

Legitimizing the Legislation: Peace and Security for all?

Constructing a narrative of inevitability

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Abstract

Japan continuously attempts to reinterpret war-renouncing Article 9 while at the same time stressing its devotion to pacifism, most recently through the Legislation for Peace and Security. The new Legislation allows Japan to engage in collective self-defense, which was considered unconstitutional for 70 years. This thesis examines Japan's legitimization of such change, answering the question; how does the Japanese State attempt to create consensus for the necessity of the Legislation? Through discourse analysis, Japan's *strategic narrative* of change is analysed. Government whitepapers, statements, press conferences, informational videos, homepages, cabinet decisions, and legislation served as empirical data. The analysis arrives at the following results; the Japanese narrative is strategically ambiguous, thereby targeting divergent audiences. Conventionally considered dichotomous ideas of liberalism/realism cooperate and arrive at one and the same result; the inevitability of the Legislation. Pacifism is indispensable for Japan's narrative, ensuring a continuation on the chosen path as a *peaceloving* nation, doing so as an integral part of the existing order. Thus, despite scholars frequently focusing on the authenticity of pacifism and liberalism in Japan's foreign policy approach, these concepts are in fact crucial for the construction of a functioning narrative of change.

Keywords: Legislation for peace and security, Collective self-defense, Narrative, Proactive pacifism, UNMISS, Recognition, Peacekeeping

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I had just left one of my favourite cafés in Shinjuku, Tokyo after a day of reading up on Article 9 revision and public opposition. All of a sudden, I found myself in a crowd of people, which may not be the most unexpected thing in Tokyo, but when lifting my heavy-eyed glare, I noticed that I stumbled right into an anti-revision demonstration. I would like to thank the Centre for the opportunity to conduct my fieldwork in Japan as well as Waseda University for all the support and hospitality.

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Acronyms and meanings

GoJ	Government of Japan
GSDF	Ground Self-Defense Forces
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Forces
<i>Kaketsuke keigo</i> (駆けつけ警護)	Rushing to the rescue of allied forces on the ground
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party, the ruling party led by Prime Minister Shinzō Abe
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PKO	Peacekeeping operation
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNPKO	United Nations peacekeeping mission
SDF	Self-Defense Forces

1. INTRODUCTION

Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution manifests a pledge to never again wage war, formulated after the devastating destruction that accompanied the defeat in WWII. What came to be known as the *pacifist* Constitution had soon made anything other than self-defense unimaginable for the Japanese people. The US, however—despite being the draftsman of the constitutional design—quickly started to push for Japan to shelve Article 9 and thereby remove any constraints for their participation in US initiatives (Toshiya, 2007). Nevertheless, the Japanese public had come to identify with the pacifist clause and revision became and still is a delicate issue. With Japan’s economic and also military capacities rebuilt, international claims amplified for Japan to contribute accordingly, critiquing what was deemed insufficient engagement (Hayes, 2001; Lam, 2009). Prime Minister Shinzō Abe (as well as his predecessors) continuously pushes the limits of the Constitution, especially noticeable in his approach of “proactive pacifism”. In 2016, such endeavours culminated in the formulation of the “Legislation for Peace and Security” (henceforth the Legislation). This Legislation is historic as it entails a permission to engage in *collective* self-defense rather than merely self-defense, thereby allowing Japan’s military to protect its allies when in danger (GoJ, 2016). It is thus a change that has been considered unimaginable and incompatible with Article 9 for 70 years. Nonetheless, Abe claims that the new Legislation is non-conflictual with the pacifist Constitution and a necessary means to ensure peace and security of Japan and the region.

This is a thought-provoking claim given the historic tiptoeing along the lines of self-defense. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute with an understanding of how Japan narrates change, convincing the audience of the Legislation’s necessity. The hypothesis that guides this research is that Japan combines commonly assumed dichotomous concepts such as “pacifism”/force (weapons-use) or liberalism/realism¹ to gain legitimacy for the historic change. By creating a strategically ambiguous narrative that absorbs a diversified audience, no alternative is provided for the assessment that the new Legislation is the inevitable next stage in Japan’s foreign policy posture. The purpose of this thesis thereby is to increase our understanding of the way in which Japan tells a convincing story to persuade its audience and legitimize change.

The research questions that emerged from that purpose and hypothesis are formulated as follows;

¹ The two main strands within International Relations theory, commonly assumed incompatible

- How does the Japanese State attempt to create consensus for the necessity of the Legislation for Peace and Security?
 - What narrative is used to justify the Legislation?
 - How is Japan portrayed within the narrative?
 - How are the dynamics of the international order used to legitimize change?

What follows is a short discussion of the contribution that this thesis makes as well as the significance of the research. Thereafter the topic is demarcated and subsequently a disposition of the thesis is presented.

1.1 Significance and academic contribution

Japanese “re-militarisation” has become an increasingly sensitive topic, with academics trying to make sense of Abe’s promise to “take Japan back”. The Legislation is a next manifestation of the endeavour to stretch the limits of the Constitution. Domestically, this led to an outburst with opposition parties voicing concern through the label “war legislation”, fearing Japan would be dragged into remote conflicts. Internationally, the Legislation is appreciated by allies (e.g. US) and the UN; however, countries that remember Japan’s imperial aggression may interpret the Legislation as signalling regression to past aggression. The Abe administration, nonetheless, stresses the importance of the new law for the peace and security of Japan as well as the international community, ensuring it is non-conflictual with the pacifist Constitution. This is a discursive maze that calls for attention and is worthwhile studying. The thesis contributes academically by focusing on the construction of the narrative that Japan deploys in order to gain consensus for the historic legislative change. This thesis supplements existing literature by focusing solely on narrative construction (rather than trying to debunk authenticity), thus gaining new insight into the ways in which legitimization is pursued.

1.1 Demarcation

First and foremost, this thesis is an analysis of the narration, meaning the story that is told about the new Legislation. It does not, however, provide an analysis about policy action or gives an explanation for the foreign policy strategy underlying the constructed narrative. This thesis does not argue that its results can show causality (meaning the relation of cause and effect) but rather, it is constitutive. The narration of reality, thus, is assumed to have discursive power if made believable. What this means is that the narrative that is analysed in

this thesis is produced by a political elite that is “authorized to speak” and thus has an audience for which it can define truths (Milliken, 1999:299). For, “a *powerful* discourse is, quite simply, one that makes a difference (Epstein, 2008:2).”

The timeframe that this thesis covers is from 2015-2017, as well as includes one 2014 Cabinet Decision that lays the groundwork for the new Legislation. The Legislation is the focal point of the study, however, given that it had its trial run in the setting of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), peacekeeping is part of the narrative construction and is thereby included to some extent. Also, initially it was planned to include frequency variation, thereby gaining insight into the extent to which different sources varied in their narration of the issue as well as whether or not the story changed over time. However, the data has not shown any significant variation or was insufficient in making a claim, which led to its exclusion.

1.2 Disposition

The thesis is organized as follows; (1) chapter 1 provides background to the topic, both historical and theoretical, allowing the research to position itself in the vast literature concerned with Japan’s foreign policy shift. Chapter (2) then discusses the theoretical underpinnings to the thesis, introducing the fundamentals of the theory and explaining its operationalization within this research. (3) Thereafter, the method is laid out, providing an overview of the connection between ontology, epistemology, and the chosen method of discourse analysis. The data collection method is presented as well as limitations, ethics, and reflexivity is discussed. Chapter (4), the analysis, then presents findings, which is followed by a conclusion in chapter (5).

2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this background chapter, relevant existing literature is critically mapped out in order to provide a context within which this research positions itself. This review of literature serves as a historic background to Japan’s foreign policy shift from what is considered a rather passive and reactive state to a proactive global leader, contributing to international security. In this context, the Legislation for Peace and Security is introduced, constituting a historic change in a broader scheme of continuous attempts to reinterpret the Constitution. This literature review provides a context for Japan’s linguistic gymnastics that try to make

legislative change compatible with the deep-rooted norms that are enshrined in the pacifist Constitution.

Thus, the literature review proceeds as follows; (1) The vast literature on Japan's assumed foreign policy shift is mapped out, culminating in the introduction of the Legislation for Peace and Security; followed by (2) the academic discussion of the continuous importance of "pacifism" in contemporary Japan; thereafter, (3) the academic debate of Japan's assumed rejection of liberalism in favour of realism is mapped out. Subsequently, (4) the gap in literature is presented that allows a positioning of this thesis and possibilities to contribute academically.

That being said, there is a lack of existing literature discussing the new Legislation and UNMISS. Consequently, the background to the Legislation (sub-section 2.1.1) is anchored in the thesis' paper of record, The Japan Times, which has a neutral reputation relative to other English version Japanese newspapers, often associated with a political agenda (McCargo & Hyon-Suk, 2010:242). UNMISS has long been treated as a low-key mission in a row of others such as those in Timor-Leste, Haiti and Djibouti. When examined, it has not received single case status and focus was mainly given to possible interests in oil access (Uesugi, 2014). The Legislation provides UNMISS with a new dynamic that is worthwhile studying.

2.1 Japan's foreign policy posture – facing international criticism

This section provides a background to the vast and diverse literature on Japan's assumed shift in security mentality, from a passive US devotee to a proactive global contributor. This discussion is essential for our research topic since it sets the stage for comprehending potential motivations for Japan's eagerness to widen its responsibilities on the global stage. Japan's foreign policy shift culminates in the introduction of the Legislation for Peace and Security in 2016, a historic change that is presented at the end of this first section. What follows is a critical review of relevant literature, providing a historical as well as theoretic overview of Japan's foreign policy shift and the legislative changes enabling Japan to counter the criticism it has faced due to its constitutional constraints.

The defeat of imperial Japan in the Second World War led to a subsequent US-sponsored revival through the new pacifist Constitution in 1947. What makes the Constitution "pacifist" is renowned Article 9, claiming 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 (Constitution, 1947)." With this embrace of pacifism Japan was able to distance itself

symbolically from its wartime past and its label as an “enemy state”, establishing its new “peace-loving” identity (Toshiya, 2007).² Japan’s goals for post-war development were articulated in what is known as the Yoshida doctrine, wherein economic development was to be accomplished by looking to the US for security (Maslow, 2015). Japan entered a period of miraculous economic growth, yet, one that came with relational dependency towards the US, mockingly described as “karaoke diplomacy” (Maslow et al, 2015). Japan’s function in the international sphere during the Cold War era, while certainly strategic, was critiqued for being a passive, inward-looking, isolationist and reactive “one-country pacifism” (Hayes, 2001; Lam, 2009; Singh, 2002).

Frequently, the Gulf crisis in 1990-1 is referred to as a crossroads-moment for a changing Japanese foreign policy mentality. Japan engaged itself in this international conflict with a substantial 13 billion US dollar contribution, however, one that resulted in the critique of “chequebook diplomacy” and was deemed insufficient by the international community (Toshiya, 2007). Most memorably, Japan was not included in the Kuwaiti governments’ letter of gratitude published in the New York Times after the war. The lack of recognition for its non-physical contribution is described as traumatic for Japan and as having resulted in an urgency to become a more active international player (Hatakeyama, 2014; Hook & Dobson, 2007; Maslow, 2015; Toshiya, 2007). Not only is this crossroads-moment often presented as leading to a *necessity* to change but also as providing *opportunity* for change, legitimising an extension of SDF (Self-Defense Forces) activity (Hatakeyama, 2014). On a similar note Sebastian Maslow et al use the concept of *risk* as a way to understand the operationalization of policy change, meaning that a certain issue can through a “state-led recalibration of risk (Maslow et al, 2015:3)” provide opportunities for certain action.

The Japanese Constitution was recognized as embracing the sentiments underlying the 1945 UN charter, paving the way for Japan’s admittance as a UN member in 1956 (Toshiya, 2007). It is often argued that Japan uses the UN as a platform for re-imagining itself as a cooperative and responsible global player, yet, with its main focus continually on its alliance with the US for security (Toshiya, 2007). Aurelia George reasons that the military is being used as a means to further a positive image of Japan as well as forging associations of the JSDF (Japan Self-Defense Forces) not as an aggressive military threat but instead as a force working for the common international project of peace distribution (George, 1993:574). Thus, attaching positive attributes to the JSDF is an attempt to counter an association of Japanese re-

² This peaceloving identity is still actively proclaimed, as will be showed in the analysis, sub-section 5.2.1.

militarisation with a retraction to its imperial past. Others argue that Japan is pursuing the strategy of UN peacekeeping due to a normative value of international collective security. According to Hatakeyama; “PKO³ operations came to reflect the essence of international norms (Hatakeyama, 2014:630)”.

In summary, Japan is typically assumed to find itself in a foreign policy shift triggered by an urgency to gain international recognition (Hook & Dobson, 2007). In order to do so, Prime Minister Abe seeks to reinterpret the war-renouncing Constitution, using the UN as a platform to re-imagine the JSDF (George, 1993; Singh, 2002). It is in the light of this UN centrism in general and UN peacekeeping in particular that the implementation of the new Legislation took place. The Legislation can be understood as the culmination of the foreign policy shift that is introduced above. In what follows, thus, the introduction of the new Legislation is presented.

2.1.1 The Legislation for Peace and Security

As mentioned earlier, this section differs from the rest of the background section as it is not a review of existing academic literature, but instead stems from The Japan Times as a paper of record. This is due to a lack of sufficient academic coverage given that the new Legislation only has been introduced very recently. This section provides a deeper understanding of the changes to Japan’s security posture that the new Legislation represents as well as gives a contextual understanding of its first trial run within the framework of UNMISS.

The Legislation for Peace and Security was pushed through the Diet in March 2016, thereby expanding the mandate of the SDF beyond merely self-defense. What is referred to as *kaketsuke keigo*, which translates to “rushing to the rescue”, allows SDF personnel to defend other countries’ troops as well as UN staff that is under attack (Japan Times, 2015b). The new Legislation marks a historic change to Japan’s post-war security posture, allowing Japanese troops to engage in collective self-defense together with other countries’ armed forces that are; “collectively addressing the situation which threatens the international peace and security”, or “countries engaging in activities for ensuring Japan’s peace and security” (GoJ, 2016). This is a clear break from the 70-year commitment that Japan had made under the war-renouncing Constitution only to engage in activities of self-defense. The Legislation is particularly controversial since the Abe administration enacted it despite resistance of opposition parties and the public. The opposition deemed the Legislation unconstitutional and

³ Abbreviation: peacekeeping operation

referred to it as “war legislation”, fearing Japan would be dragged into remote conflicts. The Abe administration, instead, maintains that the Legislation is necessary to ensure peace and security for the Japanese people in the light of an increasingly hazardous international environment (Aoki, 2015). Prime Minister Abe has commented on this lack of public support by referring to the revision of the Japan-US security treaty in 1960 as well as the PKO bill in 1992, two laws that also required some time to warm up the public (Japan Times, 2015).

Importantly, Japanese government officials continuously ensured that the situation in South Sudan is stable (Japan Times, 2016a; Yoshida, 2016), labelling it “relatively calm” at the same time as the UN described the young country as on the verge of genocide (Japan Times, 2016b). Nonetheless, the new security framework was initiated in December 2016 by replacing the 350 SDF engineering personnel with the same number of GSDF (Ground Self-Defense Forces) members trained in armed rescue missions (Japan Times, 2016b). A month later, the Abe administration confirmed that troops terminate their contribution to UNMISS, however denying there being a connection to the security situation in the country. It was instead claimed the opposing forces in South Sudan finally having initiated dialogue is making Japan’s engagement redundant (Yoshida, 2017). Japanese troops were withdrawn by May 2017.

The opposition to the new Legislation is discussed only marginally in the analysis. Nonetheless, this overview is essential since it paints the picture of strong opposition voices and a precarious situation for Abe’s administration to construct a functioning narrative that will bring consensus. The Legislation must be understood within the context of the foreign policy shift outlined above, meaning Japanese endeavours to counter criticism of the international community and thus gain recognition for the nation’s substantial contributions. It is no coincidence that this historic change to Japan’s security posture had its first trial run within the framework of UN peacekeeping. The blue helmet of UN peacekeeping (George, 1993) accentuates that this Legislation is formulated to deliver “peace”, not “war”. This kind of legitimization is crucial for this thesis, as it aims to make sense of the linguistic gymnastics through which Japan tries to legitimize change.

Japan’s ambitions to solve its issues of non-recognition certainly caused friction between long-embraced norms and newly acquired abilities. Therefore, in what follows, existing literature is reviewed that studies the meaning of “pacifism” for Japan in these times of change.

2.2 Abandoning *pacifism* for “proactivity”?

Given that this thesis argues for the continuous importance of “pacifism” in constructing a convincing narrative, it is essential to review scholars’ discussion for contemporary Japan. This is a cluster of literature that is diverse, stretching from focus being given to domestic as well as foreign policy dimensions. As mentioned in the above section, the Legislation caused domestic opposition and fears that it created too great of a distance to the cherished norms of constitutional pacifism. Internationally, the Legislation manifests change that was long sought after by allies and the UN. Given that the narrative that is studied in this thesis is directed at the international as well as domestic audience, it is worthwhile clarifying the meaning of “pacifism” within both of these settings.

The friction between domestic norms and the recent push for change is especially noticeable in Abe’s foreign policy approach of “proactive pacifism”. This approach combines endeavours to become a more active international player with pacifist constitutional norms. It demonstrates Japan’s endeavours to integrate into the existing order, doing so by echoing behavioural traits of “proactivity” that are accepted as valid by the international community while continuing to reap the fruits of “pacifism” (Pope, 2017). This tightly ties to our analysis of the construction of a narrative that legitimizes the historic divergence from “isolationist” one-country pacifism. Abe’s doctrine of “proactive pacifism” has gained a lot of attention since its announcement in 2013. Most commonly it is met with scholarly scepticism, as resembling a Trojan horse that sooner or later will lead to the constitutional devotion to pacifism being dismantled. What this means is that “proactive pacifism” is said to imply a reinterpretation of the concept of pacifism that strips it from its actual implications, thereby attaching positive emotions to an otherwise aggressive doctrine (Maslow, 2015; Oros, 2015; Pope, 2017). Scholars argue that Abe’s approach proves that “Japan’s long-standing security identity of domestic antimilitarism (Oros, 2015:140)” is becoming increasingly “irrelevant” for Japan’s future. Thus, within Japan’s foreign policy approach scholars are sceptical towards the continuous importance and meaning of “pacifism”.

Nonetheless, when considering the domestic importance of the concept, opinions are less harmonious. While some argue that Japan’s public never was truly pacifist or “antimilitarist” (Midford, 2011), others are certain that the culture of anti-militarism is deep-seated and unlikely to change despite policy makers striving for revision (Berger, 1993). Famously, in a seminal article Thomas Berger argues that the Japanese public is “risk-averse” and is therefore tightly holding on to constitutional pacifism (Berger, 1993). In more recent studies,

however, Berger's confidence in everlasting Japanese pacifism is questioned (Cai, 2008; Samuels, 2007). While still crucial for the Japanese people's national identity and with a majority still devoted to Article 9, some argue pacifism to be built on fragile grounds. What is termed "never-again" pacifism stems from fear and wartime aversion that will erode once memories fade (Cai, 2008).

In summary, "pacifism" is a widely debated concept. At the centre of the foreign policy literature appears to lay an ambition to debunk the authenticity of "pacifism" in Japanese discourse. As we will see in the analysis however, the role of "pacifism" as a communicative tool is crucial in relation to the Legislation. This may however not be surprising given the continuous domestic importance of "pacifism" in Japan's state identity. We now turn to the next important concept that our hypothesis builds on, namely the importance of *liberalism* for Japan's foreign policy discourse.

2.3 Abandoning *liberalism* for realism?

The last cluster of literature that needs reviewing is that of *liberalism* versus *realism* in Japan's foreign policy doctrine. Much like "pacifism", liberalism is a concept that while historically crucial is given less attention by scholars today. And much like with "pacifism", this thesis shows the continuous importance of *liberalism* in Japan's construction of a convincing narrative. What follows is a critical review of the existing literature on Japanese liberalism/realism. This discussion is anchored in the theoretical division within International Relations, a "discipline of theoretical disagreements (Burchill et al, 2013:5)". Liberalism and realism are the discipline's two main strands and are considered ideologically incompatible.

Article 9 of the post-war Constitution is often referred to as ushering in a period of liberalism in Japan's politics as well as discourse (Funabashi, 1998; Moses & Iwami, 2009; Wada, 2010), institutionalising compliance with Western ideals through the "permanent renunciation of war (Moses & Iwami, 2009:71)". Yet, already in the 1950s and notably with developments in the Korean War, remilitarisation was being emphasized more frequently in the political discussion (Wada, 2010:412), often in reference to liberal arguments for global peace and democracy in association with the West against the communist "other" (Moses & Iwami, 2009:72). Also, the 1990s came with rising external insecurities, mainly associated with what is referred to as the "Taepodong shock" in 1998; a North Korean missile test over Honshu, leading to heated domestic discussions about Japan's vulnerability in the light of constitutional limitations (Midford, 2011:104; Wada, 2010:420). A third major development

that arguably led to the “sudden death of liberalism” in Japan’s foreign policy posture is the 9/11-terror attack and the subsequent US call for Japanese engagement in its “war on terror” (Wada, 2010:407). Moses and Iwami argue that Japan has reached a point where devotion to constitutional pacifism even represents a burden to the liberal cause, namely the engagement in US promoted wars in the name of freedom and democracy (Moses & Iwami, 2009:70).

Hence, it is most commonly argued that Japan’s foreign policy has undergone a gradual change from post-war liberalism to realism (Midford, 2011, 2012). Thus, while opinions about Japanese liberal versus realist policy ambitions differ considerably—much like within IR theory’s “great debate”—realism is commonly assumed to have defeated liberalism. Scholars often argue that Japanese rhetoric can still be interpreted as liberal—stressing the importance of human rights, democracy, etc.—while actually pursuing realist political goals, often associated with the rise of China and the Senkaku/Diaoyu island dispute (Moses & Iwami, 2009; Pope, 2017). The alignment with the UN and US and the liberal norms and values that these associations entail, so Pope, disguise the underlying endeavours of military expansion to counter the threat posed by China and North Korea (Pope, 2017:247). We now turn to a brief review of the widely-debated concept of “normalization”. This is a cluster of literature that has become increasingly significant when discussing Japan’s foreign policy shift and is therefore crucial to include in a thesis concerned with constitutional reinterpretation. Also, when reviewing the “normalization” debate, it appears that there is an assumed correlation between “realism” and “normalcy”, which is an assumption that fits “normalization” into this section.

It was former LDP politician Ichirō Ozawa who first introduced the notion of “normalisation” in his *Blueprint for a New Japan* in 1994 as a response to the aforementioned Gulf War dilemma. Ozawa advocated the need for Japan to develop into what the international community would acknowledge as a “normal” nation. He conceptualises “normalcy” in terms of two criteria; firstly to shoulder international responsibilities and secondly, to *fully* cooperate internationally to maintain stability and build prosperity (Ozawa, 1994:94). Since Ozawa introduced the concept, “normalization” has grown into a vast cluster of literature debating the meaning of “normalcy” for Japan (Hughes, 2004; Oros, 2008; Samuels, 2007; Soeya et al, 2011). What is striking is that scholars use normalcy interchangeably with pragmatism and realism. Reference is often made to Japan not behaving as a normal state would in similar circumstances, referring to realist concepts such as *balance of power* or the necessity of self-help for survival (Curtis, 2013; Maslow et al, 2015; Oros, 2017; Singh, 2002;

Toshiya, 2007). This indicates a theoretical association of “normalcy” with realism, a pattern that is not further discussed however. The narration of the Legislation has the potential of serving as a platform for scrutiny of this correlation, since the “normal” that Japan seems to strive towards is not merely described in realist but also—and very distinctly so—in liberal terms as well.

After this extensive review, it is necessary to clarify how this research positions itself in the detected gap.

2.4 Finding the gap & research positioning

First of all, given that the Legislation has been introduced rather recently, there is a clear empirical gap. Furthermore, the academic literature focuses on a transition from a passive and reactive state to a more proactive and responsible global player. Often, this transition is implied to involve misplacing “pacifism” somewhere along the way, meaning that “pacifism” is argued to have become an empty vase that is increasingly irrelevant for Japan’s foreign policy. Similarly, liberalism is in existing literature discussed mainly in relation to its disguising function for realist ambitions. Existing literature thus focuses on a lack of authenticity of Japan’s discourse in relation to policy action, thereby rejecting the significance of liberalism as well as “pacifism”.

This thesis is instead concerned with the construction of the narrative itself and how the communicative tools—that often are dismissed as non-authentic—are deployed in order to create a convincing story. It is here argued that “pacifism”—while indeed reinterpreted—plays a crucial role as a communicative tool for legitimizing change. Also, liberalism cannot be dismissed as a sheer disguise for realist means, as it—no matter genuine or not—actively contributes to the narration of Japan’s foreign policy shift and therefore has discursive power. For, the Legislation is narrated by strategically combining liberal with realist logic, both proving indispensable for gaining legitimacy for Japan’s “normalcy”.

This thesis positions itself in this theoretical as well as empirical gap and hypothesises that Japan strategically combines dichotomous ideas (pacifism/force, liberalism/realism) in order to construct a narrative that convinces through ambiguity. This thesis will contribute to this gap in literature by answering the research question; how does the Japanese State attempt to create consensus for the necessity of the Legislation for Peace and Security? We now turn to an introduction to and discussion of the chosen theoretical framework.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter gives an overview of the theoretical framework that guides the analysis. Firstly, the choice of theory is discussed and motivated relative to other suitable theoretical approaches. Secondly, the fundamentals of *strategic narratives* are introduced. Thereafter follows an illustration of the operationalization of the theoretical approach.

3.1 Discussion of chosen framework

What follows is a short introduction to the theories that were taken into consideration and the deliberations leading up to the chosen analytical tool of *strategic narratives*. Strategic narrative is deemed most suitable for this thesis since it most efficiently allows an examination of Japan's strategic use of discursive tools in relation to the implementation of the Legislation. The chosen theory assumes that political actors through the use of communicative tools can give meaning to certain events in order to reach political objectives (Miskimmon et al, 2013; Roselle et al, 2014).

A number of theories are suitable for this thesis, one being *Identity theory* (Gustafsson, 2014; Hagström, 2016). Japanese national identity is often assumed to be in transition, thereby abandoning its post-war pacifist core. Concerning the Legislation, however, the empirical evidence is not sufficient for supposing a shift in identity. As the empirical data shows, "pacifism" plays a continuously important role as a communicative tool. This means that assuming a shift in identity is premature. Also, the chosen theoretical approach of strategic narratives incorporates identity formation in its toolkit. By analysing actors' use of narratives identity features can be observed (Miskimmon et al, 2013:32).

Another theoretical framework that much of similar research is built on is Joseph Nye's concept of *Soft Power*. Power is herein understood as a tool for attraction used to "make others want what you want (Nye, 2008:94)". There is in fact a gap in research that this thesis could have contributed to, being that soft power research on Japan largely overlooks the importance of military assets as soft power resources (Heng, 2015). The SDF peacekeeping personnel could have been analysed as being deployed as a tool for positive image creation, a topic that deserves to be highlighted in soft power literature. However, there are problems associated with the concept of soft power, most severely what is referred to as its "measurement problem", making an adoption of this approach less appealing. The measurement problem refers to the difficulties associated with identifying correlations

between soft power as input and the desired attraction as output. In order to circumvent this criticism while still making use of the ideas of persuasion in international affairs, this thesis makes use of *strategic narratives*.

3.2 Strategic narratives

Alister Miskimmon, Ben O’Loughlin and Laura Roselle formulated the analytical tool of *strategic narratives* to better grasp and define the major dynamics of international politics.

“Strategic narratives are representations of a sequence of events and identities, a communicative tool through which political actors – usually elites – attempt to give determined meaning to past, present, and future in order to achieve political objectives (Miskimmon et al, 2013:5).”

This theory assumes that agents are formed and their preferences are shaped by the narrative that surrounds them. At the same time however, agents are actively engaging in a struggle to create consensus around their own narrative (Miskimmon et al, 2013:109). Narratives—by shaping our understanding of our surroundings—establish limitations for what is *imaginable* and *acceptable*, thereby constraining actors’ agency (Miskimmon et al, 2013:1). Actors can also use narratives—as the theory’s name suggests—strategically, for example for generating and maintaining international order. Powerful actors can contribute to creating order, which is often done by the use of binaries such as liberal/non-liberal, democratic/authoritarian or simply good/evil (Miskimmon et al, 2013:60). The analysis of actors’ use of narratives can then tell us something about the way these actors integrate into the given order. Agents that are integrated into an order and seek “balance” within it aim for others to emulate the ideas defining this order. This, so Miskimmon et al, is done actively—strategically—by international actors to promote their own preferences in the given order (Miskimmon et al, 2013:63). As we shall see, Japan’s narration of legislative change strategically stabilizes the international order by incorporating an insider/outsider discourse into its own narrative. Reference to acknowledged “threats” such as China and North Korea are made strategically in order to integrate into the existing order.

The international political sphere is composed of different narratives that shape our world and our understanding of it. These narratives function on different levels; firstly, *Issue Narratives* deal with an issue that can be resolved by a particular action or policy that is constructed and depicted as “normatively desirable”.

“Issue Narratives set governmental action in a context, with an explanation of who the important actors are, what the conflict or issue is, and how a particular course of action will resolve the underlying issue (Roselle et al, 2014:76)”.

Secondly, *National Narratives* outline “the story of the state” that a nation embodies and tells about itself. It depicts the nations’ values, ambitions, goals, and norms. One example would be the story of the US as the leader of the free world. Thirdly, *International System Narratives* describe how the world and the international order are organized, and ascribe different roles to different actors. An example of a System Narrative would be the rise of China in a unipolar order (Roselle et al, 2014:76). Narratives on one level can constrain and impact agency on other levels, such as future policy action (Roselle et al, 2014:77). Analysing the narratives on these three levels, so Roselle et al, can help us “trace how political actors strategically shape and are shaped by narratives (Roselle et al, 2014:77).”

Miskimmon et al also identify a number of different actors who possess a specific set of attributes that come with the narrative they are embedded in; these are the unipole/hegemon, great powers, normal powers, rising powers, and weak/rogue states. The category of “great powers” is most relevant to our case and is therefore looked at more closely here. Miskimmon et al describe *great powers* as possessing attributes such as “[...] an emphasis on sovereignty (independence of action), leadership (structuring the system), and responsibility (to others) (Miskimmon et al, 2013:35)”. Great powers are expected to act according to these attributes, to cooperate more actively with other members of the international community as well as be involved in conflicts in regions outside their territorial accountability (Miskimmon et al, 2013:36).

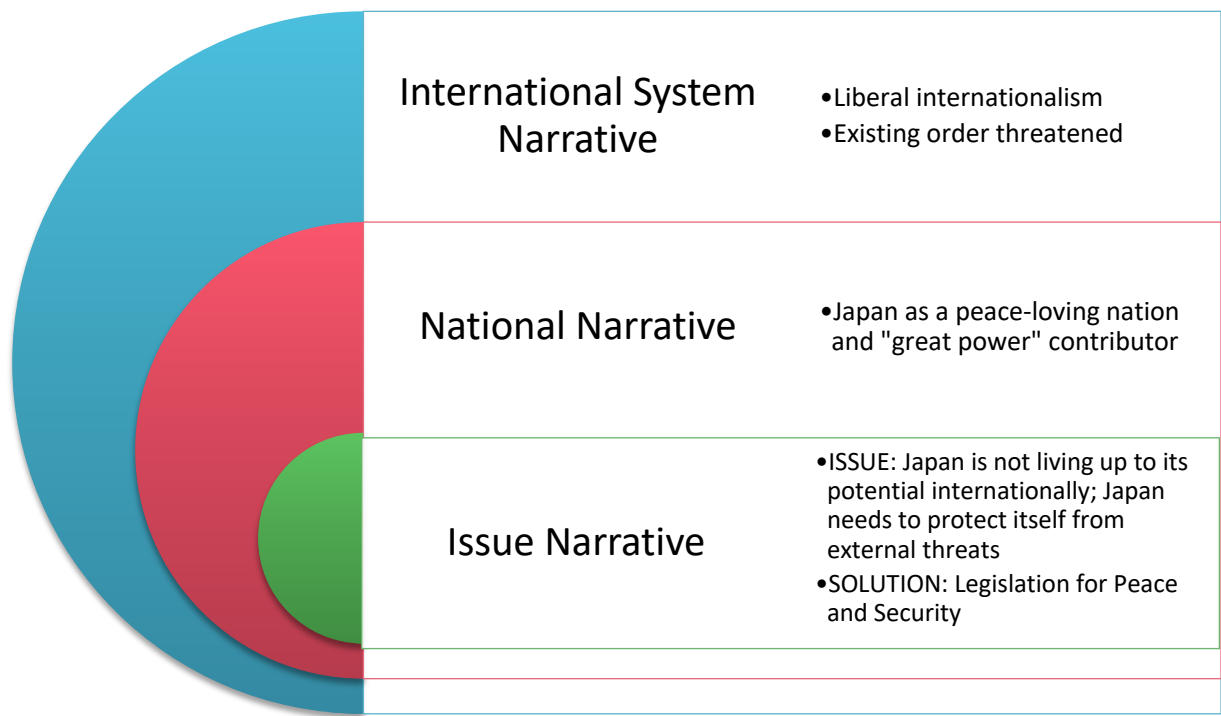
Lastly, Miskimmon et al differentiate between formation, projection and reception in the analysis of a narrative. What this means is that strategic narrative analysis enables the examination of the way in which a narrative is constructed/formed, how a narrative is projected to the audience as well as the audience’s reception of the projected narrative (Roselle et al, 2014:74). The constructed narrative can be more or less appealing to the audience depending on a series of characteristics. A convincing narrative must for instance be ambiguous, meaning that the narrative that leaders use or construct for their purpose must be coherent and clear, yet contain ambiguity to a degree that allows it “to absorb contradictory events and opinions (Miskimmon et al, 2013:114)”. Also, a convincing narrative matches the audience’s epistemology, hence, their knowledge about the world they live in (Miskimmon et

al, 2013:113). This sums up the theoretical underpinnings that guide our analysis. But how are these theoretical underpinnings operationalized?

3.2.1 *Operationalization of theory*

In this thesis, emphasis is given to narrative *formation* since it is in the construction of the narrative that we can find information about state preferences and attributes. Also, by deconstructing the formation of the narrative, we can see “how actors select from the raw materials of international affairs (Miskimmon et al, 2013:12)” in order to legitimize the desired outcome. What this means is that, Japan’s reference to North Korea in its formation of its narrative can tell us something about the narrative’s struggle for consensus. To a lesser extent, *reception* is included through the opposition’s critique of the Legislation as “war bill”. However, the reception of the narrative by the audience is looked at only marginally. The critique that is put forth by the opposition is the only “counter-narrative” that is included, since Abe has responded to the critique in a systematic manner, thereby incorporating the response into the narrative itself. International counter-narratives that may have been put forth by other countries that question Japan’s move to increase its military have been excluded in this study since Japan also excludes such criticism from its own narrative, highlighting only positive international reaction.

The analysis is divided into two sections, (1) the analysis of the Issue Narrative, examining how the “issue” is framed and what solution is provided for solving the “issue” in a manner that is normatively desirable; followed by (2) an analysis of the integration of the Issue Narrative, firstly into the “story of the state” and secondly, into the international order. What is examined here is how the Issue Narrative relates to dynamics on National and System level, meaning how it makes use of or is constrained by these dynamics. Lets now turn to a definition of the different levels of narratives for this thesis.



Graph 1: Narratives on three levels – the narration of the Legislation

The Issue Narrative is defined as follows within the collected data; Japan expresses a discontent with the status quo, being that Japan is unable to contribute according to its capacities in the light of a deteriorating security environment surrounding Japan. To solve this issue, the actor—being the different voices of the Japanese state combined—emphasizes the necessity to introduce the Legislation for Peace and Security. The National Narrative is defined as Japan continuing on its path as a peaceloving nation, a nation that has a leading role as a global contributor for peace and security. Lastly, the International System Narrative that Japan constantly refers to in the construction of its Issue Narrative can be defined as the *liberal international order*. What this means is that reference is made continuously to the order that is advocated by the US as well as the UN, desiring approval for the Legislation. What is highlighted is the importance of a Japan-US alliance built on mutual trust as well as following UN direction when making contributions. The liberal international order, however, is threatened and actors such as China and North Korea jeopardize stability.

By applying the different levels of narratives outlined by Miskimmon et al to the Legislation, we can create an understanding of Japan’s attempt to create consensus for its narration. With the theory accounted for, we now turn to a description of the methodological approach that is applied to this research.

4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methods chapter proceeds as follows; first, the research design is summarised briefly. After that, the reader is provided with a discussion of the ontological and epistemological positioning that is crucial for the way the data is being approached. Subsequently, the chosen methodological approach—discourse analysis—is introduced followed by a description of the method’s operationalization. Thereafter follows a critical discussion of the data collection method, a discussion of limitations and ethical considerations, and at last a reflection on my own role for knowledge output.

4.1 Research design

This research is qualitative in nature and embraces a social constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2007:20) that renders some methods more suitable than others. The choice of qualitative over quantitative research is mainly rooted in the ontological and epistemological positioning as well as the constructivist assumptions within the theoretical approach of strategic narrative paired with the methodological approach of discourse analysis. However, the quantitative tools of frequency calculation and code cross-referencing are used in order to triangulate findings (Bryman, 2012:392). Content analysis was deliberated upon but dismissed due to its greater focus on quantification of “predetermined categories (Bryman, 2012:290)”, giving less room for interpretation and deconstruction. Discourse analysis is deemed the logical choice for the analysis of Japan’s narrative. The next section gives an outline of the ontological and epistemological reasoning that establishes how the data is approached.

4.2 Ontological and epistemological positioning

The theoretical choices that were introduced thus far have possibly given the reader some clues concerning epistemological and ontological positioning, given that *strategic narrative analysis* is constructivist at its core. *Constructivism* is an important underpinning to the hypotheses and approaches that this thesis builds on. Accordingly, *objectivism* is dismissed as a suitable ontology. Reality is not – as assumed within objectivism – understood as pre-given and independent of agency, but rather, realities are shaped, reconstructed and revised through social interaction (Bryman, 2012:33). The empirical data is not assumed to provide us with one objective reality. Instead, the narrative that is analysed is merely one version of reality, constructed by relevant ministries of the Japanese state. Reality, thus, does not exist

regardless of agency, but is constructed by the agent in question. Language—as an important means for interaction—plays a crucial role in the process of construction, which ties our ontological positioning into our choice of method, namely *discourse analysis*, which is introduced below (Bryman, 2012:34). When it comes to epistemology—meaning the understanding of what constitutes knowledge—this thesis embraces *interpretivism*. Thus, our empirical data is not considered a value-free set of facts that leads us to knowledge about the ultimate truth (Bryman, 2012:28). Instead, the narrative is treated as strategically promoting knowledge about the world that, if believed in, is beneficial to the narrators’ cause. What we are interested in here is thereby what the Japanese state wants us to know and believe.

4.3 Discourse analysis

The methodological approach that is combined with the analytical tool of the strategic narrative is *discourse analysis*. This approach is suitable since discourses are the building blocks of greater narratives, making a deconstruction possible. Thus, it is essential to grasp the actor’s use of discourse in order to make sense of the narrative that is constructed.

“Actors can only form and project a narrative based upon the discourses available to them in their historical situation, so discourses have a structuring effect upon narrative action (Miskimmon et al, 2013:7).”

Discourse analysis focuses on language as a bearer of meaning, context, and power. Language is not only considered a tool to understand the world, but also to construct and re-create our reality and the knowledge that we acquire about it (Bryman, 2012:500). Discourse analysis thus encourages a critical analysis of text by questioning taken-for-granted categories and depictions of reality (Gil, 2000:173). Similar to our epistemological reasoning, knowledge is considered a construct and has to be deconstructed in order to be understood in the specific context. That also means that discourse is not a “[...] subsidiary path to the true nature of events (Wetherell & Potter, 1988:172)”, but is in fact our primary research objective. This clearly ties into our ontological and epistemological reasoning as well as the chosen theory of strategic narratives. With the basic assumptions of discourse analysis outlined, we can now take a closer look at how this thesis makes use of them.

4.3.1 Operationalization of research method

Since discourse analysis works from the assumption that discourse is constructed, discourse has—what Wetherell and Potter call—an “action orientation” (Wetherell & Potter, 1988:172).

Thus, the purpose with analysing discourse is to reveal the functions of the language that is deployed (Wetherell & Potter, 1988:170). But how can we reach this goal of elucidating functions?

The initial stage of analysis is critical reading and re-reading of the material, while constantly reflecting upon taken-for-granted knowledge and assumptions (Gil, 2000:178). The next stage is coding, a process that has been carried through within the qualitative data analysis software package NVivo. For initial coding, discourse analysis emphasizes as inclusive coding as possible in order not to risk exclusion of potential nuances upon own biases (Gil, 2000:179). This approach resulted in roughly 30 codes during initial inclusive coding, which were then scaled down, merged, and dismissed for lack of relevance to the research question. The next stage after initial coding is analysis, a process that comprises a search for patterns within the data. Here, nuances, vagueness, contradictions, variability as well as consistency are detected through careful and critical deep reading. Thereafter, tentative hypotheses are formed about what is earlier introduced as the “functions” of discourse, followed by a testing of these hypotheses by returning to the data (Gil, 2000:178-180). This process turned out to be particularly time-consuming, however was made easier through NVivo’s “query-tool” through which the extensive data could be visualized and hypotheses tested and rejected more efficiently. In the next section, the data collection method and sources are presented and justified in order to create transparency regarding the empirical basis that the analysis is anchored in.

4.4 Data collection method

Given that the research questions that guide this research aim to analyse the narrative constructed by the Japanese government, and given the limitations to accessibility of government officials as research objects for primary data, the method of data collection emerged rather naturally. Having said that, primary data was not ruled out hastily, since—however unsuccessfully—lower ranked government officials were contacted during fieldwork in Japan.

The main source of data are “documents”, which is defined as material that in one way or another can be read (including videos or pictures), that are not specifically produced for the research that they are used in, and are preserved and relevant (Bryman, 2012:543). In this thesis, the umbrella term “documents” refers primarily to government whitepapers produced by the MOD (Ministry of Defense)—the annual *Defense of Japan* (3 issues), the monthly

Japan Defense Focus (4), and information pamphlets that tackle issues concerning peacekeeping—as well as the MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)—the annual *Diplomatic Bluebook* (2). Additionally, press statements and press conferences by the MOD (74) and MOFA (16) have proven a rich source of data, as well as promotional videos about the SDF and its contributions retracted from the ministries' homepages (12 in total). Also, as a focal point of this thesis, the *Legislation for Peace and Security* was included into the empirical data, as well as the 2014 *Cabinet Decision on the Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People*, leading up to the development of the Legislation. Additionally, information that can be found on the MOD and MOFA homepages has been collected. Another homepage that is significant for this research is the *Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations*, where statements (21 in total) are published about the nature and future of Japan's peacekeeping engagement. Also, interesting information was found on the webpage of the *Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet*, where speeches and press conferences with the Prime Minister (34), descriptions of diplomatic relations and cabinet decisions are available in English.

The search words that have been used throughout the sources are the following; legislation, peacekeeping, peace, South Sudan, UN, UNMISS, United Nations, security, threat, global, and contribution. The search words have been combined in different ways, as well as manipulated through i.e. quotation marks.

4.5 Limitations, ethical considerations, and reflexivity

This section is important since it outlines how potential flaws and risks have been taken into consideration. The goal is to demonstrate awareness to shortcomings within the approach as well as myself and how these have been tackled and subverted. First, general limitations are outlined, followed by ethical considerations and subsequently reflexivity of my own role in the production of knowledge.

When it comes to limitations to the research approach, one issue that usually creates concerns amongst researchers that are not fluent in the language of the studied society is whether or not information is accessible in a sufficient range as well as the risks involved in translations distorting what has been said or written in the original version of a text (Bryman, 2012: 314). This is especially important if the text is analysed—as is the case in this study—as a narrative. All of the sources that are used in this research are available in English—however translated—thereby providing accessibility for me as a researcher. Still, a lot of nuances and

dynamics can be lost in translation (Smith, 2003:162). According to Smith, who has conducted research about the SDF, the discourse that surrounds the military has evolved into a language of its own; “[...] a new language had to be created in the postwar period for discussing security policy issues, and many of these new words or phrases embodied a new interpretation of the purpose of Japan’s military (Smith, 2003:162).” This requires constant awareness to possible limitations. Also, the documents that in fact are accessible, despite there being a lot of material to be found, are certainly limited and I have to be aware that what is presented for the public is what the MOD, MOFA, etc. are willing to make accessible. Then again, since this research analyses the strategic narrative of the state, what is excluded from the narrative is not relevant for answering the research questions. In other words, what is presented is treated as the deliberately created strategic narrative of the state.

In terms of ethical considerations being limited to mainly translated material could involve ethical hazards of misinterpretation. Still, the documents are not translated by outside sources but approved by the state and published on state websites. Therefore, the material can still be treated as the narrative of the state. What is more, given that this research does not include primary data, ethical principles such as harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy or deception are non-essential (Bryman, 2012:118). The documents that are being used as data sources are accessible online, making consent a non-issue. Ethical considerations are therefore most relevant in relation to the integrity and quality of the conducted research, since knowledge production that is of poor quality is considered unethical (Bryman, 2012:125).

Reflexivity is the process in which the researcher constantly reflects upon personal biases and values as well as the significance of these biases for generating knowledge through analysis (Bryman, 2012:393). Reflexivity is especially important for this research given its epistemological stance. My role is essential in interpreting the reality that the Japanese state creates through its narrative. Hence, what results from the belief that what we know about the world is a matter of interpretation rather than objective truths results in a necessity to reflect upon my own positioning as a researcher in constructing knowledge about the analysed data. First and foremost, my European background and exposure to primarily Western media could possibly have amounted to an incorporation of Western normativity. I therefore constantly have to interrogate my own biases and normative assumptions about Japan’s “remilitarisation” as well as positioning vis-à-vis “threats” such as China’s rise and North Korean missile testing. The System Narrative that I have identified as liberal internationalism

is the order under which my knowledge about reality is constructed as well. Also, since this topic is sensitive in many ways, I have to be careful not to let my personal political attitudes unintentionally play a role in the representation of voices and arguments, which ties back to discourse analysis and the interrogation of taken-for-granted assumptions. This concludes my methods chapter and with the theoretical background accounted for as well, we can now move on to the analysis of the empirical data.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

”As we reflect on the past, in heading towards the 80th, 90th, and 100th anniversaries to come, what kind of nation will Japan be and what kind of contributions will we make to the world (Abe, 2015a)?” – *Prime Minister Shinzō Abe*

As outlined throughout the background section, the Legislation marks a historic change in Japan’s foreign policy posture. It comes with the new dynamic of collective self-defense, which was considered incompatible with the Constitution since the end of World War II. As assumed within this thesis’ theoretical framework, the narratives that we are surrounded by—the way in which we converse about our world, how knowledge about it is constructed and understood—has the power to define and constrain our action as it sets limits to what we consider *actionable* and *imaginable* (Miskimmon et al, 2013:1). This is comparable with the constraints to the actionable and imaginable defined by the Japanese Constitution, limiting acceptable action to self-defense. However, a strategically used or constructed narrative has discursive power and can therefore shape opinions. Thus, the analysis of the narrative construction allows us to answer the research question guiding this thesis, namely; how does the Japanese State attempt to create consensus for the necessity of the Legislation for Peace and Security?

The analysis proceeds as follows; in section one, the Issue Narrative is analysed, first in terms of the formation of the “issue” itself—meaning discontent with the status quo—and subsequently the construction of the solution that is provided for the issue. The content of the Issue Narrative and how it is used—with which we start off our analysis—informs us about ambitions, state attributes, and strategic interest in relation to the Legislation implemented within UNMISS. In section two, the Issue Narrative is then put into the context of both Japan’s “story of the state” (National Narrative) and the international order Japan aims to integrate into (System Narrative). The Issue Narrative is embedded into these higher-level

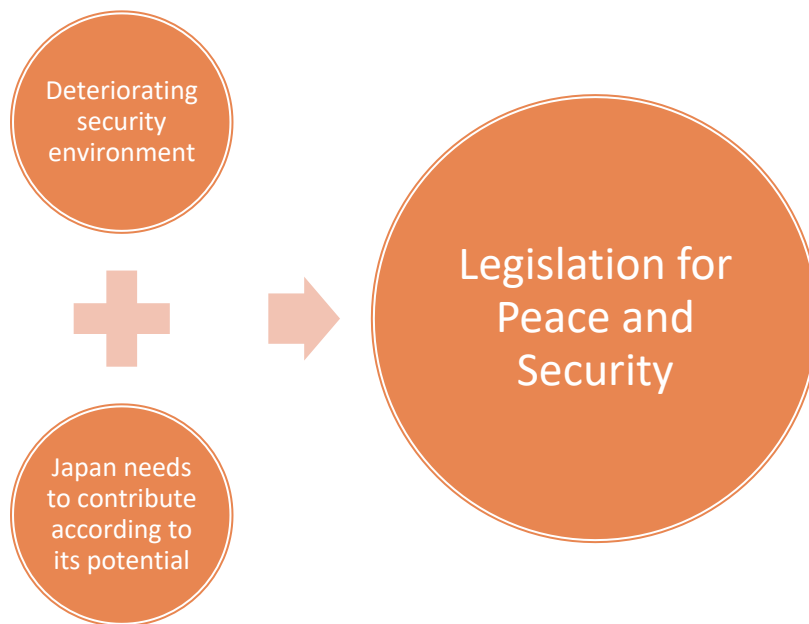
narratives and makes in its construction reference to dynamics within these levels. The National Narrative informs us about the values and ambitions that Japan want to be associated with while implementing change. The System Narrative, then, provides an understanding of the construction of the Issue Narrative in relation to dynamics within the international order.

5.1 Section 1: Detecting the strategy – the Issue and its solution

This first section of the analysis constitutes an examination of the *Issue* that is projected by the Japanese state. With issue is meant a problem or discontent with the status quo. The Issue Narrative lies at the centre of our analysis and is therefore dealt with first. By analysing the formation of the issue and the solution that is provided for it, we can start to grasp what is “normatively desirable (Roselle et al, 2014:76)” for the narrator. The Issue Narrative is embedded into the two higher-level narratives⁴ and can therefore not fully be isolated. Thus, some dynamics of the National and System level are already hinted at in this first section.

But what then, is the Issue Narrative? The identified issue within the collected empirical data is twofold; firstly, Japan cannot properly protect itself from external threats and needs to adapt to an increasingly severe security environment; and secondly, Japan does not live up to its potential internationally, meaning non-physical contribution is deemed insufficient by the international community given Japan’s size and standing. This, it is argued, is a situation that is unstable and calls for efforts for change – for a solution. What is emphasized equally throughout the analysed sources as a necessary action for solving this issue is the introduction of a new law that enables Japan to ensure its survival at the same time as it allows Japan to contribute according to its capacity and the expectations of the international community. The solution, thus, is the Legislation for Peace and Security.

⁴ The National Narrative and International System Narrative are analysed in Section 2



Graph 2: Illustration of Issue-level narrative – the problem/issue and the solution

For understanding the Issue Narrative, we first need to analyse the construction of the issue itself. We therefore start out with taking a closer look at how the issue/problem is framed and if it convincingly calls for an adjustment. We then move on to an analysis of the presented solution to the issue (the Legislation) and how it is constructed in order to create consensus about its necessity.

5.1.1 *Framing the issue*

As mentioned above, this first part of section 1 aims to analyse the discontent with the status quo being that Japan is unable to contribute according to its potential in the light of a deteriorating security environment. This narration of Japanese discontent is necessary in order to construct the solution to the issue—the new Legislation—on legitimate grounds. What follows, thus, is an analysis of the framing of the issue/the problem that needs solving.

In the collected data, reoccurring discursive patterns construct a distinguishable conflict or “issue” that calls for action. The below citation is a sequence of the MOD informational video “Peace: For Tomorrow’s Smile”;

“The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe. Furthermore, as the international community needs more contribution from Japan, we are expected to conduct more activities not only for ensuring defense of Japan but also for maintaining global peace (MOD, 2016).”

The statement above is composed of two elements; firstly, a reference to a deteriorating security environment and secondly, insufficiency of Japan's contributions, meaning being limited to engineering and financial contributions. We now look at these two elements one by one.

The deteriorating security environment is portrayed in terms of “threats” or “destabilizing factors”, manifested most frequently in the mention of North Korean missile tests and China's rise creating regional as well as international tension. These dynamics are declared threats as they disrupt the existing order, causing an undesirable “shift in the global power balance”. From the MOFA 2016 annual whitepaper;

“North Korea's ballistic missile launches and nuclear development, China's military build-up lacking transparency, and its attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion [...] on its own claims which are inconsistent with the existing international order, has been concerns of the international community (MOFA, 2016a).”

North Korea and China are portrayed as the *other*, outsiders to the established order trying to destabilize what has been constructed. These “outsiders” are making claims that contradict what the “insiders” to this order have agreed upon. China and North Korea are thus not following the rules of the game and thereby constitute a threat to the established order. Also, what catches the eye in the above statement is the manner in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—in this case—seems to plead the cause of the international community when defining its concerns. As stated by Miskimmon et al, the way in which a narrative is used indicates an actor's positioning in relation to a given order (Miskimmon et al, 2013:63). Japan uses the discourse as an integral part of the international community to which China and North Korea are “threats”. Making the concerns of the international community its own suggests a desire to integrate into the existing order. What is more, the use of the category “destabilizing factor” in relation to a changing international order can be interpreted to imply a desire for *stability* or “balance” within the given order, hence, a desire to maintain the *status quo*. To “[...] create a stable and predictable international environment and prevent the emergence of threats (GoJ, 2014)” is the proclaimed objective, it is stated in 2014 Cabinet Decision leading up to the Legislation.

What is more, it is strongly emphasized throughout the sources that single countries are unable to tackle these threats alone. The below statements by Prime Minister Abe—at the 2015 fleet review of the Japan Self-Defense Forces—and Defense Minister Gen Nakatani during a press conference illustrate such reoccurring claims;

“Threats will easily transcend national borders, whether we like it or not. We live in a time in which no single nation can address these issues alone (Abe, 2015b).”

“Japan’s stance of setting limits on its military action is becoming less accepted by other countries (Nakatani, 2015).”

The common threat perception thus calls for cooperation, and most frequently, this reference is made in association with mention of the United States. A strengthened alliance built on mutual trust increases deterrence and prevents threats from finding its way over the Japanese border, it is argued in the empirical data. It is thus implied that the foundation of the security arrangement between the US and Japan lacks reciprocity and thereby trust, decreasing deterrence and increasing possibilities for war. It is a call for cooperative protection beyond borders that renders Japan’s passive positioning as a non-military contributor unacceptable. Also, the use of “whether we like it or not” in the above statement indicates a depiction of a non-debateable reality, a fact that Japan has to act to accordingly. This can be associated with the academic debate concerning “normalization”. A comparison with the “normal”, the US, renders Japan’s function in the uneven alliance untrustworthy and insufficient. Thus, normalization would result in Japan becoming more reliable, which in existing literature most commonly is associated with pacifism being thrown overboard, abandoned for the cause of re-militarization (Hughes, 2004). However, this analysis gives evidence to the contrary, namely that despite constitutional reinterpretation and Prime Minister Abe’s revisionist tendencies now permitting collective self-defense, “pacifism”—of course merely as an interpretation of the terms’ actual meaning—plays an important role as a communicative tool for legitimizing change.

We now move on to the second element through which the problem/issue is constructed, namely Japan’s inability to live up to its potential internationally;

“When international peace and security are threatened and the international community is united in responding to the situation in accordance with the U.N. Security Council resolution, there exist situations in which it is necessary for Japan to conduct support activities to armed forces of other countries (GoJ, 2014).”

The above statement is derived from the 2014 Cabinet Decision that laid the groundwork for the Legislation. The international community is herein described as countering threats to its security and peace much like a united front. To fully integrate into this entity requires mutual assistance, which is a requirement however, that—when this statement was made in 2014—

Japan could not live up to due to its constitutional confinement to self-defense. The above statement clearly calls for a need to acquire the legislative capacities to engage in *collective* self-defense, thereby earning a spot in the united front, “[...] walking hand in hand with countries which share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law (MOFA, 2016a).” Also, the statement above legitimizes collective action under UN directive. This is a dynamic that is used frequently, emphasising the significance of responding to UN requests and to “follow the direction of the UN (Nakatani, 2015)”. Nonetheless, Japan is unable to fully obey UN guidelines. The shift in mandate from nation-building assistance to protection of civilians within UNMISS in 2014, added additional pressure on Japan to alter the constraints to its engagement. The below statements are derived from the Cabinet Office homepage and the 2014 Cabinet Decision prior to the introduction of the Legislation.

“The engineering activities that the Japanese unit intends to perform do not always square with the role that UNMISS wants Japan to play (Cabinet Office, 2012a).”

“[...] the international community also expects Japan to play a more proactive role for peace and stability in the world, in a way commensurate with its national capability (GoJ, 2014).”

Japan’s narrative exhibits clear ambitions to satisfy norms and suggestions formulated by the UN in particular and the international community in general. As introduced in the background chapter, it is often argued in existing literature that Japan uses the UN as a platform to reinvent itself as a trustworthy international player, thereby distancing itself from its imperial past (George, 1993; Toshiya, 2007). In the light of the empirical data that guides this research, that is a valid argument. However, what can be added is that the UN also provides the Japanese state with acknowledged communicative tools for initiating change. I build this argument on Miskimmon et al and the notion that narratives define the imaginable and actionable, thereby constraining as well as enabling agency (Miskimmon et al, 2013:1). Accordingly, the narrative of the UN—within which Japan operates and defines its inadequacies—collective self-defense is not only imaginable but indeed a desirable trait. The UN narrative of cooperation to counter common threats thereby sets the call for change from self-defense to collective self-defense into a positive light. In order to occupy a rank as a powerful leader within this international UN narrative, contribution is a must. This is a reality that Japan is painfully aware of since the traumatic criticism of “chequebook diplomacy” (Hatakeyama, 2014; Hook & Dobson, 2007; Maslow, 2015; Toshiya, 2007). According to

Miskimmon et al, countries that aim for “great power” status within the international community emphasize sovereign power, leadership, and responsibility for allies (Miskimmon et al, 2013:36). As Japan makes unmistakable claims for such international leadership side-by-side with the US, it needs to acquire behavioural attributes that are suitable for such a claim (Miskimmon et al, 2013:36). One such attribute is the ability to “conduct support activities to armed forces of other countries (GoJ, 2014).” Making use of the language and values of the UN⁵, underlining the necessity to follow UN norms of peacekeeping and international contribution (Hatakeyama, 2014; Singh, 2011) extends Japan’s freedom to manoeuvre when it comes to solving the “issue”. We can therefore argue that UN centrism serves not only as a platform for gaining international trust but also to legitimize change due to an incorporation of UN norms of “great power” contribution into its own narrative.

To summarize, the Japanese state expresses discontent with the status quo in terms of a necessity for Japan to contribute more proactively in the light of an increasingly severe security environment. This urgency stems from ambitions to establish itself as a “great power” in the international community that has the capacity to cooperate with allies and engage in mutual assistance. Since only through reciprocity can deterrence be ensured and only through stability within the existing order can threats be neutralized. This “issue” has to be solved in order to gain a spot in the united front and enable Japan to provide the contribution that the international community expects of it, thereby gaining the acknowledgment and pride that is associated with this accomplishment. What is discussed above, thus, represents the groundwork for the construction of a substantiated Issue Narrative, solving the problem that is presented. Let us now move on to this solution to the “issue”.

5.1.2 Solving the issue

As illustrated above, Japan is concerned with the deteriorating security environment as well as its inability to cooperate proactively with its allies for stabilizing the threatened order. This issue calls for a solution, for change. When coding the data, what was presented as having potential to solve the “issue” that is outlined above is a new Legislation that enables Japan to expand its military capacities. In this sub-section of the analysis we take a closer look at how this solution is constructed and presented to the narratives’ audience.

“In the current global context in which no country can secure its own security only by itself, this legislation truly enhances deterrence, and that in turn prevents war. [...] An

⁵ The appropriation of UN language and values for the construction of the Issue Narrative is further discussed in sub-section 5.2.2

alliance in which each side can provide assistance to the other in order to defend Japan is naturally going to strengthen our bonds of friendship (Abe, 2016a).”

In this press conference statement Prime Minister Abe clearly ties back to the “issue” that we have identified above. The Legislation increases deterrence, it is argued, as well as lays the foundation for cooperative reciprocity. As presented in the background chapter, the Legislation entails a reinterpretation of the Constitution, permitting self-defense not only as a result of an attack against Japan—as was the interpretation prior to the Legislation—but also;

“[...] when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness (GoJ, 2016; MOD 2015, 2016, 2017).”

“[...] Article 9 of the Constitution cannot possibly be interpreted to prohibit Japan from taking measures of self-defense necessary to maintain its peace and security and to ensure its survival (GoJ, 2014).”

The first statement is reoccurring in the Legislation as well as all three MOD annual whitepapers that are analysed. The second statement is derived from the 2014 Cabinet Decision. What this statement insinuates is that the “use of force”—considered an irreconcilable action for peaceloving Japan for 70 years—in fact does not conflict with the pacifist clause of the Constitution. Instead, Japan must indeed dedicate itself to an extended military capacity in order to continue on its pacifist, peaceloving path. Only a commitment to allies and cooperation against threats will truly lead to a stable international order and consequently ensure the peace and security of the Japanese people. Hence, the new Legislation is a means to ensure that the “pledge to never again wage war (Abe, 2015c)” can continuously be upheld.

As argued earlier, Japan makes claims for what Miskimmon et al frame “great power” status, which is characterized by actors highlighting their sovereignty, leadership, and responsibility (Miskimmon et al, 2013:36). For Japan, however, making such a claim is a delicate undertaking. The pacifist clause in the Constitution—declared compatible with the very Legislation that is indispensable for Japan to become a great power—is in fact a promise to give up the “sovereign right” to use weapons for the purpose of conflict resolution. Thus, the attribute of sovereignty, while necessary for Japan to display in order to gain recognition for its great power claim, is also an attribute that has to be disguised in order for it not to conflict

with Article 9, which guides Japan's state identity. Hence, it is crucial for Japan to balance its illustration of attributes, being ambiguous enough not to alert its audience (Miskimmon et al, 2013:114). So, how can this conflicting claim of compatibility be made legitimate?

As introduced earlier, in order to construct a convincing narrative, an actor needs to be attentive of the audience's epistemological frame of reference, meaning its knowledge about their world (Miskimmon et al, 2013:113). As one share of the narrative's audience, the Japanese public has an epistemological frame of reference that is clearly anchored in pacifism and in a "story of the state" defined as peaceloving. Therefore, it is strategic for the constructed Issue Narrative to tie into the audience's existing knowledge about the world they live in. Communicative features that diverge from this knowledge would alert the audience and make the narrative therefore less convincing (Miskimmon et al, 2013:113). "Pacifism" thus is a narrative element that is so significant that its incorporation into the construction of the Issue Narrative is unavoidable. Hence, the emphasis on the compatibility of the Legislation with existing constitutional parameters is strategic and convincing insofar as it does not conflict with the audience's epistemological frame of reference. What is more, for the share of the narrative's audience that is the international community the emphasis on compatibility of the Legislation with Article 9 allows a continuous identification as a "peaceloving" nation⁶, thus preventing an association to imperial Japan to re-emerge (Toshiya, 2007). Former Defense Minister Tomomi Inada states during a press conference;

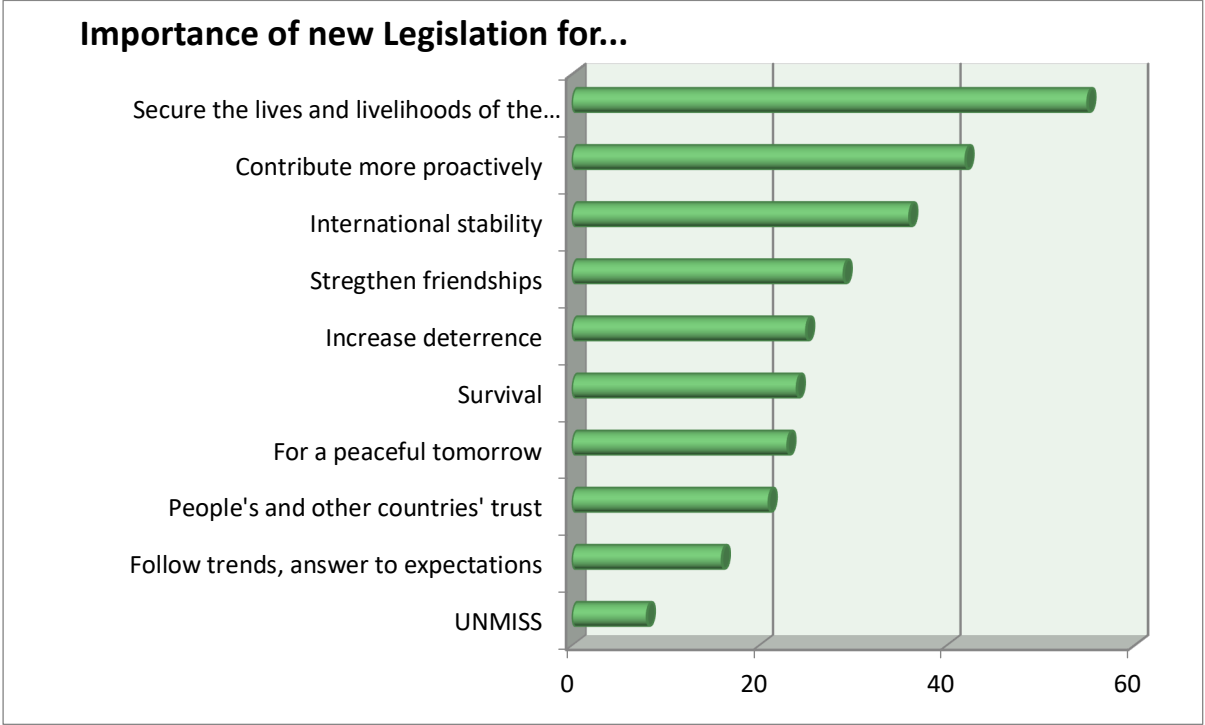
"The new Legislation for Peace and Security [...] is a very significant law that enables Japan to ensure its own security and contribute to the peace and stability of the world within the limits of the constitution (Inada, 2016)."

It is diligently emphasized that the Legislation indeed is compatible with the pacifist norm enshrined in the Constitution. Hence, "pacifism" not only prevails but—given the epistemological frame of reference of the domestic as well as the international audience—is indeed crucial when constructing a convincing narrative. This argument challenges the common academic perception that "pacifism" becomes increasingly irrelevant for Japan's foreign policy approach (Oros, 2015; Pope, 2017).

After having established that the solution is claimed to be compatible with the existing constitutional framework, lets now take a closer look at its construction. The below graph

⁶ Japan's National Narrative as "peaceloving" is discussed in sub-section 5.2.1

illustrates the themes that according to the narrator can be solved with the introduction of the Legislation;



Graph 3: NVivo count: Frequency of codes stressing the importance of the new Legislation

In what follows, the two most frequently mentioned themes are examined. Most vigorously, it is advocated that the Legislation is crucial for securing the lives and livelihoods of the Japanese people. Defense Minister Nakatani states in a press conference that;

“As I have stated repeatedly, as the security situation surrounding Japan becomes ever more severe, the Legislation for Peace and Security is essential to maintain the peace and security of Japan and to secure the lives and peaceful livelihoods of Japanese people in any situation (Nakatani, 2016).”

There is a clear linkage of the emphasis on a deteriorating security environment (the issue) with the necessity to increase capabilities to secure the lives of the Japanese people. In what was analysed in the previous section—the framing of the issue—the danger to the Japanese people was not spilled out but merely implied through a strategic reference to “threats”. By continuous reference to destabilizing factors, vulnerability was inferred, thus creating an opportunity for an extension of the taken-for-granted—being constrained to self-defense. This can be related to Maslow et al and their concept of a “state-led recalibration of risk (Maslow et al, 2015:3)” offering an opportunity for an actor to initiate policy change. The state defines external risks, thereby implying that something has to change in order for Japan not to fall

victim to these threats. In the provision of the solution, clear reference is for the first time made to the Japanese people; yet, not in relation to danger, but instead, to rescue, security, and peace. Thereby, the Legislation is given a positive connotation, providing security for the “lives and livelihoods of the Japanese people”, which legitimizes its implementation. The second most frequently mentioned theme ensuring the importance of the Legislation is that it enables Japan to contribute more proactively to the international community. A citation from a MOFA informational video;

“Following the Legislation for Peace and Security, Japan is determined to further promote Proactive Contribution to peace, and make a greater contribution to peace and stability in the international community (MOFA, 2016b).”

The Legislation is considered a necessary tool for enabling proactivity in Japan’s contributions. *Proactivity* has been a watchword in Japanese foreign policy recently. It is tightly associated with Japan’s foreign policy shift that in existing literature is understood as a transition from passivity to proactivity. As is outlined in the background chapter, Japan has encountered a significant amount of criticism in relation to its perceived passivity on the international arena, reaching from “karaoke” to “chequebook” diplomacy (Hayes, 2001; Lam, 2009; Singh, 2002). An ambition to become more proactive in its foreign policy stance can be understood as Japan attempting to distance itself from an unfavourable global image. An image as passive is incompatible with Japan’s claim for international “great power” status. Hence, the Legislation is considered to provide Japan with the ability to take initiative—be proactive—rather than be reduced to reaction. What is more, the Legislation is said to increase Japan’s cooperative capabilities, which ties to the critique of “pacifist isolationism (Maslow, 2015:29)”. We can therefore argue that the Legislation clearly is considered a tool for polishing Japan’s tainted global image and integrate more naturally into the international community, doing so not as a passive US lap-dog but rather as a proactive leader. This leadership is not, as stated before, incompatible with continuous dedication to “pacifism”, but rather “pacifism” is strategically tied to proactivity in Japan’s initiation of the “peace” Legislation.

As specified in sub-section 3.2.1 *the operationalization of the theory*, main attention is in this analysis given to the *formation* of the narrative. However, *reception* is important since it reveals whether or not the constructed narrative actually is successful in its struggle for consensus. Nonetheless, reception is in this thesis only included insofar as the Japanese Issue Narrative itself gives clues about reception in terms of critique that is integrated into the

narration. With this being said, is the constructed Issue Narrative convincing for its audience? The way in which the sub-themes of the solution are deployed suggests a struggle for consensus for the constructed narrative. The narrative seeks approval from the international community as well as from the Japanese public. The solution is composed of elements that strategically target both audiences respectively; the international community—most markedly by reference to proactive contribution (UN reference) and international stability (towards the US)—and the Japanese public—by reference to the security of the Japanese people as well as survival. These are issues that are resonant with the respective audience’s existing values/experiences (Miskimmon et al, 2013:113) and that are valuable to the targeted share of the audience. Nonetheless, consensus is not achieved—at least domestically—and the Legislation continues to be highly controversial, with an opposition party referring to it as “war legislation” (Japan Times, 2015). Prime Minister Abe’s response;

“The Legislation for Peace and Security has received support and high evaluations from the international community. This proves that criticisms of the bill as a “War Bill” was simply labelling with no basis (Abe, 2016b).”

This statement ties the international community’s trust and approval to the legitimacy of the Legislation. It also implies that consensus is in fact achieved internationally, with the Legislation being highly appreciated by the international community. This kind of logic is repeated throughout the sources, highlighting the appreciation of Japan’s allies as well as the UN for the efforts to enhance capabilities. A UN spokesperson is cited in the *Defense of Japan 2017* whitepaper;

“The UN appreciates the discussions Japan held in this matter. We welcome any measures of a UN member state that helps enhance the abilities of PKO personnel to protect civilians and UN staff (MOD, 2017).”

Reference to the approval of the international community is thus used strategically to create further consensus, indicating that Japan’s possibility to improve its standings internationally is a legitimizing factor for the Japanese public. When examining the mention of “UNMISS” or “South Sudan” in the light of the constructed narrative, we detect a continuation of this phenomenon of an emphasis on the international community’s trust. Reference to the mission in South Sudan is thus made most frequently in terms of prospects of gaining trust, internationally as well as domestically. UNMISS is a platform for Japan to prove its leadership and dedication to UN rules and norms. This ties into George’s argument that

participation in UNPKOs, the power of the blue helmet, is a means for Japan to gain trust for its military (George, 1993:574).

To summarize, the “issue” arguably can be solved by introducing the Legislation. The Legislation is argued to positively affect a great number of things, most prominently secure the lives of the Japanese people as well as strengthen Japan’s proactivity and cooperative capabilities. This in turn facilitates a more natural integration into the international community, which will become more stable and predictable due to the increasing and physical Japanese contribution that the Legislation allows. It is strongly emphasized throughout the empirical data that the Legislation is compatible with the Constitution. The interpretation of the pacifist clause holds, it is argued, since defense of allies is crucial for ensuring Japan’s survival, thus accentuating a continuous obedience to its peaceloving “story of the state”. Pacifism certainly has a strategic importance when narrating change and in convincing the audience—both international and domestic—of the narratives’ significance. The solution to the “issue” is composed of a variety of different arguments, thus creating a high level of ambiguity concerning the real purpose of the Legislation. Also, while domestic voices still counter the Legislation, Japan strategically refers to the trust that is gained from the international community by engaging more proactively. Thus, the prospect for international esteem trumps domestic criticism.

We have now established the formation of the Issue Narrative and how it is constructed in order to legitimize change. However, there are elements within this Issue Narrative that we have hinted at and that need further examination. These elements are strategically borrowed from higher-level narratives (National and System Narrative). The second section of the analysis therefore puts the Issue Narrative into context, meaning it is analysed in relation to dynamics within the national identity and international order that have to be taken into account for Japan to construct a convincing narrative.

5.2 Section 2: The Issue embedded in a nation and system

In the above section the Issue Narrative is analysed, giving insight about the strategic use of communicative tools that lie within the narrative construction. This leaves us with two narrative levels unexamined; the National Narrative and the International System Narrative. This second section of the analysis, thus, examines how the Issue is embedded into the “story of the state” (National Narrative) as well as the order that surrounds it (System Narrative). It is crucial to take these different levels into account since they inform us about the actor’s

integration into a specific order, state attributes and endeavours. In section 1 of the analysis, we have already hinted at Japan's endeavours to stabilize order and integrate more fully into the existing system. Section 2 contains a more thorough examination of higher-level dynamics (e.g. UN values, US alliance, China threat) that are deployed strategically in the Issue Narrative in order to create consensus.

Section 2 of the analysis proceeds as follows; firstly, Japan's National Narrative is identified and put in reference to the Issue Narrative that is discussed in section 1. Thereafter, the System Narrative is identified, meaning the international order that Japan integrates into. The analysis of the incorporation of communicative tools from the system into the Issue Narrative gives clues about Japan's positioning vis-à-vis the system. Also, the analysis of higher-level dynamics informs us about Japan's attempt of creating legitimacy for the Legislation within the nation and the system.

5.2.1 *Japan's National Narrative in relation to the Issue*

This section serves as a clarification to the image that Japan portrays of itself in relation to the implementation of the Legislation. This is crucial since, according to Roselle et al, a states' National Narrative—or “the story of the state”—informs us about goals, ambitions, values, and norms (Roselle et al, 2014:76). Thus, the analysis of the strategic reference to the “story of the state” within the construction of the Issue Narrative is imperative since it informs us about the national image that Japan wants to attach to the legislative change.

Japan's “story of the state” that is emphasized in relation to the implementation of the Legislation is fairly straightforward, namely Japan as a *peaceloving* nation, continuing on its chosen path, obeying the Constitution while contributing more proactively as an international “great power”. Citing Prime Minister Abe at his 2015 New Year's press conference;

“The path Japan has taken as a peace-loving nation will remain unchanged. Against the backdrop of a dramatically changing international situation, we will make this into a path which we follow even more tenaciously (Abe, 2015a).”

This National Narrative of peaceloving Japan reads like a pledge to uphold the pacifist agenda that came with admiration, while altering the passivity that resulted in disapproval. Hence, a path that embraces both pacifism and proactivity, which of course is Abe's famous or perhaps infamous foreign policy approach of *Proactive Pacifism*. This thesis of course does not allow for a thorough analysis of this conceptual fusion, yet, what is obvious is that these two concepts historically have been treated as incompatible (Hughes, 2004; Oros, 2008; Singh,

2002; Soeya et al, 2011). The pacifist clause of the Constitution has earlier been framed as denying Japan a more active international role, ushering in the traumatic era of “chequebook” criticism (Hatakeyama, 2014). However, when referring to the Legislation proactivity is a must for a peaceloving nation such as Japan given the deteriorating security environment. It is thus implicit in the “story of the state” that the pledge to never again wage war can be upheld by taking a more active, physical international role.

What is more, “the story of the state” is reinforced by strategically referring to the “other”. The image that Japan portrays of itself as peaceloving and law-abiding (meaning following its constitutional framework) stands in stark contrast to its strategic illustration of others as “threats” or “destabilizing factors”.⁷ Miskimmon et al outline the use of binaries such as “good/evil” as a strategic tool used by influential actors to create or reinforce order (Miskimmon et al, 2013:60). The depiction of China and North Korea vis-à-vis Japan can be understood as demonstrating such a binary; Japan as dedicated to its chosen path as a peace-loving nation versus China and North Korea as threats and destabilizing factors that are causing concern. By emulating common ideas about the international community’s threat perception, Japan is taking an active role in re-producing the ideas and values of the existing order. Thus, what Japan can accomplish by such a strategic use of binaries is to establish itself as a powerful actor within that order. Also, highlighting the negative image of the other reinforces the positive image Japan aims to establish of itself.

Correspondingly, what comes with aspirations to be acknowledged with a certain role within the international community is a strategic comparison with what I call “rival contributors”. In an interview published on the Cabinet Office homepage, a UNMISS staff officer states;

“I’m a little disappointed with people of Juba; they say hello to me in Chinese, although many Japanese cars are running in the downtown. [...] Of course, some people say “Japan” to me in a friendly voice when I’m in camouflage wear. The people of Juba are definitely watching the activities of the Japanese engineering unit, so I believe that they will say hello to me in Japanese in the near future (Cabinet Office, 2012b).”

This statement implies a further urgency to win the battle for recognition through contribution. Interestingly, the rival contributor in the statement above is one of the personified “threats” to international stability, as outlined earlier. This reference to China’s

⁷ For a more thorough discussion of the strategic reference to threats, see 5.1.1

international engagement—a reference that is also made habitually in every year’s *Defense of Japan*—calls for change by provoking Japan’s pride. The “peaceloving nation” can’t possibly lose the war of contribution against the “destabilizing factor”, the personified “threat” to the international community.

In summary, the National Narrative that is projected while seeking consensus for legislative change is that of *peaceloving* Japan. By highlighting peace in its “story of the state” Japan aims to distance itself further from its wartime past as well as from aggressive “others” while at the same time assuring that contributions will take a more proactive form. The constitutional pledge, thus, will not be broken and in fact, providing physical contributions is the safest way to ensure peace for all. This National Narrative counters doubt and criticism about the Legislation indicating a retraction to imperial aggression.

We now move on to the next section of our analysis, in which the last narrative level is examined, namely the International System Narrative.

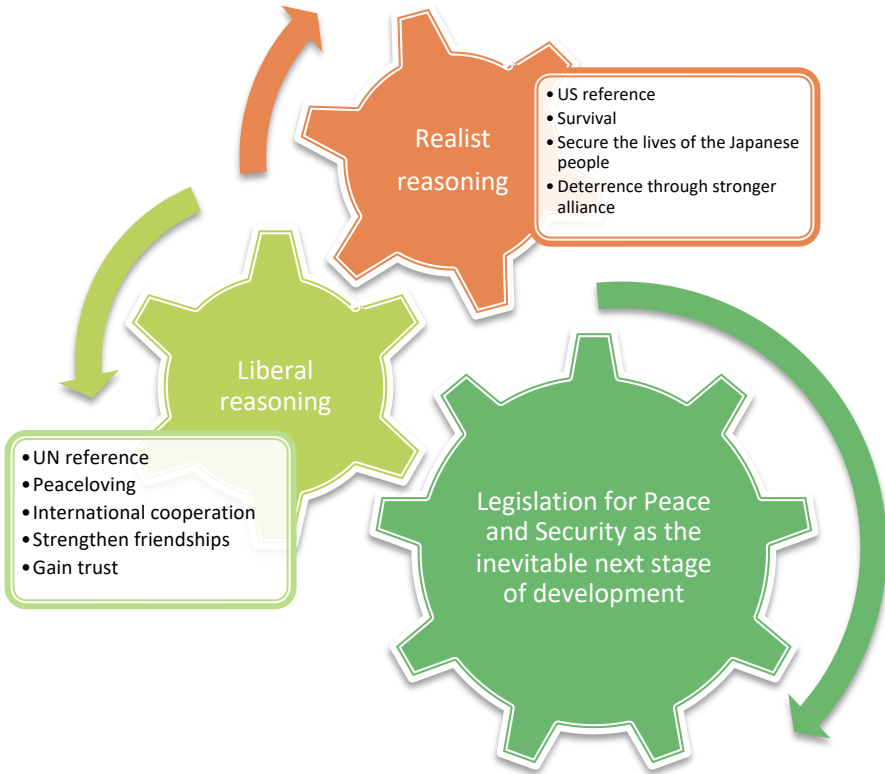
5.2.2 *The System Narrative in relation to the Issue*

This last part of the analysis provides a deeper understanding of the order that Japan is integrated into and the dynamics within this order that are referenced to in the construction of the Issue Narrative. This is crucial for our understanding of Japan’s formation of its Issue Narrative, since according to Roselle et al, International System Narratives contain information about the structure of the international order as well as the roles of the actors that are part of the order (Roselle et al, 2014:76). Therefore, this section is devoted to identifying dynamics within the existing order/system that are mirrored in the narration of the legislative change (the Issue Narrative). We have already established in the analysis’ first section that the way in which the Issue Narrative is constructed suggests that Japan aims to become an integral part of the existing order, advancing in its ranks as a “great power”. In this part of the analysis, we take a closer look at the dynamics of the international order (the System Narrative) that Japan includes into its narration of the Issue. But first of all, how can the order be defined?

When stressing the importance of the Legislation reference is most frequently made to the United States and the United Nations, focusing on issues such as ally cooperation, threats to the existing order, and the importance of following common goals and norms. Thus, the *System* Narrative that is identified in the context of the Legislation is “liberal

internationalism”. Japan’s Issue Narrative makes clear reference to a liberal international order, aspiring approval of its main advocates—the US and the UN—for its contributions.

The keen observer has surely detected realist and liberal features in the sequences of empirical data that are cited in the discussion thus far. Realist reasoning appears in the strategic portrayal of threats, a call for balance and stability in the light of a rising China, a struggle for Japan’s survival, the security of Japanese lives and livelihoods (*raison d’état*), and focus on national interest maximization. Hence, realist logic is actively used for narrating topics that are associated with the US and the Japan-US alliance. Liberal reasoning is commonly applied in reference to international cooperation for the common goal of peace and prosperity, moral institutionalism, the belief in the perfectibility of South Sudan through nation-building assistance and an emphasis on progress, as well as underscoring the importance of engaging in multiple layers of governance for establishing order through interdependence. Hence, liberal logic is actively used for narrating topics that are associated with the direction given by the UN. Liberal and realist reasoning that is connected to System level dynamics permeate the solution to the “issue” that the Japanese state provides for its audience. Interestingly, both liberal and realist logic—commonly assumed to be incompatible and striving for different goals—arrive at one and the same conclusion, namely the inevitability of the Legislation.



Graph 4: Illustration of the construction of the Issue-narrative in relation to System-dynamics

Liberal and realist logic, thus, are deployed side by side in reference to the UN and the US respectively. These ideological building blocks strategically cooperate to construct one coherent narrative. Liberalism and realism are commonly treated as incompatible ideological frameworks, making the aspirations of the construction especially ambiguous. Ambiguity is key in this construction, wherein liberal and realist logic combined absorb different audiences and opinions into one strategic narrative. Japan makes constant reference to this liberal international order in its narration of legislative change (Issue narrative). It is therefore crucial for us to draw the line between System and Issue. Lets now take a closer look at how reference is made to the advocates of the international order—the US and UN—within the constructed Issue Narrative.

The US plays a crucial part in the construction of the Issue Narrative. Mainly, the US is referred to with an urgency to increase what we earlier termed “cooperative reciprocity”. What this means is that the Legislation is argued to be necessary as it enables Japan to become a more reliable ally to the US, thus increasing trust within the alliance, which then leads to increasing deterrence. Reference to the US—one of the main agents defining the order—is made strategically for the sake of legitimising change as enhanced cooperation provides security for the Japanese people as well as stability within the region. This kind of reference is made—as introduced above and illustrated in the above graph—with realist logic, e.g. stressing the Legislations’ importance for Japan’s survival and increasing deterrence in the light of external threats to the balance of power. We now turn to the other main actor within the liberal international order (System), namely the UN.

Miskimmon et al argue that we can gain information about an actor’s positioning within an order by analysing strategic use of language, values, and ideas that the System contains (Miskimmon et al, 2013:114). We have already established that the order’s language concerning commonly acknowledged threats is strategically reproduced to reinforce a favourable image of “peaceloving” Japan vis-à-vis China and North Korea as the “other”. What is more, the language and values of the UN permeate Japan’s constructed narrative. This is noticeable already in the naming of the Legislation for Peace and Security, borrowing a combination of words that is used abundantly by the UN in reference to the Security Council and PKOs (UN, 2012). Whether the use of this UN concept of “peace and security” for the new Legislation can be understood as a form of *Orwellian doublespeak* (as suggested by the critique of “war legislation”) or if it actually is a sincere labelling mirroring Japanese ambitions is not the question here. Instead, what we do learn from Japan’s incorporation of

the UN concept into its own narrative is that the reproduction of UN language indicates an ambition to integrate into the UN order, reinforce it, and climb in its hierarchy by gaining the member's trust. This reference to the UN is guided by liberal logic. As discussed and illustrated above, this involves stressing the importance of following UN norms of liberal peace promotion through peacekeeping as well as stressing Japan's devotion to aligning with the direction given by the UN for collective "peace and security".

In summary, the Issue Narrative that is outlined in section 1 certainly is constructed with strategic reference to the existing order that Japan is integrated into, namely the liberal international order. The Legislation contains recurrent reference to the US as well as the UN, thereby hoping to gain legitimacy for the initiated change. Also, language and values that these actors promote—liberal and realist—are incorporated into the construction of the own narrative, which signals Japan's eagerness to integrate into the system and reinforce the order. Reference to threats is also made strategically in order to gain recognition for opposing the common enemy as well as reinforcing the order's outer borders. Interestingly, liberal and realist logic are combined strategically for the construction of the narrative telling the story of collective self-defense. Both liberal—the continuation of UN norms and values—as well as realist—US deterrence—arrive at the same conclusion; the Legislation is the inevitable next stage in Japan's foreign policy development. This combination of commonly assumed to be contradictory frameworks allows Japan to construct a narrative that entices and possibly creates consensus among spectators across a broad ideological spectrum. All of this tells the story of a Japanese security posture that "normalizes" not for the sake of rebuilding its aggressive imperial capacities but rather, one that makes urgent efforts to finally become a respected member and leader of the liberal international order.

6. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Japan (the Abe administration) constructs a coherent narrative in its attempt to create consensus for the Legislation for Peace and Security. This narrative anchors in a description of an issue/problem that the Legislation is capable of solving. And remarkably enough, the pacifist clause of the Constitution is cherished in the process. A clause, that for 70 years has been interpreted as strictly prohibiting collective self-defense. Yet, in a globalized world in which threats transcend borders, it is crucial to defend allies in order to ensure Japan's survival. This kind of logic enables a reinterpretation of the Constitution in the name of peace. "Pacifism"—whether a Trojan horse (Maslow, 2015; Oros, 2015; Pope, 2017) or

actually an authentic norm that proves resilient (Berger, 1993)—certainly plays a crucial role for constructing a convincing narrative of change. In fact, the Legislation is even illustrated as a means to uphold the pledge to “never again wage war (Abe, 2015c)” as it strengthens cooperative reciprocity, thereby increasing trust, stability, deterrence, and peace and security for the Japanese people and the international community. The list of perks is as long as it is ambiguous. This ambiguity is crucial to allure divergent audiences by targeting their respective epistemological frames of reference (Miskimmon et al, 2013:113) thereby absorbing “contradictory events and opinions (Miskimmon et al, 2013:114)”.

The constructed narrative strategically combines the Legislation with an image of Japan as *peaceloving*, thereby preventing audiences from associating change with past aggression as well as distancing itself from aggressive “others” (reference is here made to China and North Korea). Also, the narrative strategically incorporates dimensions from the existing international order, re-constructing language and values resonant with the US (realist) and UN (liberal) as its two main actors. This indicates a Japanese positioning within the existing order, an ambition to integrate into and stabilize rather than destabilize it. Liberal and realist discursive tools, which conventionally are considered incompatible, cooperate in the construction of a convincing narrative. What is remarkable in Japan’s narrative construction is that these arguments that are rooted in fundamentally dichotomous ideologies arrive at one and the same conclusion, namely the inevitability of the Legislation. Whether or not Japan’s use of liberal reasoning is sincere or a sheer disguise for realist ambitions (Moses & Iwami, 2009; Pope, 2017), the fact that liberalism is a major building block of Japan’s narrative tells us that without it, consensus cannot be achieved. The combination of liberal and realist reasoning, thus, could indicate that Japan’s “normal” cannot be assessed in merely realist terms (Curtis, 2013; Maslow et al, 2015; Oros, 2017; Singh, 2002; Toshiya, 2007), but rather as constituting a liberal-realist hybrid.

What then, does this imply? Japan constructs its narrative of legislative change within the existing framework of constitutional pacifism. Pacifism as a concept is certainly reinterpreted and revision is a proclaimed political goal of the LDP, however, using the concept as a central narrative building block indicates that the *actionable* and *imaginable* (Miskimmon et al, 2013:1) still is confined to this deep-seated norm. Thus, despite scholars frequently arguing for the fading relevance of “pacifism” for contemporary Japan, it still is indispensable for telling a convincing story of change. Also, Japan’s foreign policy is constrained by the rhetoric it uses. This means that using “pacifism” to legitimize change may actually contribute

to further reinforcing this norm. By integrating the concept into its own narrative, Japan's scope of action is again attached to the constraining power of constitutional pacifism. Furthermore, the fact that Japan makes use of UN and US language to legitimize change indicates a reconstruction of the existing order rather than an attempt to dismantle it and regress to past aggression. Japan clearly claims recognition for its international role, attempting to climb in the hierarchy of liberal internationalism, but it does so not as a destabilizing aggressor but as an integral part of the existing order.

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