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ARTICLE

Japanese International Relations: an assessment of the 1971-2011 period*

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This article examines Japanese International Relations in the last quarter of the 20th century, highlighting the history of IR academic development and the opportunities and constraints posed by the International System. It demonstrates that Japanese approaches to IR varied in strength and representativeness, despite the co-existence of four strands of thought: *Staatslehre*, Historicist, Marxist and American Style. The lack of integration between these approaches and in methodological refining can be held accountable for the absence of a *stricto sensu bumiputra* (autochthonous) Japanese theory of IR. The 1997 Asian Crisis was a fracture point in Japanese scholarly debate as it represented the ultimate failure of the *Gankou Keitairon* (Flying Geese) paradigm, pertaining to the until-then highly reputed *Staatslehre* strand of thought. This effectively yielded towards a greater popularization of the American style approach and evidence suggests that such strand gained more and more adepts as years went by. Being heavily influenced by international events, however, it is difficult to predict how Japanese IR will develop in the future. To be sure, there are simply too many variables in Japanese regional and global political and economic environments for one to tell for sure if the American style approach will continue gaining adepts or if it is going to be rolled back and lose ground. International challenges, especially in the case of Japan, might produce unpredictable results, as to the academic debate in the field of IR.

Keywords: Japan; international relations; strands of thought; politics; economy.

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Japan, overtime, consolidated herself as one of the world's economic powers. Long and perilous was the road to such outcome and the price paid was too high for comfort. Japanese economic growth, from 1868-2011, roughly 150-odd years, was astonishing. This article is intended at debating the period ranging from 1971-2011 from Japanese history, both in terms of historical events and the history of IR academic development in the country. The reason lies in perceiving how Japanese perception of herself, as a country, changed regarding International Relations. The main argument of this article is strictly correlated with these changes: IR in Japan, in academia and in practice, were influenced by the opportunities/constraints presented by the International System, to the country.

The periods are benchmarks for they represent twists in Japanese strategies to international insertion. From 1971-1991 the strategy of indigenous investments in infra-structure and productive factors' accumulation, allied with a selective FDI (foreign direct investments) portfolio was pursued in tandem with bilateral agreements. The situation began to change effectively by 1985, with the Plaza Accord. By 1991 (Cold War's end and the deranged economic situation inland due to the bursting of the 'Bubble Economy', between 1989-1990) Japanese economic strategy turned on its head. Politically, she faced new regional/global challenges, despite vowing to enhance her strategic cooperation with the US and to being more prone to multilateral strategies. The affair was a process in motion (TERRY, 2002). However, based on Terry's (2002), Henshall's (1999), Inoguchi's (1993, 1999, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2013), Inoguchi's *et. al*. (2011), and Cai's (2008, 2010) data, I contend that the 'benchmark interpretation' yields explicative power: 1971 marked conjunctural and structural shifts in terms of world economic affairs; 1991 yielded yet more powerful shifts in international issues — conjunctural and structural — but this time in international politics and world economic affairs.

Concerning the structure of the article: firstly, I analyze the strands of thought about the International in Japan and their evolution overtime until 2011; secondly, I assess relevant historical events in Japan's International Relations from 1971-1991 and from 1991 to 2011; thirdly, I correlate the sections and conclude that yes, the development of Japanese academic and practical IR has been intensely influenced by constraints/opportunities the country faced in her relationships with the world, during

1971-2011. This points to a relevant consequence: it is hard to predict future courses for Japanese IR.

Strands of International Thought in Japan

During the first part of the 20th Century, especially prior to World War I, International Relations, academically and practically, were not held in high esteem in Japan (KAWATA and NINOMIYA, 1964). International issues were dealt with as they came about with apparel borrowed from International Law or Diplomatic History (of Japan). As for Political Science, a field of study considered by many as the basis of academic International Relations, it was not yet formed in the country. Matters that would enter its purview were tackled as extensions of domestic politics—and that with pervasive influence from German *Staatslehre*.

The creation of a field of International Relations in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in Europe, was dependent upon the existence of colonies, regarded as national possessions or, even, extensions, of their metropoles yet not as parts of the "homeland" (SCHMIDT, 1998). This means that whatever dwelled in colonial grounds, living or not, was state property. This feeling of juxtaposition between 'in' and 'out' was the underlying enabling premise for those countries to address the International. This did not unfold in the same way in Japan. The country was, arguably, a colonial power. Anyhow, the juxtaposition feeling was not present in terms of state thinking/posture. Every time Japan 'conquered' a territory she quickly annexed it. This means that every territory (and anything therein) became part of the Empire of Greater Japan.

Koreans, Taiwanese, Chinese and other nationalities faced the profound prejudice the Japanese nurtured towards Asians; however, things were not a matter of international relations anymore, but of domestic politics[1]. This contributed to hampering scholarship in International Relations for some time. *Staatslehre* was the strongest of the trends from 1868-1945. According to Inoguchi (2002), it remained strong even after the Pacific War.

Staatslehre produced extensive, fact-rich, policy-relevant background studies, on history and institutions (INOGUCHI, 2002). This shows the extreme reliance the Japanese had put into historically-informed studies. This tradition was so pervasive in Japan during this period because it is consistent with the way the Japanese academic

[1] On Japanese history see: Kennedy (1963) and Panikkar (1977)

elite had behaved in relation to science, as Francks' (1992) discussion about the process of technology emulation, production and internalization in Japan suggests. Thusly, the fields of Law and Economics were privileged. Political Science and Sociology fields were not. The writings of List and Kant were paramount for Japanese political and bureaucratic thinking/actions (MORRIS-SUZUKI, 1989, 1994; NANBARA, 1927). Examples are the industrial promotion actions like the setting up of heavily protected infant state industries that were to be sold latter to private entrepreneurs at discounted prices. This was the basis of formation of the *zaibatsu* conglomerates (KOBAYASHI, 1977; NAKAMURA, 1990; SHIBAGAKI, 1968). Another example was the way the Japanese concatenated economic growth; reformulated their military; put forth national mottos like '*Oitsuke, Oikose!*' ('catch up, overtake' Europeans and North Americans, in all matters related to national power), '*Fukoku Kyouhei!*' ('rich country, strong army"); and used Western assistance to build modern armed forces from scratch (HENSHALL, 1999; PREISSEISSEN, 1965; RALSTON, 1990).

Staatslehre continued strong after 1945. It became spearheaded by bureaucracy/government-related think-tanks that produced policy-relevant research (INOGUCHI, 2002). However, the end of the war also meant the end of the pressure government placed onto academia so that it produced policy-relevant studies, leading scholars to counter the dominance of *Staatslehre*. More humanistic studies were undertaken, but they lacked, in positivistic terms, in methodology.

Japan, during the 1930's, forced academia to produce policy-relevant studies, discouraging anything that did not fit the principle. Two of the most significant offspring of this (and perhaps the most significant) were Akamatsu's *Gankou Keitairon* (Flying Geese) model, which even after the war, continued to be followed by Japan and imposed on her weaker partners; and Toyota's *Kanban* model, formulated during the 1930's in order to better cope with constraints the government and the times placed upon the company. In the 1970's it was 'rediscovered' by the West, becoming known as the "*just-in-time/toyotism*" model of business organization (FRANCKS, 1992).

Both models were formulated in a government-pressurized, *Staatslehre* tradition. Even though they brought about productivity gains and ameliorated Japan's position *vis-à-vis* her opponents, they were fruit of a state-induced science-production process. Its main goal was to better Japanese odds at troubled times. After 1945 they were reformulated to better suit peace-time needs and continued to be intensely utilized by the Japanese bureaucracy/government and the *keiretsu* in their relations with the outside world. South Korea, one of Japan's Tier 2 geese, even emulated the *zaibatsu* system and created the *chaebol* (DICKEN, 2011).

Despite being the most powerful tradition in Japan prior to 1945, *Staatslehre* was not alone. After World War I and the creation of the League of Nations, interest in the international as something distinguished from domestic or foreign policy abounded. Efforts at establishing a separate field of/for IR were undertaken. Seminal works like Shinobu's (1925a, 1925b, 1925c, 1926) four volumes (which considered International Politics as something different from diplomacy or foreign policy and attempted at crafting an independent field of/for IR), Kamikawa's (1948-50) (which considered the League of Nations the main driving force towards cooperation, integration and then fusion of different countries into one entity, also hindering the growth of *Minzoku-shugi*, 'nationalism'), and Rooyama's (1928) (which targeted more clearly at devising useful concepts like the ones of 'international political science', 'international society', and 'international organization', stressing that international organizations could effectively yield towards stabilizing international politics) are cases in point.

None succeeded in creating a separate field of and for IR. Conversely, torrents of 'area studies' works appeared: Taiwan, Korea, China, India, and the European island-colonies of Southeast Asia began to be studied in detail, albeit lacking in methodological refining. These were basically descriptive works.

It was in such context that another trend in Japanese political thought arose: Marxism. It was a discernible trend and grew, albeit in nonlinear progression, between the 1920's on to the 1960's, being marked as *Oppositionswissenschaft* (INOGUCHI, 2002). It identified ideological biases, pervasive in Japan. In the 1920's the term *Shakai Kagaku* (social science) was first used and became synonymous to Marxism-oriented works. However, such works did not have the theoretical/methodological refinement of their Western counterparts, some of this being due to the 'war' government waged on them, for leftist writings were deemed a subversive influence to Japanese values. The sheer amount of anti-communist regulations is an indicative. Mass trials of 'communists' took place during 1931-32. They contributed to hampering the growth of the Japanese Communist Party and leftist ideologies (DUUS, 2005; HALL, 1968; KENNEDY, 1963; TOTTEN III, 1974). The deep-seated Japanese scientific tradition (description-making in order to apprehend things in minute detail) also played its part.

Things worsened for Marxism, as a strand of thought, when Japan took a militaristic turn in 1931 (KAWATA and NINOMIYA, 1964). From there onwards, Japanese scholarship became 'state-induced', favoring themes that would bring insights to help Japan quell resistance and consolidate power. The reasoning implied was that of 'conquering and annexing', going back to *Staatslehere*. Studies in diverging directions were discouraged. It was during this time that doctrines, which came out as results of research, were put into practice in the form of foreign policy, most important of which are: *Dai Tooa Kyoueiken* (Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere) and Akamatsu's *Gankou Keitairon* (the Flying Geese).

Only after 1945 did Marxism in Japan gained popularity: the constrained domestic political context was no more, despite Cold War rivalries and US-Japan's alliance. After the Cold War most Marxists had become post-Marxists, postmodernists, radical feminists and noncommunist radicals retaining, however, their critical posture (INOGUCHI, 2002).

The third strand is the historicist tradition. Unlike *Staatslehre*, it focused on historical events and how different political personalities contributed so that these events unfolded the way they did, especially prior to 1945 (*ibid*). Inoguchi (2002) goes so far as to argue that it was Rankean-inspired. The fourth strand of thought is relatively new, emerging during the 1970's-1990's: the internalization of Western authors, which yielded more methodological/theoretical care in treating the International, being also particularly interested in empirical testing (*ibid*). However, it never became hegemonic in Japan (INOGUCHI, 2010).

After 1945, many universities set up subjects in international affairs, international politics, diplomatic history, and international political history (KAWATA and NINOMIYA, 1964). The publication of studies rose manifold but these were mostly concerned with providing detailed information on regions and continents, not theory crafting, a reflex of the deep-seated *Staatslehre* tradition. Methodologically, three trends emerged: 1) to adopt an 'international political science' approach; 2) new, comprehensive studies on international affairs, albeit of a descriptive type; 3) to adopt an 'international political history' approach (*ibid*).

This is consistent with Inoguchi's (2002, 2009, 2010) accounts of the period. But he goes further, identifying three basic questions that the Japanese wanted to address so to understand the world from a Japanese standpoint. The first question dealt with the troublesome defeat at the *Pacific War*. Basically, the Japanese wanted to know why they had lost that war. The second question focused on clarifying the best types of international arrangements to secure lasting international peace. The third question was intended at grasping the reasons why the Japanese felt that their diplomacy was inadequate for the post-war scenario and what could be done about it. These methodological tenets circumscribed research options, leading to detailed but theoretically disinterested pieces that served as important information sources to the Japanese bureaucracy.

Japanese bureaucracy in Japan can be extremely insulated, meaning that outside interference, even from Diet representatives, is reduced. In this sense, it needed domestic and foreign guidelines for action. That was how Akamatsu's Flying Geese paradigm was revived from the ashes of the *Dai Nippon Teikoku* and adapted to better suit Japan's needs at the time (TERRY, 2002; KASAHARA, 2004; OZAWA, 2005).

Kaname Akamatsu was a Hitotsubashi graduate. During the 1930's, as Japan took a militaristic turn, the government needed information on how to best administer territories, heighten combat readiness, and boost economic growth. Akamatsu, working as a government official, devised his Flying Geese paradigm, which can best be understood as a model for 'outsourcing' national production on massive scale: Japan (the leading goose) would only retain state-of-the-art industries, establishing unequal trade (favoring Japan) with her neighbors and colonies, buying low-end but desperately needed goods (food, raw cotton, iron ore and raw metals, etc)[2] at prices way below what would be the natural fee for such products if produced in Japan and, at the same time, providing these markets with high-end goods (chemicals, fertilizers, capital goods, etc). These dealings were carried out by the *zaibatsu* and supervised by the Japanese government. As Japan grew economically, Japanese salaries became higher than those of her immediate neighboring colonies. The Flying Geese paradigm was, therefore, an efficient way of producing trade surpluses and, at the same time, keeping tabs on fellow Asian populations. The model was revamped to fit the post-war scenario masterfully and Japan reaped the benefits almost instantly (AKAMATSU, 1962; INOGUCHI, 2007; KASAHARA, 2004; TERRY, 2002).

After the war, Japan needed economic growth. Her military alliance with Washington left her one of her hands free to carry out efforts towards such goal. The

[2] For more on this see: Bergamini (1971), Kennedy (1963) and Panikkar (1977).

alliance was forthcoming for the country: America provided security and some funding (the Colombo Plan) and promised not to fiercely compete with Japanese goods for Asian markets, so long Japan refrained from succumbing to socialism (the deal did not include European and American markets). The US would also transfer some technology to the Japanese.

America became Japan's leading goose while she fell back to Tier 2. In the process, Japan first opted to master technology, producing first for her domestic market. Quickly enough, however, she began exporting a significant parcel of her production to many markets, including Europe and the United States. This pattern of international insertion brought tandem growth, one of the tenets of Akamatsu's (1962) prior model but more identified with his revised paradigm, as presented by Ozawa (2005) and Kasahara (2004). The behavior brought to light the 'Japanese economic miracle', which lasted until the early 1970's.

From the 1970's on attempts towards establishing an independent/separate field of/for IR continued. The Japanese were, barely, successful. These efforts have not yet bear real fruit, as Inoguchi's (2009, 2010) accounts show — even today, IR is a underdeveloped field in Japan, with works leaning towards descriptive area studies. The lack of theoretical proposing is still a feature of Japanese IR and recycling of pre-war models for international action is pervasive; perhaps a reflex of bureaucracy's desire to know more about specific markets in order to better tinker its international strategies, following on the revamped Flying Geese model. After the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis Japan abandoned the paradigm and academy was left freer to try and grasp why things turned out the way they did for Japan.

As a result, more theoretically-grounded studies abounded, especially in security- and international politics-related areas. The 1997 Crisis was a dividing event for more theoretically- and methodologically-grounded studies the way the *Pacific War* was for Marxism, in Japan. Funding issues also play their part, for scholars of IR seldom work in a specific department dealing with international matters in universities. Rather, they are scattered throughout different departments frequently unrelated to IR.

According to Inoguchi (2002, 2009, 2010), the four tenets presented above (*Staatslehre,* Marxism, Historicism and American-style) are present in Japan's International Relations today, even though they varied in strength and representativeness overtime. The problem is the lack of communication between these four paradigms. Even though nowadays a scenario of diversity is present (something relatively new to Japan), integration is less than satisfactory.

This lack in integration hampers Japanese IR in many ways, the most important of which being the difficulty more traditional Japanese scholars face when discussing International Politics/Relations with more American-style-influenced neighbors, e.g., Korean and Taiwanese academics. Only recently is this situation changing, with an increasing number of professors with PhDs obtained in the West teaching in Japanese universities; and the creation of English-written journals, which receive submissions from Japanese and foreign scholars.

The end of the Cold War also provoked domestic political changes (INOGUCHI, 1993). Three American-style works, published in the 1990's, had intense impact on how parts of the Japanese academia perceived the International. Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations', Kissinger's 'Diplomacy', and Fukuyama's 'The End of History and the Last Man' are important. The perspectives they inspired were, respectively: the 'end of geography', the 'end of the Cold War' and the 'end of history'. According to Inoguchi (1999), they are respectively correlated to the Anti-Utopian, the Westphalian and the Philadelphian paradigms of International thought. Important as they were, however, empirical evidence strongly suggests that their impact towards making a *bumiputra* (autochthonous) Japanese theory of IR has been marginal.

As far as a Japanese theory of International Relations is concerned, it is hard to contend that there existed any: the *Gankou Keitairon* and the *Kanban* were models, not theories. Proto-theoretical arguments were put forth by Hirano (1924), Nishida (1958) and Tabata (1946). Each dealt with themes that find echo in IR theories (INOGUCHI, 2010). Hirano (1924) is closer to constructivist theorizing, Tabata (1946) discussed natural law and the natural freedom of individuals in a Marxist-oriented fashion and Nishida (1958) tackled regional integration. For Inoguchi (2010), if one is somewhat lax with what theory is/means these works could be considered theoretical.

However, I contend that, due to their lack of methodological strictness, coupled with their normative pushes, they cannot be considered theories '*stricto sensu*', being more philosophical than theoretical in nature: they veered more to Political Philosophy than to Political Science. Another aspect of this is the fact that even though these works were highly influential in terms of arousing and nurturing passions of a multitude of flavors — among academics, the general public, the media and government sectors —

they did not produce methodologically strict pieces aimed at theory construction. In a scientific realist perspective, they have failed to yield observable effects in the form of *stricto sensu* theory-building in Japan.

The development of the field of IR in Japan, however, has been extremely influenced and constrained by international events. Thus, a logic different from the one unfolding in America—internal and cross-disciplinary debates (SCHMIDT, 1998) — took place in Japan. In the country, shocks external to the scholarly field have had a more prominent role in shaping the field than intestine, cross-disciplinary debates. This trend can be grasped when one looks at historical events during the period assessed. That is precisely why it is difficult to forecast how IR will evolve in Japan in the future. Political conjuncture influences academic production. So, conjunctural and structural changes in the international environment can take the field to non-envisaged directions. This is especially pronounced in a region so dynamic and tense as East Asia. Factors like the rise of China, DPRK's political positioning and nuclear weapons buildup, the uncertain fate of the US-Japan security alliance, South Korea, the Taiwan Straits, the dispute for islands in the Pacific between Japan and China, Russia, conflicting trade relations, the possibility of Japan changing her constitution and giving her Self-Defense Forces a more prominent role, to name a few, can upset an already tenuous balance, yielding unpredictable results.

In order to understand these tenets it is necessary to look at the challenges Japan faced in her international relations. I now present some of the basic constraints she faced, from 1971-2011. There is a clear shift in posture between the benchmark-periods of 1971-1991 and 1991-2011. External events are key to understanding Japanese IR development.

Japan from 1971-1991

1971 marked the end of the gold-dollar standard. Exchange rates began fluctuating, making Japanese investments abroad susceptible to exposure and market-risk. Japanese economic boom brought twofold consequences: 1) it contributed to mastering foreign technology in key-sectors as production in automobiles and parts, electronic components, and electrical appliances; 2) it contributed to raising the average salary of the Japanese worker (the *sarariman*). These events influenced the Japanese 'coming-out', which displaced parts of her production to Asian countries in a manner consistent with the Flying Geese model.

The Japanese looked for places to outsource their most dirty labor-intensive industries. MITI's (Ministry of International Trade and Industry), MOF's (Ministry of Finance), and MOFA's (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) confidence in the Flying Geese pattern of development was adamant and they helped guide *keiretsu* investments in Asian countries (TERRY, 2002). However, war wounds from the Pacific War had never fully healed, making Asians wary of Japanese economic strategies. That was why MOFA used the effective stratagem of ODA (Official Development Assistance) to try and win the 'hearts and minds' of Asians. Thus, even in countries where *coups* happened, like in Sukarno's Indonesia, the relationship between governments and *keiretsu* entering their domains (Mitsubishi, Fujitsu, NEC, and others) remained relatively warm.

Relations with Washington, however, became more contentious economically, especially after the 1973 oil shocks, even though both countries remained allies politically. After the Oil Crisis, oil prices soared and everything, which depended directly or indirectly on oil (the majority of sectors in Japan and America), experienced fixed and variable costs hikes. This happened at a time when the US economy was stumbling and the Japanese was on overdrive for quite some time: American commercial relations with Japan were deficitary, with immense surpluses favoring Japan. Moreover, personal savings in America were low, inhibiting the administration to roll its increasing debt; oil imports reached historical highs, despite the country's oil reserves; the US received crippling blows in the Vietnam war in terms of morale and war costs; and the need to keep pace with the Soviet Union in military terms troubled Washington. The Americans also urged that Japan stepped up its political game (OGATA, 1980).

Thus, America began pressuring Japan so that she promoted domestic consumption and imports. The Japanese yielded to Washington but this was not enough to quench her needs. The US later demanded that the Japanese appreciated their currency. All came to a head in 1985, the Plaza Accord, and Japan accepted to valuate the Yen.

Japanese companies and subcontracted firms became wary of the international economic environment. With good reason: they would see return margins plummet and credit become scarcer, as the price of the Yen to the Dollar would soar. However, the Japanese government reacted in an unusual way. To sustain growth and investments abroad the Bank of Japan massively reduced discount rates: the real interest rates for credit taking in Japan became negative (TERRY, 2002). The Bank virtually paid clients to borrow money. The *keiretsu* used the opportunity to inject money into infrastructure and productive sectors in Japan and especially abroad. As a result, a big speculative bubble in assets formed: real estate prices, salaries, and indexed prices hiked across the board. Nikkei Stock Exchange beat record high after record high. This was the 'Bubble Economy' period, which did not to last long. In 1990 the bubble exploded, insolvency took hold and many companies paid a cumbersome price. Banks were left with many non-performing loans, assets needed to be liquidated, and real estate prices collapsed. The situation enabled a feedback system between three trends, which, functioning in tandem, contributed to one of the most severe crisis experienced by Japan: 1) rise in asset prices; 2) overheated economy; 3) expansion of monetary aggregates and credits (OKINA *et. al.*, 2001; SHIRATSUKA, 2003). For the authors, the initial factors were correlated with the Japanese financial system. They point to an aggressive bank behavior (Bank of Japan included), which favored the gradual financial deregulation Japan was experiencing, especially after the Plaza Accord; declining profitability; and monetary easing. But other factors are also important: inadequate risk management by banks; introduction of the Capital Accord; biased regulations/taxation aimed at catalyzing the rise in land prices; overconfidence in the economic situation and overconcentration of financial functions in Tokyo.

The Japanese economy took a severe blow from which it was not to fully recover in years. At 1991's end the Soviet Union died a natural death. So too did American interest in indirectly supporting Japanese economic ventures in Asia. Additionally, Japan was left with yet another problem: Japanese investments and FDIs into South Korea and Taiwan successfully contributed to the transference of technology to these countries. Following on Japanese footsteps, they effectively mastered it in some sectors: Japan now had new economic competitors in the region. Moreover, China grew at impressive rates and, despite the enormous gap between Chinese and Japanese economies, the Japanese sense of confidence in their economy had been highly reduced at the 1990's outset.

Politically, relevant events also unfolded. Japan tied herself to the US in terms of security. Her Self-Defense Forces had only defensive capability, intended at protecting Japan in case of foreign aggression, providing relief support in catastrophes and national emergencies and, supporting US forces in East Asia during conflicts. They lacked power projection capabilities, what constrained foreign policy options (INOGUCHI, 2007). Japan relied heavily in bilateralism to conduct its foreign relations from 1960 until 1975, a trend already strong prior to 1945. After the war Washington became Japan's major political partner. In 1960, the 1952 security treaty with America was revised to better reflect the situation both countries faced at the time and to reduce its unequal character. Japan continued to be the junior partner in the affair, however.

Japan's bilateral relations with the world grew in tandem with her economic expansion. Unequal as it were, the US-Japan security alliance gave Japan a free hand: she needed not worry herself much with security matters, being under America's security/deterrence mantles. Thus, she could focus efforts into achieving economic growth and performing reconstruction works. The alliance also gave her easier diplomatic transit with the West and non-Soviet influenced countries, responding significantly for Japan's growth in bilateral relations, during the period. The trend did not hold true only in three cases: South Korea and China[3] (because of mutual distrust and unhealed war wounds) and the Soviet Union (because of Cold War tensions).

Multilateralism was timid from 1960-75, despite growing after Japan's accession to international organizations like the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and, later, the Group of 7/8 (G7/G8). Nevertheless, as put by Job (1997) *apud* Inoguchi (2007, p. 58), it was a 'bilaterally networked multilateralism' referenced on Washington. Moreover, Japan refrained to address security issues multilaterally, at the time.

The 1973 oil shocks, the gold-dollar standard's end, and America's debt and inflation problems changed things in Japan, leaving, however, security commitments untouched (INOGUCHI, 2013). American commitments to Japan became under question at home, making the Japanese fearful of complications. Additionally, globalization was a growing trend.

By 1975, Japanese bilateralism was becoming more multilateral and a good example of which is the Plaza Accord. However, empirical data strongly suggests that the

[3] Rapprochement with China only happened in 1972, with the normalization of diplomatic relations even though economic cooperation did not rapidly follow due to the internal context the country faced with ground-shaking events such as the Cultural Revolution. With South Korea the relationship was contradictory: despite Japanese investments and FDIs in the country, political relationship was troubled even after the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965.

1975-1990 period was one of transition from bilateralism to multilateralism. Accordingly, the numbers of meetings attended by Japanese officials in multilateral settings, though higher than for the 1960-1975 period, were consistently lower than for the post-1990 period (INOGUCHI, 2007).

The United States mildly voiced, during the Reagan administration, its preference for a more acting Japan in security matters to help implement a more effective defense against Soviet forces in East Asia. While not revising its Self-Defense Forces' role, Japan modernized capabilities somewhat and cooperated more in bilateral security programs. For Inoguchi (1993), four reasons explain why Japan has not yielded to US pressure this time: 1) the troublesome 1945 defeat still haunted Japanese conscience, and furthermore, US-Japan security treaty framework complicated such pushes; 2) domestic constraints were implemented in the 1960's and 1970's, especially on export of weapons and denial of possession of nuclear weapons; 3) unfavorable public opinion; 4) the reticence other countries nurtured to a war-faring Japan. The collapse of the Soviet Union, however, influenced policy inflections.

Japan from 1991-2011

The year of 1992 began problematic for Japan's ambitions in Asia. She, however, was able to collect a mild victory: World Bank's support to its economic model of development. Japan became one of its biggest investors and the effort paid-off as the institution voiced preference to the Japanese model to the detriment of IMF's and America's method: structural adjustment and control of expenses, along a neoclassical line.

Academic, political and developmental debates ensued worldwide regarding what would be the best way to foster development/growth at credit-crunch times. Against the neoclassical proposals spoke the weak performances the 'Washington Consensus' was reaping in Latin America and elsewhere.

Many Asian countries embarked even more on Japan's favored model (with Japanese patronage), especially after the World Bank released its 'East Asian Miracle' report. The 1993 document acknowledged that non-economic factors do influence growth processes: cultural and political structures can encourage or hamper them. Japanese institutions are based on a millenary tradition of bureaucracy plus private elements, with the former providing conditions so that the latter might foster, close to

Staatslehre premise of Japanese academia. That was the *keiretsu*-system kernel and some consider this industrial policy. However, some non-healthy practices of promiscuity between government and businesses ensued: cartels were formed while the government looked the other way (CAI, 2008; TERRY, 2002). The practice was severely criticized by other governments and scholars. The WTO (World Trade Organization), once created, in 1995, also criticized Tokyo along such lines. It labeled such practices market-unfriendly and potentially distortive (a view finding echo in the writings e.g. of Krugman (1993) and others).

Additionally, the Japanese also grew wary of China's ascension in three pivotal areas of regional and world politics: diplomacy, economic performance and military buildup (HOOK et al., 2001, 2005). Chinese diplomacy had the convincing power, which the Japanese lacked. They were competing with the Japanese for regional preeminence, even without Tokyo's economic muscle. Economically, the potential Chinese market attracted more investors, eager to produce under its low-regulated environment for industrial pollution, huge markets, and cheap labor force. Moreover, the prospect of Hong Kong returning to China excited investors. The island was an important stock-exchange site in Asia and Beijing promised to experiment on some financial deregulation. Militarily, China realized, after the Gulf War, that her armed forces were not prepared for the 'Revolution in Military Affairs' and started reforms to enhance combat survivability and punch, and give forces better coordinating skills for operating in an environment favoring mechanization and informatization (CORDESMAN et al., 2012). Efforts were increased after the 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis.

Meanwhile, the bursting of the 'Bubble Economy' took its toll on the Japanese economy: inflation rates decreased steadily throughout the 1990's (TRADING ECONOMICS, 2015). Prices lowered and suppliers were left with less than an incentive to produce in Japan. In 1997 struck the Asian Financial Crisis, as a result of a contagion effect originated in the Thai currency, rapidly eating through profit margins and leaving many banks with loads of non-performing loans. The interesting point about the event was that Japan played a major part in it. Japanese investors had extensive assets in Southeast/East Asia. As the first signs of danger appeared they began pulling out their money all over these regions. With markets globalized, a panic spree ensued and other investors followed suit. Before long, Southeast/East Asian economies, highly interdependent and functioning in tandem, were in shreds (TERRY, 2002; CAI, 2010).

The Japanese blamed globalization, the West blamed Japanese-model-inspired economic policies. IMF's response was timid and unforthcoming. Japanese response was to lend large sums so that countries could put themselves back into tracks. However, the event damaged Japanese confidence in the Flying Geese paradigm and inspired bad jokes in the West. For all intents and purposes, the ghost of Akamatsu (1962) was finally put to rest (*ibid*). Empirical evidence suggests further that outsourcing and activity specialization, characteristics of the revamped Flying Geese model, may have probably sped the contagion effect while enhancing its scope and strength during the 1997 crisis (CAI, 2010).

The 2000's began as the 1990's ended: dire. National debt soared steadfastly, tax revenue fell likewise, and total expenditures hiked — in 2011 government debt had already surpassed the 200%-of-GDP-mark (OECD, 2015; MINISTRY OF FINANCE, 2015; IMF, 2015). However, unemployment remained at a comfortable 04~06%-level between 2001-2011, despite the Japanese having trouble putting their economy back on its feet (IMF, 2015).

Regarding the Yen, the Japanese enacted reforms to further internationalize their currency, at 21st Century's outset. These were intended at stabilizing Japan's external economic environment. However, globalization is a thread that cannot be deconstructed solely. Moreover, fiscal constraints inhibited effective change. Thusly, reforms had a more cosmetic effect than originally envisaged (GRIMES, 2003).

Japan was also hard-hit by the 2007-2008 economic crisis. The government had to enact unwanted policies at a time of high indebtedness, credit crunch, and plummeting revenues. It provided credit-guarantee programs for exporters, injected banks with money, the Bank of Japan purchased commercial paper, and expansionary fiscal policies were implemented to boost domestic consumption (FUJII and KAWAI, 2010). These measures helped ease the crisis' effects only at a steep price: further indebtedness. As of 2011, Japanese economy had not still fully recovered, deflation was a serious trend, national debt had reached the 220,3%-of-GDP-mark, gross national savings were diminishing, and exports balanced out imports (TRADING ECONOMICS, 2015).

In political matters, the Cold War's end brought challenges to Japan. The US-Japan alliance was enhanced, being elevated to 'special friendship' status. It was taken some steps further after Japan's political support to the U.S. after 09/11 (INOGUCHI, 2007). These events were influenced by America's response to Japanese inability in getting more involved in the Gulf War. Despite donating considerable monetary sums to the coalition, she was severely criticized by many western countries, which labeled her foreign policy the 'checkbook diplomacy'. The Gulf War affair also contributed to a heightened Japanese involvement in Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs) and Peace Building Operations under UN mandate.

Nevertheless, a new tenet also emerged: regionalism. Japan sought to complete agreements with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and bilateral Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) accords with a multitude of countries, what does not mean that multilateralism was abandoned. Quite the opposite. Bilateralism remained salient, multilateralism, however, entered the order of the day, especially in three areas: human rights, disarmament, and human security (*ibid*). But it occurred in other areas as well: finance, trade, and markets, especially after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis (CAI, 2010).

The strengthening of the Japan-US alliance is related to new sources of regional tension, the first of which being the rise of a China keen on obtaining more influence regionally and globally. Indeed, the 'China question' is a cumbersome thorn in Tokyo's and Washington's sides. Concerning security, Chinese (nuclear) weapons buildup is making the partners uneasy, with good reason (KRISTENSEN and NORRIS, 2013; CORDESMAN et al. 2012; YAROSH, 2012; PAUL, 2013; ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012; THE MILITARY BALANCE, 2012, 2014; SIPRI, 2015). Beijing has been augmenting her power-projection capabilities on the seas of China and beyond them. This is troublesome for the US and Japan, for both feel their interests may be threatened. Japan is worried about territories she disputes with China, of which a clear example are the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. The U.S. is fearful China might adopt a more aggressive posture towards Taiwan and American commercial, political, security, and strategic interests in Asia.

North Korea is another major source of regional instability. After her Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT denunciation and her missile and nuclear tests, her East Asian neighbors, the US and Russia became restless as to what policy lines she might pursue. One major source of anxiety stems from Pyongyang's ability in denying information on how her nuclear weapons program is faring. After the tests it has become undisputed that she is nuclear-capable. Anyhow, it is still difficult to assess the degree of expertise and efficiency she has in fielding deliverable nuclear artifacts (KRISTENSEN and

NORRIS, 2005). Recent missile tests have been showing, nonetheless, that she might acquire such sophistication soon, if she has not already done so.

The third tension source revolves around how Japan and her neighbors will react to such conjuncture. South Korea is jumpy at the prospect of a nuclearized North. Backlash from Seoul and other countries, including Japan and the U.S., might send the region into a weapon's buildup spiral, contributing to heightening tensions, making it more feasible that anyone actor jump the gun, with dire consequences.

Moreover, Tokyo-Washington relations became more strained recently, despite enhancement in the security alliance and Japan's backing U.S. antiterrorism policies. As Washington became involved in the Middle East, she demanded that Japan played a bigger role into Asian security matters. Something she sought, at least, performatically. Japan lent some modicum sums in order to help Middle Eastern countries fight terrorism (HOOK *et. al.*, 2005). If these actions were wholehearted or just to provide the Americans with some satisfaction, however, is hard to assess.

Japan has been more active than before regarding committing human resources to the cause: Japanese teams were sent to war-torn areas in the Middle East to help with reconstruction efforts, signaling a Japanese slight change of heart (INOGUCHI, 2013). This is a sign that American pressure to make Japan get more involved in security-related issues may finally be paying off. The ongoing debate about amendments in Japanese constitution to give the Self-Defense Forces a more prominent role is a related topic (HOOK *et. al.*, 2005; THE DIPLOMAT, 2015). Enabling a more assertive role for the SDF would possibly be one of the most significant international-security-related events of the early 21st Century, which, if confirmed, would exacerbate tensions and destabilize the region further.

Many different challenges have arisen in the post-Cold War period. If the security alliance with the U.S. is going to endure or succumb under the pressure of international events in the near future is something that remains to be seen.

As could be evinced, the field of IR in Japan developed in tandem to the country's international challenges and constraints.

Conclusion

Japanese International Relations have been dependent on the opportunities and constraints the country faced internationally. External events have always been decisive to the development of the field until the 1997 Crisis, which is a fracture point.

The *Staatslehre* tradition and the Historicist tradition, to a much lesser extent, were important to Japan. They helped her assemble useful information utilized by the bureaucracy and governments to tinker international insertion strategies. A substantial part of works performed under the *Staatslehre* tradition were financed, directly or indirectly, by the Japanese government. This kind of research was undertaken, on a significant part, by government-related think tanks and the bureaucracy. It was useful for it produced policy-relevant insights.

The revamping of the Flying Geese model and its use to conduct economic relations both with the U.S. and Europe (with Japan as one of their Tier 2 geese), as well as with Asia, especially South Korea and Taiwan (with Japan as the leading goose) attests to my statement. This brought tandem growth to Japan and Asia (though unequal) and helped Japan in her catching-up efforts, what however, troubled Washington for she realized she might have her economic primacy threatened by her fast-growing East Asian counterpart. That was when she started paying attention, during the 1970's and 1980's, and voiced demands so that the Japanese did something about their own currency.

The Plaza Accord only attests to my prior statements. But there is more to it than that. Perhaps the most decisive influence to the whole thing was the stark change in economic conjuncture processed in the 1970's. Globalization was a thread in motion and, though it made it more difficult for Japan to continue as one of the Tier 2 geese to America and Europe, it definitely facilitated her economic penetration in Asia: she consolidated herself as the uncontested leader goose while South Korea and Taiwan became Tier 2. The situation endured until the Cold War's end, when her former *fukutaichou* geese started to challenge her primacy as the pack's leader and completely turned on its head due to the 1997 crisis. Globalization had become a consolidated trend, producing effects hampering the efficiency of the model. The world became 'overglobalized', something that did not favor the *Gankou Keitairon*. The Japanese had to adapt in order to meet the requirements of the new times. Thus, the strategy was abandoned.

Regarding her political relations, the ones with the U.S. come in the forefront. The security alliance was central to Japan, enabling her to focus on economic matters more than on security ones. However, this was not everything it did. Japan became so dependent on the U.S. that the shadow of Washington watched over even her multilateral positioning.

This state of affairs became the focus of some Marxist scholars that vowed to elucidate political biases so pervasive in Japanese politics, denouncing the seemingly unequal character of the agreement and the political consequences of Japan becoming inescapably tied to the United States. The end of the Pacific War and Japan's crushing defeat were pivotal events to the development of Marxism and Marxist-oriented works in the country. There was practically no space for this strand of thought in Japan prior to 1945, for the social and academic environments were extremely pressurized by the government. Additionally, to openly spouse such ideological choice was a dangerous business and many scholars tended to camouflage some of the trademark jargons of Marxism, making their writings sound less Marxist (INOGUCHI, 1993, 1999, 2002). It stopped growing and attracting new followers in the 1960's. The reasons why this is so remain disputed. However, it is possible to argument that the incredible economic growth of the 1960's, combined with the income-doubling plans of the 1960's and 1970's, and the dire need the bureaucracy had of policy-relevant studies to better tinker its relations with the world as well as with Asia (*Staatslehre*, in nature) may have attracted young and not-so-young scholars to this kind of study, to the detriment of Marxism. Even after the Cold War, when Marxism lost some of its appeal, being correlated to Soviet communism in many parts of the world as it was, many scholars still retained a critical vein, even if they were no more Marxists *stricto sensu*. Here again, it is possible to see how external events drove academia.

As to the post-Cold War period, the works of Huntington (1996), Kissinger (1994) and Fukuyama (1992) have had intense influence on a minority parcel of Japanese academia. Heavily influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union, they espoused different accounts of what would be the world from that point on. The first point to make here is the fact that the Cold War, or rather that its end, was of fundamental importance for these books turning out the way they did. The second point to make is that, even though they stirred quite the debate in Japan, they did not have the same impact the 1997 crisis had in influencing the academic field. The financial crisis was a rupture point in that a model under the *Staatslehre* heading proved to be incapable of avoiding the generalized bust that ensued. In a sense, it was deemed anachronistic and unsuitable for a heavily globalized world. Thus, scholars turned to American-style science in the hope that they could profit from its apparel to better understand the ever-changing world around them.

Nowadays, the four strands are present in Japanese academia even if there is almost no debate between different traditions. The lack of debate points to a serious difficulty in devising new and enhancing existing methodological tenets. Of all the trends presented above, the American-style approach is the most methodologically advanced, in positivistically speaking, but it never became hegemonic. If there are difficulties for debate among approaches inside Japan, there are also difficulties in promoting academic debate with foreign scholars, since approaches are not so methodologically refined and there is a strong load of the Japanese cultural background infused in analyses. This is especially visible when it comes to trying to establish academic dialog between Japanese and South Korean and Taiwanese academics (much more influenced by the American style).

The situation began to change after the 1997 crisis and world events have helped the Japanese embrace, slow but continuously, the American style. According to Inoguchi's (2009) account, the Japan Association for International Relations (JAIR) had in 1998 many members specialized in the teaching of themes related to area studies or history but, already in that year the number of persons specialized in theory teaching was significant, what shows some preoccupation with methodology and theory. Security-related events like the 09/11 attacks, transnational terrorism and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the (future of the) security alliance with the U.S. and China's and DPRK's (nuclear) arms buildup catalyzed further such change in JAIR. Here again, external events influenced Japanese academia.

As to the thorny issue of why there has been no *bumiputra* (autochthonous) theory of IR in Japan, one could blame the lack of methodological strictness and the fact that only recently is American-style becoming more popular and debate with foreign scholars has been fostered via English-written journals. As to the future development of the field, it is possible to devise a few comments. It is extremely hard to tell if the tendencies analyzed above are going to be escalated or rolled back, for, as was made fairly clear hitherto, Japanese IR has been especially influenced by international events.

One potentially disturbing such event would be a possible revision of Japanese constitution, being pressed for approval, mainly, by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The event could have potentially destabilizing effects, both regionally and globally. First and foremost, it would completely change the way Beijing and Tokyo conduct their foreign relations and an arms race could definitely ensue as both countries dispute the legitimacy of islands in the Pacific. The United States would be another variable. While she would welcome a 'war-faring' Japan in the short term for the purpose of keeping tabs on the Chinese and the North Koreans, Washington may grow wary of Japanese power projection capabilities, especially as the U.S. maintains interests in the Pacific and the memory of Pearl Harbor (the first and only time the United States was attacked on massive scale, on its own soil by foreign armed forces, since independence) remains fresh. This whole situation begs the question: would U.S.-Japan security alliance become redundant in the face of a militarized Japan? If yes, another question might as well be asked: how much redundancy are both countries willing to accept? Another complicating factor is North Korean short-, medium- and intermediate-range missiles that now can (possibly?) be fitted with nuclear warheads. Even if they do not have enough range to target the continental United States, Japan and South Korea are certainly on the line of fire (THE MILITARY BALANCE, 2014). Seoul will be another problem. The old war grudges still were not put aside and war wounds have not yet healed. A Japanese arms buildup might send chills down South Korean spines, which is not a good thing in an area so ridden with deep-seated mutual distrust. Last but not least, it is difficult to foresee how the Japanese-Southeast Asian countries' relationships are going to turn out. They will, most likely, however, take a turn for the worse. After all, Japanese revision of its constitution would imply that she would now be able to use its forces abroad, only contributing to the acceleration of a trend that has been present in Southeast Asian countries for some time: big loads of money being used on military expenditure, according to SIPRI's (2015) evidence. Unpredictable is also how Moscow will react to the (maybe?) new, most relevant fact in security matters of the second decade of the 21st Century.

As a result, it is extremely difficult to state if the more eclectic approach to IR is going to be permanent or not or even if the American-style approach is going to become hegemonic in the future. There are simply too many variables involved. It will be interesting, however, to see how the situation is going to unfold and what will be the state of Japanese IR in, say, 20 to 30 years.

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