p.291) of realists. Second, the military issues do not always prevail over the others for a state. Many problems have to be taken into account, and a clear hierarchy among them cannot be witnessed. Additionally, the governmental departments in charge of those issues can be separate from foreign departments. Third, when complex interdependence is at stake, no military force is utilized among the countries involved. It can still be used by the same countries, but toward the outside of the interdependence.

Furthermore, the interdependence is not inevitably symmetric. Indeed, different states own different amounts of power and asymmetry could arise from the process. According to Milner, "the key ideas articulated by Keohane and Nye in the 1970s are increasingly winning the theoretical and empirical battles in international relations to understand a globalized world" (2009, pp.3-4).

Most of the disputes mentioned above take root in the binary model of interdependence-power. For Nye, the interdependence between the U.S. and Japan arises in their economic and military interrelations. That relation, in turn, is seen as benefiting the first stakeholder (Mulgan, 1997, Miyashita, 1999, etc.). In some cases, Japan is even seen as a "Reactive

State” (Calder, 1998), following guidelines from the United States to take “basic security and foreign policy decisions” (Bello, 2017, p.110). However, some authors add a caveat to that conclusion. Mayer (2017) tells us that American dominance or pressure cannot do everything and similar Japanese domestic interests need to be found for the pressure to be successful. This argument did appear to be echoed in other writers’ findings (Schoppa, 1997, etc.). Japan’s decision-makers haven’t always been reluctant to accept guidance from the outside. Nonetheless, “this subservient but comfortable role that Japan filled is what is now in question. (...) Abe and the Japanese establishment are being forced to confront the headaches that come with making decisions on fundamental issues that had long been decided by Washington” (Bello, 2017, p.110). The final decision is not made by the U.S. or Japan, but By Shinzo Abe and the Japanese establishment. Therefore, that last conclusion raises the question of the actor’s involvement in the process of decision-making. The next section will treat the relation between actors and structures in the realm of international relations.

## 2.5. The Holism-Interactionism Dilemma in International Relations

“All social scientific theories embody an at least implicit solution to the agent-structure problem.” (Wendt, 1987, p.337)

The duo agent-structure has been the concern of many scientists not only in international relations but also in the whole social sciences’ world. On the first hand, holist approaches consider the whole (structures, institutions, etc.) as defining the agents (Talcott Parsons, Pierre Bourdieu or Emil Durkheim are prominent representatives of that school of thought). A single unit acts in such a way because he is part of an institution, a period, a



group or a society. In brief, the explanatory power lies in the structures. On the other hand, for interactionists or individualists, the agent is an actor, in a way that he can make a difference (Harold Garfinkel, Raymond Boudon or Erving Goffman represent that doctrine). Here is the unit researchers should focus upon, not on the murky overall structures. The actor is not completely defined by overlooking frames and can deviate from the norm. In international relations, the same dilemma appears. Most of the international relations' theories make "either state agents or system structures ontologically primitive units" (Wendt, 1987, p.337).

Before the end of the Cold War, scholars were generally inclined to give system-level structures the preeminence in explanations (Hudson, 2005). Indeed, the 'Trente Glorieuses' following the Second World War have seen a relatively frozen international power balance between the capitalist West and the communist East. That particular state of affairs enabled and nurtured theories focusing on structural stability. But the "theoretical, substantive vacuum (...) catalyzed by the end of the Cold War" (Hamilton, 2016, 142) paved the way for new theoretical approaches. Globally, political analysts had failed to foresee the end of the old-world order. The criticism expressed was that system-level variables at the center of the studies were not able to explain change. After that, more and more researches focusing on individual-level variables or actor-specific theories took shape, where the middle ground "between grand principles and the complexity of reality" (Hudson, 2005, p.6) were sought. Actors passed from being mostly defined as role-taker, "guided by institutionalized and internalized norms and identities" (Blatter, 2009, p.101) to more creative role-maker "whose orientation depends on the internalization of established community values" (Idem.).

Consequently, many social scientists have tried to remedy the dilemma of agent-structure. Antony Giddens (1986) has described social structures as resulting from social interactions, happening every day. But, in turn, those interactions and individuals' behaviors are determined by the structures. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, in a similar attempt to build a bridge between holistic and individualistic conceptions by conceptualizing the dialectical relation between agents and structures as a loop. According to them, society possesses both subjective and objective features, and both aspects matter. The society is subjective in the fact that "society is a human product" (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p.61). But once the society is created, its different features are institutionalized (when certain behaviors or thoughts are repeated a great number of times and become part of the norms), and therefore it becomes objective reality.

Finally, that reality impacts man, who are "social product" (Idem). Alexander Wendt proposed an interesting development of the idea of loop. For him "properties of agents and those of social structures are both relevant to explanations of social behavior" (1987, p.338). Doing so, he gives both units the same credit, or in other words, none of them precede the other when it comes to the explanation, so both have to be taken into account. Thus, agents and structures are "codetermined or mutually constituted" (Idem, p.339). Concurring with that perspective, David Dessler (1989) advocates the legitimacy of the transformational model, which encompasses structures as "a means to action rather than as an environment in which action takes place" (p.444). According to the model, actors live in pre-existing structures, but individuals appropriate them. However, another fringe of authors points out the fluctuating nature of the duo agent-structure. Hollis and Smith (1991) warn us against bending both units, as "the problem is not settled by deciding what proportions to put in the blender (...) solution to the problem tend to be unstable" (p.393).

## 2.6. Hypothesis

“It is fruitless to debate whether domestic politics really determine international relations, or the reverse. The answer to that question is clearly "Both, sometimes." The more interesting questions are "When?" and "How?" (Putnam, 1988, p.427)

Following Putnam’s reasoning, the present research will not address the question of weighting powers between the international pressure and the domestic demands that lead to the current Japanese security stance. In lieu of this, the research question - how is Japan still tied to its alliance with the U.S., in respect of its foreign security - will be divided into two smaller parts.

First, how is the contemporary security posture of Japan entangled with the United States, through which channels the interdependence still functions. Second, how actors involved are acting? Does it impact the overall security interdependence? The researcher chose the structure “if...then” to clarify his hypotheses. The proposition after *if* represents the independent variables, that is manipulated through the analysis. The proposition after *then* represents the dependent variables, that is measured through the analysis.

Hypothesis 1 - the influence of the United States over Japanese security posture:

- *If* the security alliance with the U.S. influence the contemporary security posture of Japan - through different resource’s mobilizations (economic, politico-ideological, military),
- *Then* Japan and the United States are still interdependent.

The independent variables, or the presumed causes, are the empirical influences of the U.S. to the Japanese security posture. The dependent variable, or the presumed effect, is the presence of interdependence between Japan and the United States.

Hypothesis 2 – the influence of actors and interactions over Japanese security posture:

- *If* actors and interactions influence the contemporary security posture of Japan,
- *Then* the relation between Japan and the United States is evolving.

The independent variables, or the presumed causes, are the interactions among actors, which are in turn leading to change in the structures. The dependent variable, or the presumed effect, is the presence of a changing structure of the relation between Japan and the U.S.

## 3. Conceptual Framework

### 3.1. Intro

“Facts do not speak for themselves or stand out. They are limited by the creation of conceptual and perceptual frameworks and by measurement techniques.” (Sequeira, 2014, p.4)

In scientific research, facts are not handed out straightforwardly by external reality. Indeed, the researcher adopts a perspective based on related concepts, which will then shed light from a particular angle onto the object of the study. Thus, the knowledge emerging from the same facts will differ depending on the perspective that the researcher chooses to embrace. Therefore, selecting specific concepts suggests an anterior ontology. In other words, to select concepts, the researcher needs to have a defined point of view on “what is the world and what we can know about it” (Ormston and al., 2013, p.11). In the next section, the researcher will explain the ontological foundation of the research and then define the concepts selected to conduct the study.

### 3.2. Ontological background of the research

“All theories presuppose a basic ontology.” (Wendt, 1999, as cited in Hamilton, p.140)

All studies, and therefore all theories, embody an answer or a perspective on the basic ontological question. That is to say, what is possible for us to know about the world (Ormston and al., 2013, p.11). The major contention concerns the duality of the agent-structure unit. What is the main driver of world affairs? “Human beings and organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live” (Wendt, 1987, pp.337-338). But at the same time, the society more in general “is made up of social relationships which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors” (Idem., p.338).

Answering which of the two constitutes the fundamental unit has kept researchers occupied for decades, and the debate is far from being settled. If the issue of agent and structure is “alive on all fronts” (Hollis and Smith, 1991, p.410), nonetheless some authors have developed ontologies that encompass a solution. An ontology, or an idea of the world that puts the focus on structures or agents will, in turn, illuminate the case from a certain angle. As a result, some dimensions will be kept in the shadow. Accordingly, theories and concepts could be interpreted as an answer to that effect of light and shade.

Alexander Wendt provides a potential solution that permits the researcher to take into account both structures and agents. For him, agents and structures are defined as “mutually constituted or codetermined entities” (Wendt, 1987, p.350). The nature of the world is of different kinds. Not a single aspect of it prevails on all the others. Consequently, both of the primary units – structures and agents/actors - must have their groundwork in concepts and theories. Nonetheless, difficulty arises when it comes to combining them. The solution found by Wendt is to divide the process into two parts and treat them in sequence. The first time, the researcher has to conduct an abstract analysis

to determine the structures (causal powers, practices, and interests) of the system he wants to examine. The second time, he has to conduct a “concrete historical analysis to trace the causally significant sequence of choices and interactions which lead to particular events” (Idem., p.364). The present study will follow a comparable method and will be developed in the next chapter. Besides, the previous dual nature of the world needs to be reflected in the concepts correspondingly. Therefore, the researcher will develop in the next section structural concepts – interdependence, power – first, and then move on to actors-focused concepts – interaction, Hudson, actor’s margin, etc. second.

### 3.3. Structural concepts

#### Interdependence

Interdependence engages two actors or more in a two-way dependency process. To clarify the argument, the researcher won’t differentiate between “dependency” and “dependence” as two separate concepts – as Caporaso did - but instead use them indifferently to talk about the same concept. What does “dependency” mean? According to Baldwin, it “refers to situations in which an effect is contingent on or conditioned by something else” (Baldwin, 1980). In other words, it means that an actor is affected or determined by forces from the outside. These forces are not only represented by a hostile power that makes another actor act against its own will. But in fact, the relation is also needed by the very same actor to satisfy some of its demands. In short, the two – or more – parties involved are both getting something from the relation.

Let's come back to the interdependence in light of the previous developments. The concept of interdependence highlights the fact that all the actors involved are reliant on each other. For example, on one hand, Japan is dependent on the United States – and also gets benefits from the relationship – but on the other side, the United States is dependent too, and therefore cannot break the tie without backlash. The attempt on modifying the relation to make it more suitable is complicated and costly. Many factors intervene.

That leads us to question the value of the relationship. In that perspective, the value of the relationship is calculated in comparison of what the actor would lose or get if he breaks it. Regarding the “choices available” (Caporaso, 1980, p.31), a state can determine if it is valuable for it to quit or to stay in its current relation. The fewer alternatives a country has – “at tolerable cost” (Idem.) - the more a country is vulnerable in its relations. That is to say the lower the degree of independence an actor has, the more defenseless he is. All things considered, the calculation of potential gain and loss are rarely simple. Not only because international relations don't take place in a world where a rational actor can analyze all the existing possibilities, but also because there are a lot of factors intervening to measure if a choice is valuable, or even available (Frieden, 1999). If an actor calculates gain and loss, it's only the “expected” (Caporaso, 1980, p.19) outcome, and not the exact and perfect one, that will be chosen at the end.

## Power

The above discussion about interdependence is not without consequences, but in order to forge closer ties to the object of study, the researcher will bring in the concept of power.



In interdependent relations, the country that will be able to take the upper hand will be the one displaying a greater amount of power. To fully understand this statement, the notion of power should be more detailed.

Power is a relational concept (Baldwin, 1980). One cannot be powerful without getting involved in interplay with a partner. Furthermore, the power holder in a relationship is the actor that can “get others do what they otherwise would not do” (Nye, 1990, p.177). Here again, it is not easy or even possible to determine exactly what the partner would or would not do if they were not involved in the interdependence. To understand what the other’s plans are and how to influence them – or how to be the most powerful actor in the relationship – an actor has to own resources. Nye (1990) classifies resources on the world stage in three major groups. The “soft power” first, includes a country’s ideology, rules, and cultural products. The second one consists of the military force. The third one comprises the economy; for instance, a flourishing industry represents an asset.

However, owning resources is not enough for a country to be dominant. It also needs to use them well – at the right time, against the right opponent and with a good balance. Furthermore, the power needs to be converted from “potential power” – resources holding – to realized power – a different behavior for others as an outcome (Nye, 1990). In short, holding tremendous resources in one field is not enough to be dominant overall.

#### Asymmetrical Relations

To sum it up, interdependent relations engage two or more actors in interactions where the partner is valuable. It is valuable in the way that the cost of leaving the relationship is

higher than staying in it. In short, the actors are staying in a relationship where they both are tied to each other in various ways. But almost always, an actor converts less of its potential resources into realized ones and thus becomes less powerful than its counterpart. This leads to a situation where an actor is more vulnerable than its partner. To that end, the interdependent relation is in most cases asymmetrical.

#### From Structure to Agency

With the notions of interdependence and power, the role of society as a whole was emphasized. Indeed, interdependence ties states to each other, and powers are owned by those same states. Nonetheless, the ontological perspective of the present research mingles structural and interactional approaches. Therefore, room has to be left for the individuals. It is important to note that system-level explanations do not wipe out individuals' action. Hence, structures do not "generate state actors themselves" (Wendt, 1987, p.335), but constrain the choices of individuals.

As Dudley and Brown (1981) wrote, some social models see "the actor as a derivative of the society" and others take the opposite perspective and tend to see "the society as a derivative of the actions of individuals" (Dudley and Brown, 1981, p.314). The crux of the matter is not to find whether the society or the individual ultimately precedes the other, but rather to give both room in the explication. In summary, the study will adopt "an approach to the agent-structure problem which does not preclude a priori making both agents and structures problematic or dependent variables" (Wendt, 1987, p.337). The further developments are essentially based on the contributions from Erving Goffman and Valerie M. Hudson.

## Social Interactions

“A social encounter is an occasion of face-to-face interaction, beginning when individuals recognize that they have moved into one another’s immediate presence and ending by an appreciated withdrawal from mutual participation.” (Goffman, 1956, p.265)

In everyday life, individuals are engaged in an environment where they constantly have to interact with each other. From cradle to grave, relentlessly, people have to cope with others of their kind. Indeed, most humans’ actions are in one way or another related to their peers, in their “real or imagined presence” (Idem, p.264). When someone is not physically copresent, his or her perceived judgment could nevertheless hold sway over other actors in multiple ways.

Erving Goffman had developed all along his career the analogy between social interactions and theatre. According to him, individuals can be seen as actors, performing different roles on stage. For every social situation, there are partitions available. Individuals “come to a world, already in some sense or other, established” (Goffman in Verhoeven, 1980, p.323). Individuals are thus guided through their acting. To put it differently, partitions are given by the structures, and constrain the action. But while constraining, the rules or directives do not completely format actions.

Moreover, those guidelines are proper to situations and actors. An individual may know what to do while performing an activity on the one hand, but it also depends on who he is acting with on the other. For instance, the trivial case of someone having a beer. The

environment provides an array of hints on how to respond. Being at home watching TV won't trigger the same behaviors as being with colleagues after work, or in a meeting of former childhood friends. The topics for discussion, the amount of alcohol drunk, or the outfit worn won't be the same. However, those differences won't be felt by the individuals participating, as they are seen as natural.

Most human behaviors have been learned and internalized during previous similar activities. Nonetheless, actors don't reiterate the very same performance every time, as social interactions always diverge from each other in at least some details. Thus, a certain level of uncertainty emerges from interactions. Additionally, the overall definition of the situation can be unclear at the beginning, and therefore it is often at stake in social interactions. Goffman states that the actor who can control this definition becomes the most powerful.

But knowing that their roles bind actors, how can they impact the definition of the situation itself? This can be achieved "through his using or not using role distance" (Goffman, 1961, p.152). The normative role and the role enactment overlap for the most part, but not completely. A margin appears then between what would happen in if the actor acted "solely in terms of the normative demands" (Idem, p.85) and how he acts on the social stage.

#### Interaction in International Relations

"Every theoretical discipline has a ground. A "ground" means the conceptualization of the fundamental or foundational level at which phenomena in the

field of study occur. (...) International relations (IR) as a field of study has a ground, as well. All that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in human decision makers acting singly or in groups. In a sense, the ground of IR is thus the same ground of all the social sciences. Understanding how humans perceive and react to the world around them, and how humans both shape and are shaped by the world around them, is central to the inquiry of social scientists, including those in IR.” (Hudson, 2005, p.1)

Until the beginning of the 1990s, most of the international relations studies did not take agency into consideration. Their analyses focused solely on structural explanations of state behavior (Idem., p.4). In this manner, human beings become interchangeable pawns who play roles attributed to their position in the social structures. But the end of the Cold War shattered the previous accepted tenets and theories. Indeed, no school of thought had predicted the end of the bipolar world order, as known at the time. To put into other words, “the end of the Cold War revealed anew that it is not possible to explain or predict system change at the level of system-level variables alone” (Idem., p.13). Since then, actor-specific theories were developed gradually. Actions and actors acquired a bigger depth than simply stemming from structural norms or utility maximization.

Hilton L. Root (2013) provides, for instance, a comprehensive explanation of how actors re-create structures. According to him, constant feedback loops between actions and reactions. An individual observes other’s actions, whereupon he adjusts his actions and behaviors. In turn, other actors adapt their own action after the first actor’s reaction, and so on. Doing so, they re-create “the system in which they operate” (Idem., p.16). Novelty and change can, therefore, emerge from the action.

Furthermore, the decision maker performs, or “processes only in his or her own mind” (Payne and al., 1993, p.100). However, the mind is not a tabula rasa, but rather operates within a frame of past “beliefs, attitudes, values, experiences, emotions, traits, style, memory, national, and self-conceptions” (Hudson, 2005, p.10). Consequently, an action, although oriented by antecedent structures, always takes a distinct shape. For this reason, different actors have to be taken into account. Political leaders, elites, communities of analysts giving technocratic insights, fringes of public opinions, bureaucrats, and so on act in various manners and thus contribute to the framing of reality.

In the interactional part of the analysis, the focus will be put on which actors count in the Japanese security stance, who participate in the definition of the situation, and whether or not those actors have deviated from normative roles.

### 3.4. Significance of the Research

When it comes to explaining the recent shift in the security posture of Japan, many scholars emphasize the importance of the international security environment of Japan, that would have become the “most severe” (Sugai, 2016, p.1) since the end of the Second World War. Additionally, the role of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is often encompassed as the primary driver of the recent evolution.

The present research tries to address shortcoming that could arise from such analyses. First, the international environment as a factor of internal security change is coupled with a focus on the US-Japan’s internal environment. This explanation gives an explanation taking into account more than the role of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Moreover, the description of Shinzo Abe as performing his role differently than various former Prime Ministers illuminates his position under a different angle.

Besides, the research method, or process tracing, allows comparing a hypothetical causal mechanism to its traces found during data collection. The researcher postulates that such a dialectic loop between theory and empirics allows a better assessment of a situation.

Indeed, the explanation of Shinzo Abe as performing its role differently than the previous

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Introduction

“How do we get from a vague interest in some area of IR to a specific argument that explains or interprets a particular aspect of international politics? Addressing this question is (...) the task that determines the project’s ultimate value.” (Bladgen, 2016, p.195)

The question of how to get from a remote interest to a precise interpretation, or from empirical evidence to an explaining theory, lies at the heart of social sciences. Building a strong methodology is a critical step toward giving a reasonable answer to that questioning. Indeed, methodology, as the “ways in which we acquire knowledge” (Moses and Knutsen, 2012, p.4), takes a central part in defining how to research and learn about the phenomenon. For the present project to be valuable, a proper methodology needs to be associated with it. The ensuing methodology has been thought as to encompass the dual nature of the present research – the couple perspective of social interactions and global dynamics. Which one would be in a position to supply enough evidence for both sides? The latter part explains which method will be taken to conduct the research and how it will be applied to the case study.



#### 4.2. Method: Process Tracing

The actual security posture of Japan is the outcome of a long historical process. Various causes have occurred throughout the process, emerging at different moments and spaces. To trace back their birth and evolution, understand how they intervene and lead eventually to the contemporary situation, the researcher chose the “process tracing” method. The next section will discuss the implications of that choice and, further, how the theory will be applied to the case study.

Conducting a process tracing analysis could be considered in broad understanding as an attempt to link specified initial conditions, or independent variables to defined outcomes, or dependent variable, through causal mechanism(s). Trying to unveil what binds causes and results allows the researcher to have a deeper insight into that mechanism, which would remain a “black box” otherwise. The focal point of process tracing consists of a “temporal unfolding of events and dense interactions of causal factors in specific cases” (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p.309). The three points emphasized by As Moses and Knutsen, namely the temporal, interactional and within-case dimensions of process tracing, are developed by George and Bennett (2005) and Blatter and Blume (2008a, 2008b), among others. The researcher will hereafter refer to their contribution to the theory. First, according to the former George and Bennett, an explanation involving causal mechanisms have to be “consistent with the most continuous spatial-temporal sequences” (2005, p.140).

Blatter and Blume add that the chronological dimension takes the “center-stage” (2008b, p.321) of process tracing analyses. Thus, the author should relate his findings in a “narrative style” (idem., p.335). Second, all along the temporal evolution of the case study, many causal factors intervene and overlap. Causes are always plural. Additionally, they do not simply pile up and produce an outcome due to the simple strength of their addition. On the contrary, causal factors collide and thus modify the trajectory or intensity of their power. In process tracing, “there exist intense links and/or complex interactions between various factors in the production of outcomes” (Blatter & Blume, 2008a, p.32). It is then crucial to cover “every significant step and every significant context factor of the process leading towards the outcome” (Blatter & Blume, 2008b, p.334). Third, causal factors are always contextual, related to the time and space where an event takes place. One particular causal factor will not come into existence in the same way if it’s deployed under different conditions. It is important then to study the causal mechanism under the light of the actual case. Thus, a scientific endeavor that is aimed at gathering information and evidence about the causal mechanism(s) does it in a “within-case” perspective. Indeed, precise knowledge is obtained “using detailed within-case empirical analysis” (Beach, 2017, p.1).

As seen above, scholars who base their research on process tracing have to dig into the depth of causal mechanisms and built their explanation on it. But, as George and Bennett suggest it, the causal mechanism itself is “ultimately unobservable” (2005, p.137). A causal mechanism is more a mind construction than a first-hand, objective observation. To establish a causal mechanism is to uncover traces within a context (Bennett & Elman, 262). Those traces are to be found at every step of the chronological development in between causes and outcomes. Blatter and Blume talk about “temporal unfolding of

situations, actions and events, traces of motivations (or other lower level mechanisms), evidence of (complex) interactions between causal factors, and/or information about restricting/catalyzing contexts/conditions, and detailed features of a specific outcomes” (2008b, p.319) as examples of traces. Eventually, “understanding comes from untangling the complex knot of connections: from unfolding the causal cable” (Moses and Knutsen, 2012, p.310).

The causal mechanism is not directly visible, but its traces allow attempts to unveil it. Traces, observations are gathered into a causal mechanism via interpretation. Hall defines interpretation as “an iterative process of observation and conjecture whose goal is to identify an intrinsic coherence to behaviour or events that is not immediately visible to the observer” (2012, p.5). Indeed, the investigator doesn’t merely transcribe what he sees, but also attaches meaning to what he observes. A final analysis that is relayed by a scientist’s work reflects his interpretation.

Moreover, Hall describes a fine interpretation as needing to be compatible with the meanings produced by social actors themselves (Idem.). Indeed, what is observed is of a dual nature, the events themselves, and the meanings actors involved attached to the events. Both need to be sought by the researcher. Nonetheless, the meanings shared by actors cannot be taken directly as unbiased. Interest, beliefs or partial access to information constitute among other common pitfalls which scientists need to be aware. Thinking scientifically requires us to deploy “a series of thoughts in which thinking the thoughts is at the same time thinking the connections between them” (Collingwood, 1962, as cited in Moses and Knutsen, p.302). If the requirements are met, inferences can be

drawn from empirical traces to theoretical causal mechanisms, explanations (Blatter and Blume, 2008b, p.318).

Conducting a process tracing research helps to unveil the components of a particular historical event. Therefore, the conclusion of the study touches upon the interactions between the event's various aspects, and the presence or not of causal mechanism(s) among them. Or in other words, concluding a process tracing research is to assess assesses "whether the theoretical mechanisms at the heart of the model were working or not" (Blatter and Blume, 2008a, p.33). Additionally, process tracing methods have a larger scope than a mere factual description of events, or "laundry-listing" (Bladgen, 2016, p.199). Indeed, it helps to conclude "from the reality of "concretes" (observations) to the relevance of "abstracts" (concepts, theories, and paradigms)" (Blatter and Blume, 2008a, p.30). Nonetheless, the aim is not to generalize conclusions to a broader population or going from "specific to universal."

Rather, case study methods in general and process tracing more in particular are "a more inductive method" (Beach, 2017, p.22). In its purest form, induction means that conclusions are drawn after empirical observations. However, it is inevitable that former observations, perceptions are tinged with previous knowledge, and thereby theory. If the core of social sciences, is "a confrontation between our theory, on one side, and empirical observations, on the other" (Hall, 2012, p.2), none of the two components takes the upper end ultimately. As demonstrated by Bladgen, "theory and evidence exist in an endogenous feedback relationship in which our grasp of each is informed by the other" (2016, p.199). To sum it up, induction needs to be completed with deduction – or

particular instances as a contingency of broader theories - to build a strong theory, where both in turn “precede the other” (Idem., p. check where “each can precede the other).

#### 4.3. Epistemological Background of the Case Study

“A significant part of what we know about the social and political world comes from case studies.” (Vennesson, 2008, p.223)

As Vennesson stated it, case studies have been omnipresent since the first half of the 20th century in many fields of research such as foreign policy studies or political sociology. However, case studies do not consist of a compact body of similar approaches. On the contrary, the variety of case studies encompass differences on their core “objectives, characteristics and results”, as well as “the ways in which they are conducted” (Idem., p.225). To take a stance on such issues, it is of primary importance to define the epistemological premises underlying the research. Epistemology can be defined as the answer to the question “what there is to know about the social world and how to find out about it (Ormston and al., 2014, p.23). In the case of the present research, the nature of knowledge is interpretative. As mentioned in the method part, in the first step the researcher will scrutinize facts and associated meanings, and in the second step, interpret the events mentioned above and meanings to come to a conclusion. Thus, conclusions can be inferred from observations only after they have passed through the channels of perception and interpretation.

Gaston Bachelard and his definition of the “scientific fact” help to structure how research using interpretation can be done. Indeed, with the scientific fact, Bachelard gives a more

in-depth example of how knowledge is ideally constructed in social sciences. According to him, a conclusion, that suggests a scientific fact, is conquered, constructed and observed (Bachelard, 2002). First, scientific works have to step back from common knowledge and the immediate experience, which is “impure and formless” (Idem., p.20). In particular, the common-sense knowledge has meanings ascribed such as “too soon”, and facts cannot be detached from those former meanings. Indeed, “we would moreover be committing a serious error if we thought that empirical knowledge could remain at the level of rigorously assertoric knowledge by restricting itself to the simple affirmation of facts” (Idem., p.52). In like manner, the point is not to reproduce the categorizations already present in the social world and apply them as such in the analysis. Instead, scientific facts have to be built, in a second phase, following “an explicit effort of theory construction” (Vennesson, 2008, p.229), taking into account the former meanings attached to facts. Following the theory building, the third and final phase touches upon the observation. Scientific endeavor is not finished until it has proceeded with an empirical examination.

However, the three phases can overlap. As suggested in the previous part, scientific work can be characterized as a “feedback loop” where the investigator can modify his previous thoughts and notions under the light of new theoretical or empirical findings (Bladgen, 2016, p.207). In summary, the research is conducted to unfold scientific facts that are conquered constructed and observed. Moreover, the chosen epistemological premises will give guiding principles on how to apply the process tracing method. The researcher postulates that following such argumentation patterns will help to clarify what characteristics the present case study owns and how it will be conducted.

#### 4.4. Process Tracing Applied to the Case Study

As defined by Bachelard, the first step toward scientific achievement is the conquest of knowledge, standing up against an immediate understanding of reality. The present research investigates the current Japanese security posture and its links to the alliance with the United States. Most spread associated meanings are the role of leaders such as presidents Shinzo Abe and Donald Trump, the economic importance for America to sell weapons to Japan, or the importance of deterring North Korean assumed nuclear power with a robust military presence. Newspaper's headlines such as "Trump sees big arms sales as quick fix for Japan trade deficit" (Asian Review, April 20th, 2018) or "Arms Sales Push May Further Trump-Abe Bromance" (The Globalist, November 6th, 2017) indicates such interpretation. If the assumptions are not without impact and relevance, they are only part of a broader explanation. Therefore, the researcher will strive to construct in the first part of the analysis the broader causal factors sizing up the extensive nature of possible answers. Essentially, the causal factors are of two kinds; the ones touching upon the internal environment of the alliance between Japan and the U.S., and the ones related to its external environment.

In the next part, the researcher will observe or apply the process tracing properly said. How the security posture of Japan has changed during the last decades in general and more in particular since 2012, and Shinzo Abe's coming to power will be explained, following a chronological narration, or a "concrete historical analysis" (Wendt, 1987, p.364). To put it differently, this will explain how the causal mechanism unfolds.

As indicated before, the postulated causal mechanism cannot be straightforwardly and concretely seen. Rather than looking directly for it, the researcher instead has to look for traces it could have left behind. To do so, the data collected will be of three sorts — theoretical texts – books, scientific articles, etc. – newspaper articles, and reports and government-issued documents, such as treaties or scripts of officials’ speeches. The researcher believes that this combination will allow a more extensive perspective on the matter. Nonetheless, the data-gathering and scrutiny are not able to happen without posing their own problems. Indeed, data is always “too plentiful and too sparse” (Moses and Knutsen, 2012, p.204). In the first place, the method developed will help to sort out the more and less relevant information. But in the second place, two major issues arise. First, historical information “tends to shrivel over time” (Idem., p.205). Thus, the surviving information may be unrepresentative. The second limit involves the languages of sources. Indeed, as the case study is on the relations between Japan and the United States, sources in Japanese would be interesting to access. But due to the researcher’s limited knowledge of the language, the scope will be limited to English-based information. Finally, after having passed through the process tracing, the conclusion will assert the applicability of the former hypotheses. How does the case study’s findings validate or invalidate them?



## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. Historical Development of the Interdependence Between Japan and the United States

The Post-war Agreements: 1945-1952

After the turmoil and upheaval of the Second World War, Japan woke up devastated. The U.S. forces took the upper hand among the allies and occupied the whole country, under the command of General MacArthur, letting only the Allied Council (British commonwealth, and China) work as an advisor (Hsu, 1951). The situation lasted until 1952 when the conflict took an end officially with the signature of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Japan emerging from the War has been pictured as a future threat, and thus disengaging it from rearmament or militarization was primordial. That's what happened within the two years following the war, where the army was dismantled, and the former Japanese officers were excluded from the new political structures. Eventually, a new constitution was adopted in 1947, aimed at preventing Japan from rebuilding a strong offensive strike force. Indeed, Article 9 of Chapter 2 states that "Land, sea, and air forces, as well as another war potential, will never be maintained" (The Constitution of Japan). The defense of the country would hereafter be under control of the United States, which would provide defense forces, as allowed in the 7th chapter of the Charter of the United Nations (Kawashima, 2003, p.7)." The constitution limited the independence of the country and thus the Japanese foreign policy (Cooney, 2007).

Two dynamics, appearing over the years 1947-52, changed the factors. First, the communist threat increased. Coupled with the strategic position of Japan in the Asian

“Far East”, the new deal brought the United States to rethink how the occupation of Japan should be regulated. Second, Japan faced a shortage of resources to produce finished goods again during the years 1947-1948. To remedy the situation, two solutions were considered, the economic and military rehabilitation of Japan. On the security matter, the U.S. deciders considered and eventually allowed Japan to possess small Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). Indeed, the Korean War broke out at the beginning of the 1950s, and American officials were worried that an unarmed Japan could fall to the communist side.

Besides, security ties were adopted between the two countries. What is called the “Yoshida Doctrine”, named after the incumbent Prime Minister, represent the ability for Japan to own a “lightly armed mercantile state” (Kawashima, 2003, p.7). In other words, the ability to possess deterrence power in the state of JSDF and ties with the United States but pursuing “a low-profile foreign policy and restrained defence policies” (Dobson, 2017, p.205), while “prioritizing economic growth” (Idem.). Since then, the defense posture of Japan was revolving mainly around the United States, following the American lead on international issues, while keeping the military staff and equipment as limited as possible.

In 1952, the “Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan” was ratified. Here was decided the status of the U.S. forces in Japan. America was therefore entitled to place military camps in Okinawa and the rest of the archipelago, and to offer protection to Japan if the country is under “armed attack from without” (MOFA, 1952 Art.1). On the economic scale, America opened its doors to the Japanese market, to ingest Japanese exports and thus helped to rebuild the country. The goal here was to help Japan take off and not to drop into the laps of communism. But finally, the country did so well that it

went far ahead of plan. This wasn't forecasted by the United States, which saw Japan as a "second rate economic market" (Hook, 2001, p.13), and not a possible concurrent.

The Economic Prosperity: 1952-1973

The post-war situation had set new trends in Japan, and the majority of them had lasted over time. The military alliance with the US and the economic developments has embarked on a path that they will follow with some adjustments.

The two stakeholders amended the former "Mutual Security Assistance Pact" in June 1960, which gave birth to the new "Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security". It helped to strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries, aiming at defending Japan against invasion from its neighbors, and it defined the rights and duties of both countries within the Alliance. "The U.S.-Japan alliance was originally constructed as a fundamentally asymmetric arrangement—Japan hosts U.S. military bases in exchange for a one-sided security guarantee" (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.1). Indeed, Japan doesn't have to defend the U.S. if the country is attacked.

The following "Status of Forces Agreement", ensued the same year, designated the "treatment of U.S. personnel stationed in Japan" (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.12). Those treaties are a crucial matter because they are the first of a series of bilateral agreements that will "define the scope and form of security cooperation" (Idem). Therefore, they will become of the main channels through which the alliance functions. They are an integral part of the growing interdependence between Japan and the United States.

The National Diet adopted in 1967 the “Three Principles on Arms Exports”, which excluded arms sales to countries from the communist bloc, under arm export embargo according to the UN Security Council resolutions, and states that are likely or already involved in international conflicts (MOFA, 1967). Japan deprived itself of the right of exporting arms, and thus the industry stayed domestic-oriented. On the other hand, as foreign market opportunities shrank, Japanese companies started to leave the defense industry (Hirose, 2014, p.1). To stay competitive, Japan imported from the United States licenses to produce weapons in Japan (Sugai, 2016). Finally, through various bilateral agreements, the two countries started to tie their industries and defense programs together. Nonetheless, at the same time, Japan incrementally increased its budget on JSDF, mainly on technological equipment, which also pleased a specific American opinion, that was unhappy with Japan not spending enough on its Defense.

It’s also during this period that America became and stayed the primary consumer of Japanese exports. This particular bilateral trade relationship between the two countries has brought a broad array of issues, including the uneven balance of payments. However, the “economic miracle” was brought to a standstill by the first oil crash in 1973 and the drastic increase in crude oil price.

#### The End of Cold War: 1973-1991

The military alliance with the United States followed a more or less steady path during the 1970s and 1980s. In February 1976, the Japanese Government broadened the spectrum of the principles’ area of application. From then, the ban was enlarged to encompass every place in the world and the weapons concerned were all the ones that

could be used by armies on battlefields (Sakurakagawa, 1995, p.101). As a result, the only customer of Japanese arms industries left was the JSDF, the domestic military. Thus, the process of arms acquisitions newly formed took a stiff structure. Sugai (2016) defines Japan at that time as striving to “strengthen its defense production and technological bases through licensed production, indigenous production, and research and development of major defense equipment through government-industry cooperation based on the Basic Guideline for Production and Development of Defense Equipment of 1970”. The arms trade structure seemed rigidified, but some changes happened. The JSDF got modernized at that time for instance.

As seen before, the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Japan has not always unfolded entirely smoothly. Some parts of the American opinion saw the cost of Japanese Defense as too costly. Thus, America pressured Japan to spend more of its budget on it. But at the same time, a domestic voice calling for peace got a say, so decision-making agents took the opportunity to balance the contradicting pressure (domestic and foreign) to increase the efficiency and power of the JSDF. Mulloy talks about a “welcome gaiatsu, whereby external pressure allows a ministry to overcome domestic opposition”(2011, p.38).

For instance, the national spending on military matters couldn't reach over 1% of the total GNP legally. When Prime Minister Nakasone decided to abandon this floor rate in 1986, the year following didn't see an exponential rise in military allocations – Japanese public opinion being against it (Hook, 2001).

## 5.2. The Causal factors and Mechanism

### Intro

How is Japan still tied to its alliance with the U.S., in respect to its foreign security? To provide a tentative answer to the research question, the researcher will proceed with a two-step analysis. In the first step, the researcher will define the causal factors explaining the recent security evolutions. They will subsequently be combined to form a causal mechanism. As the second step, the researcher will follow a narrative chronology to explain step by step the transformation of the security posture. Doing so, the researcher hoped to find traces of the empirical influence of the U.S. over Japanese security posture, as well as the impact of actors through interaction throughout Japanese security posture.

### Causal Factors

#### *Intro*

If authors define the recent Japanese security policies' evolution as a "normalization" (Envall, 2018, Bacon and Burton, 2018, Hornung & Mochizuki, 2016) or "remilitarization" (Hughes, 2017, Madison, 2018) of the Japanese army, the vast majority acknowledge the existence of a change. Furthermore, many analysts conclude that it is aimed at making Japan "a more credible alliance partner" (Bacon and Burton, 2018, p.41) or at providing "enhanced military support" (Hugues, 2017, p.2) to the United States.

Moreover, the participation of the US is entangled in the recent evolution of Japanese security. The researcher will hereafter seek to define the different causal factors at stake to explain the latest evolution. The factors are of two kinds, in relation to the external and internal environment of the Japan-US alliance.

## External Causes

### *The changing environment-end of the cold war*

“Japan finds itself in the most severe security environment that it has experienced since the end of the World War II.” (Sugai, 2016, p.1)

### *Russia*

From the escalating tensions between communist and capitalist countries to the end of the cold war, Japan “was predominantly preoccupied with the threat from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)” (Hughes, 2016, p.121). When the San Francisco Treaty ended the US occupation of Japan officially in 1952, the USSR refused to sign it. One of the major contentions was the provision allowing the US to own military bases in Japan, which would directly appoint Japan as part of the US-led coalition. Furthermore, controversies about the ownership of the Kurils Islands remained the cornerstone of the unsolved dispute. Besides, Soviet intentions were seen from a certain Japanese opinion as “genuinely malign” (Idem.), with leaders prone to invade or even bomb Japan with nuclear heads. It was only with the collapse of the USSR that the thaw of relations started. The Tokyo Declaration on Japan-Russia Relations was signed in 1993. Both parties reiterated their engagement toward the resolution of the territorial dispute.

Nonetheless, five years later, the cancellation of Boris Yeltsin's visit to Tokyo after mounting public outcry, shrank the encouraging perspectives seen hitherto (Feng, 2007, p.206). Since then, Russia has shown assertive behaviors toward the disputed islands, notably by keeping military exercises in the region (Katagiri, 2018). Moreover, Russia follows a militarization course, developing, for instance, A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) weapons, and expects to introduce new stealth jets soon (Gady, 2018).

### *China*

During the cold war, Japanese leaders encompassed communist China as struggling for survival, after periods of domestic upheaval and international confrontations (Hughes, 2016). Also, since the Second World War, China and Japan had never been a major global player at the same time. But since the inception of the 21st century, they had become “major players in the international arena at the same time” (Feng, 2007, p.201). From the end of the cold war, the perception of the Chinese menace grew. Japanese leaders and public opinion (see fig.1) started to fear Beijing’s strong leadership, economy, military capabilities, and modernization. Indeed, Chinese public opinion is prone to support policies that bolster the state, “especially over historical rivals like Japan” (Katagiri, 2018, p.340). Besides, the growing military strength of China hampers the US’s freedom of movement in the region, notably after the acquisition of A2/AD weapons.

While China wasn’t a main concern for the US directly after the cold war, Japanese public concern arose quickly. Indeed, it took off at the end of the Cold War, accelerating substantially after the Senkaku Islands’ disputes of 2010 and 2012. The construction of China as a “non-transparent, unruly, challenging, and aggressive dictatorship” (Lindgren, 2018, p.8) contributed to the fear of an assumed Chinese peril. The non-predictability of



Chinese decisions, coupled with a less “favorable offense-defense balance” (Hughes, 2016, p.109) to Japan, may trigger a more assertive stance toward China.

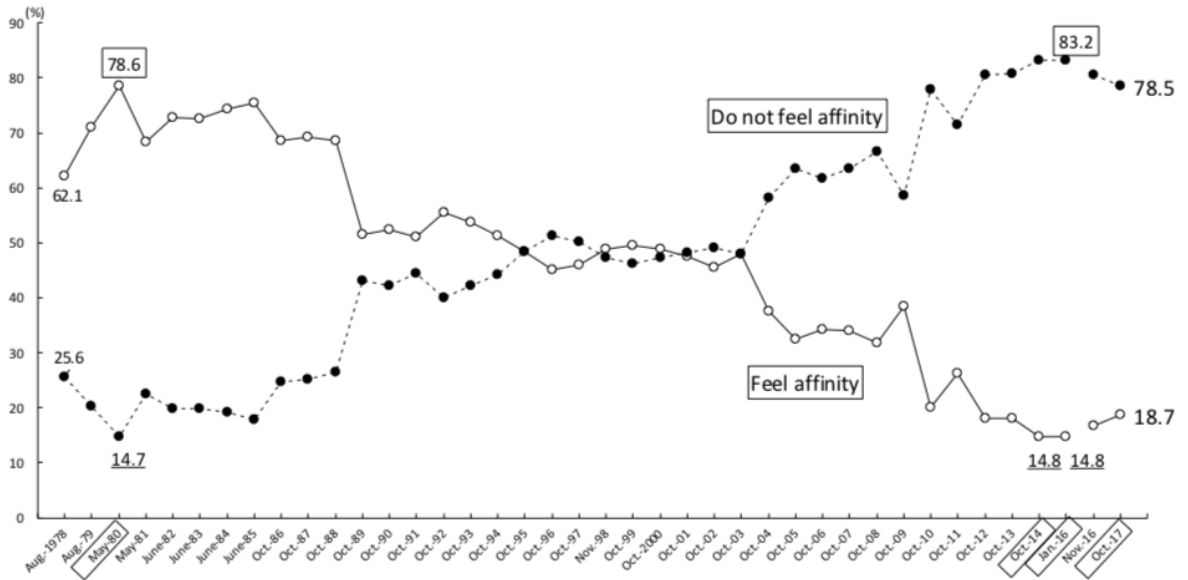


Figure 1, Affinity Toward China (2017, Cabinet Office)

### North Korea

“After the end of the Cold War, North Korea took step by step the place of Russia, as Russian powers decrease” (Katagiri, 2018, p.328).

Since early 1991, the US has tried to compel North Korea to abandon their nuclear missiles’ programs. After three years of unsuccessful attempts, the situation worsened to the point where the two countries were on the verge of a nuclear crisis. Japan’s decision makers worried as well about the deterioration of the situation. Indeed, both the geographical situation of the Korean Peninsula as “a dagger aimed at the heart of Japan” (Yoshihara and Holmes, 2006, p.25) and the status of Japan as an ally of the United States makes the outbreak of a Korean conflict directly related to Japan’s security. But in 1994, “the lack of preparedness for the interoperability of JSDF and alliance capabilities”

(Hughes, 2016, p.124) would risk jeopardizing the alliance. Indeed, the US could disregard Japan “as a useful ally” (Idem.) if the interoperability of allies’ armed forces proved inefficient.

Over the next 25 years, the North Korean threat has followed a similar path, which makes it predictable and less menacing for Japan. Indeed, North Korea starts by making threats, then demands aid or the abolishment of the blockade and other international sanctions, and finally stays quiet for a short period (Katagiri, 2018). Notwithstanding, Japan has used the threat of North Korea, combined with the one of China, to implement security measures. The ongoing LDP-Komeito alliance in power wants, for example, to allow the protection of US ships with Japanese citizens on board, with US warships navigating in Japanese waters or with the US military personnel if under ballistic missile threat (Hughes, 2016).

#### *The Evolution of the Arms Trade*

If “China and North Korea are perceived to be the most significant conventional threats to Japan’s security” (Bacon and Burton, 2018, p.47), then other threatening states, and non-state entities, also exist and make the overall security environment more complex. Moreover, the arms production’s nature has been crucially modified within the last decades.

During the cold war, strategic alliances were built among the duo of arms producers and arms buyers. In a polarized world, it was of prime importance to keep the state-of-the-art weaponry out of your opponent’s reach (Garcia-Alonso and Levine, 2007). Since the end of the Cold War, the growing global demand, as well as the increase in arms suppliers,

has led to an arms trade defined as a “buyer’s market” (Perlo-Freeman, 2018). It implies that the suppliers have to compel with buyers’ demands to avoid the risk of being overrun by concurrence. The buyers are “spoiled for choice” (The Economist, 2018). Nonetheless, the US industry is still accounting for more than half of the international arms exports (see fig.2). However, the SIPRI chart lacks information from China, which is allegedly one of the most prominent modern arms producers. Nonetheless, if Chinese companies are aiming at the international market, the country’s opaque system production compromises their desire to export more (Yeo, 2018).

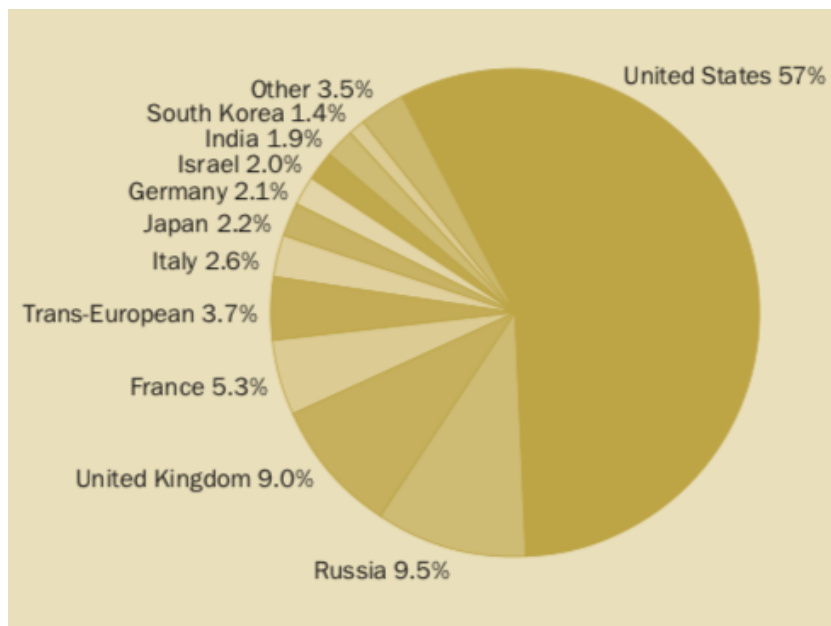


Figure 2, Share of Arms Sales of Companies in the SIPRI top 100 for 2017, by Country (SIPRI, 2017)

Furthermore, the “globalization of economy and the spread of the Internet has significantly increased the proliferation of cutting-edge technologies” (Sugai, 2016, p.5). The increasing technology embedded in weapons is spreading at a faster pace. Therefore, to stay ahead of the concurrence, states have to invest more and more capitals. Two trends arise from that evolution. The first one consists in a tendency to retain the most developed cutting-edge technology for the state’s market (Garcia-Alonso and Levine, 2007). The

second one arises when countries do not own enough capitals to keep up with the latest developments. It is of a crucial matter in this case to share the production's costs and technology knowledge among different nations.

### Internal Causes

The second set of causal factors are to be found in the internal environment of the US-Japan alliance. In particular the balance of powers between the two allies is changing. As developed in the conceptual framework, the stakeholders of an interdependence own resources. Keohane and Nye (2001) affirm that assessing an actor's initial resources constitutes a way to appraise its overall power. Eventually, the modification of the resources will lead to the new Japanese security posture. Moreover, the resources can be divided into three categories, the economic, military, and soft power resources (Idem.).

#### *Economic resources*

##### *Japan*

In 1976, the cabinet of Prime Miki Takeo Miki decided to cap the defense expenditure at 1% of the GNP (Gross National Product) – which would become later related to the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). That measure was taken to “prevent Japan from becoming a military superpower” (Nippon.com, 2018). If Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone abolished the official ceiling a decade later, the unspoken rule has subsisted and continue to constrain Japanese decision-makers.

Nonetheless, after a decade of defense spending diminution, Japan started to increase its defense budget fiscal year 2013, to eventually reach a total of 5.2 trillion of yen five years

later, marking an “all-time high” (Idem.), see fig.3 – the amounts shown in the figure are the spending and not the budget. If the willingness of Shinzo Abe and its administration to expand the defense budget is already ongoing, the 1% normative limit remain strong. For instance, when the recently appointed Defense Minister Iwaya Takeshi talked about the necessity to increase the defense budget, he denied wanting to reach 2% of the GDP, which would be “inappropriate” (Takeshi, 2018, as cited in Kato). Indeed, Japan has to take into account its overall indebtment, and inconsiderate defense expenditure could easily provoke a public outcry.

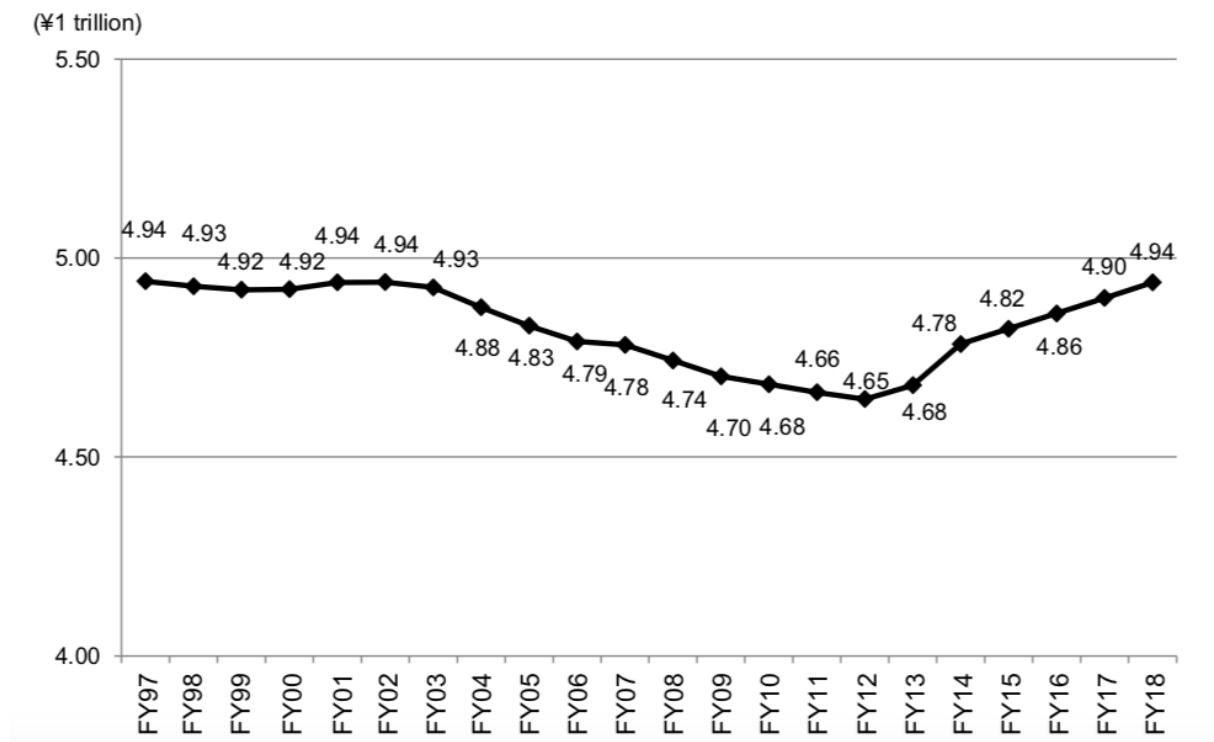


Figure 3, Changes in Total Amount (MOD, 2017)

Shinzo Abe and its cabinet want to increase defense expending, but Japan is also becoming an essential arms producer. Indeed, in the year 2014 has seen the abolishment of the arms export ban. The vast Japanese defense industry, formerly aiming uniquely at the domestic market, has therefore access to a new market. Nonetheless, it competes

“from a fairly weak position, with China for Asia-Pacific customers” (The Economist, 2018). Besides, the defense equipment has become “techno-centric and highly sophisticated” (Sato, 2015, p.5). This characteristic makes it complicated for the newcomers – such as Japan - to reach the standards without largely investing in production. But, as exemplified in the fig.4, the recent increase in defense budget concerns mainly its research and development facet, which accounts for a willingness to compete in the cutting-edge technology’s race after the abolishment of arms export.

“In this new defense environment, Japan had to consider whether it was realistic to continue its relatively closed domestic defense market or to rely on domestic defense production while receiving a majority of production licenses from the United States.”

(Idem.)

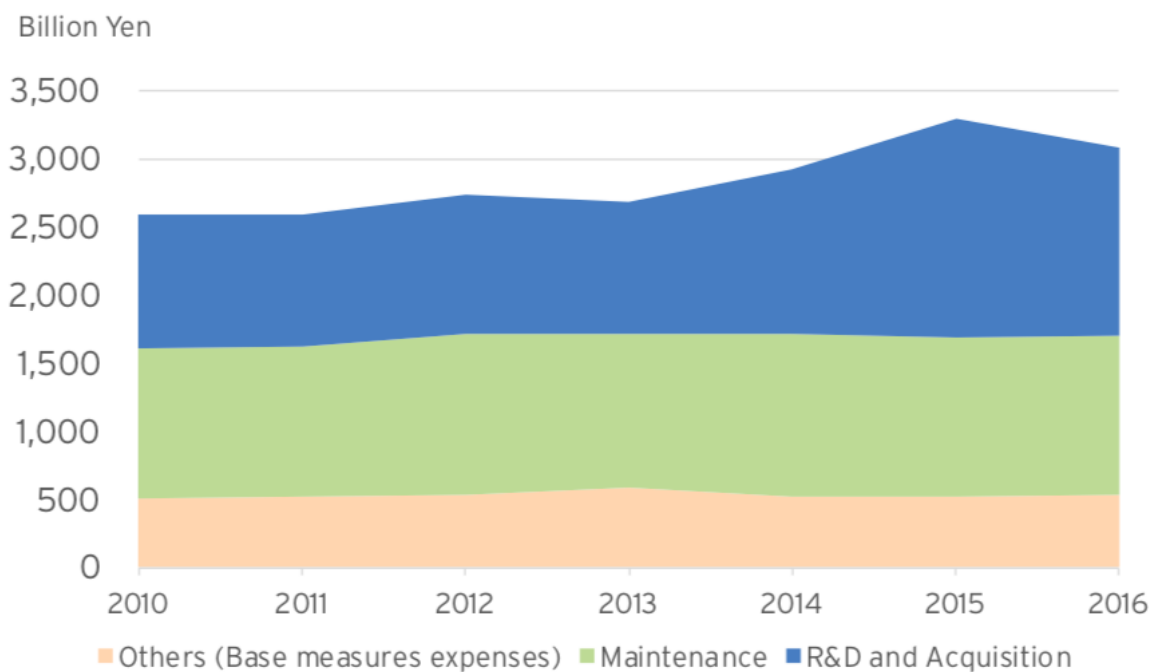


Figure 4, Changes in Japan’s Contract-Based material Expenses (Sugai, 2016)

USA

Conversely, the United States still dominates the global commerce in conventional weapons (see fig.2). Since the 1990s, the arms industry transformed its structure to narrow down the total number of major defense companies. The concentration of producing efforts has permitted the national defense industry to stay competitive (Sato, 2015, p.5). Nonetheless, the US has been reluctant to share the most cutting-edge technologies available on their domestic arms production. In a more competitive global arms market, retaining expertise could prove essential to keep ahead of the “near-peer” (Ellman and al., 2017, p.1) competitors.

### *Military Resources*

#### *Japan*

“Since the beginning of the 1990s, Japan has been undergoing major changes in its security approach, gradually moving away from its constitutional constraints towards a more assertive and proactive stance.” (Dell’Era, 2016, p.5)

Following the Article 9 of the current constitution of Japan, the SDF cannot engage in armed conflicts as a direct stakeholder. But from its first appearance in international conflict during the early 1990s’ Gulf War to the more recent peacekeeping missions of the JSDF, its role has evolved to step further from a real defense-oriented army. Indeed, the assistance and post-conflict/disaster in Iraq 2004-2007, Indonesia 2004, Haiti 2010, and so on, have forged a strong field experience for the soldiers of the JSDF. Moreover, the JSDF posture as domestic-oriented eroded even further when in 2009 the first post-second world war had been built in Somalia to counter piracy (Chanlett-Avery and

Rinehart, 2016, p.16). Overall, Shinzo Abe and his cabinet have “adjusted Japan’s interpretation of its constitution to allow for the exercise of the right of collective self-defense” (Idem., p.3).

### *USA*

“The U.S.-Japan alliance was originally constructed as a fundamentally asymmetric arrangement—Japan hosts U.S. military bases in exchange for a one-sided security guarantee” (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.1).

Since 1952 and the Mutual Security Assistance Pact, the US has the right to own military bases in Japan – see fig.5. In details, about 89 military facilities shelter more than 50 000 US soldiers. Japanese authorities have the right of speaking on issues arising with the US troupes. Now more voices raise to recalibrate the strength among the allies toward a more balanced equilibrium (Japan-US Joint Declaration on Security, 1996, various Armitage and Nye reports, 2000, 2007, 2012, 2018).

The United States, as a global power, is concerned with security environments in the Asia-Pacific, but also in other parts of the world. Thus, the military focus is more dispersed than the one in Japan. Nonetheless, the ongoing Chinese empowerment brings the attention of the US more closely to the region.





Figure 5, Map of U.S. Military Facilities in Japan (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.16)

## *Soft power resources*

### *Japan*

For the major part of the after-world war epoch, Japan followed the Yoshida doctrine. In other words, Japan was prioritizing economic recovery and later on growth, “whilst pursuing a low-profile foreign policy and restrained defence policies under the wing of a US security guarantee” (Dobson, 2017, p.205). However, since 2012 and the Shinzo Abe’s second Prime Minister mandate, the ideology followed by the Prime Minister and his cabinet seems to deviate toward a focus on security and revigorated the national identity of Japan. “The strategy to achieve these objectives has come to be known as the “Abe Doctrine”, which represent a radical but risky shift in foreign policy” (Idem., p.199). The first National Security Strategy (NSS) issued in 2013, the end on arms export ban are, among other, two traces to detect the shift toward “a new japan (that) is now waving banner for proactive contribution to peace” (Abe, cited in Dobson, 2017, p.211). Also, the United States is defined as an ally that stabilizes the region’s security.

“Japan has maintained its security, and contributed to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, by enhancing its alliance with the United States (U.S.) with which it shares universal values and strategic interests, as well as by deepening cooperative relationships with other countries.” (Cabinet Office Japan, 2013, p.3)

The overall public opinion on the US stays high throughout the years. The operation Tomodachi, which saw US troupes backing JSDF in the post-tsunami aftermath in 2011, made the US more appreciated than there were before – see fig.6 and fig.7.

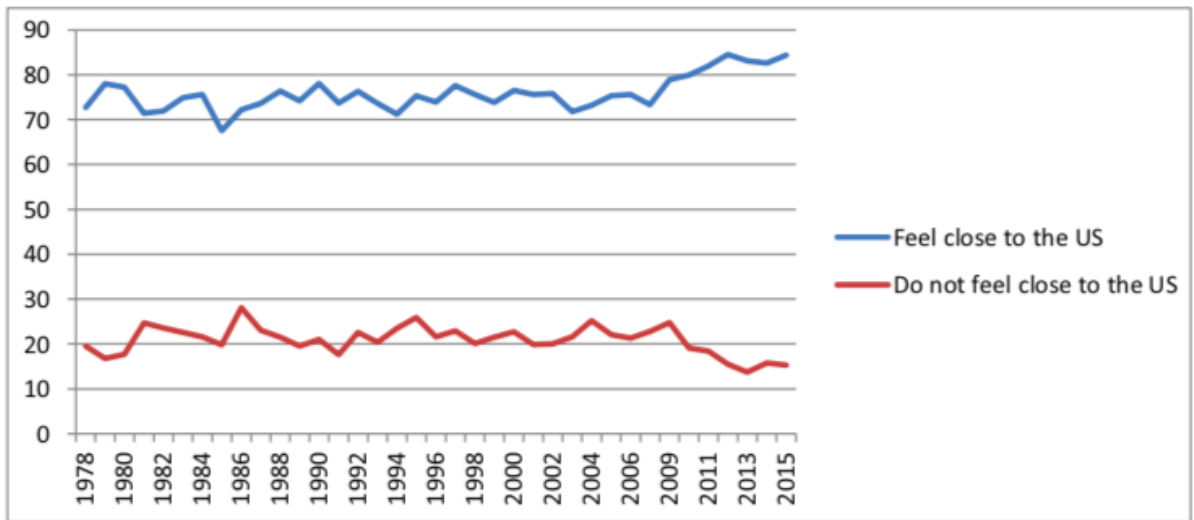


Figure 6, Japanese "Feeling Close" to the United States (Katagiri, 2018, p.332)

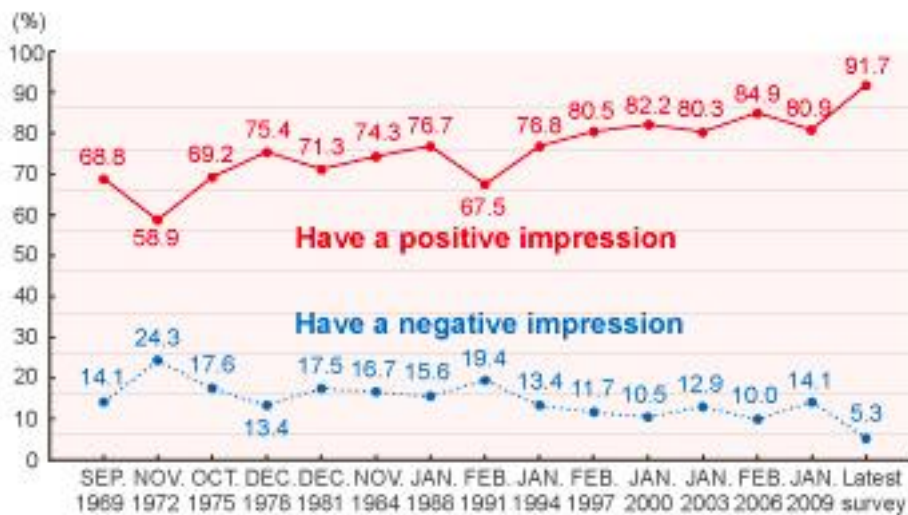


Figure 7, Impression Toward the SDF (MOD, 2012)

## USA

“More Important than Ever. Renewing the U.S.-Japan Alliance for the 21st Century” (Armitage and Nye, 2018). The title of the influential Armitage-Nye report displays the importance a fringe of the American elite is showing to Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. Under President Bush and Obama already, the American presidential administration

worked, US-Japan alliance was seen as “the fulcrum of American presence in the region” (Chanlett-Avery, 2009, p.1). The alliance had met some problems since then – the LDP originally advocating for a “more Asia-centric foreign policy” (Chanlett-Avery, 2016, p.28), the coming to power of president Trump, and the ensuing “neo-isolationist ambivalence towards the US-Japan alliance” (Bacon and Burton, 2018, p.44).

Also, President Donald Trump “presses its alliance partner to increase its burden-sharing and defence expenditure” (Hughes, 2018, p.436). To rebalance what has been labeled as the “trade imbalance” – Japan exporting more than importing from the US – the growing defense spending of Japan “is shaping up a bright spot in bilateral trade for the U.S. president” (Nobuhiro and Urabe, 2018).

### 5.3. Causal Mechanism

How do the causal factors intervene to create a causal mechanism? The subsequent section will provide a theoretical answer to the questioning. Further, the process tracing itself will take place to assess the validity of the assumed causal mechanism.

The internal and external causal factors overlap and impact each other in different ways. However, the “causal complexity” (Benett and Elman, 2006, p.251) at stake can be ordered logically. First, the interdependence between Japan and the US and the gaiatsu constitutes the former environment. Second, the events unfolding lead to a changing external and internal environment. The ensuing balance of power between the allies is modified in turn. In other words, the resources of Japan and the US are shifting. But the

resources need to pass from a potential to a realized state (Milner, 2009) to modify powers effectively.

But how can resources be realized? Through interaction among actors. For instance, Japan has gross public debt at “roughly 250% of GDP” (Chanlett-Avery and Rinehart, 2016, p.5). But the defense budget is albeit growing. To pass from the budget increasing potential to increase it, interaction between different actors have to take place. Shinzo Abe is pushing for a more capable Japan, defining the security situation surrounding Japan as “the most severe in post-war history” (Abe, 2017) in a speech to the diet advocates for an increase in Japanese security, and more in particular in security budget.

Moreover, the diverging power balance raises the question of the costs and value of the interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 2001). Are the United States still a reliable partner? Will Japan pay help us to recalibrate the export-import imbalance? The calculation done is not one of a rational choice done knowingly, but rather a result of the perceived costs and values, regarding the “choices available” (Caporaso, 1980, p.31).

Finally, the current outcome of the changing situation is a US-Japan relationship modified, but still interdependent. The next section unfolds the process tracing strictly speaking. The researcher will assess the theoretical causal mechanism by following a chronological narration of the recent changes in the US-Japan alliance.

#### 5.4. Process Tracing

## Intro

In the next part, the researcher will observe and describe the unfolding of the events, while following the process tracing method. How the security posture of Japan has changed during the last decades in general and more in particular since 2012 and Shinzo Abe's coming to power, will be explained. It will be done following a chronological narration, or a "concrete historical analysis" (Wendt, 1987, p.364). To put it differently, how the causal mechanism takes place. The eventually unobservable nature of causal mechanisms led the researcher to look for traces of its existence (Blatter and Blumer, 2008a). The traces are of four kinds, the environmental modification (internal and external of the US-Japan alliance), the non-normative performance of social actors, the tentative definitions of the US-alliance in general or one of its components (the role of JSDF for instance), and its costs and values. Every trace found by the researcher will be explained in the forthcoming section.

## The Post-Cold War Situation

### *The Former Turmoil*

#### *Changing Environment 1*

After the end of the Cold War, the power balance in East Asia and on the international scale switched. The USSR had collapsed, and thus the global communist movement has lost his head. Therefore, the preoccupations of the United States, the ex-concurrent superpower, and its allies was reshaped. For Japan, the focus switched from the North and the Soviet threat to the South and the North Korean and Chinese threat. However, "Japan's static defense posture was slow to evolve during the 1990s" (Chanlett-Avery &

Rinehart, 2016, p.25). For the United States, the need to maintain a robust military presence in the country decreased after the end of the capitalist-communist clash. A modification of the external environment – the end of the cold war - gave the first impulse to the upcoming changing balance of power inside the US-Japan alliance.

But soon, new threats arose. The Gulf War as well as the North Korean nuclear and missiles advancements “prompted Japan to reconsolidate the alliance and change its passive, limited defense posture” (Kaseda, 2012, p.29). The United States demanded Japan to back them up on the field. But, as Article 9 of Japan’s constitution still forbid overseas deployments, the JSDF couldn’t go to the battlefields. As a result, international criticism arose about Japanese unwillingness to dispatch the JSDF to support allies’ troupes. But even if Japan didn’t provide direct assistance, it helped with a 13 billion dollars contribution to the American military cost and humanitarian participation. If minesweepers were sent to clear the ground, it was “made possible only because it occurred in peacetime after the cessation of hostilities” (Hughes, 2017, p.105).

Furthermore, Japan passed a bill in 1991 to approve its future participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations. Such involvement had triggered “a series of new legislative actions (...) authorizing the government to engage the JSDF in various noncombat missions abroad, such as peacekeeping missions, logistical support activities for the U.S. forces” (Kawashima, 2003). The new threats triggered

Nonetheless, the GSDF (Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, which is the biggest branch of the JSDF), and the military equipment, which both have decreased significantly after

the end of the Cold War (Hughes, 2008). But accompanying the reduction in quantity at the same time, the quality of JSDF's capabilities were improved.

### *General Empirical Direction of the Causal Mechanism 1*

The end of the cold war coupled with new threats (Gulf War, North Korea's nuclear program) triggered modification of the US-Japan alliance's balance. International pressure on the role that the JSDF should take during international conflicts eventually led to a broader role for the JSDF. Following this trend, JSDF has been incorporated into several UN peacekeeping missions. It was considered as the shift from "strict focus on territorial defense to regional and global operations" (Liff, 2015, p.81). Since then, Japanese soldiers have been sent overseas. To help the post-conflict rebuilding in Iraq in 2004, to the Gulf of Aden in 2009 as a part of an anti-piracy patrol, for instance. JSDF's operations have been labeled as "humanitarian". The general behavior of the JSDF is described as an "assisting mode", rather than a "threatening behavior" (Heng, 2015).

### *Changing Environment 2*

A few months before the American presidential elections of 2000, the first Armitage-Nye report was released. In it, Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye and their peers advocated for a "more equal partnership with Japan and enhanced defense cooperation" (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.29). The report followed a Joint Declaration on Security of 1996, where the details on security alliance weren't clearly stated. "In this context, the Armitage report was intended to impress upon the next US president" (Kondo, 2007, p.2).

After the attack on World Trade Center, Japan aligned itself more on its alliance with the U.S. and moved the definition of its international role to proactive contribution to peace



while reinterpreting the Article 9 of the Constitution. Japanese government sent 600 JSDF personnel to Iraq in February 2004, to support aftermath reconstruction. It represented the first time since the Second World War that Japanese military staff were sent to a country where conflict was still ongoing. Additionally, the Japanese government passed laws that permitted Japan to back Americans during the war in Afghanistan with refueling tankers. All of this “reinforced the notion of the U.S.-Japan alliance as one of the central partnerships of U.S. foreign policy, particularly in Asia” (Idem.).

Another significant step toward a change in Japanese security posture was taken when, in December 2003, Tokyo decided to implement a BMD system (Ballistic Missile Defense). The government mentioned about it in its “National Defense Program Guidelines” of 2004 that exporting arms that have to do with the BDM and therefore, to “the threat of nuclear weapons” (Kaseda, 2012, p.35), is legitimate. By doing so, Japan moved forward to the later abolishment of the ban on arms export. Indeed, developing BMD system together with American experts constituted another occurrence of exceptions to the arms transfer ban, in favor of the United States. The trend will continue, as “by 2011, Tokyo had made 21 U.S. exceptions” (Hornung & Mochizuki, 2016, p.106). However, the ban acts for more than a simple lure and remains active. For example, in the mid-2000s, the Japanese government showed a keen interest in acquiring the U.S. F-22 Raptor, a jet fighter that would have replaced the actual F-15 that Japan possesses. But the acquisition couldn’t take place due to the “congressional export ban” (Ait, 2018).

### *General Empirical Direction of the Causal Mechanism 2*

The war on terror led by America after the 9/11 events included North Korea in the rogue states, part of the “axis of evil”. Japan position in the Asia-Pacific and further legal

developments bolstered the alliance. Contentions on the North Korean case arose afterward, but the Obama administration worked closely with Japan to consolidate the alliance (Chanlett-Avery and Rinehart, 2016). Furthermore, with the low productivity growth rate hampering Japan's economy during the 1990s (Hayashi & Prescott, 2003), Japan had to reduce ODA's budget. Which led, in turn, Japan with fewer means of diplomacy and economy to cope with world's issues. Thus "since the mid-1990s, Japanese policy-makers have sought to rebalance comprehensive security by strengthening Japan's military components" (Hughes, 2007, p.329).

#### The First Ministerial Mandate

When Shinzo Abe accessed the Prime Minister function for the first time in 2006, he planned to revise two fundamental charters of Japan, the Ampo (the security treaty concluded with the United States) and the Japanese Constitution itself (McCormack, 2012). One of the aims of such a claim was to "normalize" the Japanese military and thereafter be able to send trained troupes to battlefields.

#### *An Attempt at Influencing the Definition of the Situation*

When North Korea launched a missile toward Japan in 2006. This event highlighted a major component of the US-Japan alliance, namely, the asymmetrical nature of the military power. Indeed, Japan is constraint by the current treaty to defend only himself. Therefore, the right of collective-defense, more in particular when it comes to protecting American military, is prohibited. Shinzo Abe took that opportunity, tried to utilize the North Korea mounting threat to push for implementing the right to participate in collective self-defense. Indeed, during a speech to the Diet in September 2006, Abe

stated: “there are new threats to the peace and security of the international community, such as North Korea’s missile launch” (Abe, 2006).

Further, Prime Minister Abe advocates that “the times demanded that Japan shift to proactive diplomacy based on new thinking” (Idem.). Doing so, Shinzo Abe was trying to create what Lindgren calls an “intersubjective understanding of the urgent need for security measures” (2018, p.1). To state it differently, the transformation of the of the external environment of the US-Japan alliance gave room for attempts at defining the situation. In his addresses to the Diet and other public speeches, Shinzo Abe tried to influence the future definition of the situation. As in Goffman, influencing the definition of the situation is the major way of actors to impact their environment.

#### *A Failed Attempt at Influencing the Definition of the Situation*

However, the attempt at modifying the definition of the situation – making Japanese citizens and political opinion accept the collective self-defense that Shinzo Abe was supporting – by Shinzo Abe was followed by other stances that undermined the eventual success. Indeed, Prime Minister Abe’s strong stance on issues such as the Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea during the 1970s and 1980s (when Bush’s administration started to actively negotiate with North Korea on nuclear weapon’s problem, without taking into account the Japanese abductees issue into account), his willingness to create an alliance in the Asia Pacific without or against China, did eventually harm the Japanese-United States relation (McCormack, 2012). Finally, he resigned from his position in 2007.

A second Armitage-Nye report was released in February 2007. The authors still aiming at involving the United States in Asia, which is seen as the “twenty-first century’s new

world order” (Kondo, 2007, p.2). Because the US interest in Asia had been meager before the publication of the report. Indeed, the report states that “it is important to note here that the new Armitage report recognizes that the US’s interest in Asia has been minimal in recent years” (Armitage and Nye, 2007, p.2). The intention of the report’s writers can be defined similarly as a tentative influence on the definition of the evolving situation. That situation is the “importance of Japan-US relations” (Idem., p.2), and the risk for the US to “lose its influence over Asia” (Idem., p.1), which is a call for action.

The two succeeding Prime Ministers, namely Yasuo Fukuda and Taro Aso, stayed in office for a year each, as both been seen as incapable of following a “more active military role for Japan” (Chanlett-Avery and Konishi, 2009, p.4). A major reason was the growing importance of the Democratic Party of Japan.

#### The DPJ in Power

“From 2007 to 2012, unstable leadership and political paralysis in Tokyo slowed some bilateral security initiatives, but ultimately the turmoil that plagued Japanese politics may have reinforced Japan’s commitment to the alliance. In the end, both the left-leaning DPJ and the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) reaffirmed the centrality of the partnership with the United States.” (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.1)

#### Japanese environment’s evolution

Is it often said that DPJ, which brought a prime minister’ representative three times into office in a row from 2009 to 2012, does not take strong stances on defense issues, “due to initial wrangling with the US over bases uses” (Hughes, 2018, p.432). That initial disagreement could be divided into two main points. First, the willingness to commit

Japan more to an “East Asian Community” (Easley, 2017, p.74), in an attempt to decrease the country’s dependence on the United States.

Second, the contention on the Futenma military base. Indeed, since 1996 and an agreement between the two countries, the current base was supposed to be relocated. But disagreement appeared when Tokyo postponed fulfilling the agreement. At the beginning in fact, they were trying to diminish the alliance with the United States, by decreasing the number of American Marines positioned in Okinawa. But “the implementation was so difficult that Hatoyama (the incumbent Prime Minister) eventually gave up” (Kaseda, 2012, p.39).

Eventually, the parties came to an agreement and effectively relocated the military base. Prime Minister Hatoyama had to resign after the controversy. Finally, the alliance was still strong, and going against American interests in a key issue was proved risky. Contrariwise, the DPJ participated to the acceleration of the reforms aiming at reshaping the defense of Japan.

Overall, it was under the lead of the DPJ that the JSDF switched its former passive focus toward the North and the Soviet menace, to cope more actively with south-west and possibly China (Idem). The Senkaku incident of 2010, where Japanese Coast Guard confronted Chinese fishermen near the islands, “prompted the Japanese government to take measures to defend its national interests in maritime contingencies” (Easley, 2017, p.74). The same year 2010, Japan adopted new National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), “which reconceived Japan’s basic defense orientation toward active deterrence and a highly mobile “dynamic defense force” capable of responding rapidly to a threat

anywhere in Japan, especially its remote southwestern islands near China” (Liff, 2015, p.82). Here again, a transformation in the external environment of the alliance prompted Japan to implement new measures to cope with the rising danger.

Moreover, the Tsunami and the Fukushima nuclear meltdown brought JSDF and the American military closer to face the disaster. Both armies operate in normal time under different command, but this time marked the first one where U.S. military “operated under Japanese command in actual operations” (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.17).

The DPJ also took the decision to get hold of the Final Assembly and Checkout (FACO), which is a facility to build various parts of military’s aircraft, and also to eventually import a jet fighter with similar properties as the raptor F-22, the F-35A (Hughes, 2018, p.432). Mitsubishi and Lockheed Martin partnered to put it into action.

Just before the Japanese election of 2012, a third Armitage-Nye report was released by the same Center for Strategic and International Studies. It depicted the alliance between Japan and the United States still as crucial. But it must become “stronger and more equal” (Armitage and Nye, 2012, p.1). The joint development of sophisticated weapons is seen by the two authors as a solution to strengthen the U.S. security. “The time is past when Americans should be concerned about Japanese defense exports posing a threat to U.S. security or our industrial base.” (Idem. p.13). The nature of arms trade evolving, it is of a primary necessity to share the knowledge and technology to produce military goods, especially with allies that are needed (Idem., p.2). Here again, the report’s authors try to influence the definition of the situation by bringing together Japan and the US. “The

United States needs a strong Japan no less than Japan needs a strong United States”  
(Idem.)

*The Alliance in a Changing Security Environment*

Through the previous process, the interdependence has evolved toward a Japan more assertive and active, but still relying on the United States. First, the international security environment has changed. With the end of the bipolar world, the threats are more scattered. Indeed, Chinese moves on the Senkaku Islands, North Korean nuclear missile plans are rising risks, but not exclusives. Japan keeps an eye on the northern territories, where no final agreements have been found by Russia and Japan.

But overall, a movement from North to South has been spotted. “Japan has shifted its security posture toward the defense of its southern perimeter and (...) no longer considers military threats in the north to be as significant as the south” (Katagiri, 2018, p.340). The fourth NDPG issued in 2010 reflects the trend with identifying China and North Korea as the two main threat to the national security. Following the Cold War, the primary driver of Japanese foreign policy’s shift was depicted as its direct environment.

And Japan is moving toward a stronger JSDF and alliance with the U.S. Army. Nevertheless, the change is described as slow or static. No strong leadership and broad consensus among the political elites undermine the ability to implement change faster. On the other hand, public opinion, that contributed to counterbalance external pressure in the past, evolves toward accepting a role in international security affairs (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.25). The former shape of *gaiatsu* seems to change with the

reluctance's decrease of the Japanese public opinion toward a more pro-active defense posture. The previous "small groups of privileged domestic actors" (Schoppa, ) who utilized the pressure from the outside to support unpopular policies among Japanese broader public opinion, apparently does not need to use *gaiatsu* as much as before.

The arms export ban is still in place. If it was broken several times for the United States, and Japan moved toward revoking it. But it is still binding in most of the cases. Previously, Japan was producing weapons conjointly merely with the United States. But in December 2011, Prime Minister Noda established "comprehensive exemption categories" which led Japan to be able to transfer defense equipment abroad for situations "related to peace contribution and international cooperation as well as international joint development and production of defense equipment" (Hornung & Mochizuki, 2016, p.106).

Japan was then able to establish projects not only with the United States but also with other countries. If the defense sales remained under a particular examination, it was the first step toward a more opened trade market. Over time, weapons become more and more sophisticated. It is a hard task to produce them domestically. A country would need a tremendous amount of resources (financial, expertise, etc.) to go through the whole process alone. Thus, cooperation between countries become more vital to stakeholders who want to stay updated and have a capable army. Overall, the United States remains the strongest ally and thus has more power in the interdependence.



*2012*

After a “sumo-sized win” (The Economist, Dec 16th 2012) with two-thirds of the seats won in the Lower House, at the Japanese general elections, the of the alliance LDP-Komeito, Abe came back to the Prime Minister function. In his inaugural speech, he stressed the importance of the alliance with the United States.

“More than anything else, it is imperative that we rebuild the relationship of trust we enjoy under the Japan-U.S. alliance. The other day, I had a telephone conversation with President Obama. At that time, we agreed that we would construct our relationship over the long term. I recognize that the first step in turning Japan's foreign and security policy around is reinforcing our Kizuna - our bonds of friendship - once more under the Japan-U.S. alliance, which is the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy.” (Abe, 2012)

But the same inaugural address doesn't contain clear statements concerning his desire to modify the peace clause of the Japanese constitution. Besides, he appointed to his new cabinet young and relatively unknown people, “to emphasize that the party has changed since it was driven from power three years ago” (New York Times, Dec 27th 2012).

*2013*

This type of Japanese capability might be used in a contingency to strike against the Chinese mainland and missile launch sites, and so mark a radical departure in Japan's defence-oriented posture. The ASDF is furthermore now set on procuring Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) to help patrol Japan's air space, long coastline, and distant islands.

Japan's reaction to China's missile forces has again been mostly symmetric, evident in attempts to neutralize these capabilities through the deployment of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD). The 2010 and 2013 NDPGs mandate the ASDF to maintain six anti-aircraft groups equipped with PAC-3 batteries, and the MSDF eight Aegis destroyers equipped with BMD SM-3 interceptors. Hughes 2016, p.144

At the end of the year, the Security Council of Japan and the government's cabinet issued a new National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG). To sum it up, it is stated there the possible future threats to the country's security. The general trend depicted is a world more diverse, unforeseeable and interconnected. "As interdependence among States expands and deepens, there is a growing risk that unrest or a security problem in a single country or region could immediately spread over the entire international community" (National Defense Program Guidelines, 2013). The problems listed were the nuclear threat from North Korea, the changing balance of power after the rise of China, but also India and the modernization of Russian military forces.

One of the solutions offered is strengthening the alliance with the United States. America has the will to put "greater emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region and is maintaining and strengthening its involvement and presence in the region despite fiscal and various other constraints while enhancing its relationships with its allies and other countries" (National Defense Program Guidelines, 2013). And Japan has the willingness to align with the U.S. in a military alliance.

All along the guidelines, an emphasis put on the fact that Japan shouldn't exclusively rely on the United States but also built its defense force. "Japan will take appropriate measures

through its own efforts” (Idem, p.3), or “it is becoming more important than ever for Japan’s security to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and make it more balanced and effective” (Idem, p.4) for instance. The decision to improve JSDF capacities and thus import more arms and military technology can be seen in the tone of the chapter on the Japan-U.S. alliance. First, the Japan-U.S. alliance is depicted as the “cornerstone for Japan’s security” (Idem, p.4). The missions of both countries’ militaries cover a broad range of activities, from peacekeeping, humanitarian support to “maritime affairs, outer space, and cyberspace” (Idem, p.4). This could be seen as a step forward in repealing the Constitution’s article 9.

Japan will have to “develop a highly effective integrated defense force” (Idem, p.3), because “Japan's defense forces are the ultimate guarantee of national security” (Idem, p.3). Japanese decision-makers will stress the importance of securing defense capabilities, that should be “adequate both in quantity and quality” (Idem, p.4).

More in details, “Japan will build a Dynamic Joint Defense Force, emphasizing developing advanced technology and information, command and communications capabilities” (Idem, p.4). The guidelines follow a similar path as the ones in the previous Armitage-Nye report. That development followed a meeting between the Japanese and the American military and diplomatic leaders in October of the same year. There both countries’ representatives agreed to revise the former guidelines concerning defense cooperation (DSCA, 3rd Oct 2013). In addition to the guidelines, the National security Council (NSC) was formed in November 2013 and release the first National Security Strategy (NSS) a month later.

“The National Security Strategy stated that Japan would continue to adhere to the country’s longstanding policy to proactively secure peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community as a “Proactive Contributor to Peace.” (Sugai, 2016, p.10).

The NSC was “introduced to achieve better integration and coordination among key security agencies” (Dell’Era, 2016, p.33). Thus, the “interministerial battles” (Sato, 2015), opposing diverse ministries, would be more easily avoided.

The NSS follows a “Proactive Contribution to Peace” (Cabinet Office Japan, 2013, Dec 17th). Thereafter, Japan is fostered to use various resources, cooperate with international agencies. Nonetheless, those ideas aren’t entirely new but were instead the follow-up of the previous NDPG of 2010 (Heng, 2015). To conclude, the Japanese government was ready to allow JSDF more power and strengthen the alliance with the United States.

#### *2014*

In April, the Japanese government releases the “three principles on transfer of defense equipment and technology” which replaced the 1967 “three principles”. In other words, it means that the country abandoned the ban on arms exports, except in some extreme cases, such as “Cases where the transfer violates obligations under treaties and other international agreements that Japan has concluded”, “cases where the transfer violates obligations under UN Security Council” and “Cases where the defense equipment and technology are destined for a country party to a conflict” (MOFA, 6th Apr 2016).

It does, on the one hand, allow Japan to sell their existing weapons and technology abroad, but the country will also buy more arms. Indeed, “it is hard for most countries to develop high-end weapons systems like fighter jets by themselves, except for a few countries such

as the United States and Russia. Therefore, Japan has relaxed its self-imposed policy banning arms exports in order to join international cooperative development projects” (Sugai, 2016, p.21). At the same time, Foreign Military Sale (FMS) – the arms selling program of the United States, or “a mechanism by which the US government transfers defense articles and services to partner nations” (DSCA, 30th Aug 2016) – were issuing to Japan a permit to buy for 33 millions of USD in missiles.

However, it is worth noting that the FMS does not gather the amount of arms sale done, but rather a plan to sell arms. Eventually, the expenditures for FMS started skyrocketing that year (see fig.8) and continued on the same trends in the years beyond.

In December, Shinzo Abe got re-elected as the head of the government for the next four years. The speech he delivered after the election highlighted two of his priorities, economic growth, and constitutional revision. However, he admitted that it was a hard task and that the consent of the public would be a significant concern (Xinhua, 25th Dec 2014).

2015

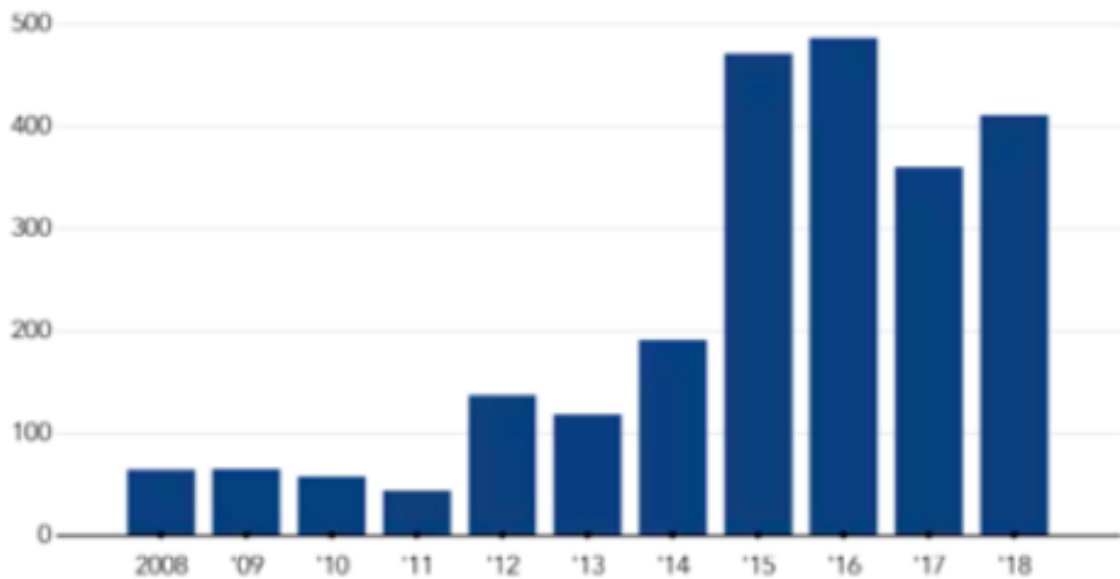


Figure 8, Japan's Procurement Through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales Program Has Been Growing (Xinhua, 2014)

After having been through discussions about it, the revision of the Mutual Defense Guidelines came to an end in April 2015, the first update since 1997. The new guidelines make U.S. and Japanese forces overlap more in different ways and made “it difficult to avoid involvement in each other’s military engagements” (Chanlett-Avery & Rinehart, 2016, p.3). The guidelines took into account challenges related to space and cybersecurity missions. The guidelines also provided a reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution, “involving Japanese participation in collective self-defense beyond areas surrounding Japan” (Easley, 2017, p.76). The same year, the Japanese and American governments agreed upon sale of missiles and aircraft for a total of above 6 billion dollars (DSCA, 2015). In the same year, the amount of maritime, air and ground defenses reach the total of above 240’000 soldiers (see fig.9), with the more and more sophisticated equipment.

According to the “Japan Press”, from Shinzo Abe’s inauguration to 2015, the FMS “increased by 3.5 times from 133.2 billion yen to 465.7 billion yen” (Japan Press, 29th April 2016).

Plus, the Ministry of Defense bought thirty tanks AAV-7s, for an approximate cost of 700 million yen each (Idem). Starting from 2014, but reaching a peak in 2015, the Research & Development (R&D) and acquisition part of the Japanese defense’s “Material Expenses” increased, while the other components remain stable. 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the end of Second World War. At that occasion, Prime Minister Abe delivered a speech where he reiterated his “deep remorse” (Abe, 14th Aug 2015), and assure that “we have consistently devoted ourselves to the peace and prosperity of the region since the end of the war” (Idem). But, “we must not let our children, grandchildren, and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologize” (Idem). That remark triggered anger in South Korea and China.

<b>Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF)</b> 2015 defense budget: 5.05 trillion yen (\$42 billion)	<b>U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ)</b>
<b>Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF)</b> 45,500 sailors 47 surface combatants (6 Aegis BMD-equipped) including 2 helicopter carriers 18 submarines, 166 maritime patrol aircraft	<b>U.S. Navy</b> 19,600 sailors ashore and afloat 1 aircraft carrier, 2 cruisers and 8 destroyers (8 Aegis-equipped), 70 aircraft, 3 amphibious transport ships, 1 command ship, 2 mine countermeasures ships
<b>Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF)</b> 47,100 airmen 552 combat capable aircraft: 201 F-15J fighters, 17 AEW&C aircraft, 66 transport aircraft; 17 PAC-3 BMD units	<b>U.S. Air Force</b> 12,400 airmen 1 fighter wing at Misawa AB with 18 F-16C/D 1 fighter wing at Kadena AB 24 F-15C/D, 2 AEW&C aircraft 1 airlift wing, total of 14 transport aircraft; 1 special ops group; 8 SAR helicopters
<b>Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF)</b> 151,050 soldiers 1 tank division, 3 armored infantry divisions, 5 light infantry divisions, 1 airborne brigade, 1 helicopter brigade, 3 artillery brigades, 2 air defense brigades, 1 special ops unit	<b>U.S. Army</b> 2,300 soldiers 1 special forces group, 1 aviation battalion, 1 air defense regiment Forward operational headquarters
<b>SDF Amphibious Assets</b> GSDF is building up an Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade of 3,000 personnel 3 landing ships (LST), 20 landing craft	<b>U.S. Marine Corps</b> 15,700 marines 1 Marine division, 12 F/A-18D aircraft, 24 MV-22 transport aircraft, 12 refueling aircraft
<b>Reserve</b> 54,200 soldiers, 1,100 sailors, 800 airmen	<b>U.S. Strategic Command</b> 2 AN/TPY-2 X-band radars

Figure9, Military Forces in Japan (Sugai, 2016)

2016

Negotiations among countries bordering the Pacific Ocean has been ongoing for years. They eventually came to a tangible result. The Trans-Pacific Partnership was signed by 14 countries, including Japan and the United States, after protracted negotiations. The partnership was seen among others as a way to counteract China and its increasing economic power. But the American administration that signed the treaty was about to leave the White House, as the presidential elections would take place at the end of the year. Thus, the future of TPP was not certain. Therefore, when Donald Trump was elected in November 2016, Prime Minister Abe tried to establish mutual trust among the two



leaders. Indeed, he was the first leader of a country to meet the newly elected president face-to-face (Tamkin & De Luce, 13th April 2018). If at the beginning it seemed to be a winning bet – “a lot of other world leaders were very impressed” (Idem) – the long-term relation challenged that perspective.

Also, the “2016 budget request marking the largest ever budget in the post-war period (Hughes, 2018, p.430). Plus, two new arms sales have been approved, for a total of about 2.7 billion dollars (DSCA, 2016). On the other hand, the Japanese arms export have collapsed by 6.4%. Important producers such as Mitsubishi or Kawasaki “declined by 16.3 and 29.2 percent respectively” (SIPRI, 11th December 2017).

*2017*

The same day Donald Trump became president of the United States, Japan ratified the TPP. It was, in fact, the first stakeholder to do so. Nonetheless, one of the first official statement of Donald Trump was to withdraw America from the treaty, and this the very same day he entered into office. But even so, Shinzo Abe kept trying to develop a close bond with Donald Trump. In February of the same year, both leaders met in Mar-a-Lago, Florida. It was a success. Daniel Bob, an expert of East Asian Studies, even said that Mister Abe made a statement, and “apparently won over Trump at a personal level” (Tamkin & De Luce, 13th April 2018).

Later on this year, the leaders took turn, and Donald Trump came to visit Japan while he was on his first Asian tour. If Shinzo Abe seems to appreciate multilateral agreements such as the TPP still, Donald Trump pursues trade agreements following another channel, bilateral agreements.

When the two leaders met in November, the American President complained that Japan was taking advantage of America “for decades” and thus he was aiming at reshaping “the nation’ trade relationship” to cut down the deficit to Japan, “which totaled nearly 70 billion dollars” (Lemire & Colvin, 2017). Besides, as North Korea had just launched a missile that overflew Hokkaido, President Trump “implicitly acknowledged his disappointment that Mr. Abe did not shoot down the missiles” (Landler & Davis, 2017). The solution Donald Trump brought was for Japan to purchase American arms and thereafter “shoot out of the sky” (Trump cited in Landler & Davis, 2017) the North Korean missiles. The purchase would benefit not only Japan on the security matter, but it would also help the United States to rebalance a trade that Donald Trump had criticized continuously. The link between trade and security was made clear here.

Overall, the acquisition of military equipment seems more likely in 2017 than five years ago as Shinzo Abe appears to be a mighty and long-lasting leader. The hurdle of “longtime lead” evoked by Sugai (2016) looks like possibly surmountable.

*2018*

As of April 20th of the ongoing year – the end of the fiscal year - the spending on military imports have already reached a total of more than 400 billion of yen, which makes it the yearly third highest spending. The day also marked an important meeting between the two countries’ leaders. They came up with mainly the same results as in 2017, namely an agreement on American FMS to Japan (missiles and aircraft once again), but no step forward in other trades, such as cars or beef.

As elections were approaching in both countries, the leaders weren't prone to make concessions. On the first hand, Donald Trump stated "I don't want to go back into TPP. ... I like bilateral better" (Trump, cited in Kato, 20th April 2018), but on the other hand, Japanese officials said they "will absolutely not enter negotiations over free trade agreement" (Kato, 20th April 2018).

However, the arms trade remains the best way to solve the 70 million dollars' trade deficit that the United States suffers from. But America starts facing a new problem at that time. Indeed, Japan has the habit of paying FMS in advance.

Since the fiscal year 2016, Japan paid 100 billion yen for weapons and technology that America has not provided so far (Grevatt, 26th February 2018). So, at the same time, America tries to balance the trade deficit with new sales, but the country also has to pay back advanced payment for products that haven't been delivered so far. The reason behind that absence of delivery could be very trivial, as it could be due to a shortage of the staff working on it (Kato, 20th April 2018).

#### The Role of Shinzo Abe in the Recent Security Posture's Transformation

Since his failed attempt at modifying Japanese security posture during his first mandate, Shinzo Abe had become more cautious. In his inaugural speech (Abe, 2012), there is no mention to a future modification to the article 9 of the constitution. Nonetheless, the "introduction of collective self-defense in 2014/2015 and other expansions of Japanese security policy" (Lindgren, 2018, p.8) eventually happened. Two reasons can explain the

shift. First, the environment of Japan has changed. Second, Shinzo Abe has modified the general perception of the Prime Minister function.

What has changed between 2007 and 2012 is the relative position of China toward Japan. Indeed, the Senkaku Islands conflict of 2010 was seen as an “intrusion of sovereignty” (Idem.) in a territory that Japan considers its property – “there is no doubt that the Senkaku Islands are clearly an inherent part of the territory of Japan, in light of historical facts and based upon the territory of Japan” (MOFA, 13th April 2016). Therefore, the “need for collective self-defense” (Lindgren, 2018, p.8) invoked echoed among Japanese opinion.

Furthermore, the economic crisis of 2007-2008 hit Japan full on, while China was relatively spared. The appreciation of the yen impacted the global economy and consumption of Japan. The United States suffered as well from the crisis. China became after the crisis the second economy in the world, passing Japan (Idem. p.9), with a substantial increase in GDP. The balance of power was therefore modified, favoring China against the US-Japan alliance.

But an additional factor explains the Japanese security shift, the performance of the Prime Minister’s role by Shinzo Abe. If his tentative to implement collective self-defense with the United States (Madison, 2018, p.12) proved successful, it is also due to his role-playing. Before the ongoing mandate, the function of Prime Minister was considered as weak among experts. For example, in the 2012 Armitage report, the authors give the example of: “the Japanese people have been served by six different prime ministers in six

years” (Armitage and Nye, 2012, p.1) as a de facto negative characteristic for Japan’s influence in the world.

“In a time of strongly divided government and weak economic performance leaders may find it particularly difficult to maintain the support of swing voters and the perch at the top may be particularly precarious.” (Nyblade, 2011, p.195-196)

But over the years, Shinzo Abe proves that the Prime Minister of Japan is not destined to hold a lesser powerful position than his international counterparts. He participated in the (re)construction of the strength of the Prime Minister function. Besides, a stronger function provides a larger margin of action for the actor. Shinzo Abe took advantage of this opportunity to implement “collective self-defense alongside Japanese allies” (Lindgren, 2018, p.8). A proof that Shinzo Abe has succeeded as imposing his definition of the situation – collective self-defense as necessary to protect Japan – is that “a significant share of domestic and foreign security experts accepted both the threat claims and the necessity of introducing collective self-defense alongside Japanese allies” (Idem.). Dobson mentions Abe’s objectives of “radical but risky shift in foreign policy” as the “Abe Doctrine” (Dobson, 2017, p.199).

All things considered, the situation at stake follows a similar path than previous ones found along the process tracing. First, an external environmental incentive leads to a change in the situation and thus the balance of power. Then domestic actors take the opportunity of the external threat to implement national security policies.

## 5.5. Conclusion

How is Japan still tied to its alliance with the U.S., in respect of its foreign security?

To analyze the research question, the researcher provided two hypotheses. First, if the alliance with the United States is still influent, this through economic, politico-ideological and military resources, then Japan and the United States are still dependent. Second, if actors and interactions influence the contemporary security of Japan, then the relation of interdependence between Japan and the United States is evolving. To answer, the researcher provided an analysis in two steps. The first one listing the theoretical causal factors of the recent security posture's evolution of Japan and the assumed causal mechanism ensuing. The second one unfolding the track of events to assess how the causal factors unveil chronologically and to estimate the relevance of the assumed causal mechanism.

The causal events highlighted are of two sorts, internal and external of the alliance between Japan and the United States. On the one hand, the external environment of the alliance experiences a modification of its balance of power. The territorial dispute with Russia is not settled yet. The North Korean nuclear program continues to threaten its neighbors. And the growing power of China raises the question of the Japanese security's pertinence. Additionally, the shifting nature of arms sales – the spread of cutting-edge technologies as well as the increasing number of buyers - pushes countries to adapt their production and trade policies. On the other hand, the alliance between Japan and the United States is internally transformed. Resources start to be reshuffled. The Japanese defense budget is slowly increasing, the national ideology advocated by Shinzo Abe and its cabinet rallies more domestic support. The United States in turn, push for a more proactive Japan, providing more support to American troops.

During the process tracing part, two main types of traces have been found. The first concerning the environment modification, the second related to the importance of a particular actor, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Contrasted examples between his first and second mandates at the head of the state have been provided. An actor can influence the overall structures, but to do so he has to try to modify the definition of the situation. Overall, actors appear to have a margin of action. But to assess it more in-depth, it would be helpful to develop other examples. All along the process tracing, or the historical analysis, we have seen that the causal mechanism is not working unidirectionally – from a difference in the environment of the alliance, modifying the balance of powers, giving a margin of action to actors to define the new situation. The causal mechanism works rather in feedback loops. First, an incentive coming from the environment makes the security posture of Japan evolve. Second, the new security posture can trigger reactions in the environment. As mentioned above, the researcher who follows a process tracing method focuses his attention on traces more than on facts directly observable. And not all traces concur. In accordance with Hall, “the results are almost always ambiguous (2012, p.2).

## 6. Conclusion

“All we can safely conclude is that researchers invariably face a choice between knowing more about less, or less about more.” (Blatter and Blume, 2008a, p.348)

The researcher chose to conduct a process tracing case study. The focus was put on the influence of the United States from the one hand and of actors on the second hand. The causal factor chosen was running from the end of the cold war to these days, with a particular focus on the contemporary period and the second mandate of Shinzo Abe at the head of the Japanese state. Eventually, the scope appeared slightly too broad to conduct an exhaustive in-depth analysis. Therefore, the researcher had to focus his analysis on some parts of the developments and chose to do not talk about some others. To find a balance, it would have been judicious to narrow down the focus of the case study to a shorter time period.

For further study research, focusing on a few actors all along the causal mechanism would give a good opportunity to develop the knowledge of the field. Besides, principal actors of world politics are nation-states, but they are not the only actors. Focusing on elites, the role of public opinion or transnational organization would highlight the topic under a different angle.



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