

Constructed Threats

Analyzing how China and North Korea are securitized in Japanese conservative newspapers in relation to the topics of Japan's constitutional amendment

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Abstract

Achieving constitutional amendment has been a goal for the Japanese conservatives for a long time, especially after the Cold War, because Japan's peace identity has been perceived increasingly "abnormal" by the conservative elites in Japan. It thus engendered the heated debates surrounding whether Japan should change its peace identity via controversial constitutional amendment, which conflicts against established the norm of peace. The conservative elites have tried various methods to push forward the agenda of constitutional revision. Existing research revealed that, on the level of Japanese government, securitization of China and North Korea was a common method to influence public attitudes toward constitutional amendment. However, since the general public usually relies on mass-media for the news, instead of analyzing the government documents, this thesis explored how Japanese conservative newspapers shaped this issue in the general public. Based on social constructivism in International Relation (IR), this thesis adopted securitization theory to analyze the contents of the newspapers. The aim was to reveal whether the conservative newspapers also used securitization strategy when reporting relevant issues. Which themes are commonly used by the newspapers when portraying foreign threats? The result indicated that the conservative newspapers indeed adopted securitization to change people's attitudes toward constitutional revision.

Keywords: Japan; International Relation; Constructivism; Securitization; Conservative newspapers; North Korea; China

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Notes on Japanese Language:

1. All Japanese names are listed with its traditional order: family name first, given name in the end.
2. Long vowels are noted with traditional romanizing spelling instead of using diacritic macron “̄”. For example: Hō = Hou;

Abbreviations

LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (Japan)
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
UN	United Nations
SDF	Self Defense Force (Japan)
ASDF	Air Self Defense Force (Japan)
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has enjoyed security under the protection from its U.S. ally. During the Cold War, the “Yoshida Doctrine”¹ played a crucial role in Japan’s foreign and security policies. Combined with Article 9 in the constitution (See Chapter 2), it resulted in Japan’s post-war economic miracle because it allowed Japan to focus on economic growth while spending less on national defense thanks to the protection from the U.S.

Apart from its economic effects, Article 9 has prevented Japan from getting involved into armed conflicts since World War II. So, Article 9 has helped Japan to develop a norm of peace or pacifism, and incorporate it into Japan’s national identity. This is why its constitution is also called the peace constitution. And Japan is also exemplified as a nation of peace. However, after the Cold War, with changing regional and global security conditions, Japan was forced to rethink its identity and role in the international community, especially from a security standpoint. To many Japanese conservative elites, Japan’s identity of peace has been perceived as “abnormal” in this new age. In their opinions, Japan’s identity of peace needs changes accordingly (See Chapter 2). And such changes primarily involve its security policy and the root of the policy – Article 9 in the constitution.

As shall be illustrated in chapter 2, the issues surrounding Article 9 have fostered various discourses, and each discourse represents different path for Japan, including the ones that are against pacifism. However, because of the pacifist influence in Japan and fearing being dragged into war again, any attempt toward changing Article 9 will result in heated debates all over Japan. A typical example is the massive demonstration and brawl in the Diet against the reinterpretation of Article 9 in 2015.

Nevertheless, even with such strong opposing voices, the Japanese government under the LDP never gives up its plan vis-à-vis the constitutional amendment because this goal is one of the party’s core interests since its establishment in 1955 (Samuels 2007). Although the amendment

¹ Yoshida Doctrine was originally developed by the former Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru after the World War II as a way to reject the U.S. demands of rearming Japan during 1950s. Essentially, the doctrine emphasizes the importance of concentrating on Japan’s economic growth rather than rearmament (Kingston 2013).

remains difficult to achieve, under the current framework, smaller changes have been achieved since the end of the Cold War via reinterpreting the constitution, such as the controversial right of collective self-defense. Existing studies have revealed that the Japanese government, under the LDP in particular, has been influencing the discourses and reshaping Japan's identity toward its development as a "normal nation". In the meantime, Chinese rapid modernization and North Korean missile and nuclear programs have been frequently involved in Japan's discourses of security. To establish the necessity of constitutional revision, the Japanese government has adopted a securitization strategy on the discourses about China and North Korea in order to influence people's threat perception (Schulze 2016).

As shall be discussed in Chapter 3, securitization is essentially a "speech act" or discursive apparatus that can be helpful in achieving certain political goals. In this regard, the securitization of North Korea and China has been a frequently referred element in the foreign discourses of Japanese government. In the case of China, it has been frequently securitized as an "aggressive" and "threatening" during the time of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands disputes. Thus, in the name of responding to potential threat posed by China, Japan has to make change on its defense policy beyond the scope of current defense policy (Hagström and Hanssen 2016). As for the North Korea, its reckless nuclear weapon and missile programs have drawn grave security concern from the Japanese government. Because of North Korea's overall poor international reputation, North Korea has "made" itself a convenient subject of securitization for the Japanese policymakers in order to legitimize the changes in Japanese security policy (Hughes 2009).

Before continuing, it is worth bearing in mind that the goal of Japanese government² is to fulfill the constitutional amendment instead of developing rivalries with surrounding countries (Hagström and Turesson 2009). Therefore, the term – "threat" largely functions on a discursive level rather than as a representation of actual military power. It is a tool that can be helpful in reshaping Japan's identity into one of weakness regardless of ontological facts. For example, the Japanese government has constantly expressed security concerns over the North Korean weapons programs. Their effort of instrumentalizing North Korean threat even formed a sense of "North

² In this thesis, unless specified otherwise, the term "Japanese government" refers to the one under the LDP administration because constitutional revision is one of party's core interests.

Korea Peril” in Japan (Hughes 2009). But, given the technological limits and the availability of North Korean missiles, the actual military threat imposed by the North Korea is still questionable (Hagström and Turesson 2009).

1.1. Research Questions and Study Aims

In fact, as shall be discussed in the following chapter, Japan’s normalization, including remilitarization can all be understood in terms of identity change. As stated above, on a government level, it is reasonable to argue that the Japanese government intends to overstate and subsequently securitize the foreign threats in order to reinforce discourses of Japan’s “abnormal” identity, especially the weakness in its identity, and eventually reach the goal of a constitutional amendment via such a strategy.

Regarding the topic of Japan’s normalization and identity change, existing studies primarily focus on Japan’s changing foreign and security policies whereas little attention has been given to Japanese public opinion. In fact, newspapers, which can either shape or reflect public opinions, have played a noticeable role in terms of reshaping the public understanding of constitutional revision in Japan. For the pro-revisionist (conservative) faction, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* serves a typical example as a conservative newspaper. Throughout 1990s, when the first Gulf War marked as a shameful diplomatic failure as the result of Japan’s “abnormal” identity, along with conservative voices in the government, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* started to advocate the merits of normalization via its editorials and opinion polls (Berkofsky 2012). Berkofsky (2012) also suggested that, by doing so, *Yomiuri Shimbun* helped create/portray an environment where the majority of public opinion favored the change at the time (regardless of reality).

Considering the influence of such conservative newspapers (See Chapter 3) in Japan’s quest of normalization, this thesis shall look deeper into the influence of conservative newspapers in shaping public opinion regarding the constitutional amendment since 2000. In particular, since how exactly such foreign threats are portrayed among the general public has not yet gained enough attention, this thesis aims to explore that. The research questions are thus about examining: *which themes are frequently involved when reporting the issues of Chinese and*

North Korean threats? And most of all: Are the Japanese conservative newspapers also securitizing China and North Korea like the Japanese government?

1.2. Thesis Structure

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter primarily focuses on establishing a context based on literature review. It aims to connect Japan's motivation to revise the constitution with its constructed identity. The third chapter offers an explanation of the theoretical framework for this thesis – securitization theory. It is a framework that emphasizes the role of discursive power when perceiving something as a threat. In addition, this chapter also explains the reasons behind choosing Japanese conservative newspapers by illustrating the relationship between the Japanese government and the newspapers. The fourth chapter explains the process of data collection and research methods – qualitative content analysis. The fifth chapter focuses on illustrating empirical findings from collected newspaper articles. And the final chapter will draw conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Regardless of whether the securitization is carried out by the Japanese government or the conservative media, they all share a common ground – Japan's current national identity is “abnormal” and requires changes. Indeed, most literature on Japan's foreign and security policies have reached a similar conclusion that Japanese policymakers have been emphasizing the need to change Japan's “abnormal” identity. Regardless of their final intentions, their opinions are based on normalizing Japan's identity via revising Article 9 in the constitution.

This chapter aims to establish a context for the thesis based on literature review. It connects Japan's quest for constitutional revision, including subsequent military build-up that is the most important part, with the Japan's “abnormal” identity. Additionally, it suggests that neither realism nor liberalism – rationalist schools in international relations (IR) can offer a sound explanation of Japan's quest for normalization and remilitarization. As shall be discussed below, such a quest is not always a representation of rational and egoist choice. Therefore, the third

school in IR – constructivism and related identity study is adopted. It suggested that Japan’s desire for normalization can be concluded as a subjective choice, which is enabled by its *constructed* self-perception of being “abnormal”. Via the lenses of constructivism, the chapter will explore the reasons behind Japan’s desire for normalization, including remilitarization, through constitutional amendment. It revealed that seeking identity change is Japan’s main purpose rather than entering into power struggles with other countries in realist standpoint.

The chapter starts by explaining the connection between Japan’s remilitarization and normalization. It suggests that remilitarization possess a pivotal role in Japan’s normalization agenda. Then, the following section that demonstrates rationalist school thoughts – realism and liberalism are insufficient in explaining Japan’s motivation of normalization. After this, the section focuses on explaining constructivism, and how Japan’s “abnormal identity” is constructed.

2.1. “Normal” and “Rearmament” – From Japan’s Point of View

Today, Japan’s self-perception of itself as an “abnormal” country is a result of various constraints, particularly those related to Article 9 in the constitution. In recent years, Japan’s efforts to “return to normal” via achieving constitutional revision is usually referred as “normalization” in both academic circles and news media. Because the realization of normalization shall mark the moment once Japan successfully returns to its “normal” self, it is crucial to understand the contents of “normal” against the backdrop of Japan’s ambition toward realizing constitutional amendment. In fact, the literature review showed the definition of “normal” is closely related to Japan’s current security policies, especially increasing military build-up or remilitarization.

Throughout the post-war era, four types of discourses have been identified by Richard Samuels (2007) on the issues of Japan’s security/defense policies: *Neoautonomists*, *Normal Nation-alist*, *Pacifist* and *Middle Power Internationalist*³. *Normal Nation-alist* stands for the idea that Japan shall pursue prestige via *strength* in order to become “normal” (Samuels 2007). LDP prime

³ Only “Neoautonomists” and “Normal Nation-alist” are discussed here because they are the two that argue Japan should become “normal” via increasing military build-up, including normalizing the role of SDF as a regular armed force.

ministers, Abe Shinzo and Koizumi Junichiro, who are known for pursuing a “normal Japan” ideology, are categorized under this discourse. According to Samuel, the *Normal Nation-alists* are different from the *Neoautonomists*. The former emphasizes the importance of alliances whereas the latter prefers to maintain greater distance from the U.S. Nevertheless, both sides believed in the importance of possessing a *normal* armed force for Japan.

Another four discourses/trajectories have also been raised regarding Japan’s security/defense postures: *Normal Japan*, *Remilitarized Japan*, *Autonomous Japan* and *Active Ally Japan* (Easley 2017). Easley argued Japan’s defense and security policy is shifting toward *Normal Japan*. While *Autonomous Japan* resembles the *Neoautonomists* in Samuel’s theory above, the demarcation between *Remilitarized Japan* and *Normal Japan* is blurred. Both of them contain definitions similar to Samuel’s *Normal National-alist*. Based upon Easley’s (2017) discussion, *Remilitarized Japan* exclusively emphasizes more aggressive defensive postures within normalization while the *Normal Japan* falls into a moderate position between *Active Ally Japan* and *Remilitarized Japan*.

In detail, according to Easley’s (2017) research, *Normal Japan* stands for:

Such a trajectory is more pacifist and more independent than many US officials would recommend, and more pacifist and less independent than Japanese conservative nationalists would prefer. The goal of a normalization strategy is to achieve a balance between non-military and military means, and between unilateral and multilateral approaches. (2017, 68).

In other words, different from pacifist ideology, *Remilitarized Japan* and *Normal Japan* both acknowledge the indispensable role of increasing military build-up as well as its value for a “normal Japan”.

In short, the results of both researchers showed that increasing military build-up or rearmament serves as a crucial pillar within the entire agenda for normalizing Japan, especially in recent decades. Although there has not been any sign of radical approaches in practice yet, the gradual changes of various discourses surrounding Japan’s identity changes have been noticed and analyzed. Existing research has revealed that the role of remilitarization has become increasingly

significant over time (Hagström 2015; Hagström and Gustafsson 2015) for Japan's identity change. Therefore, remilitarization has become a core interest in Japan's agenda of "normalization".

2.2. The Constitutional Amendment: From a Constructivist Standpoint

For Japan, pursuing normalization essentially refers to the fact that it is seeking a change of identity in the international community. A research from Hagström and Hanssen (2016) concluded that Japan's normalization means to change its identity from a "peace state" into a "global ordinary power". As the previous section outlined, remilitarization is important in Japan's quest of normalization. Hence, revising Article 9 in the constitution, which restricts Japan's military capability in general, is a key step in Japan's normalization agenda.

With the involvement of enhancing Japan's military capability, the rationalist position from IR may argue that Japan's motivation behind constitutional revision is a result of realism. But Japan's main goal of the amendment is not to initiate a power struggle against other countries. As Easley (2017) concluded: "Even if Article 9 were fully amended to allow for a 'normal' military, Tokyo would likely retain a pacifist sub-clause" (82). This thesis thus took an alternative view from IR – constructivism. Seeking an increased military build-up is no doubt included in Japan's agenda, but the focus should be placed upon Japan's quest toward identity change based on constructivism rather than Japan's military strength from a realist position. The following sections will explain the reasons why this thesis adopted the constructivist approach rather than rationalist ones – realism and liberalism.

2.2.1. *Insufficiency of Realism and Liberalism*

To begin with, it is important to explain why the rationalist school explanation is insufficient to explain Japan's quest for "normalization. In the post-war era, Japan has been tied down by the controversial topic of "remilitarization" and "normalization" via the constitutional amendment or reinterpretation. Related thoughts and debates surrounding the topic are *not* recent as a result of changing international dynamics after the end of the Cold War. Rather it has been a goal of the LDP since its establishment in 1955 (Samuels 2007). Because of this historical origin, many

LDP members also utilize it as a supporting argument for justifying constitutional amendment. In the meantime, this topic is also a *recent* one in terms of fostering diplomatic friction between Japan and its East Asian neighbors. Both China and the Korean peninsula are concerned with Japan's ambition of reinterpreting or amending the Article 9 in the constitution. On a superficial level, this may remind them of dreadful memories inflicted by Japanese militarism. On a latent level, in terms of the realist perspective, Japan's remilitarization and normalization can disturb the regional power balance even further, especially in the case of China.

However, a unilateral discussion regarding the power change and competition in the region, which is from the realist standpoint, does not produce a convincing explanation of why Japan wants the constitutional amendment and reinterpretation. When Japan faces threats, it does not act alone when defending itself. Its "bandwagoning" strategy, the U.S.-Japan alliance, has been working effectively throughout the post-war era. The alliance can assist Japan with considerable strength against potential threats. Within the alliance, the U.S. takes a bigger role as an ally in terms of defending Japan while the role of Japan remains supportive. The military options of Japan, such as launching counter attacks, are thus still largely constrained on both policy and hardware levels so far. Therefore, Japan still needs its U.S. ally who is known for having the world's most powerful military for its security.

It might be considered as an unfair relationship ostensibly, but the alliance is in fact a highly reciprocal relationship.

As Leif-Eric Easley (2017) remarked:

Japan's defense structure and policy is inextricably tied to the US-Japan security alliance for the foreseeable future. Even as Tokyo marginally reduces its reliance on Washington and pursues a gradually more independent foreign policy, Japan will continue to rely on the USA for force-projection capability and nuclear deterrence, and the USA will continue to rely on Japan for basing, diplomatic and financial support" (2017, 80).

In addition, this conclusion also countered earlier research indicating Japan is worried that the U.S. may no longer have the capability to protect Japan due to the increasing security burden worldwide, for example the War on Terror in Afghanistan (Hook et al 2012).

Given the firm relationship of the U.S.-Japan alliance, it does not seem to be necessary for Japan to worry about security threats as a result of regional power struggles. On the one hand, the presence of U.S. military in the region prevents China and North Korea from conducting military actions toward Japan. On the other hand, as shall be discussed below, Japan has strong economic relationships with surrounding countries, particularly China. The cost of starting an arms race with surrounding countries could be too high to withstand. As Mearsheimer (2001) already remarked: “No state will attack if the costs and risks are too high (37)”. In short, according to realist standpoint, remilitarization is not an imperative option to Japan. Thus, the unitary explanation and understanding from the realist perspective is insufficient to explore the reasons behind Japan’s motivation for remilitarization in its normalization agenda.

As for liberalism from the International Relation (IR), it lies on the opposite side of the realism. The core liberalist belief is that peace is not only perpetual but also natural status and desire which are rooted within human beings and states. Conversely, acts of war and conflicts, which are brought by the power struggles between states, are viewed as an unnatural status (Burchill 2013). To reach the goal of peace, economic cooperation between states, which has become the process of globalization, plays an important role. The wealth that represents the power of each nation will be achieved in such peaceful manner. However, this idea is also insufficient to understand Japan’s motivation. Trade is crucial to Japan, and economic cooperation brings substantial benefits to Japan⁴. It is especially true in terms of regional cooperation, namely among Japan, China and South Korea. *Yet*, Japan still seeks to fulfill normalization and remilitarization which may increase regional tension, hence jeopardize trade.

After Deng Xiaoping started “Reform and Opening” policy in late-1970s, China was in need of various foreign assistance in order to promote economic reform. A study has revealed that Japan,

⁴ North Korea is excluded from the discussion here for obvious reasons, such as international sanctions and its isolationist foreign policy. Therefore, the regional economic relationship, especially, between China and Japan is solely discussed.

if not the most, has been a very active actor in accommodating Chinese economic growth ever since the late of 1970s (Jerdén and Hagström 2012). With various assistance from Japan, both countries have eventually become each other's top trading partners. In addition to various reciprocal economic connections, Japan has also played an important unilateral role of helping China to become incorporated into many international communities. For example, Japan strongly supported China's membership in the WTO (Jerdén and Hagström 2012).

Needless to say, the economic relationship between China and Japan has been relatively stable and progressive. But such interdependence does not overcome the strain in their bilateral relationships vis-à-vis security and some foreign policies. Various other issues, notably historical issue and territorial disputes, have slowed and even frozen almost all non-economic relations. According to the media of both countries, such relationship has been constantly referred to as “Cold Politics. Heated Economics”⁵.

In conclusion, as for realism, based on the condition of the U.S.-Japan alliance, Japan adopted “bandwagoning” strategy ever since the end of the World War II. Considering the military capability of both, the concerns regarding the security threats does not seem to be Japan's priority concern. When it comes to the liberalism on the other hand, the economic interdependence crafted by the various types of cooperation have benefited both sides. However, the relationship in general has not been going down to the track as the liberals predicted. Japan still sees China and North Korea as military threats, and “uses” them as a crucial part of prerequisites for justifying the remilitarization (via the constitutional amendment/reinterpretation) as part of its agenda of normalization.

2.2.2. Constructivism: An Alternative Approach

Both realism and liberalism belong to rationalism in IR. Rationalism assumes states are egoist actors (Reus-Smit 2013), which is a supposed constant characteristic. These two ideologies explain and understand a state's motivation from a state level and take the state as the main actor in the rationalist sense. However, as outlined above, Japan's motivation behind

⁵ Japanese: 政冷経熱 (せいれいけいねつ/sei rei kei netsu); Chinese: 政冷经热 (zheng leng jing re)

remilitarization/normalization cannot be fully explained by the two schools. In the end, the third school in international relations (IR): constructivism and related identity studies are considered. Under the framework of constructivism, Japan's motivation can be approached from a subjective standpoint. Thus, given the fact that remilitarization has a pivotal role in Japan's normalization agenda, the focus, from a subjective aspect, is to explore why Japan considers itself an "abnormal" country and why the remilitarization is *constructed* as so important for Japan's normal identity rather than its ontological interests from liberalist and realist's point of view.

In the rapid changing international surroundings after the Cold War, non-state factors like culture and norms have become incrementally important in IR. Constructivism is the school that based on these factors. Moreover, unlike realism and liberalism, which attempt to explain and study state interests in from a fixed perspective – state being a definite rational and egoist player, constructivists argue otherwise: State interests and identity are open to change (Agius 2016), and do not depend on rational decisions.

Since the constructivist approach stresses the importance of non-material and irrational aspects within the structure, it allows the incorporation of factors, such as mutual belief, culture, into studies. For constructivists, studies of national identity are usually comprised of these factors. As Reus-Smit concluded: "Constructivists argue that understanding how non-material structures condition actors' identities is important because identities inform interests and, in turn, actions." (Reus-Smit 2013, 225). In theory, within a country (group), the identity of a nation stands for a mutual belief that supports the legitimacy of country's political system (Fukuyama 2018). Furthermore, such beliefs may not be necessarily based on objective facts. It can be constructed with a strong subjective influence. The ideas/beliefs are usually determined by each group's actors from an intersubjective perspective, rather than given by the nature (Agius 2016). Fukuyama (2018) specifically made an analogy suggesting that identity is "the stories that people tell about themselves" (8).

Much previous research has already attempted to explain Japan's quest of the constitutional amendment and reinterpretation from a constructivist perspective, specifically to connect the issue with Japan's changing identity. Although the aspects that have been examined are different

in their details, their starting points are similar: Japan is discontent regarding the peace identity that it has established since the end of the Second World War. Such identity is becoming incompatible with serving Japan's interests. So, it is imperative for Japanese to seek and promote a new identity within the changing international dynamics.

Article 9 of the Japanese constitution is a key factor in Japan's identity issues. Japan's widely recognized pacifist identity is a direct result of Article 9⁶. It not only limits Japan's military potential to a minimum level – self-defense, but also permanent renouncement of the right of belligerency. As a cornerstone of the Yoshida's Doctrine, it helped foster Japan's economic miracle. Meanwhile, the peace article also resulted in hindering Japan's foreign/security policy from being "normal": it limited Japan's military-related options when participating in the world's security-related issues, including many UN peace keeping missions. Therefore, the SDF was strictly prohibited from using force outside of Japan (prior to 2015). Even in joint operations, it could only play a logistic role. During the Cold War, such security policy was indeed considered normal. However, it was not until the end of the Cold War that such an "abnormal" drew widespread public attention.

The most important event in drawing public attention to Japan's "abnormal" was the Gulf War (1990-1991), which marked a shocking humiliation to Japan's foreign/security policy. It was this war that enabled Japanese elites to review its "abnormal" identity within the constitutional framework. Two problems brought by Article 9 were exposed: first, its role as a reliable ally of the U.S. and second, its legitimacy as an active international player. During the war, the U.S. urged Japan to join its multinational joint military operations against Iraq. But Japan was unable to join any military operation due to the restrictions of Article 9, not even being able to actively defend its ally. Ozawa Ichiro, who was the Secretary-General of the LDP at the time, argued that Japan, as a responsible ally of the U.S., should participate in the operations on the basis of "collective security"⁷ (Berkofsky 2012). It would be "abnormal" if Japan were absent from such

⁶ Full text of the Article 9: Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, 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. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized. (The Constitution of Japan 1946)

⁷ Meanwhile, according to Axel Berkofsky (2012), this "collective security" is *different* from "the right of collective self-defense", which comes from Article 51 of the UN Charter. This idea of "collective security" was instead based on Article 43 of

operation. Additionally, the U.S. complained that Japanese could not provide sufficient support – While other nations armies were trying to protect Japan’s regional interests from Iraq’s aggression, Japanese leaders only needed to sit and watch from a safe distance and write cheques (Berkofsky 2012). This brings us to the latter problem.

Since Japan was unable to send forces to participate in the joint operations, financial contributions are the only way of help – The 13 billion U.S. dollars that it contributed to help the allies is also known as Japan’s Check Book diplomacy. Yet, such contribution did not gain Japan its desired recognition.

As Berkofsky (2012) illustrated:

The Gulf War 1990/1991 was a disaster for Japan: Japan paid \$13 billion to the US-led multinational coalition to liberate Kuwait and was not even thanked for that-not even by those who should have been to some extent grateful as it was Japanese money which helped liberate them from Iraq’s dictator Saddam Hussein: the government of Kuwait which did not invite a Japanese delegation to Kuwait to celebrate the liberation of the country (2012, 194).

To the Japanese, such an outcome was not only a failure of check book diplomacy but also an utter humiliation. Compared with the economic miracle Japan achieved, Japan’s influence in global security affairs has been greatly exceeded by its economic influence. It subsequently weakened Japan’s overall performance and reputation on the stage of world politics in the post-Cold War era. In the end, Japan earned itself the title “economic giant, political dwarf”. Many politicians, including Ozawa Ichiro, alleged that Article 9 is an obstacle and constraint that preventing Japan from being an active and responsible member in the international community. Overall, it damaged Japan’s reputation and pride and made Japan seem selfish and, thereby was an embarrassment (Kingston 2013).

The humiliation of the Gulf War became political pressure. It subsequently enabled Japanese elites to re-examine the “abnormal” within its post-war identity in order to amend it and return

UN Charter that, under UN-sanctioned missions, authorizes the use of force in the case of military aggression against an UN member.

Japan to a well-recognized, full-scale “normal” power. In the process, it has spurred a variety of heated debates surrounding Article 9. Given its nature, which is about limiting Japan’s military capabilities, the debates usually come down to whether Japan’s peace identity should be altered via constitutional amendment. Ozawa Ichiro, again, argued that, for Japan, “normal” means to be allowed to dispatch its own military to UN-sanctioned missions overseas (Berkofsky 2012). In general, one can argue that Japan’s “abnormal” identity is rooted in various constraints dictated by the constitution for two reasons: First, as described above, it limits Japan’s capabilities of fulfilling international commitments like a “normal” nation; second it prevents Japan from acquiring “normal” national defense capability.

The aftermath of the Gulf War stimulated Japan’s quest for seeking a “normal identity”. The emerging “danger” of China and North Korea further reminded Japanese elites of the importance of emphasizing the role of remilitarization within its normalizing agenda. Since the 1990s, nuclear and Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) programs from North Korea and rapid military modernization from China have been perceived as threats to Japan’s security⁸. Japan’s security concerns toward these two countries have become incrementally more prominent in the following decades. Japan thereby seeks to include a strong military build-up like a “normal” nation to deter potential threats (with/for its allies). However, by doing so, Japan has placed itself on the verge of violating the constitution. For example, as shall be discussed in the following chapters, increasing military build-up means acquiring equipment and administrative resource that can be used for launching attacks. Notable examples include promoting the Defense Agency into a full-scale ministry in 2007; enhancing the capability of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) so significantly that is close to being able to launch preemptive strikes and the introduction of the latest Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) (Hagström and Turesson 2009).

In conclusion, from a constructivist standpoint, Japan’s quest of seeking identity change is motivated by two aspects, which are constructed as “abnormal” in Japan’s current identity: the international commitment of a responsible international actor (and ally) and capabilities of maintaining national defense on a “normal” level. The discussion from above revealed that both

⁸ In fact, the Abduction issue from North Korea is also considered as a threat. However, this thesis unitarily focuses on the nuclear and ICBM programs when referring to North Korea. Therefore, the Abduction issue is not within the scope of the thesis.

are connected with Japan's military capabilities that are constrained by Article 9. In recent years, the heated debates from Japanese conservative elites vis-à-vis the constitutional amendment and reinterpretation usually stress the importance of increasing military build-up. As a result, as Kingston (2013) argued: "the [normal nation] debate is about how Japan uses its military power and under what conditions, so that it can assume a more influential role in shaping global affairs to promote its national interests" (119). Alternatively, one can also argue that remilitarization or increasing military buildup plays a pivotal role in Japan's identity change.

Chapter 3: Theory

The previous chapter revealed Japan's goal of normalization (constitutional revision) is in fact a pursuit of identity change. In this process, remilitarization serves a pivotal role in Japan's normalizing agenda. In this context, to Japanese conservative elites, such as Ozawa Ichiro and the Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who support the constitutional amendment, fulfilling remilitarization equals normalization. Additionally, since remilitarization leads to changing Article 9 in the constitution, it makes constitutional amendment an indispensable step on Japan's path toward a "normal" identity.

The first chapter has introduced that the Japanese government has been justifying the motivation of constitutional amendment via an apparatus of securitization. To understand whether the conservative newspapers also adopted the same apparatus to influence the public opinion in Japan, it is essential to understand what securitization is. This chapter aims to illustrate securitization as the theoretical framework for this thesis.

Like the constructivism in which identity is socially constructed through subjective perception, securitization can also be constructed subjectively (Balzacq 2010). In the case of Japan, the Japanese government has been securitizing China and North Korea for a long time based on its constructed "abnormal" identity. Meanwhile, as the third section of this chapter discussed, Japanese conservative newspapers can also be considered proponents of the constitutional amendment. They are thus likely to adopt the same strategy to influence public opinion.

This chapter includes three sections. It starts with an overview of securitization theory. Then, the second section explains the motivation of a securitization strategy for establishing theoretical framework of the thesis by connecting Japan's "abnormal" identity with securitization theory. In the last section, it briefly introduces Japan's media environment with an emphasis on Japanese government and conservative newspapers: *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri*. It includes the influence of the conservative newspapers, and their connections with the conservative political groups, including the LDP. It is likely that the newspapers can be using securitization strategy when they are reporting the news around constitutional revision and remilitarization. By doing so, the conservative newspapers are able to raise people's awareness regarding constitutional revision.

3.1. An Overview of Securitization Theory

Securitization theory was developed by the Copenhagen School. Based on the traditional studies about security that give exclusive focus on military power projection, the Copenhagen School expanded the scope beyond the traditional focus with additional four non-military sectors: the political sector, the economic sector, the societal sector and the environmental sector (Emmers 2016). That is to say, studies of security are no longer limited within the scope of military affairs, and almost any issue can be securitized.

Essentially, as Collins (2016) summarized:

[Securitization] refers to the accepted classification of certain and not other phenomena, persons, or entities as existential threats requiring emergency measures. Through an act of securitization, a concern is framed as a security issue and moved from the politicalized to the securitized (2016, 449).

To securitize an issue, there are two factors: referent objects and securitizing actors. The former represents an issue/thing that is seen to be existentially threatened, and thereby has the right to claim its survival; the latter is the actor that securitizes an issue/thing (referent objects) by declaring it is existentially threatened. In short, securitization is a process in which a securitizing actor believes or frames an issue, as a referent object, that is existentially threatened. Hence, the process enables the security actor to take *extraordinary actions* to deal with the threat (Emmers 2016). Most of all, there is an indicator that distinguishes whether the securitization of the

referent object is successful: Audience acceptance. As Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde (1998) remarked: “If no signs of such acceptance exist, we can talk only of a securitizing move, not of an object actually being securitized” (25).

In theory, the securitization theory on the one hand is still closely connected to existential threats based on realism, and takes it for a *premise* as constituting securitization. Such a reflection of a realist stand sets up a standard of constituting security as well as prevents overstressing the definition of security (Emmer 2016). On the other hand, however, it does not clarify what factors can be considered as posing the threat and causing security issues. As mentioned above, almost anything can be securitized regardless of objective properties. Under the framework of securitization, the definition of “security” can be therefore ambiguous because it is open to change depending on subjective interpretation of surroundings.

As Buzan et al. (1998) has concluded:

“Security” is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue—not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat (1998, 24).

Given the nature of security above, securitization can rely on using discursive power as means to portray or, even frame an issue as a threat. This is also known as a speech act. Therefore, the nature of the regarding securitization process is highly subjective. A securitization move starts as long as securitizing actor wants and manages to claim a referent object that meets the premise – being existentially threatened. A known example in real life, the Hungarian action of securitizing refugees is a good example of explaining the process. Hungarian Prime Minister – Viktor Orbán, as the securitizing actor, claimed the Muslim refugees can threaten Christian traditions, culture, security and eventually the survival of Hungary as the referent object. Moreover, Viktor Orbán’s securitizing action can be perceived successful because most Hungarians were convinced, and support his hardline attitude toward the refugee issues.

3.2. Connecting “Abnormal” Identity and Securitization

Japan’s constructed sense of an “abnormal” identity requires it to construct politicized issues as threats in order to start securitization process. In this regard, the concerns regarding North Korea’s weapon programs and China’s military modernization suits the criteria of politicized topics that can “endanger” Japan as well as distinguish the “weakness” in Japan’s “abnormal” identity.

As concluded in the preceding chapter, there are two kinds of “abnormal” conditions in Japan’s national identity as the result of military restrictions from the constitution: the inability of fulfilling international commitments as a responsible international actor and inability of maintain a “normal” national defense force. To return to being a “normal” nation, the constitutional amendment and subsequent remilitarization are perceived as a viable solution. In past decades, the foreign policy of Japan has gradually shifted toward cooperating with the strategy of normalization. Moreover, accompanying this strategy, a securitization move toward China and North Korea has already taken place in the inner circle (policymakers and elites) of Japan (Schulze 2016; Hughes 2009). The research by Schulz (2016) and Hughes (2009) have revealed that Japan’s securitization act is essentially constructing a discourse about strong and threatening “other” (notably China and North Korea) to distinguish the weakness inflicted by Japan’s “abnormal” identity.

In the case of North Korea, its long-range missiles and nuclear program have been perceived as a threat to Japan. At the same time, North Korea has kept expressing hostility toward Japan and its U.S. ally. Eventually, many Japanese news reports and government’s documents have portrayed North Korea as existential threat that poses an immediate danger on the basis of its strike capability, which is portrayed as having surpassed Japan’s limited/weak defense capability. As for China, as a latecomer to Japan’s official list of existential threats since the early 2010s, it is actually more capable of endangering Japan’s survival. Indeed, backed up by its tremendous resources, the modernization of the Chinese army and its well-developed missiles and nuclear warheads are perceived as threats by some Japanese. In addition, the territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands between them make China a suitable excuse for being portrayed as a threat to Japan’s survival by Japanese conservative elites.

In short, securitization is developed based on already politicized topics (Emmers 2016). In this case, North Korean nuclear weapons and the territorial disputes with China are ideal topics. Combined with Japan's constructed weakness, the Japanese government, as securitizing actor, can form a securitization discourse by taking Japan as a referent object: Because of Japan's weakness, it is vulnerable to the existential threats brought by China and North Korea. An extraordinary means should thus be adopted for securing Japan's survival – remilitarizing/normalizing Japan through a constitutional amendment.

However, as mentioned, due to its subjective nature, securitization can be inaccurate in terms of respecting ontological facts. In many cases, it only reflects a subjective choice of the securitizing actor. The securitizing actors need to intentionally articulate the threat in a way that the audience can accept (Emmers 2016). In this sense, constructing threatening “others” is an ideal way to increase people's awareness of Japan's weakness. Japan unilaterally emphasizes the threatening aspects vis-à-vis the subjects *regardless* of their objective potential. For example, North Korea in fact only possesses very little technology and resources to upgrade its military as a result of its long-going isolation. Thus, it could be concluded that North Korea is unlikely to pose a severe threat to Japan's survival because the SDF should still be able to defend itself in terms of technology and equipment (Hughes 2009), not even considering the US presence in the region.

In summary, the weakness of Japan's “abnormal” identity is what constituted Japan vulnerability in front of threatening “others”. Further, it is also the cornerstone vis-à-vis the securitization agenda of Japan in the context of China and North Korea, which have been perceived as threats regardless of their actual capability and intentions. With its identity as a premise, those who favor the idea of the amendment play the role of securitizing actors, and Japan is given the role of referent object. Upon portraying China and North Korea as existential threats, they hope, if not all, more and more people will soften their stance on amending Article 9 to allow Japan to take the step of developing “normal” military power as an extraordinary measure.

3.3. Japan's Media Environment

The preceding parts of the thesis have explained the connection between Japan's identity change and securitization. But how do Japanese newspapers fit into the connection exactly? Without a doubt Japan, as a state, has started securitization by formally perceiving China and North Korea as threats to its survival. But, throughout the entire securitization process, the state is not the only one that can push forward the agenda. Non-state actors are also important (Emmers, 2016). As stated previously, non-governmental actors, the conservative press in Japan, have already acted "accordingly" to advocate the constitutional amendment. It thus makes analyzing the role of Japan's conservative newspapers equally important because they can reflect how related issues have been received among the general public of Japan. This section deals with explaining the reasons for choosing Japan's conservative newspapers, namely the *Yomiuri* and *Nikkei*, as the subject of analysis by describing changes and features in Japan's media environment. It concluded that the newspapers are qualified securitizing actors.

First of all, I would like to explain the reasons behind not choosing *Sankei Shimbun*. First, I was unable to access the database of *Sankei Shimbun*; second, most importantly, *Sankei*'s opinions may not be as influential and valid as other two because, as O'Shea (2018) concluded: "Sankei, further to the right than Yomiuri, follows it closely – and with harsher rhetoric – but has neither the mainstream appeal nor the reputation of Yomiuri or Nikkei" (7).

Japan is a country of contradictions where high technology coexists with traditional ways of life. Newspapers are a typical example. Unlike other countries where the internet has played an indispensable role in acquiring news, Japanese still prefer to read daily news from traditional newspapers. The reason is rather simple: most Japanese still believe newspapers are a reliable news source (Shinoda 2007). The top 5 best-selling newspapers (the Big Five) in Japan are: *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Nikkei Shimbun* and *Sankei Shimbun*. Among them, both *Yomiuri* and *Nikkei* have world-class reputations. The former is not only Japan's best-selling newspaper but also world's best-selling one; the latter is the world's best-selling financial newspaper. Thus, these newspapers are able to exert a remarkable influence on public opinion in Japan (O'Shea 2018).

Political stance in Japan is always related to the issue of Article 9. This applies to the entire Japanese population in general. Different from other Western democratic countries where political stance is largely about social and economic policies, attitudes toward the constitutional amendment, especially the Article 9, are regarded as an additional key criterion to distinguish Right and Left in Japan (Suzuki 2015). Because of it, the Big Five can be separated into two groups: First, *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, which are critical of constitutional revision, on the left; second *Yomiuri*, *Sankei* and *Nikkei*, which are supportive, on the right. It is worth noting that *Nikkei* was originally critical vis-à-vis the issues involving constitutional amendment. Since 1992, its attitude has been changed into being supportive during the Diet discussion of the International Peace Cooperative Legislation, which enabled Japan to send SDF in UN's peacekeeping operations (Shinoda 2007). Furthermore, as shall be revealed in the following analysis chapter, it still has a moderate stance compared with *Yomiuri* even though *Nikkei* is categorized as a conservative newspaper.

The quantitative advantages, such as total number of circulations, and political stance of the conservative newspapers mentioned above are not the only reasons they are chosen for the thesis. In the securitization model, non-state actors can be important when they are in a powerful and privileged position, as Emmers (2016) wrote: "Yet securitization tends to be a process dominated by powerful actors that benefit from privileged positions" (171). In the case of Japan, its conservative newspaper *can* be considered in privileged positions primarily because of their ties with Japanese government. It is this tie that placed them in a position which is powerful enough to exert dominated influence over public opinion.

Japan is known for its mature democratic system. Yet, its media environment can be considered as an exception because it is marked only as 67th according to the World Press Freedom Index (2018). Although this rank is higher than the one in 2017, it is still lower than most European countries, Canada and the U.S. The rank suggested the fact Japan's news industry has been losing neutrality and interference by other actors⁹. In this thesis, the Japanese government is unitarily discussed.

⁹ Other actors include non-state actors, notably nationalist/right-wing civil societies. The pressure inflicted by them on the media especially concentrates on the reports surrounding historical issues and the constitutional amendment. See: <https://rsf.org/en/japan>

Whenever talking about the tie between the Japanese government and media, the Kisha Club or Reporter's Club is an obvious example demonstrating government's influence over the media. Its function as government's "mouth" can be traced back to the time of World War II. During the wartime, for the sake of propaganda, the Japanese government organized the mass media into Kisha Club that served as the only legal channel to deliver the government's opinions to the mass media, and it was preserved after the war for the same reason during the occupation era (Nakano 2017). Up to today, the Kisha Club is still a closed system based on membership, which is held by most major Japanese media companies. Due to its nature of exclusiveness, Nakano (2017) argued it can be easily turned into an information cartel that can be used for information manipulation.

The overall function of Kisha Club is to serve as a privileged information conduit between the Japanese government and major Japanese media companies. Moreover, among these privileged media, the Japanese government even sought to establish a cozier relationship with those who are *favored* by the government via offering some exclusive opportunities for interviews (Mulgan 2017). Naturally, in this case, big conservative newspapers: *Yomiuri* and *Nikkei* are the major beneficiaries of the system as the result of their conservative stance is mostly in line with the opinions of the Japanese government.

Apart from Kisha Club as an instrument, the Japanese government also directly exerted pressures upon news media in order to regulate "undesired" information. It has become an increasingly prominent trend since the LDP returned to power in 2012 under Abe's lead. Abe's administration has tried to silence media criticism against the government and shape an obvious pro-government bias within Japan's media environment (Mulgan 2017). Needless to say, as prime minister Abe aims to pass a constitutional amendment, those who are against the amendment are the primary targets. Various methods are applied for enforcing favorable reporting, including direct complaints against the news organizations for being "unfair" and exerting pressure on the media's senior and executive members (Mulgan 2017). At the same time, conservative media sometimes even "collaborate" to attack the liberal media (Kingston 2018) as they share a similar

political stance with the government. Such efforts can result in reduced opposing voices within the general public.

Based on the facts illustrated above, Japan is not very friendly toward media. The government pressure along with cooperating conservative media have driven the entire Japanese media into self-censorship by avoiding publication of “unfavored” news. Considering the goal of Abe’s administration, the current media environment, which is right-leaning, certainly favors the supportive opinions on the issues regarding constitutional amendment. The result is to make Abe’s work easier when proposing some controversial issues, including the normalization and remilitarization (Fackler 2015). In this context, the *Yomiuri* and *Nikkei* are no doubt in a privileged position due to their public popularity and ties with the government. Within the securitization process, they can exert considerable influence as the securitizing actors in convincing the general public. These newspapers are trying to persuade people, as much as possible, to believe Japan is indeed under existential threats, and extraordinary action is required for survival.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The aim of the thesis is to explore how has the issue of Japan’s remilitarization/normalization been portrayed in the general public via two major conservative newspapers in Japan. To analyze the articles from selected Japanese newspapers, the thesis adopted a qualitative approach toward the newspapers’ contents. Therefore, in this chapter, following sections are to illustrate details regarding this qualitative approach. It starts off with describing the research design and why chosen method is suitable for this research. Then, it is followed by two sections that illustrate the process of data collection and analysis. In the end, the chapter is concluded by summarizing research limits and ethical concern.

4.1. Research Design – A Qualitative Approach

Content analysis in general is a research approach of studying selected documents. Some other methods in social science, which require researchers to be actively involved into selected social

phenomena, may otherwise generate biased outcomes. Compared with it, content analysis can largely maintain the originality of social phenomena because researchers do not need to be involved into the process of phenomena themselves. In other words, a systematic content analysis can largely ensure objectivity of research process because of its non-interference nature (Bryman 2012).

Meanwhile, many researchers uphold content analysis is basically a quantitative research approach. But this thesis adopted otherwise – qualitative content analysis, which is also called ethnographic content analysis (Bryman 2012). As an umbrella term, qualitative content analysis includes many different qualitative approaches. Among them, thematic analysis is chosen eventually because of its flexibility (Braun and Clarke 2006). The thematic analysis, as a qualitative approach, is omnipotent that can be applied onto many different research areas, such as psychology and sociology.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006): “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns [themes] within data” (79). Thus, it suits the aim of the thesis that is to explore the themes, which usually remain latent, beneath selected news articles.

4.2. Data Collection

The data collected for the thesis is text-based. All data (newspaper articles) is collected from authorized database, Asia Portal, offered by Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri* are chosen for the data (newspaper articles) sources because their influence in Japan. In addition, the thesis chose domestic version of both newspapers, which are printed in Japanese and mainly circulated within Japan. This is to say that opinions from these newspapers are designated meet the needs of indigenous Japanese readers. Because of it, these two newspapers can be a better option to analyze how relevant issues have been reflected/shaped within Japanese society compared with their international counterparts.

The data collection process was comprised of two steps. The first step is about key words. The key words have to be related to the topic of the thesis. Based on securitization theory, Japan has

started action of securitizing China and North Korea to emphasize the “abnormal” in its identity, particularly the aspect of weakness. Therefore, to change the situation, the constitution must be changed in order to adopt “extraordinary measures” to counter the “threats”. In this light, I picked up “security”, “constitution” and “China/North Korea”¹⁰ as key words for searching. These words can reflect how the conservative media have been portraying China/North Korea-related security issues in relation to the constitution.

The second step is about time range of the articles. Instead of choosing a continues time span, I decided to focus on the specified time periods around particular events that can easily remind Japanese of existing threats. Therefore, in the case of North Korea, the time periods focus on all major nuclear and missile tests from 2000 to 2017. In total, there are ten time periods selected. (See Collection Result). In the case of China, the collected articles are fewer than predicted. Due to historical issues, territorial disputes and Chinese overall growth, Japan has taken China for a potential threat based on the capability of Chinese military (Hughes 2009). But such emotion/attitude barely went explicitly on official level except during the event of nationalization of Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in 2012. Other than that, mostly, Chinese military has been perceived to be less provocative compared with that of North Korea. In the end, only two time periods were chosen: the territorial disputes in 2012, China including Senkaku/Diaoyu islands into its Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in 2013. Least but not last, although there are only two time periods selected for China, a number of articles about North Korea also mentioned China together especially the articles after 2010. In this case, regarding the contents/codes from these articles, they are still categorized into China whenever they referred to China.

In total, 248 articles were collected for analysis from both newspapers: 201 articles for North Korea and 47 articles for China (See Collection Result). In addition to normal newspaper articles, the number also included editorials and opinions.

¹⁰ In Japanese, they are 安全、憲法、中国／北朝鮮

4.3. Data Analysis

Coding is an essential step in doing both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. In content analysis, coding is a process of categorizing the phenomena of interest (Bryman 2012). In this thesis, it is employed to identify and categorize the themes and patterns in the media coverage of interested issues. And, through analyzing themes, it can eventually uncover "...the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 84). In this thesis, the underlying idea will be "how have Japan's security issues and concerns, in relation to the constitutional amendment, been depicted in the conservative newspapers?"

One criticism of coding is overlooking the context (Bryman 2012). In other words, the coding process should be more inclusive regarding additional relevant information from the context (Braun and Clarke 2006). Thus, the coding process for this thesis is not merely guided by those three key words. Two criteria were adopted in order to identify codes. The first one is about whether there is detailed context or not. Through reading collected articles, some of them simply wrote the sentences such as "some political figures believed the constitutional amendment is require because of security concern". Since such articles did not specify the reason behind the proposal, such as "who is creating the security concerns" and "how can it be counted as a security concern", this kind of content is excluded in coding process. The second one is about whether the constitution amendment is clearly connected with the issue of remilitarization and normalization. In the collected articles, the constitutional amendment is not always related to Article 9. Some of them referred to other articles of the constitution, such as Article 96. The contents without connecting the constitution with remilitarization and normalization are thereby also excluded.

Since only handful amount of existing research on examining the media reports were found throughout the literature review, preconceived categories for coding are limited. Therefore, the coding process is based upon the manner of Conventional Content Analysis where codes and themes are directly generated during data analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005) rather than based on existing literatures. This is also called open coding. After coding and reviewing are done, the codes included similar contents are categorized together. In thematic analysis, this process is also

taken for generating themes (Braun and Clarke 2006). In total, 38 codes were extracted from the analysis. (See Codebook I) Afterwards, they are refined and recategorized based on the connections among them. Eventually there are two main themes are concluded for China. And three main themes concluded for North Korea (See Codebook II). It is worth bearing in mind that during analyzing and categorizing the codes, some of them are discarded eventually due to they are either less relevant to the topic or repetitive. In other words, it does not seek to illustrate the contents of each code. Only representative ones are selected.

4.4. Limits and Ethical Concerns

The efforts have been applied in order to minimize the effect of reflexivity throughout research. As mentioned earlier, I did not directly participate and thereby influence the process of interested phenomena via choosing content analysis. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to describe a phenomenon instead of making alternative explanations from different point of view. But limits still remain. They primarily concentrate on following aspects.

As for research methods, to understand how the issues of “remilitarization/normalization” and “the constitutional amendment” have been understood and reflected among the general public in Japan, ideal methods would be conducting interviews and surveys toward Japanese. This option is excluded due to conducting research in Japan was not available as well as concerns of feasibility. This topic remains highly controversial in Japan. The answers could be different depends on many factors, such as participants’ age and occupation. To generate valid and authentic outcomes, the time span of research can be very long. And the size of sample has to big enough cover many participants with different social backgrounds.

Meanwhile, a concern from epistemological level exists since the beginning of research. The subjective influence over judgement occurred when defining key words. Before the data collection, several test runs were carried out. In fact, the result of each run was not exactly the same. Thus, there are some articles that may be relevant but not included into the final collection due to adopted searching key words. Moreover, as Braun and Clarke (2006) noted: “Researcher’s judgement is necessary to determine what a theme is” (82). In this case, the process of

categorization or generating themes is also influenced by subjective judgement depending on the overall understanding of the data.

In the case of ethical concern, according to Bryman's (2012) conclusion, there are four principles: "Harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and involvement of deception" (135). But these four principles mostly are associated with social researches involving participants. Due to the fact that this thesis utilizes text-based data only, the ethical concern from these four principles can be avoided.

However, it does not mean social researches using text-based materials are risk-free at all. Bryman (2012) also summarized four criteria to assess text-based data: "Authenticity, Credibility, Representativeness and Meaning" (544). As introduced in previous chapters, given the influence and popularity of *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri* in Japan, they can be qualified as a source of authenticity and representativeness in terms of upholding conservative thoughts vis-à-vis the issues of constitutional amendment. On the other hand, it is their conservative stance that makes their credibility and meaning remain questionable. Distorting and blurring have been found during data analysis. As mentioned, a known example is their attitude toward North Korean' weapons programs. Although North Korean's weapons programs seem to advancing at an unprecedented speed, in academic circle, the availability of North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles are still questionable (Hagström and Turesson 2009). Therefore, North Korea may not have the attack power that can overwhelm Japan's current defense capability. But, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, both newspapers have gone through a lot of efforts in terms of framing and, even exaggerating, North Korea's threat.

Chapter 5: Empirical Finding

The chapter of empirical finding is comprised of themes. The themes listed in this chapter are refined and recategorized (See Codebook II) from collected articles. Since, based on the discussion of securitization theory mentioned above, "speech act" is the core of the theory, these themes shall represent frequently involved aspects in the "speech act" carried out by Japanese conservative newspapers when China and North Korea are portrayed as threats. As shall be

discussed, these themes are not only used to depict a threatening “other” but also, most of all, feature Japan’s “abnormal” identity. Such an “abnormal” is usually portrayed as weakness, which includes the inadequacy of both defensive equipment and security policy.

In this chapter, it is comprised of two major country-specified sections: China and North Korea. Moreover, since the codes and themes gathered from the analysis covered various debates regarding how Japan should counter the “threats” and become “normal”, instead of following a chronological order, this section is thus organized based on the themes: two main themes for China and three main themes for North Korea.

5.1. China

The relationship between China and Japan is complicated. Preceding chapters have suggested that, despite potential rivalry between China and Japan, both of them remain restrained in terms of facing possible arms conflict because of incremental economic interdependence between them. Moreover, unlike North Korea, China did not adopt explicit military provocative measures against Japan. Even at the height of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands disputes in 2012, in terms of physical presence, China still maintained at low provocative level, such as sending civilian vessels to patrol only (Easley 2017).

According to securitization theory, it is crucial that a politicized issue has to be perceived as “existential threat” (Emmers 2016). From Japanese, especially conservative elites, point of view, they cannot neglect potential threat posed by Chinese increasing military strength. However, as stated above, it is not easy for the conservative, whoever favor the idea of constitutional revision in, to find and openly develop a politicized issue into an “existential threat” for securitization purpose *except* the territorial disputes with China. This is also the reason why the territorial disputes are frequently involved into the articles collected regarding China as a direct “threat”. In terms of securitization, this is not enough for portraying China as an “existential threat”. As shall soon be revealed, China is securitized in an alternative manner according to collected article.

5.1.1. *China as a Threat*

Based on the conventional understanding of security pressure, this subsection aims for illustrating how China is portrayed as a “threat” to Japan according to its military strength and influence. As for overall military pressure from China, in line with existing observers’ conclusion, a number of concerns were given upon increasing investment and lacking transparency in Chinese military build-up (Hagström and Turesson 2009). An editorial from *Nikkei* has expressed similar concern: “Chinese national [defense] budget has continued to increase in double digits and two times more than Japan. Japan along cannot deal with Chinese military build-up” (Nikkei, 2013a). From *Yomiuri*, an article that summarized opinions of the Prime Minister Abe Shinzo also shared similar concern: “China has not officially released a breakdown of its defense budget, thereby [China’s] transparency is low” (Yomiuri, 2014a).

The territorial disputes in 2012 has no doubt stimulated Japanese’s sense of danger even further and instigated the sense of nationalism. The overall public opinions believed China might invade Japan’s territory and thereby threaten Japan’s survival. Collected news articles also expressed the opinions in similar fashions. An article from *Nikkei* said if China normalizes sending surveillance vessels to the island, Japan’s de facto control will collapse and the territorial disputes with China will be demonstrated to the rest of the world. This is China’s goal (Nikkei, 2012a). An editorial from *Nikkei* also stated that the tension of the disputed islands between two countries continued to exist. China repeatedly sent surveillance vessels and violated Japan’s sovereignty (Nikkei, 2012b).

5.1.2. *Japan as a Responsible International Actor*

Other than the territorial disputes, it is not easy for Japan to elevate other politicized issues into a security threat brought by China. Japan thus adopted an alternative strategy of securitizing China.

Chinese overall military strength has been undeniably increasing. For example, Chinese first aircraft carrier commissioned into the Chinese naval force in 2012. It expanded Japan’s definition of security beyond the boundary of its national security. In a *Nikkei* article, the concern has been expressed vis-à-vis the Chinese aircraft carrier would enhance its naval power and mark

as a turning point for the main focus of Chinese naval from coastal defense to going into the deep sea (Nikkei, 2012a). This indicated that the conservative newspapers did not only focus on the issue in terms of how Chinese naval power can threaten Japan's territorial integrity.

The concern regarding the security pressure brought by Chinese military power has been taken beyond the disputes between two countries into a broader context because Japan is not the only one that has territorial disputes with China. It has been extended into the fields of regional (South East Asia) security and, most of all, Japan's ally – the United States. A *Nikkei* editorial stated: “If China does not stop its bullying¹¹ actions surrounding the ownership of disputed islands in the South China Sea, it is in conflict with South East Asian countries” (Nikkei, 2013). A *Yomiuri* article that summarized the opinions from many experts, including the former U.S. ambassador to Japan, Michael Armacost, stated: “If the Chinese army can expand its power further [into the deep sea], it is likely going into more conflicts with the U.S., Japan and other Asian countries” (Yomiuri, 2013a).

In short, the security pressure brought by Chinese overall increasing power has been portrayed as a problem for regional security. It made China a common threat to almost every country within the region. In academic circle, some researchers also shared similar opinions.

In a research article, Liff and Ikenberry (2014) has summarized:

Yet the more important point is that regardless of China's actual intentions, to other states the objective reality of Beijing's growing military power, coupled with its rapidly expanding military capabilities and recent policies vis-à-vis disputed territory and features on its periphery, appear provocative and newly “assertive,” even aggressive. (2014, 56)

As a crucial part of the constitutional amendment and reinterpretation, the right of collective self-defense is referred in the articles as a solution when facing potential *regional* security threat brought by the China Rise. Such an opinion from the newspapers addressed Japan's role that is

¹¹ In the original text, it was 強気 (Tsuyoki). It should be interpreted as “assertive” originally. However, since Japanese media commonly frame China as a bully in the territorial disputes in South East Asia, the definition of “bullying” is thereby adopted.

indispensable in regional security affairs. As a responsible member in the international community, Japan is supposed to take the responsibility of aiding countries in the region to counter Chinese growing military influence. And such responsibility should be carried out via the collective self-defense.

This kind of discourse is usually accompanied by opinions such as Japan should take a hardline attitude toward China. In the name of “maintaining regional security” and “Japan’s role in regional affairs”, it can help to shape constitutional amendment into a more acceptable idea, even with the explicit discussion of enabling the right of collective self-defense.

An article from *Yomiuri* has stated:

To exercise the right of collective self-defense, ‘the minimum necessary measures’ should be recognized. Moreover, the first principle¹² should be changed into ‘Japan and the countries with close relationship with Japan’. As Chinese military threat increases, Japan alone cannot guarantee the security for itself. It reflected the Prime Minister Abe’s sense of danger (*Yomiuri*, 2013b).

The contents illustrated above, apart from discussing Japan’s responsibility to other countries, the newspaper managed to portray a strong and aggressive “other” (China) toward Japan who has an identity of weakness. Under the framework of securitization, it can be helpful in justifying China as an “existential threat” to Japan and thereby, the reason of utilizing “extraordinary measures” to defend Japan itself against the threat. In addition, such weakness also reflected the importance of U.S.-Japan alliance. Without the ally, Japan barely stands chance to protect itself. Chinese challenge surrounding the disputed islands is a *result* of weakened alliance¹³ (*Yomiuri*, 2012a).

¹² The old three principles of using armed force for self-defense: 1. There is an urgent and injustice infringement against Japan; 2. There is no other proper means to exclude the situation; 3. The usage of actual force should stay on a minimum necessary level. See <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/anzenhosyou2/dai6/siryous2.pdf>.

In 2014, the three principles have been thoroughly revised: 1. When an attack occurs against Japan and a country closely related to Japan. When there is an obvious danger that threatens Japan’s existence and undermines the life and freedom of Japanese citizens as well as the right of pursuing life; 2 when there is no other appropriate means to exclude, protect Japan’s existence and protect its citizens; 3. The usage of actual force should stay on a minimum necessary level. See: <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/anzenhoshousei.html>.

¹³ Referring to Hatoyama Yokio’s failed attempt on handling Futenma Base. It created gap between the alliance by weakening the mutual trust. According to the conservative narrative in Japan, China is widely believed to take the advantage of the opportunity in order to ignite the territorial disputes in 2012.

When it comes to the importance of alliance, the conservative media suggested that Japan should take a more active responsibility in order to establish a more reciprocal relationship within the alliance, and subsequently strengthen the alliance. In this regard, again, the right of collective defense is a common topic. According to a *Yomiuri* article that summarized Abe's speech, it was imperative to restore the U.S.-Japan relationship in order to protect the islands. And the right of collective defense was also indispensable to restoring the U.S.-Japan Alliance (Yomiuri 2012b). Although it not explicitly referred to the collective defense, a *Yomiuri* editorial also featured similar opinion: "Japan alone cannot maintain its security. In terms of contributing to the regional and worldwide security, Japan has to work together with the U.S. and other related countries. It is also helpful for Japan's security" (Yomiuri, 2013c).

5.1.3. Summary

As for China, in general, the security pressure is the result of Chinese increasing military strength and regional influence. As discussed, Chinese direct security pressure vis-à-vis Japan is stemmed from the Sankaku/Diaoyu Islands disputes. According to the collected articles, they struck an impression that Chinese' military power has been enhanced to a point that is beyond Japan's understanding and control. Thus, they securitized the issue that Chinese military presence is dangerous to an "abnormal" Japan. In addition, Chinese growing military capability is also securitized as a potential danger to the countries in South East Asia and U.S. ally too. In this context, the conservative newspaper emphasized, by policy, Japan is supposed to take more responsibility to help these countries like a "normal" country.

5.2. North Korea

Compared with China, North Korea is known for its provocative actions on missile and nuclear programs regardless of international regulations. Its actions have drawn grave security concerns from the region. To some extents, North Korea is one of main protagonists under the spotlight on the stage of world security affairs, especially from Japan's point of view. Meanwhile, as for Japanese government and media, these bold weapon programs also served as good reasons for securitization. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, increasing military build-up involved

issues of breaking the limits of the constitution in Japan. From analyzing the collected articles vis-à-vis North Korea, it suggested that the conservative newspapers are trying to justify increasing military buildup via securitization. In terms of existential threat, North Korea earned more attention compared with China according to the newspapers.

5.2.1. North Korea as a Threat According to Actual Power

As the title suggests, this is a sub-section according to conventional mindset of securitization. It focuses on illustrating how the conservative newspapers *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri* have portrayed North Korea as an existential threat via emphasizing Japan's vulnerability from aspects of actual military power and capability.

Starting from 2006, in July, North Korea tested several types of missiles, including Rodong and Taepodong-2, whose range are able to cover Japan. Furthermore, just months later, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test in October. Together, they became Japan's greatest fear. At the time, all news media worried Japan was exposed to possible nuclear strike. North Korea was thus portrayed as a direct threat on the newspapers. Such perception of threat is commonly depicted via featuring Japan's vulnerability. An article from *Yomiuri* wrote: "Once North Korea acquired nuclear power, Japan is most vulnerable to be attacked" (Yomiuri, 2006a). Furthermore, *Yomiuri* also encouraged people to take it seriously. As an editorial noted: "As the result of North Korea nuclear test, Japan has to consider the situation of being attacked by nuclear weapons" (Yomiuri, 2006b). Intriguingly, compared with *Yomiuri* that suggested North Korea as a threat, *Nikkei* held reserved attitude. In 2009 when North Korea conducted its second nuclear test, *Nikkei* admitted North Korea's enhanced missile specifications could pose danger toward Japan, but it still addressed North Korea as security concern (Nikkei 2009) rather than a "threat".

When discussing featured Japan's vulnerability, Japan's incapable military equipment is included as a popular topic in the collected articles. Soon after the second nuclear test in 2009, doubts were casted upon the reliability of Japan's defense equipment against North Korea threat. An editorial from *Yomiuri* wrote: "However, if multiple missiles are launched at once, it is very hard to perfectly intercept them via missile defense" (Yomiuri 2009a). Another article from

Yomiuri even provided evidence explaining why the current defense equipment is less incapable: The Standard Missile-3 on the Aegis destroyers has three times of failure out of total fifteen intercept tests (*Yomiuri* 2009b).

In addition to describe Japan's incapable defensive equipment, there is another aspect associated with Japan's overall incapable military power. This is "Enemy Base Attack Capability"¹⁴. It can also be categorized as a policy-related issues judging by its nature, but most articles described it from the angle of Japan's incapable military power. Furthermore, emphasizing Japan's incapable military power can help to facilitate a dangerous and threatening North Korea figure in readers' minds.

The discourses regarding this capability has a historical origin.

According to a summary from *Yomiuri*, during a congress debate in 1956, the former Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichiro expressed his own interpretation regarding the constitution:

When missiles are flying toward Japanese soil, I do not think sitting and waiting for self-destruct are the meaning of the constitution. As long as there is no other way of defending, it is possible to include attacking enemy base into the scope of defense (*Yomiuri*, 2006c).

Because of it, during the missile and nuclear crisis in 2006 and 2009, thoughts about "Enemy Base Attack Capability" resurfaced on the newspapers. For example, an editorial from *Yomiuri* believed mere defense is not enough: "As long as there is a limit for missile defense, it makes researching whether to have Enemy Base Attack Capability an important issue" (*Yomiuri* 2009a). When discussing the availability of the capability, the newspapers focused on Japan's incapable overall military strength because Japan does not possess proper equipment, such as long-range bombers and cruise missiles, to launch a strike (*Nikkei*, 2009; *Yomiuri*, 2009c). An article from *Yomiuri* even explicitly stated that having Japan's own cruise missiles is a part of "Enemy Base Attack Capability" in self-defense (*Yomiuri* 2006c).

¹⁴ 敵基地攻撃能力 (Teki kichi kougeki nouryoku): When Japan is facing attacks, such as missile strikes, from enemy country, it should be allowed to launch counter-strike. However, given its nature of launching attacks, this policy remains highly controversial because it conflicts against Article 9 of the constitution.

5.2.2. *Inadequate Security Policy*

The previous sub-section struck an impression that Japan is weak against North Korea threat from the level of actual power. In this sub-section, it deals with the issues created by the policies derived from the Article 9, in particular the right of collective self-defense. Under the framework of securitization, it can be counted as the second type of securitization in the newspapers' securitization agenda. It is less-common, however, as the subject of securitization (referent object) is Japan itself, specifically Japan's security policy.

Article 9 utterly denies Japan's right of taking violent measures (armed force) for a solution to any international disputes. Japan can only use violent measures on self-defense. This policy is also known as "Exclusively Defense-Orientated Policy". Because of it, Japan's options of handling potential danger from North Korea are limited. Furthermore, many Japanese conservative politicians nowadays believe it restrained Japan from committing its international responsibility to other countries, especially to its ally. In this regard, the weakness in Japan's "abnormal" identity does not only refer to the weakness in terms of power, but also irresponsibility. As mentioned, the "checkbook diplomacy" has taught Japan a lesson. Fearing being alienated by the international community again, this irresponsible aspect in Japan's "abnormal" identity is thereby securitized in the newspapers.

Japan's security policy sometimes is not only referring to Japan only. It also included Japan's responsibility to other countries, especially the US ally. When referring to the Japan-U.S. alliance, the collective self-defense is a common topic throughout entire Japanese media. On one hand, it was a controversial topic in relation to the constitution. On the other hand, it stands for being able to share more responsibility within the alliance¹⁵. From collected articles, seeking the role of an active ally is a discourse that frequently connected with justifying the constitutional amendment and reinterpretation. After the missile and nuclear tests in 2006, international

¹⁵ It is worth noting that Japan already sought to increase military options when facing security crisis since North Korea start to test ballistic missiles during 1990s. At the time, Japan was allowed to provide logistic support for the U.S. in the case of regional conflicts according to revised Defense Guideline (Hughes 2009). But after searching data bases of *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri*, it revealed that the missile tests in 1990s did not draw enough attention under the same searching parameters, because few results were shown based on the searching parameters.

community implemented various sanctions against North Korea, which included inspecting North Korean cargo ships in surrounding waters. Due to various limits inflicted by the policy, Japan worried it could not protect its ally during ship inspections. An editorial concluded that, if Japan cannot protect US ships without the right of collective self-defense, the trust between the allies and subsequent protection of Japan's peace and security will be broken (Yomiuri, 2006d).

From 2009 to 2012, the DPJ took power with an unprecedented political agenda. When Hatoyama Yukio was the prime minister, he aimed at strengthening multilateral relationships with Asian neighbors. His ambition would reorient and rebalance Japan's position between Asia and the U.S. (O'Shea 2014). The policy was thus much criticized by the LDP and other conservative power because it would eventually weaken the alliance with the U.S. (Easley 2017; Delamotte 2012). Hatoyama's failure of handling Futenma base was understood as a mark of damaging the alliance. When the LDP returned to power since December 2012, restoring the alliance became one of their main agenda¹⁶. And Prime Minister Abe Shinzo was determined to fulfill it. In a *Yomiuri* article summarizing a dialogue between Abe Shinzo and Former U.S. President Barack Obama, Abe specifically expressed his trust in the Japan-US alliance and confident on reviving it because the alliance is indispensable in securing Freedom of Navigation (FON) as the regional security has become incrementally severe (Yomiuri 2013d).

The conservative newspapers "followed" Abe's determination and took the advantage of it because it offered an opportunity of restoring alliance as well as re-defining Japan's role in the alliance. The collected articles suggested the main focus has been shifted slightly since 2010. Prior to 2010, the articles primarily emphasized that it was the security policy which limited Japan's option when facing North Korea as a threat. After 2010, the focus shifted to stress that it was the policy that hindered Japan's role and influence in the alliance and international community. For example, regarding the right of collective defense, an editorial from *Nikkei* wrote: "The right that Japan holds yet unable to exercise due to the [current] constitutional interpretation. This interpretation has become a major constrain for Japan-US security cooperation and SDF's international contribution" (Nikkei, 2013b). Interestingly, in this

¹⁶ In fact, measures of restoring the alliance were also adopted by the DPJ after Hatoyama's resignation.

editorial, content regarding threats, regardless whether it is from China or North Korea, barely acted as the premise of enabling change. Its importance was replaced by the role of alliance.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the conservative newspapers also published the articles about those who support the constitutional reinterpretation vis-à-vis the right of collective self-defense.

An article from *Yomiuri* wrote:

Under the influence of North Korea, those Japanese who live in South Korea welcome the decision made by the Diet. Via enabling the right of collective self-defense, SDF is able to defend the U.S. ships that are evacuating Japanese once the emergency breaks out across Korean Peninsula. (Yomiuri, 2014b)

Another article even included a supportive voice from US ally: “with the threat to Guam has become reality, we want the constitutional reinterpretation for the collective self-defense as soon as possible.” (Yomiuri, 2014c)

Apart from promoting Japan’s role and responsibility as an ally, the conservative newspapers also included the articles on promoting Japan’s role in the international community. In 2015, Abe administration successfully reinterpreted the constitution by passing the bill of Legislation for Peace and Security¹⁷. The bill formally introduced the right of collective self-defense. It broadened the parameter for rules of the SDF operations on the battlefield. In addition to making Japan a reliable ally, it also made it easier for Japan to fulfill its international responsibility by authorizing SDF the right of “Rush to Defend”¹⁸. According to an opinion article from *Yomiuri*, Ito Toshiyuki, the former commissioner of the MSDF Kure district, argued that the right of collective self-defense aims to provide support for allies and friendly nations during PKO while the role of the Article 9 means limiting the use of force on minimum necessary level, instead of using them in other countries (Yomiuri 2016).

¹⁷ In Japanese newspapers, it is also called “a package of national security bills” (安全保障関連法案/Anzen hosyou kanren hou’an) and “National Security Bills” (安保法案/Anhou hou’an)

¹⁸ 駆けつけ警護 (Kaketsuke keigo): A type of PKO mission that was previously prohibited for the SDF due to it requires using armed force as a solution to defend or save objectives in combats. Therefore, it was against the old interpretation of the constitution. The newly passed national security bills have lifted this restriction for SDF.

5.2.3. Nuclear Option

The last theme, although uncommon, is about Japan's nuclear option. From collected articles, it only appeared in 2006 when the first North Korean nuclear test took place. It is still about the actual power, but judging by the nature of nuclear weapon is beyond conventional weaponry, the theme is thereby demonstrated independently.

North Korea's possession of nuclear arsenal not only changed regional environment, but also specifically marked Japan and the US bases as target. Japan's nuclear policies have been long developed under various restrictions from both domestic and international frameworks (Hughes 2007). Eventually, the usage of nuclear has been strictly limited for civilian purpose. Therefore, it was impossible to make any change upon Japan's nuclear arsenal with tremendous pressure from public opinions (norm of anti-nuclearism). Yet, an editorial from *Yomiuri* suggested "the North Korean possession of nuclear weaponry is a great change to the international community. Being unable to realistically deal with the issue due to emotional nuclear-allergy is endangering Japan's existence" (Yomiuri, 2006e). The newspapers still hinted Japan's weakness in front of nuclear threat. Developing Japan's own nuclear arsenal is the key to counter foreign nuclear threats.

Without a doubt, the norm of anti-nuclearism is also derived from the pacifist identity of Japan. Japanese, as the only victims of nuclear attack on human history, have been actively treating any supportive discourse and opinions of nuclear armament as inappropriate. Because of their efforts of promoting anti-nuclearism, Japanese government under Sato administration adopted three "Non-Nuclear Principles" in 1960s. The principles are also a symbol of Japan's pacifist identity.

To the conservative in general, however, there is a reason to argue the anti-nuclearism as "nuclear allergy" and "irrationality". From their point of view, since the current identity (pacifist identity) is regarded as "abnormal", this norm is also going to be portrayed by the conservative newspapers as a part of "abnormal". From the quotation above, *Yomiuri* specified the "emotional nuclear-allergy" is what prevents Japan from adopting nuclear-related counter measures. In this light, the newspaper hinted that anti-nuclearism may not be a rational result in given context.

In fact, anti-nuclearism and subsequent “nuclear allergy” has been common sense in the general public for a long time. In contrast, Japanese government/policymakers sometimes think differently. The difference between public opinions and policymakers/government formed a “nuclear paradox” in Japan: while the discussion regarding nuclear armament has become a taboo in the general public, the policymakers admit that Japan still has to rely on the nuclear protection/deterrence for self-defense, particularly the one provided by the US (Doyle 2015) since Japan is surrounded by three countries with nuclear armament. For the Japanese government, the debates surrounding nuclear armament never cease to exist. Many members of LDP have suggested either Japan should be allowed to possess nuclear weapons or, at least, Japan has to have the capability of producing nuclear weapons (Berkofsky 2012).

In this regard, one can argue that anti-nuclearism in Japanese government is never as determined as it is in the general public. It opened window for the conservative newspapers influence the public opinions by hinting “nuclear allergy” is “irrational” and “abnormal” just like Japan’s “abnormal” identity, and encouraging people to rethink Japan’s defense policy from a “rational” and “normal” (government) point of view.

5.2.4. Summary

North Korea is also portrayed as a significant threat toward Japan. In general, through depicting North Korea as a threatening “other”, Japan’s “abnormal” identity has been featured in different aspects based on the themes collected. To begin with, it focused on Japan being weak in terms of an actual power level, such as equipment. After 2012, the focus shifted, it featured primarily Japan’s current inadequate security policies, which hindered Japan to become a more reliable ally and responsible member in the international community. Last but not the least, the conservative newspapers also attempted to incorporate Japan’s nuclear option into the discourses of being “normal”.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

After analyzing the selected newspaper contents, we can find that the major conservative newspapers – *Yomiuri* and *Nikkei* have indeed tried to craft a sense of danger via distinguishing Japan’s “abnormal” identity, and made connection with constitutional revision. Based on securitization theory illustrated in Chapter 3, it can be concluded that the newspapers have acted like securitizing actor. As non-governmental actors, they have dedicated to reshaped the narrative of constitutional revision into a more acceptable one in the public opinion of Japan. The securitization is yet incomplete as the topic of constitutional revision still remains highly controversial. In addition, their actions are also in line with the goal of Japanese government under the LDP. To some extent, these major conservative newspapers are also main propellers of the government’s policy through securitization.

Securitization is essentially based on “speech act” – a discursive construction of threat (Emmers 2016). In this regard, the themes from the previous chapter have revealed that threats, which were constructed by *Yomiuri* and *Nikkei*, consisted of two aspects. The first aspect is about military threats from foreign countries, which followed a conventional mindset of securitization strategy. In this light, the conservative newspapers exclusively focused on possible existential threats may be brought by the growing military influence of China and North Korea. As for China, Japan’s fear primarily concentrated on possible “invasion” of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands from China as well as Chinese opaque military growth. Additionally, to some extents, the growing economic interdependence between China and Japan has made China an “reluctant” subject of securitization to Japan¹⁹. As for North Korea, Japan’s fear focuses on its unpredictable nuclear and missiles programs. In general, since North Korea is less predictable, the newspapers have exerted more efforts on portraying North Korea as a direct threat compared with China.

The first aspect featured strong and threatening “others”. Subsequently, it also exposed Japan’s weakness. In addition to defense capability/equipment from a conventional mindset, the

¹⁹ On the government level, Japan indeed has been reluctant addressing China as a direct threat. However, it does not mean the Japanese government worries less regarding China. In the meantime, securitizing North Korea serves as a good excuse of increasing Japan’s military build-up in order to deter overall Chinese military capability (Hughes 2009).

conservative newspapers also addressed that Japan's weakness is also the result of its current security policy, which derived from Japan's "abnormal" identity. The second aspect of securitization is thus followed an unconventional manner – Japan itself. Precisely speaking, its current security policy that limits Japan's international commitments (particularly toward its allies and the countries that are perceived as friendly by Japan). Due to the harsh lesson from the first Gulf War, the conservative newspapers expressed a sense of fear that Japan may be marginalized and alienated by the international community if Japan still upholds current security policy, which makes Japan "abnormal". Hence, they portrayed the current security policy as unreliable and may threaten Japan's international position. In addition to the sense of fear, the newspapers almost illustrated the advantages and necessities if Japan could act more actively in the global security issues, such as actively defend its ally and other nations in PKO.

The two aspects of securitization illustrated above, they formed and reinforced the narrative vis-à-vis Japan's "abnormal" identity. In details, such identity is not only about exterior aspect – being unable to "normally" protect itself in front of foreign military threat, but also involved an interior aspect – current security policy that stems from the Article 9, which restrained Japan from being a major and "normal" international actor. Furthermore, in the case of public opinion, the securitization strategy could make the discussion of constitutional revision less restrained and thereby encourages Japanese to rethink the possibility of the revision in the name of self-preservation in the long run.

6.1. Prospects

Aside from featuring the necessity of constitutional revision via stressing the weakness in Japan's "abnormal" identity. Securitization carried out by the conservative newspapers not only helps change public attitude toward constitutional revision but also reshape Japanese perception of peace identity. Although it is slightly beyond the scope of this thesis, it is still worth bringing it up. This effect is primarily reflected via the second type of securitization – securitizing Japan's own security policy.

Seeking an identity change is the fundamental motivation behind Japan's effort of constitutional amendment. However, evoking people's sense of fear via securitization is not enough. In the case of the concluded second type of securitization, in responding to the government's new security policy, the newspaper in fact attempted to shape a new framework for Japan's peace identity among the public. For example, in the theme addressing Chinese military influence is breaking *regional* status quo, it also hinted what kind of responsibility Japan could or should have after remilitarization in terms of contributing to maintain regional security.

As Hagström and Hanssen (2016) remarked:

It also upholds the norm constructivist assumption that a peace identity can enable peaceful behavior, but demonstrates – more unexpectedly – that the meaning attributed to peace can change and become fully compatible with other identities, such as that of a 'normal state', indeed with a process of remilitarization (2016, 270).

With this in mind, this discourse can be interpreted into Japan should change its security policy from a reactive style into a more active one. Thus, Japan's "new" peace identity may stand for an active contributor for the world peace. In this case, Japan can still keep its title of "peace". However, its definition of "peace" has been displaced by a new framework, which can be used for constituting a new mutual belief of peace (national identity) in the general public in Japan.

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Appendices

Collection Results:

There are three categories: Search Results, Collected and Applied. Search Result indicates how many articles were presented in search outcomes initially. Then, the first screening process is followed, only relevant articles are collected. In the end, followed by an elaborated screening, applied section represents how many articles are eventually made into the final content analysis.

Yomiuri			
North Korea:			
	Search Results	Collected	Applied
2006-7-5 ~ 2006-7-31	11	4	3
2006-10-3 ~ 2006-10-23	38	23	18
2009-4-5 ~ 2009-6-25	17	10	10
2012-3-16 ~ 2012-5-13	6	3	3
2012-12-12 ~ 2013-1-12	10	6	6
2013-2-13 ~ 2013-3-13	12	8	6
2014-6-29 ~ 2014-7-29	21	16	12
2016-1-6 ~ 2016-3-7	19	12	10
2016-9-9 ~ 2016-10-9	8	6	5
2017-8-29 ~ 2017-10-15	136	34	26
Total	278	122	99
China			
	Search Results	Collected	Applied
2012-9-10 ~ 2012-12-10	29	9	9
2013-11-1 ~ 2013-12-31	14	10	7
Total	43	19	16

Nikkei**North Korea:**

	Search Results	Collected	Applied
2006-7-5 ~ 2006-7-31	3	1	0
2006-10-3 ~ 2006-10-23	11	11	9
2009-4-5 ~ 2009-6-25	14	11	9
2012-3-16 ~ 2012-5-13	6	3	2
2012-12-12 ~ 2013-1-12	6	4	3
2013-2-13 ~ 2013-3-13	8	5	2
2014-6-29 ~ 2014-7-29	6	6	5
2016-1-6 ~ 2016-3-7	13	5	2
2016-9-9 ~ 2016-10-9	11	8	5
2017-8-29 ~ 2017-10-15	51	25	15
Total	129	79	52

China:

	Search Results	Collected	Applied
2012-9-10 ~ 2012-12-10	36	16	12
2013-11-1 ~ 2013-12-31	21	12	12
Total	57	28	24

Codebook I

This is the codebook concluded from the analysis. This is categorized based on four major categories (red texts) based on newspapers and countries. Nikkei-China, Nikkei North Korea, Yomiuri-China and Yomiuri-North Korea. Miscellaneous included the codes that are less relevant to the topic. There are overlapped codes. But due to they come from different newspapers, they are still listed separately.

Name	Description
Nikkei-China	
Chinese pressure	Chinese actions that are perceived as pressure and threats by Japan.
Constitutional re-interpretation, amendment	Thoughts, actions and intentions regarding the amendment/re-interpretation as well as its influence, especially regarding security issues.

Name	Description
Importance of Alliance	How can the US ally help Japan and vice versa, especially about security issues. It also includes the actions that will firm the relations.
Japan's hard-line	Japan's hard-line postures towards China on many issues, such as security, policy and territorial issues. (Worsen ties)
Preventing escalation	Measures/plans that can prevent escalation of Chinese influence.
Nikkei-North Korea	
Be more independent	Japan should have a more independent posture in foreign policy, including security policy.
Constitutional hindrance	The current explanation of the constitution can hinder Japan's actions in the international community as well as when it cooperates with ally
Constitutional justification	The reasons that can justify the action of the constitutional amendment/re-interpretation.
Constitutional re-interpretation, amendment	Thoughts, actions and intentions regarding the amendment/re-interpretation as well as its influence, especially regarding security issues.
Importance of Alliance	How can the US ally help Japan and vice versa, especially about security issues. It also includes the actions that will firm the relations.
Incompetent defence	Japan's defence plans in general have been constrained by both constitution and the equipment. It also involves the thoughts and comment regarding whether Japan should be able to launch counter-attack upon attack as a part of defense.
Japan's nuclear arsenal	The thoughts/comments regarding whether Japan should have its nuclear arsenal.
Needs of New equipment	SDF currently hold incompetent defence power. Therefore, it needed new equipment for enhancement, including new cruise missiles and satellite for supporting counter-attack.
North Korea threats	North Korean missile and nuclear capability has composed the threats that are unprecedented towards Japan.

Name	Description
Respect the current framework	Japan's security options should still remain within the scope of current security frameworks brought by the current constitution. And being cautious towards the amendment.
Yomiuri-China	
Chinese pressure	Chinese actions that are perceived as pressure and threats by Japan.
Constitutional re-interpretation, amendment	Thoughts, actions and intentions regarding the amendment/re-interpretation as well as its influence, especially regarding security issues.
Importance of Alliance	How can the US ally help Japan and vice versa, especially about security issues. It also includes the actions that will firm the relations.
Improving defence plans	Japan needs to improve its defensive strategy
Incompetent defence	Japan's defence plans in general have been constrained by both constitution and the equipment. It also involves the thoughts and comment regarding whether Japan should be able to launch counter-attack upon attack as a part of defence.
Japan's hard-line	Japan's hard-line postures towards China on many issues, such as security, policy and territorial issues.
Japan's nuclear arsenal	The thoughts/comments regarding whether Japan should have its nuclear arsenal.
Preventing escalation	Measures/plans that can prevent escalation.
Yomiuri-North Korea	
Ability of Counter-attack	Discussing the possibility of initiating Missile Defence (MD) along with counter-attack of enemy bases.
Constitutional hindrance	Including preventing collective defence with allies, the regulation about using weapons and protecting its own safety. In all, they prevent Japan from being more active and helpful.

Name	Description
Constitutional justification	Including the reasons that can justify the amendment and re-interpretation, such as attacking enemy base into self-defence legally. And the possible contexts for re-interpreting.
Constitutional re-interpretation, amendment	Thoughts, actions and intentions regarding the amendment/re-interpretation as well as its influence, especially regarding security issues.
Dispatching SDF overseas	Under the context of new international environments. Japan wants to take an active role in the world and shape a new image via SDF. Also, for Japan's own international interests.
Importance of Alliance	How can the US ally help Japan and vice versa, especially about security issues. It also includes the actions that will firm the relations.
Incompetent defence	Japan's defence plans in general have been constrained by both constitution and the equipment. It also involves the thoughts and comment regarding whether Japan should be able to launch counter-attack upon attack as a part of defense.
Independent defense	The thoughts on Japan takes bigger more active role when defending with the US. And Japan should be able to defend without ally.
Insufficient defense plans	Lack of proper defensive plans. In order to be capable to self-defence and defending along with its US ally, a better plan has to be formed.
Issues of legal framework	Existing legal framework no longer suits changing security surroundings. Therefore, need to change it, including collective Self-Defence and SDF.
Japan's nuclear arsenal	The thoughts/comments regarding whether Japan should have its nuclear arsenal.
Needs of new equipment	SDF currently hold incompetent defence power. Therefore, it needed new equipment for enhancement, including new cruise missiles and satellite for supporting counter-attack.
New security framework	How can it be beneficial to Japan and the rest of the world? It usually appeared as "Heiwa Anzen Housei" (平和安全法制/安全保障)

Name	Description
	関連法). It marks the fact that defence policy has been changed into a more proactive-defensive posture.
North Korea threats	North Korean missile and nuclear capability has composed the threats that are unprecedented towards Japan.

Codebook II

This includes the refined codes based on the connections among the ones from Codebook 1. There are only two major categories that are country-specific – China and North Korea (red texts). Under each category, main themes are marked with bolded texts and subthemes are marked with regular text. Note that, due to there are more articles collected for North Korea, more details were included. these details are listed Italianized under the subthemes.

Name	Description
Themes regarding China.	
Japan as a responsible international actor	
Constitutional re-interpretation, amendment	Thoughts, actions and intentions regarding the amendment/re-interpretation as well as its influence, especially regarding security issues.
Importance of Alliance	How can the US ally help Japan and vice versa, especially about security issues. It also includes the actions that will firm the relations.
Preventing escalation	Measures/plans that can prevent escalation of Chinese influence.
Potential Threat from China	
Chinese pressure	Chinese actions that are perceived as pressure and threats by Japan.
Incompetent defence	Japan's defence plans in general have been constrained by both constitution and the equipment. It also involves the thoughts and

Name	Description
	comment regarding whether Japan should be able to launch counter-attack upon attack as a part of defence.
Improving defence plans	Japan needs to improve its defensive strategy
Japan's hard-line	Japan's hard-line postures towards China on many issues, such as security, policy and territorial issues.
Themes Regarding North Korea.	
Japan's Inadequate Defense	It also includes the inadequate defense/security policy that limits Japan's international commitments.
Constitutional re-interpretation, amendment	Thoughts, actions and intentions regarding the amendment/re-interpretation as well as its influence, especially regarding security issues.
<i>Constitutional hindrance</i>	Including preventing collective defence with allies, the regulation about using weapons and protecting its own safety. In all, they prevent Japan from being more active and helpful.
<i>Constitutional justification</i>	Including the reasons that can justify the amendment and re-interpretation, such as attacking enemy base into self-defence legally. And the possible contexts for re-interpreting.
<i>Issues of legal framework</i>	Existing legal framework no longer suits changing security surroundings. Therefore, need to change it, including collective Self-Defence and SDF.
<i>New security framework</i>	How can it be beneficial to Japan and the rest of the world? It usually appeared as "Heiwa Anzen Housei" (平和安全法制/安全保障関連法). It marks the fact that defence policy has been changed into a more proactive-defensive posture.
Dispatching SDF overseas	Under the context of new international environments. Japan wants to take an active role in the world and shape a new image via SDF. Also, for Japan's own international interests.
Importance of Alliance	How can the US ally help Japan and vice versa, especially about security issues. It also includes the actions that will firm the relations.

Name	Description
Incompetent defence	Japan's defence plans in general have been constrained by both constitution and the equipment. It also involves the thoughts and comment regarding whether Japan should be able to launch counter-attack upon attack as a part of defense.
<i>Ability of Counter-attack</i>	Discussing the possibility of initiating Missile Defence (MD) along with counter-attack of enemy bases.
<i>Independent defense</i>	The thoughts on Japan takes bigger more active role when defending with the US. And Japan should be able to defend without ally.
<i>Insufficient defense plans</i>	Lack of proper defensive plans. In order to be capable to self-defence and defending along with its US ally, a better plan has to be formed.
<i>Japan's nuclear arsenal</i>	The thoughts/comments regarding whether Japan should have its nuclear arsenal.
<i>Needs of new equipment</i>	SDF currently hold incompetent defence power. Therefore, it needed new equipment for enhancement, including new cruise missiles and satellite for supporting counter-attack.
Nuclear Option	
Japan's nuclear arsenal	The thoughts/comments regarding whether Japan should have its nuclear arsenal.
Real Power of North Korea	
North Korea threats	North Korean missile and nuclear capability has composed the threats that are unprecedented towards Japan.