War is peace: the rearticulation of 'peace' in Japan's China discourse

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Abstract. This article demonstrates that a national identity defined by a normative commitment to peace is not necessarily an antidote to remilitarisation and war. More specifically, the article takes issue with the debate about the trajectory of Japan's security and defence policy. One strand of the debate holds that Japan is normatively committed to peace while the other claims that Japan is in the process of remilitarising. This article argues that the two positions are not mutually exclusive – a point that has been overlooked in the literature. The article uses discourse analysis to trace how 'peace' was discussed in debates about China in the Japanese Diet in 1972 and 2009–12. It demonstrates how rearticulations by right wing discourses in the latter period have depicted peace as something that must be defended actively, and thus as compatible with remilitarisation or military normalisation. Japan's changing peace identity could undermine rather than stabilise peaceful relations with its East Asian neighbours.

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Introduction

Competing assessments of what kind of state Japan is and how Japan behaves in its security and defence policy are becoming increasingly polarised. While a good number of observers argue that Japan embodies a national identity uniquely marked by a normative commitment to peace,[1] many others believe that the country is shedding

[1] Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, 'Japan's national security: Structures, norms, and policies', *International Security*, 17:4 (1993), pp. 84–118; Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996); Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Andrew L. Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity and the Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Yukiko Miyagi,

its peace identity in favour of one marked by a desire to 'remilitarise' or become 'normal'[2] – a 'normality' typically characterised by an ability to 'go to war'.[3]

In international studies, peace is defined unequivocally as the 'absence of violence'[4] or the 'antithesis of war'.[5] Violence and war, moreover, are seen not merely as 'episodes of armed conflict' but as 'the whole complex of activities and organization that lead up to and make possible such episodes'.[6] Needless to say, this includes militarisation, or the process of 'assembling and putting into readiness the military forces for war or other emergency'.[7] However, militarisation arguably also includes processes 'in which individuals or political systems either become increasingly dependent upon, controlled and affected by the military, or … by which individuals and political systems adopt militaristic values, beliefs, and presumptions about human history that enhance military ones'.[8] Similarly, Japan's alleged remilitarisation is regarded not merely as a process in which the country's military capability is augmented, but ultimately as one that involves fundamental changes in its value system, culture or – again – identity. This is why militarisation and militarism are often difficult to separate.

The two positions in the ongoing debate about Japan's foreign and security policy are thus discrete and contradictory – at least in theory.[9] However, this article aims to demonstrate that an identity defined in terms of a normative commitment to peace can be both inconsistent and *highly consistent* with the identity of a 'normal state'.

'Foreign policy making under Koizumi: Norms and Japan's role in the 2003 Iraq War', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 5:4 (2009), pp. 349–66; Robert Johnson, 'Japan closes the nuclear umbrella: an examination of nonviolent pacifism and Japan's vision for a nuclear weapon-free world', *Asian Pacific Law & Policy Journal*, 13:2 (2012), pp. 81–116; Andrew L. Oros, 'International and domestic challenges to Japan's postwar security identity: "Norm constructivism" and Japan's new "proactive pacifism"', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 139–60.

2 Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007); Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007); Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Remilitarisation* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, and London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009). Early examples of this discourse include Ken'ichi Nakamura, 'Militarization of postwar Japan', *Security Dialogue*, 13:1 (1982), pp. 31–7; Glenn D. Hook, 'The erosion of anti-militaristic principles in contemporary Japan', *Journal of Peace Research*, 25:4 (1988), pp. 381–94; Watanabe Osamu, *Abe seiken to Nihon seiji no shindankai: Shinjiyūshigi, gunji taikokuka, kaiken ni dō taikō suru ka?* [The Abe Government and the New Stage in Japanese Politics: How to Resist Neo-Liberalism, Great Power Militarisation and Constitutional Revision] (Tokyo: Junpōsha, 2013). For attempts to provide more nuanced accounts of Japanese security policy change in the early 2000s, see Yasuo Takao, *Is Japan Really Remilitarizing? The Politics of Norm Formation and Change* (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2008); Linus Hagström and Jon Williamsson, '"Remilitarization", really? Assessing change in Japanese foreign security policy', *Asian Security*, 5:3 (2009), pp. 242–72.

3 Samuels, *Securing Japan*, p. 111. The term 'normalisation' implies that there is something 'abnormal' about postwar Japan's security and defence policy. This alleged abnormality is most frequently linked to Japan's constitutional constraints on its military capacity. For a critique, see Linus Hagström, 'The "abnormal" state: Identity, norm/exception and Japan', *European Journal of International Relations*, 21:1 (2015), pp. 122–55.

4 Johan Galtung, 'Violence, peace and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6:3 (1969), p. 167.

5 David Keen, 'War and peace: What's the difference', *International Peacekeeping*, 7:1 (2000), p. 1.

6 Andrew Alexandra, 'Political pacifism', *Social Theory and Practice*, 29:4 (2003), p. 594.

7 See *Webster's Dictionary*, available at: {http://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/militarization}.

8 Isis Nusair, 'Women and militarization in Israel: Forgotten letters in the midst of conflict', in Marguerite C. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga (eds), *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War and Resistance* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), p. 121.

9 Removed from the Japan literature, however, some scholars contend that the distinction is less than clear-cut; there are war-like occurrences during peacetime and peace-like episodes during wars. See, for example, Vivienne Jabri, *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1996), p. 150; Keen, 'War and peace', p. 19; Ursula Lau and Mohamed Seedat, 'Towards relationality: Interposing the dichotomy between peace and violence', *South African Journal of Psychology*, 43:4 (2013), pp. 482–93.

Moreover, by defining what actions make sense in order to create, maintain, and defend peace – and what actions do not – a peace identity can encompass diverse and even quite divergent policies, including remilitarisation.[10] Indeed, since a peace identity is necessarily formed and transformed by differentiating a peaceful inside/Self from a non-peaceful outside/Other, it can enable antagonism and violence towards the excluded (non-peaceful) outside in the same way as any other identity discourse.[11] To put it more starkly, one might even quote the exercise in 'doublethink' captured in the party slogan in George Orwell's novel to say that in some instances 'war is peace'.[12] This means that a lingering peace discourse in Japan does not necessarily forebode the entrenchment of pacific relations in East Asia.

More specifically, the article aims to contribute to the burgeoning literature on Japan's national identity, and security and defence policy by demonstrating that Japan's peace identity in the postwar period was not produced by the adherence to pacifist norms or a culture of antimilitarism,[13] and that a resilient peace identity is not necessarily negated by Japan's current steps towards 'normalisation'.[14] Instead, while peace continues to be discursively pitted against violence or war in Japan, the term is currently being renegotiated through discursive struggles and changing modes of differentiation. Japan's China discourse provides the material for this exposition, and so the article also sheds light on the question of how Sino-Japanese relations will develop amid China's 'rise'.[15]

The next section addresses the concept of identity in international studies, discussing how it has previously been connected to peace and the study of Japan's security and defence policy. We then explain why we think that Japanese Diet debates on relations with China in 1972 and 2009–12, our empirical material, provide an appropriate context for analysing the connection between peace and identity in Japan, and clarify how the data were gathered. The questions posed in the ensuing discourse analysis are: How is Japan's peace identity represented in the debates? What is the 'difference' that this identity is constructed in relation to? What actions become conceivable, and sometimes even seemingly unavoidable, in the light of different identity constructions? How has the struggle over the meaning of 'peace' changed between 1972 and 2009–12, and with what implications?

Identity, international studies, and Japan

The question of what Japan *is* has preoccupied observers for centuries. In the past forty years it has been pursued in particular by analysts wishing to make sense of the

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[10] A similar point is made in Halvard Leira, '"Our entire people are natural born friends of peace": the Norwegian foreign policy of peace', *Swiss Political Science Review*, 19:3 (2013), pp. 338–56.

[11] Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 124.

[12] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1949).

[13] As argued by the works quoted in fn. 1.

[14] As argued by the works quoted in fn. 2.

[15] This question is addressed in, for example, Yinan He, 'Ripe for cooperation or rivalry? Commerce, realpolitik, and war memory in contemporary Sino-Japanese relations', *Asian Security*, 4:2 (2008), pp. 162–97; Kentaro Sakuwa, 'A not so dangerous Dyad: China's rise and Sino-Japanese rivalry', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 9:3 (2009), pp. 497–528; Jian Yang, 'Japan's decline relative to China: Scenarios and implications for East Asia', *Political Science*, 62:2 (2010), pp. 146–65; Björn Jerdén and Linus Hagström, 'Rethinking Japan's China policy: Japan as an accommodator in the rise of China, 1978–2011', *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 12:2 (2012), pp. 215–50; Bjørn Elias Mikalsen Grønning, 'Japan's shifting military priorities: Counterbalancing China's rise', *Asian Security*, 10:1 (2014), pp. 1–21; Linus Hagström and Björn Jerdén, 'East Asia's power shift: the flaws and hazards of the debate and how to avoid then', *Asian Perspective*, 38:3 (2014), pp. 337–62.

country's supposedly uneven power profile in international affairs – one characterised by formidable economic clout, but incommensurate military capability and an ostensibly passive and reactive foreign and security policy.[16] The concept of identity explicitly entered the analysis in the 1990s. The most influential explanation for Japan's security and defence policy employed 'pacifist' or 'antimilitarist' identity as an independent variable, through a focus on what were believed to constitute it – 'peaceful cultural norms'[17] and an 'antimilitarist culture'.[18]

This 'norm constructivist' scholarship ascribed particular importance to article 9 of Japan's constitution, which renounces 'war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes'.[19] Other evidence of norms/culture that supposedly made Japan particularly 'peaceful' included the three anti-nuclear principles (from 1967), the three principles prohibiting weapon exports (from 1967, revised in 1976), and the fact that Japan's defence expenditure long remained below 1 per cent of GDP.

Why have observers taken so much interest in the question of what Japan *is*, or what it *is becoming*? Fundamentally, there is the explicit or implicit assumption that identity is entwined with distinct courses of action, often through the production of interests.[20] What a state is therefore is thought to translate into how it behaves, and, conversely, how it behaves reflects on what it is.[21] In other words, the two are co-constituted. Hence, from a norm constructivist perspective Japan's peace identity is believed to produce characteristically 'peaceful' behaviour. Indeed, one might even hypothesise that Japan's peace identity has facilitated the relative state of peace in East Asia since 1979.[22] Norm constructivists typically hold that, in the absence of major critical junctures in Japan's strategic environment, these normative constraints will remain resilient.[23]

However, Japan has taken a number of controversial steps in its security and defence policy. Conspicuous examples in recent years include: (a) the strengthening of the Japanese-US alliance through the dispatch of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to contingencies outside of UN command in line with special laws passed in 2001 and 2003, the implementation of a missile defence system in 2004 and most certainly new guidelines on defence cooperation late in 2015; (b) the acquisition of weapons that might be construed as offensive in character, most notably in-flight refuelling capability in 2003 and two classes of helicopter destroyers that closely resemble aircraft carriers in 2009 and 2013; (c) the upgrading of the Japan Defense Agency to a full ministry in 2007, and the introduction of a National Security Council in 2013 – both of which signal the elevation of security issues up the political agenda; (d) the relaxation in 2011 and then partial dismantlement in 2014 of three principles prohibiting weapon exports; and (e) the Cabinet's decision to reinterpret article 9 to permit the exercise of collective self-defence in 2014, and the ongoing campaign to revise the article altogether.

[16] For an extensive analysis of this discourse, see Hagström, 'The "abnormal" state'.
[17] Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms*.
[18] Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*.
[19] Cabinet Office, *The Constitution of Japan* (1947), available at: {http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government/frame_01.html}.
[20] Felix Berenskoetter, 'Identity in International Relations', in Robert A. Denemark (ed.), *The International Studies Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
[21] Yanagisawa Kyōji, *Bōkoku no shūdanteki jieiken* [A Ruined State's Right to Collective Self-Defence] (Tokyo: Shūei Shashinsho, 2015), p. 150.
[22] Stein Tønnesson, 'What is it that best explains the East Asian peace since 1979? A call for a research agenda', *Asian Perspective*, 33:1 (2009), p. 126.
[23] Oros, *Normalizing Japan*; Oros, 'International and domestic challenges'. See also Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms*, p. 24; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, p. 208.

Do these signs of remilitarisation mean that Japan is ceding its peace identity? Some scholars have understood them as a belated vindication of realism.[24] In contrast, the only Japan-focused norm constructivist to have commented on these developments lately argues that Japan's postwar identity is 'under siege', but also that it 'continues to shape … the framing of Japan's national security debates'.[25] Based on a similar norm constructivist understanding of identity, a number of other recent studies contend that Japanese parliamentarians have traded 'pacifist' and 'pragmatic multilateralist' role conceptions for a more 'centrist' one,[26] and that Japanese identity is changing from that of a 'peace state' to that of a 'global player',[27] a 'global ordinary power',[28] an 'international state',[29] or a 'middle power'.[30]

This article corroborates the observation that a normative commitment to peace remains a highly resilient aspect of Japan's identity construction process. It also upholds the norm constructivist assumption that a peace identity *can* enable peaceful behaviour, 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', and indeed with a process of remilitarisation. This point has been constantly overlooked in research on Japanese security policy – an omission that has led to a dichotomisation of peace identity and remilitarisation that does not match developments in Japan. In other words, there is little consideration of the notion that Japan could be remilitarising exactly *because* there is a strongly shared commitment to peace in the country.

Our argument builds on a concept of identity drawn from the large and heterogeneous body of literature that could be summarised as 'relational constructivism'. According to this literature identities are constituted in relation to difference, because 'the very condition of constituting an "us" is the demarcation of a "them"'.[31] Identities are thus created at the intersection between sameness and difference, but what constitutes sameness and difference will always be an empirical question as this relation 'is not intrinsically linked to any particular differential content'.[32] At the risk of oversimplifying, one could say that norm constructivism focuses on the rules and norms of a given society, whereas the emphasis of relational constructivism is on how these rules and norms are constructed through political struggles.

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[24] Michael Green, 'Japan is back: Why Tokyo's new assertiveness is good for Washington', *Foreign Affairs*, 86:2 (2007), p. 142; John J. Mearsheimer, 'The gathering storm: China's challenge to US power in Asia', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 3:4 (2010), p. 382; Thomas Wilkins and Malcolm Cook, *The Quiet Achiever: Australia-Japan Security Relations* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2011), p. 5.

[25] Oros, 'International and domestic challenges'.

[26] Amy L. Catalinac, 'Identity theory and foreign policy: Explaining Japan's responses to the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 US War in Iraq', *Politics & Policy*, 35:1 (2007), pp. 58–100.

[27] Yongwook Ryu, 'The road to Japan's "normalization": Japan's foreign policy orientation since the 1990s', *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 19:2 (2007), pp. 63–88.

[28] Takashi Inoguchi and Paul Bacon, 'Japan's emerging role as a "global ordinary power"', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 6:1 (2006), pp. 1–21.

[29] Bhubhindar Singh, 'Japan's security policy: From a peace state to an international state', *The Pacific Review*, 21:3 (2008), pp. 303–25.

[30] Soeya Yoshihide, *Nihon no 'midoru pawā' gaikō* [Japan's Middle Power Diplomacy] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2005); Soeya Yoshihide, 'A "normal" middle power: Interpreting changes in Japanese security policy in the 1990s and after', in Yoshihide Soeya, Masayuki Tadokoro, and David A. Welch (eds), *Japan as a 'Normal Country'? A Nation in Search of its Place in the World* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 72–97.

[31] Chantal Mouffe, 'Politics and passions: the stakes of a democracy', *Ethical Perspectives*, 7:2–3 (2000), p. 149.

[32] Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (London and New York: Verso, 1996), p. 43.

Relational constructivist analyses of identity are primarily interested in the process by which the imagination of the nation state and the state system comes into being,[33] but this focus does not preclude establishing how emergent identity constructions produce propensities for action – even national interests.[34] To understand what actions make sense for whom, it is thus crucial to grasp the discourses in which actors operate, but a political science explanation should also show how these discourses have emerged and transformed over time. Since the relationship between identity and action is not clear-cut, such an analysis needs to address in each instance how and why a particular identity discourse makes certain policies possible[35] – even seemingly unavoidable[36] – and others impossible; and how and why similar discourses in other spatiotemporal contexts might enable and constrain differently.

We distinguish most importantly between two processes of identity construction that rely on imaginations of difference that are more or less antagonistic and dichotomised, and therefore produce quite different behavioural relationships between Self and Other: exceptionalisation and securitisation.[37] Exceptionalisation is the production of boundaries *vis-à-vis* an entity whose difference is recognised as *legitimate*. Exclusion is necessarily present, as it is the very condition for a delimited identity discourse, but this kind of process could still hypothetically enable integrationist policies.[38] Securitisation, in contrast, is markedly more antagonistic, exclusionary, and hostile. It involves the social construction of dangers, threats, and enemies – or the kind of *illegitimate* difference that cannot be tolerated and which both threatens and constitutes the identity of the Self and potentially serves to justify violence. Hence, while an exceptionalising peace discourse is expected to generate pacific behaviour, it is more likely that a securitising one produce the conditions of possibility for remilitarisation.

Previous relational constructivist research on Japan's security and defence policy has concluded that Japan is currently differentiated in a way that is enabling remilitarisation, but it has kept clinging to the assumption that remilitarisation and peace are opposites. This research has thus concluded that Japan's peace identity is being *superseded* by the identity of a 'normal state'.[39] The present article demonstrates how relational constructivism can offer a bridge through which the two positions can be reconciled: Japan can have an identity characterised by a

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[33] Michael C. Williams, 'Identity and the politics of security', *European Journal of International Relations*, 4:2 (1998), p. 205.

[34] Jutta Weldes, 'Constructing national interests', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2:3 (1996), pp. 275–318; cf. Linus Hagström and Karl Gustafsson, 'Japan and identity change: Why it matters in International Relations', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 1–22.

[35] Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Foreign policy as social construction: a post-positivist analysis of US counter-insurgency in the Philippines', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37:3 (1993), pp. 297–320; Jack Holland, 'Foreign policy and political possibility', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19:1 (2013), pp. 49–68; Epstein, 'Who speaks?', p. 343.

[36] Jutta Weldes and Diana Saco, 'Making state action possible: the United States and the discursive construction of "the Cuban problem", 1960–1994', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 25:2 (1996), p. 378.

[37] Hagström, 'The "abnormal" state', pp. 125–6.

[38] Arash Abizadeh, 'Does collective identity presuppose an Other? On the alleged incoherence of global solidarity', *American Political Science Review*, 99:1 (2005), pp. 45–60.

[39] Hagström, 'The "abnormal" state'; Karl Gustafsson, 'Identity and recognition: Remembering and for-getting the post-War in Sino-Japanese relations', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 117–38; Linus Hagström and Ulv Hanssen, 'The North Korean abduction issue: Emotions, securitisation and the reconstruction of Japanese identity from "aggressor" to "victim" and from "pacifist" to "normal"', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 71–93; Taku Tamaki, 'The persistence of reified Asia as reality in Japanese foreign policy narratives', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 23–45.

normative commitment to peace and remilitarise at the same time. The way in which Japan's peace identity was constructed in 2009–12 thus foreshadows the remilitarisation of the country's security and defence policy, as well as continued tensions in Sino-Japanese relations.

How to analyse Japan's identity

This article analyses the construction of Japan's peace identity, and how it enables and constrains security and defence policy. It does so through an analysis of Diet debates focused on China, comparing debates in 1972 with debates in 2009–12.[40] Since it is dominant ideas that tend to be articulated in the legislatures of representative democracies, parliamentary debates are suitable for exploring the distribution of discursive representations and the boundaries between them.[41] Moreover, parliamentarians belong to a state elite that is expected to play a special role in discursive struggles revolving around 'the meaning of "the national interest"'.[42] This article does not claim to track ideational change across the board in Japan, but we do believe that Diet debates reflect general identity discourses in Japanese society.

China figures prominently in Japanese identity discourses. Attempts to nail down what Japan *is* thus tend to differentiate Japan from its neighbour.[43] We therefore assume that Diet debates on China are an important context in which a 'peace state' identity discourse is formed, maintained, and transformed. Nevertheless, we are fully aware that China is not the only difference in relation to which Japanese identity is constructed.[44] Japan's relation to the United States in the postwar period has been an especially important source of both differentiation and socialisation,[45] although Shogo Suzuki argues that China has recently superseded the US as the main focal

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[40] The Diet is bicameral and consists of the House of Representatives (HoR) and the House of Councillors (HoC). All the debates are translated by the authors and were accessed from {www.http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/}.

[41] Ole Wæver, 'Identity, communities and foreign policy: Discourse analysis as foreign policy Theory', in Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver (eds), *European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of the Nordic States* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 42; Linus Hagström and Björn Jerdén, 'Understanding fluctuations in Sino-Japanese relations: To politicize or to de-politicize the China issue in the Japanese diet', *Pacific Affairs*, 83:4 (2010), p. 725.

[42] Weldes, 'Constructing', p. 281.

[43] See, for example, Hagström and Jerdén, 'Understanding fluctuations'; Christian Wirth, 'Japan, China and East Asian regional integration: the views of "self" and "other" from Tokyo and Beijing', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 9:3 (2009), pp. 469–96; Linus Hagström, '"Power shift" in East Asia? A critical reappraisal of narratives on the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands incident in 2010', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 5:3 (2012), pp. 267–97; Kai Schulze, 'Risk of sameness, the "rise of China" and Japan's ontological security', in Sebastian Maslow, Ra Mason, and Paul O'Shea (eds), *Risk State: Japan's Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate), pp. 101–16; Gustafsson, 'Identity and recognition'; Linus Hagström, 'The Sino-Japanese soft power battle: Pitfalls and promises', *Global Affairs*, 1:2 (2015), DOI:10.1080/23340460.2015.990798.

[44] Scholarship that explores sources of differentiation other than China includes Shogo Suzuki 'Japan's socialization into Janus-faced European international society', *European Journal of International Relations*, 11:1 (2005), pp. 137–64; Alexander Bukh, 'Identity, foreign policy and the "Other": Japan's "Russia"', *European Journal of International Relations*, 15:2 (2009), pp. 319–45; Taku Tamaki, *Deconstructing Japan's Image of South Korea: Identity in Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Xavier Guillaume, *International Relations and Identity: A Dialogical Approach* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); Hagström, 'The "abnormal" state'.

[45] Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000); Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001); Masaru Tamamoto, 'Ambiguous Japan: Japanese national identity at century's end', in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno (eds), *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

point in Japanese identity discourses.[46] Nonetheless, by focusing solely on Japan's China discourse we inevitably miss some aspects of Japanese identity formation. Any study requires limitations, however, and this particular one is motivated by our belief that China currently provides an indispensable context for the peculiar marriage between Japan's 'normative commitment to peace' and 'normalisation/remilitarisation'.

The reason for delimiting our analysis to debates in 1972 and 2009–12, moreover, is that the two periods are believed to provide maximum contrast. In 1972, Japan, at the height of its 'economic miracle', normalised bilateral relations with China. In the period 2009–12, by contrast, Japan, having muddled through two 'lost decades', saw Sino-Japanese tension over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands intensify and bilateral relations deteriorate. In short, we demonstrate how the mode of differentiation changed between the two periods from exceptionalisation – a sense of Japanese superiority *vis-à-vis* a backward but non-threatening China – to securitisation – a sense of threat which must be countered by force in order to secure Japan's peacefulness. Although we believe that this is far from temporary identity change, the aim of this article is not to conduct a longitudinal study of Japan's identity construction, but to demonstrate that a peace identity can enable many courses of action, including remilitarisation.

Since the material is too large to represent in its entirety, we have singled out relevant and characteristic debates and statements using the keywords 'China' (*Chūgoku*) and 'peace' (*heiwa*). These two terms were employed in combination with a number of other words generated deductively, through our familiarity with Japanese security debates, and inductively, after becoming increasingly acquainted with these particular debates. The resulting body of statements ranges over several hundred pages of text and focuses squarely on the question of Japan's 'peace' in the context of Sino-Japanese relations.

This article uses discourse analysis to uncover the meanings attributed to different Self and Other representations in the material. A discourse is a system in which every signifier (word) derives its meaning from its differential relation to other signifiers. A discourse revolves around one or a few master signifiers (for example, 'peace'). Although these master signifiers carry little meaning by themselves, they temporarily fix the meaning of other signifiers in the discourse by binding together 'different elements that are seen as expressing a certain sameness'.[47]

However, a central assumption in discourse theory is that the apparent fixity of the signifiers in a discourse is always temporary and partial and that they can be reshuffled through articulatory practices. Hence, as new signifiers are included and old ones dropped, other signifiers constituting the discourse also take on new meanings.[48] The lack of fixity of the signifiers is crucial to our argument because it explains how a signifier such as 'peace' can be 'disarticulated from one discourse, appropriated, and rearticulated into another discourse that might be oppositional to the former'.[49]

We thus seek to establish how representations of Self and Other have been formed and maintained, and how they have changed over time. We also analyse how the

[46] Shogo Suzuki, 'The rise of the Chinese "Other" in Japan's construction of identity: is China a focal point of Japanese nationalism?', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 95–116.
[47] Torfing, *New Theories*, p. 301.
[48] David Howarth, *Discourse* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000); Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy, *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction* (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage, 2002); Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London, Thousand Oaks, CA, and New Delhi: Sage, 2002).
[49] Silvia G. Dapía, 'Logics of antagonism, of difference, and of the limit: Questions of cultural identity in Latin American cultural studies', *Diálogos Latinoamericanos*, 1:1 (2000), p. 13.

discourse enables and constrains, by making some courses of action appear natural, normal, reasonable, realistic, logical, and perhaps even seemingly inevitable, and others unnatural, abnormal, unreasonable, unrealistic, illogical, and possibly even dangerous. In short, if the outside is seen as threatening and the inside as peaceful, the need to negate this dangerous difference might even serve to legitimise violent conduct in order to protect one's own peaceful identity.

Japan's identity construction in 1972

The Self: 'Peace state' Japan, developed Japan

What kind of Japanese Self was constructed by 1972? Judging from Diet debates on Sino-Japanese relations, there was broad agreement around the notion that Japan *was* or *should become* a 'peace state' (*heiwa kokka*), and that article 9 of the constitution was key to Japan's peacefulness. This statement by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei is typical:

For a quarter of a century in the post-war era we have stuck consistently to the nature of a peace state based on our peace constitution, and we have called for a path of development along the lines of cooperation and harmony with the international community.[50]

The world was interpreted as becoming increasingly peaceful,[51] and LDP members argued that Japan stood at the forefront of this positive development. Japan was not the only state to follow international norms – that would be contradictory – but it was better 'at anticipating future trends in the international community and constantly acting on these',[52] and had a special 'duty' to contribute to peace.[53] The Chairman of the LDP's Executive Council and future prime minister, Nakasone Yasuhiro, succinctly summarised these sentiments:

It is an obvious fact that until now we have worked consistently for the establishment of détente and peaceful coexistence based on the spirit of our peace constitution. But in order to respond to the greatly changing international situation I think it is extremely important that, through our policies and statements, we show that Japan's desire for peace is firmer and stronger than that of any other country in the world.[54]

Japan's desire for peace, moreover, was seen as part and parcel of its postwar economic development, and policy goal formulations often conflated peace and prosperity.[55] Together, Japan's peace and affluence also nurtured an identity of being superior, especially compared with its Asian neighbours.

As the LDP had governed Japan for most of the postwar period, it frequently represented itself as the architect of the peace state – an image that the centre-left opposition constantly sought to discredit. The latter criticised the government for 'acting against peace'[56] and sticking to an 'anti-peace stance'; and thus for keeping

[50] Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972; cf. Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972.
[51] Ōhira Masayoshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 October 1972.
[52] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 2 June 1972.
[53] Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972.
[54] Nakasone Yasuhiro (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972.
[55] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 March 1972; Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972; Ōhira Masayoshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 October 1972.
[56] Suzukiri Yasuo (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoR, 15 June 1972; cf. Matsumoto Zenmei (JCP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 16 March 1972; Sano Kenji (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 15 June 1972.

Japan in a state of inferiority.[57] The so-called Fourth Defence Build-up Plan, which stipulated an increased defence budget, was seen as evidence of the LDP's failure to understand the global 'atmosphere of peaceful coexistence',[58] and even as indicating its desire to remilitarise Japan.[59] Nishimiya Hiroshi of the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), for example, lamented that the LDP had 'deceived the expectations of the people who hope for peace'.[60] The Buddhist Kōmeitō party also tried to delegitimise the LDP's peace state narrative, here in the words of Suzukiri Yasuo:

> By looking at how the government has acted against peace we can see how empty its words about a basic diplomatic policy devoted to peace are. It is an undeniable fact that you have continuously acted against the trend of history.[61]

The LDP, in turn, struggled to defend its worldview, vowing that Japan would never become a military great power and branding oppositional voices as utterly 'naïve' and 'unrealistic' in an anarchic and unstable, albeit improving, world.

The Others: Japan's past Self, militaristic great powers and economic laggards

The debates in 1972 constructed Japanese identity as essentially tied to peace. Moreover, across the political spectrum, peaceful Japan was differentiated most importantly from wartime and prewar Japan.[62] References to the postwar peace state were thus almost unfailingly coupled with promises never *again* to walk the path towards militarism, as in this statement by Foreign Minister, and future prime minister, Fukuda Takeo:

> Japan has article 9 of the constitution. There is also a consensus among the people never again to wage war. Our economic power has grown tremendously, but we will never *again* become a military great power. This is also a consensus.[63]

Japan's peace was also differentiated from unspecified militaristic great powers in the abstract, although this was almost certainly a tacit reference to the primary Cold War combatants of the time – the US and the Soviet Union.[64] A statement by Fukuda is again illustrative:

> In the history of all times and places economic great powers have become military great powers. If we had wanted to, we could have chosen the path of a military great power. If we had wanted to, we could have had powerful arsenals. Furthermore, if we had wanted to, we could have had nuclear weapons. But we don't pursue these goals. Our military power is limited to the scope of self-defence.[65]

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[57] Takeiri Yoshikatsu (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoR, 30 October 1972.
[58] Kitayama Airō (JSP), Budget Committee, HoR, 4 February, 1972; cf. Nishimiya Hiroshi (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 3 April 1972; Itō Sōsukemaru (Kōmeitō), Cabinet Committee, HoR, 11 October 1972; Mineyama Akino (Kōmeitō), Cabinet Committee, HoC, 17 October 1972; Kuroyanagi Akira (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 November 1972.
[59] Agune Noboru (JSP), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 February 1972; Yamahara Kenjirō (JCP), Plenary Session, HoR, 3 April 1972; Takeiri Yoshikatsu (Kōmeitō), Budget Committee, HoR, 3 April 1972; Kase Kan (JSP), Plenary Session HoC, 16 June 1972; Narita Tomomi (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 30 October 1972.
[60] Nishimiya Hiroshi (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 3 April 1972.
[61] Suzukiri Yasuo (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoR, 15 June 1972.
[62] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972; Sonoda Sunao (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 4 February 1972; Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 29 February 1972.
[63] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Committee for Okinawa and the Northern Territories, HoC, 22 March 1972, emphasis added.
[64] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR 31 January 1972; Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC 2 February 1972; Esaki Masumi (LDP), Budget Committee, HoC, 19 April 1972; Esaki Masumi (LDP), Budget Committee, HoC, 19 April 1972.
[65] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 2 June 1972.

While there was broad political consensus that Japan's peace identity contrasted with its militaristic past, the opposition parties enlisted references to the same past in their attempts to delegitimise the LDP's peace state narrative. For instance, the defence budget in 1972 reminded JSP Chairman Narita Tomomi of 'the emergency military budget of the military dictatorship during the war' and the paucity of Diet deliberations on the plan brought back memories of the Imperial Army's disregard for democratic procedures.[66] On another occasion, Narita reminded the Diet of the misery brought about by Japan's past militarisation, which he thought was now in danger of revival:

But looking at the government's approach, I can't help but recall the 'Rich Country, Strong Army' (*fukoku kyōhei*) policy of the Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa eras, which also used the defence of the country as a pretext. … But the military did not protect Japan; it attacked China and other countries and caused unspeakable harm to the people of Asia. Even the people of Japan were dragged down to the depths of misery for this cause.[67]

LDP members, in contrast, insisted that Japan's growing economic power had a different purpose than remilitarisation:

Our surplus power is spent on domestic services. Accordingly we are trying to create a living standard for the Japanese that is the envy of the world. Japan is also trying to serve those countries in the world that are lagging behind. This is a completely new approach for an economic great power.[68]

This statement betrays yet another mode of differentiation. Thanks to its peaceful intentions, Japan could aim for economic superiority, which was in turn differentiated from countries 'lagging behind', most notably 'neighbouring countries' and 'developing countries, particularly in Asia' – two references to China and the Korean Peninsula.[69] This mode of differentiation highlighted legitimate differences between 'developed' Japan and 'undeveloped' Asia/China, and was thus an instance of exceptionalisation.

Although Japan itself was not differentiated from China in terms of peace, China's *understanding* of Japan's peace was still differentiated as deficient and in need of improvement:

China has not really reached an understanding about the fact that we now have the national traits of a culture state, a peace state and that we even have article 9.[70]

As a more advanced country, it was Japan's responsibility to help enlighten its neighbour.[71] Should Japan succeed, moreover, 'all bilateral suspicions will be wiped away'.[72]

What 'peace' enabled: Cooperation and limited deterrence

Fairly divergent policies seemed reasonable and necessary in the light of the conflicting peace discourses represented in the Japanese Diet. There was some common ground,

[66] Narita Tomomi (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972.
[67] Narita Tomomi (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 30 October 1972; cf. Agune Noboru (JSP), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 February 1972; Ino Masaki (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 14 March 1972.
[68] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 2 June 1972; cf. Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR 31 January 1972; Esaki Masumi (LDP), Budget Committee, HoC, 19 April 1972.
[69] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Budget Committee, HoC, 6 April 1972; cf. Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972; Ōhira Masayoshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 October 1972.
[70] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoC, 16 March 1972; cf. Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoC, 16 June 1972.
[71] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR 29 January 1972; Tokunaga Masatoshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 April 1972.
[72] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Committee for Okinawa and the Northern Territories, HoR, 8 March 1972.

however, which arguably enabled the normalisation of relations with China, as this was seen across the political spectrum as an important step towards achieving peaceful coexistence in Asia[73] – and therefore in line with the peaceful 'trends of the time' and as part of Japan's special 'duty'.[74]

Yet these sentiments had obviously not enabled normalised relations before 1972. It was only with the end of Sino-US hostility (1969–72), China's inclusion in the United Nations (1971), and the resignation of Prime Minister Satō (1972), who had been declared *persona non grata* in Beijing, that the peace-requires-normalisation equation began to overshadow bilateral problems and constrain potential opposition in the Diet. Despite the existence of a substantial pro-Taiwan bloc in the LDP, the Diet debates contained no criticism of China or the normalisation of bilateral relations.

This lack of objections indicates that the signifier 'normalisation of relations' had been tied to the master signifier 'peace'. Even pro-Taiwan debaters felt that they had 'no choice but to accept' normalisation.[75] To normalise relations with China became common sense because it was believed it would set China on a peaceful course too. Moreover, with China's inclusion in the UN, and US President Richard Nixon's visit to China, China became a legitimate actor in Japan – a US ally and a self-proclaimed 'UN-centrist state'.[76] Normalisation thus became part of Japan's adherence to international norms, which was seen as one of the Japanese peace state's finest qualities.

Prominent LDP members moreover stressed that Japan's commitment to peace entailed maintaining civilian control of the military and other 'self-imposed restrictions' on the country's security and defence policy.[77] Despite 'signs of international détente', they argued that 'we cannot claim that world peace has firmly taken root yet'.[78] They insisted that 'peace will not be accomplished just by words';[79] it needs to be actively protected and defended with 'deterrent force against invasion':[80]

If we want peace, it is necessary to maintain self-defence capabilities and we should understand that the Security Treaty is important. … With this in mind we should realise that peace has been secured due to our self-defence capabilities and the Japan–US Security Treaty. … Peace is more important than anything. And for the sake of peace we should do what we need to do. We have to make sacrifices.[81]

In contrast, the centre-left opposition argued that a commitment to peace required the abrogation of the Security Treaty, a reduced defence budget, the abolition of the

[73] Kawamura Seiichi (JSP), Committee for Okinawa and the Northern Territories, HoC, 22 March 1972; Ōhira Masayoshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 October 1972; Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972.
[74] Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972; cf. Satō Eisaku (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 28 February 1972.
[75] Nakae Yōsuke (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Commerce and Industry Committee, HoC, 10 November 1972.
[76] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 4 February 1972.
[77] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972.
[78] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972 4; cf. Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972.
[79] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 4 February 1972.
[80] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 March 1972; cf. Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 30 October 1972; Sakurauchi Yoshio (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 30 October 1972.
[81] Satō Eisaku (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 4 February 1972; cf. Nakasone Yasuhiro (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972; Fukuda Takeo, (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 29 February 1972; Matsuno Raizō (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 15 June 1972; Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 October 1972.

SDF and the establishment of 'unarmed neutrality' in international affairs.[82] This was deemed the 'most rational and realistic option'.[83] In response, the LDP derided the JSP's notion of peace as 'naïve' and 'unrealistic':

If everyone in the world always kept their promises, and if the world consisted only of countries with saints and people of virtue, it would be different, but that is not the reality. In these global affairs we have to think of a sufficient deterrent force as a natural political responsibility.[84]

Extrapolating from what we know about Japan's security and defence policy in the early 1970s, we can conclude that the LDP's version of peace identity remained. In addition to enabling normalised relations with China, the LDP discourse made a security and defence policy that clearly exceeded literal interpretations of article 9 appear as the most realistic policy.

Japan's identity construction in 2009–12

The Self: Still advanced and peaceful

'Peace' was also a key signifier in Diet debates in 2009–12. Party executives and cabinet members from both the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) shared an understanding that the regional situation was becoming increasingly precarious, but also that Japan had a responsibility to pursue peace.[85] As in 1972, peacefulness and being advanced were closely aligned key elements of Japanese identity construction.[86] Most succinctly, the LDP's Yamatani Eriko argued that Japan was 'pacifist (*heiwashugi*) and respected as the big brother of Asia (*Ajia no oniichan*)'.[87]

At the same time, the political playing field had changed completely between 1972 and 2009–12. Left wing parliamentarians continued to make similar statements to those of their counterparts in 1972, emphasising the need for Japan to become a peace state in accordance with article 9 of Japan's constitution,[88] but with the JSP's marginalisation the volume of such statements decreased tremendously.

On taking the reins of government in 2009, the centre-right DPJ largely adopted the LDP's stance on security and defence from 1972 – one in which peace was 'based on realism' rather than the idealism associated with the left.[89] In contrast, the growing opposition to the right of the DPJ – including the increasingly influential right wing of the LDP – tried to challenge the meaning of Japan's peace identity,

[82] Narita Tomomi (JSP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 January 1972; Agune Noboru (JSP), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 February 1972.

[83] Narita Tomomi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 30 October 1972.

[84] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 29 February 1972; cf. Satō Eisaku (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 4 February 1972; Tanaka Kakuei (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 1 November 1972.

[85] For example, Asō Tarō (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 January 2009; Nakasone Hirofumi (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 11 March 2009; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR 24 January 2011; Ichikawa Yasuo (DPJ), Security Committee, HoR, 21 October 2011; Gemba Kōichirō (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2012.

[86] Saitō Yoshitaka (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 28 September 2010; Kiuchi Minoru (LDP), Law Committee, HoR, 22 February 2012.

[87] Yamatani Eriko (LDP), Budget Committee, HoC, 24 August 2012; cf. Asō Tarō (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 28 January 2009.

[88] Kasai Akira (JCP), Constitutional Review Meeting, HoR, 31 May 2012.

[89] Kan Naoto (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 11 June 2010.

or alter it altogether. A substantial number of statements criticised Japan for evading its responsibility to peace by 'freeriding'[90] and for using 'economic recession'[91] or 'constitutional restrictions'[92] as excuses for not taking proper defensive measures.

The consensus in 1972 that compliance with international norms is central to peace remained intact, but led several parliamentarians to conclude that Japan was not contributing enough to international security to deserve the peace state label. Most pleas for a responsibility to peace on these terms were accompanied by harsh criticism that the DPJ's security policy implied weakness rather than security: 'a peace which is obtained by keeping silent when our feet are stepped on is not a true peace'.[93] The former was increasingly represented as 'passive pacifism' (*shōkyokuteki heiwashugi*), while the latter became known as 'proactive pacifism' (*sekkyokuteki heiwashugi*).[94]

To some the perceived deterioration in regional security instilled a sense that Japan's security and defence stance was totally outdated, leading them to refer to 'peace' in a derogatory way. After the collision between a Chinese fishing trawler and Japanese coastguard ships in disputed waters in September 2010, for example, the Sunrise Party of Japan's Fujii Takao complained: 'Our tendency to think that as long as we don't make a fuss and do things peacefully things will be resolved has led others to take advantage of us'.[95] In a similar vein, the LDP's Koike Yuriko accused Japan of suffering from 'peace senility' (*heiwaboke*) – a term used to deride Japan's naivety.[96]

The Other: Substandard and threatening China

China was generally regarded as the main driver behind the region's allegedly deteriorating security situation and became an unmistakable object of differentiation in Diet debates in 2009–12. China was differentiated most consistently by requests for it to become a 'responsible stakeholder' and to play a 'constructive role',[97] and by being excluded from statements about 'countries with which Japan shares basic values'. Defence Minister Kitazawa Toshimi's remarks are characteristic:

For the sake of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, it is important that we deepen our cooperative relations with … countries with which we share basic values and security-related interests, such as Australia, South Korea, the various Southeast Asian

[90] Itō Ken'ichi (public expert), Budget Committee Hearing, HoR, 2 March 2012.
[91] Imazu Hiroshi (LDP), Security Committee, HoR, 15 June 2012.
[92] Fujii Takao (Sunrise Party of Japan), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 January 2011.
[93] Furukawa Yoshihisa (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 14 September 2011; cf. Ishiba Shigeru (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 5 February 2010; Tanigaki Sadakazu (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 6 October 2010; Nakasone Hirofumi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 15 September 2011; Imazu Hiroshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 July 2012; Abe Shinzō (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 October 2012; Inoue Yoshihisa (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoR, 1 November 2012.
[94] These terms have become established under Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, but were already in use in March 2012. Itō Ken'ichi (public expert), Budget Committee Hearing, HoR, 2 March 2012. In fact, DPJ Prime Minister Naoto Kan compared 'passive response' with 'proactive diplomacy' back in 2010. Plenary Session, HoR, 11 June 2010.
[95] Fujii Takao (Sunrise Party of Japan), Land Infrastructure and Transport Committee, HoC, 28 October 2010.
[96] Koike Yuriko (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 January 2011.
[97] For example, Sengoku Yoshito (DPJ), Cabinet Committee, HoC, 21 October 2010; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2011; Noda Yoshihiko (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoR, 17 February 2012; Kan Naoto (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoC, 27 January 2011; Gemba Kōichirō (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2012.

nations and India. When it comes to China we will work to make it improve the transparency of its national defence policies and military capabilities through security dialogue and defence exchanges.[98]

Complaints about China's alleged lack of transparency were particularly common during this period.[99]

The intensifying dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, moreover, led to China being more openly differentiated as 'aggressive' and 'unreasonable',[100] 'non-commonsensical',[101] 'provocative',[102] 'coming on strong',[103] 'hardline',[104] 'loud-mouthed',[105] 'not very adult'[106], 'expansionistic',[107] 'great power-istic',[108] 'hegemonic',[109] 'anti-Japanese'[110] and a 'peculiar great power',[111] a 'communist one-party dictatorship',[112] a 'country that does not know how to behave'[113] and simply 'a threat'.[114] These ostensibly Chinese traits were implicitly or explicitly contrasted with Japan's own alleged peacefulness, its poised diplomacy, its democracy and constitutionality, and its adherence to international norms. In a typical example, the LDP's Yamatani Eriko criticised China's maritime advances in the South and East China Seas by stating that 'China is acting like a hegemon and does not follow international rules' – traits she contrasted with Japanese 'pacifism' and moral superiority.[115]

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[98] Kitazawa Toshimi (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 30 March 2011; cf. Ichikawa Yasuo (DPJ), Security Committee, HoR, 21 October 2011; Imazu Hiroshi (LDP), Security Committee, HoR, 17 April 2012.

[99] For example, Hisasawa Katsuei (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 19 May 2010; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2011; Nakano Jō (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 31 May 2011; Tanaka Naoki (DPJ), Security Committee, HoR, 21 October 2011.

[100] For example, Nagashima Akihisa (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 28 September 2010; Kishi Nobuo (LDP), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 28 September 2010; Tanigaki Sadakazu (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 6 October 2010; Inada Tomomi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 6 October 2010.

[101] Saitō Yoshitaka (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 28 September 2010.

[102] For example, Furukawa Yoshihisa (LDP), Environment Committee, HoR, 23 April 2010; Masuzoe Yōichi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 16 September 2011; Kusuda Daizō (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 July 2012; Satō Masahisa (LDP), Committee for Settling the Accounts, HoC, 3 September 2012.

[103] Taira Masaaki (LDP), Committee for Monitoring the Settlement of Accounts and Administration, HoR, 11 June 2012.

[104] Kakizawa Mito (Your Party), Land, Infrastructure and Transport Committee, HoR, 11 April 2012.

[105] Sengoku Yoshito (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoC, 14 October 2010.

[106] Iwaya Takeshi (LDP), Security Committee, HoR, 16 November 2010.

[107] Mizuno Ken'ichi (Your Party), Plenary Session, HoR, 8 October 2010.

[108] Mizuno Ken'ichi (Your Party), Plenary Session, HoR, 8 October 2010.

[109] Kishi Nobuo (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 8 October 2010.

[110] For example, Tanioka Kuniko (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 21 October 2010; Hirasawa Katsuei, Law Committee, HoR, 22 October 2010; Higashi Junji (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoR, 16 November 2010.

[111] Iwaya Takeshi (LDP), Security Committee, HoR, 21 October 2010.

[112] For example, Nakayama Yasuhide (LDP), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 25 March 2009; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Special Committee on the North Korean Abduction Issue and Others, HoC, 20 October 2010; Kamei Akiko (People's New Party), Special Committee on the North Korean Abduction Issue and Others, HoC, 20 October 2010; Kakizawa Mito (Your Party), Budget Committee, HoR, 17 February 2012; Fujii Takao (Sunrise Party of Japan), Land, Infrastructure and Transport Committee, HoR, 19 June 2012.

[113] Katayama Satsuki (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 8 October 2010.

[114] For example, Shimajiri Aiko (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 15 April 2009; Hamada Masayoshi (Kōmeitō), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 2 July 2009; Otsuji Hidehisa (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 20 January 2010; Eguchi Katsuhiko (Your Party), Committee for Okinawa and the Northern Territories, HoC, 9 September 2010; Higashi Junji (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 July 2012.

[115] Yamatani Eriko (LDP), Constitutional Review Meeting, HoR, 31 May 2012; cf. Mizuno Ken'ichi (Your Party), Plenary Session, HoC, 8 October 2010.

China was not just differentiated from Japan in security debates. A similar pattern recurred regarding well-drilling,[116] aid,[117] human rights,[118] border perceptions,[119] pollution,[120] and postal services.[121] Almost all statements in 2009–12 concurred that China was backward and substandard, as in 1972, but also threatening.[122] In other words, China was not merely an object of exceptionalisation, but increasingly also one of securitisation.

Moreover, while present-day Japan was no longer differentiated from its prewar and wartime incarnation, as it had been in the first period, several statements now drew parallels between Japan's past and *China's* present. Prime Minister Kan Naoto, for instance, recalled:

In the famous speech Sun Yat-sen made in Japan (in 1924) he asked Japan, which at that time had militarised, if Japan would choose the rule of force (*hadō*) or the rule of virtue (*ōdō*). In a sense, these provocative words are extremely important for us today and, given the situation, I feel that I want to return this question to today's China.[123]

Kōmeitō's Tomita Shigeyuki concurred:

Sun Yat-sen's words were a warning signal aimed at Japanese militarism but if we fast-forward to today, I think his words can be applied as a warning signal aimed at China, which is running along the path to military armament.[124]

Similarly, the LDP's Koike Yuriko compared China with the hegemonic Roman Empire, and Japan to the pacifist Carthage. Koike warned that the Carthaginians suffered a gruesome fate because of their naïve belief in peace.[125] In 2009–12, it was the DPJ's Japan, or perhaps even peaceful Japan, that risked becoming a danger to itself.[126]

What 'peace' enabled: Japan's remilitarisation

Despite the lingering agreement in 2009–12 that Japan should contribute to peace, there was still no consensus on how to fulfil this responsibility. Preferred methods ranged from 'peaceful dialogue'[127] and termination of the Security Treaty,[128] on the

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[116] Ejima Shin'ya (public expert), Committee on International and Global Environmental and Food Problems, HoC, 27 April 2011.

[117] Okada Katsuya (DPJ), Foreign Affairs Committee, HoR, 10 March 2010; Hashimoto Seiko (LDP), Special Committee on Official Development Assistance and Others, HoC, 1 July 2011.

[118] Kiuchi Minoru (LDP), Law Committee, HoR, 17 November 2009; Ishihara Nobuteru (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 12 October 2010; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoC, 22 November 2010.

[119] Akamatsu Masao (Kōmeitō), Budget Committee, HoR, 1 November 2010.

[120] Yamauchi Kōichi (Your Party), Economy, Trade, and Industry Committee, HoR, 27 July 2012.

[121] Nakanishi Kenji (Your Party), Budget Committee, HoC, 19 November 2010.

[122] We also found two conspicuous exceptions: DPJ Foreign Ministers Okada Katsuya and Maehara Seiji stated that China 'is not a threat' and 'does not have differing values', respectively. Okada Katsuya (DPJ), Committee for Okinawa and the Northern Territories, HoC, 9 September 2010; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoR, 31 January 2011.

[123] Kan Naoto (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoR, 16 February 2011; cf. Ishiba Shigeru (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 12 October 2010; Nakasone Hirofumi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 27 January 2011.

[124] Tomita Shigeyuki (Kōmeitō) (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoR, 16 February 2011.

[125] Koike Yuriko (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 January 2011.

[126] Fujii Takao (Sunrise Party of Japan), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 January 2011; cf. Taira Masaaki (LDP), Committee for Monitoring the Settlement of Accounts and Administration, HoR, 11 June 2012.

[127] Shii Kazuo (JCP), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 January 2011; Kokuta Keiji (JCP), Land, Infrastructure and Transport Committee, HoR, 3 August 2012; cf. Yoshida Tadatomo (Social Democratic Party of Japan), Budget Committee, HoC, 27 August 2012.

[128] Ishii Kazuo (JCP), Plenary Session, HoR, 27 January 2011; cf. Kasai Akira, (JCP), Constitutional Review Meeting, HoR, 31 May 2012; Kokuta Keiji (JCP), Land, Infrastructure and Transport Committee, HoR, 3 August 2012.

diminishing political left, to Japan's 'normalisation' through constitutional reform and collective self-defence, on the growing political right. More often than not, 'normalisation' and remilitarisation were identified as beneficial to, and even necessary for, the preservation of peace.

In contrast, the DPJ generally ended up somewhere in-between. To preserve peace, Japan had to engage in well-tested schemes for cooperation and diplomacy.[129] *Vis-à-vis* China, the plan to forge a 'mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests' – initiated during Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's first term in 2006–7 – remained central, and was almost always brought up as part of the argument for cooperation and diplomacy in the service of peace.[130] The idea that China could develop into something similar to Japan, however, was ruled out. In its current incarnation, China was simply regarded as beyond salvation.

In addition to cooperation, leading DPJ members repeatedly clarified that as the security environment grew increasingly uncertain, peace had to be maintained through 'realist policies'.[131] Although this resembled the LDP's policy in 1972, Diet members from right wing opposition parties, including the LDP, complained that the DPJ's realism was not 'realistic' enough, and hence that Japan's contributions were insufficient. In a more sinister security environment, adherence to international norms required not only trade, development and humanitarian assistance, but also active contributions to security, such as alliance building with countries other than the US as well as collective self-defence.[132]

For many, the Senkaku/Diaoyu incident in 2010 was proof that peace needed to be defended beyond the scope allowed by Japan's current defence restrictions. A statement by the LDP's Imazu Hiroshi is representative of the increasingly frequent juxtaposition of peace with defence and security, but it is distinctive for its succinctness:

> When it comes to the defence budget as a percentage of GDP, in 2009 it was 4.5% in the US, 2.8% in the United Kingdom, 1.3% in Germany, 2% in France and 1.4% in China. In Japan it was 0.9%. Can we say that this is enough for Japan to fulfil its responsibility towards peace? Nuclear powers such as Russia, China and North Korea are situated right before our eyes, and as the threats are increasing Japan must play a part in deterring China. Only by properly strengthening our defence force will we be able to defend our nation's safety and sovereignty and this, I think, will lead to peace in Northeast Asia.[133]

Hence, throughout these years, many statements boiled down to the understanding that only with sufficient deterrence – consisting of strong alliance relationships and a strengthened national defence capability – could Japan protect peace at home and abroad.[134] To realise these visions, moreover, many Diet members advocated

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[129] Gemba Kōichirō (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2012; cf. Yamaguchi Natsuo (Kōmeitō), Plenary Session, HoC, 27 January 2011.

[130] For example, Hatoyama Yukio (DPJ), Budget Committee, HoR, 22 January 2010; Kan Naoto (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 11 June 2010; Maehara Seiji (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2011; Noda Yoshihiko (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoC, 2 November 2011.

[131] Kan Naoto (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoC, 24 January 2011; Gemba Kōichirō (DPJ), Plenary Session, HoR, 24 January 2012.

[132] Asō Tarō (LDP), Plenary Session, HoC, 30 January 2009; Kitazawa Toshimi (DPJ), Diplomacy and Defence Committee, HoC, 30 March 2011; Imazu Hiroshi (LDP), Security Committee, HoR, 15 June 2012.

[133] Imazu Hiroshi (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 July 2012.

[134] Ishiba Shigeru (LDP), Budget Committee, HoR, 5 February 2010; Koike Yuriko (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 26 January 2011; Nakasone Hirofumi (LDP) Plenary Session, HoC, 15 September 2011; Imazu Hiroshi (LDP), Security Committee, HoR, 17 April 2012; Imazu Hiroshi (LDP) Plenary Session, HoR, 26 July 2012.

'breaking the chains of the post-war regime' and revising article 9 of Japan's constitution,[135] which many saw as reflecting 'an unrealistic fantasy worldview (*arimoshinai kūsō no sekaikan*)'.[136]

To conclude, in 2009–12 the DPJ linked Japan's peace identity to signifiers such as 'international cooperation' and 'international norms'. To some this arguably enabled attempts to forge cooperative schemes with China, and a more moderate response to the Diaoyu/Senkaku incident than might have been the case had this identity construction not lingered. Even hardliners on the right could agree that cooperation and adherence to international norms were necessary to defend peace. Given the constant attempts by the political right throughout this period to rearticulate peace into something that must be defended actively, however, it is unsurprising that, after the change of government in December 2012, the 'peace requires deterrence' logic began to enable a more radical overhaul of Japan's security policy. This is the gist of Prime Minster Abe's 'proactive pacifism', which constituted the rationale for the July 2014 reinterpretation of article 9 permitting Japan's participation in collective self-defence, as well as new security legislation in 2015.

Conclusions and implications

This article has demonstrated continuity in Japan's identity discourse, comparing the discourse in 1972 with the one in 2009–12. In both periods, statements about Japan's security and defence had to be framed in terms of peace in order to become authoritative. Japan continued to be defined as 'peaceful', but the signifiers chained to the master signifier 'peace' changed quite radically (for a summary, see Table 1).

The difference against which this identity was constructed also changed significantly. In 1972, 'peace state Japan' was differentiated from its own belligerent prewar and wartime embodiments as well as traditional great powers more generally. In 2009–12, Japan's persistent responsibility to peace was contrasted *vis-à-vis* the 'aggressive' and 'threatening' China, which was in turn compared with prewar and wartime Japan. At the same time, peace remained a battleground, and a small but growing body of statements in 2009–12 tried to disarticulate 'peace' from the national identity discourse altogether by emphasising the dangers of sticking to it at all costs.

Intimately entwined with the identity of 'peaceful' Japan was that of 'advanced' Japan. In 1972, the latter was characterised by the notion that Japan was in sync with the peaceful trends of the time and by Japan's economic success. Economically advanced Japan was differentiated from states that 'lagged behind'. In 2009–12, advanced Japan, with its peace and democracy, was differentiated from substandard China, with its assertiveness and repression. While China's representation as underdeveloped in terms of values marked a continuation of the exceptionalist mode of differentiation of 1972, its representation as threatening marked the beginning of securitisation.

In 1972, a largely exceptionalising peace discourse enabled the normalisation of diplomatic relations with China and limited deterrence. In 2009–12, by contrast, an

[135] Abe Shinzō (LDP), Plenary Session, HoR, 31 October 2012; cf. Fujii Takao (Sunrise Party of Japan), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 January 2011; Taira Masaaki (LDP), Committee for Monitoring the Settlement of Accounts and Administration, HoR, 11 June 2012.

[136] Taira Masaaki (LDP), Committee for Monitoring the Settlement of Accounts and Administration, HoR, 11 June 2012; cf. Fujii Takao (Sunrise Party of Japan), Plenary Session, HoC, 28 January 2011.

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creation of collective identities.[138] Hence, in order to create an identity that includes as many as possible, the master signifier 'peace', or its substitutes, must necessarily become almost devoid of meaning. The only thing it means is that which separates the Self from the Other. The consequence is that one can criticise Japan in normative terms for straying from how a peace identity *should be*, but not in absolute terms for drifting from what a peace identity *is*.

The idea that one's own country should contribute to peace, or that its course of action should serve to promote such values, is of course less *uniquely Japanese* than acknowledged by the norm constructivist literature. Attempts to construct a peaceful national Self were seen in many places around the world in 1972 and remain conspicuous today, for example, in statements by such disparate states as the US, Sweden, and North Korea.[139] Yet few states have seen a more consistently close link between 'peace' and identity than Japan.[140] This is of course not to say that Japan is *essentially* more peace loving than other states. It simply indicates that 'peace' has emerged through discursive struggles as a master signifier in Japanese identity discourse since the Second World War, and that security and defence policy in Japan must be framed in terms of 'peace' to become 'thinkable, resonant and dominant'.[141]

Having said that, we do not believe that the Japanese peace discourse has evolved in isolation from peace and security discourses in other parts of the world. The rearticulation of 'peace' in Japanese discourse can arguably be explained partly by the global diffusion of interventionism and norms such as 'responsibility to protect'. Much like the case of Germany,[142] the current reconfiguration of Japan's peace identity is arguably an attempt to make it more compatible with international norms, according to which peace is something that must be actively defended. Since the increasing compatibility of 'peace' with 'normalisation' not only further differentiates Japan from China, but also reduces Japan's imagination of difference *vis-à-vis* the US, it might clearly be interpreted in terms of Japan's further socialisation in the US-led world order.[143]

Both realists and norm constructivists might object that the findings of this article merely confirm that peace requires deterrence, that the securitisation of China in 2009–2012 corresponds to an increasing threat, and hence that objective, material factors underlie the reconstruction of Japan's peace identity. However, this begs the question why China was not differentiated as a threat back in 1972. At that time it

[138] Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*, pp. 36–46.
[139] 'Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize', The White House, 10 December 2009, available at: {http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize} accessed 11 September 2014; 'Sveriges säkerhetspolitik' ('Sweden's security policy'), Regeringskansliet, available at: {http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/1991/a/12436} accessed 11 September 2014; Korean Central News Agency, 'Aspiring after Peace is DPRK's Consistent Foreign Policy: News Analyst', available at: {http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201308/news13/20130813-12ee.html} accessed 11 September 2014.
[140] Andrew L. Oros, 'Japan's strategic culture: Security identity in a fourth modern incarnation?, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 35:2 (2014), p. 232.
[141] Holland, 'Foreign policy and political possibility'.
[142] Thomas U. Berger, 'The past in the present: Historical memory and German national security policy', *German Politics*, 6:1 (1997), pp. 39–59.
[143] For other research exploring the question of Japan's socialisation in a Western-led order see Suzuki, 'Japan's socialization'; Tamaki, *Deconstructing Japan's Image of South Korea*; Ayşe Zarakol, 'Ontological (in)security and state denial of historical crimes: Turkey and Japan', *International Relations*, 24:1 (2010), pp. 3–23; Guillaume, *International Relations and Identity*; Alexander Bukh, 'Shimane prefecture, Tokyo and the territorial dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima: Regional and national identities in Japan', *The Pacific Review*, 28:1 (2015), pp. 47–70; Hagström, 'The "abnormal" state'.

was undergoing one of the most tumultuous processes of political radicalisation the world has ever seen, the Cultural Revolution; it had recently engaged in deadly border skirmishes with the Soviet Union; it had tested nuclear weapons in 1964, aggravating the Japanese 'allergy to nuclear weapons', which is 'stronger than in any other country';[144] it was continuing to support communist militants in Southeast Asia; and it frequently engaged in anti-Japanese propaganda. Furthermore, there were serious bilateral problems with conflict potential, such as the burgeoning territorial dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands and military tensions around Taiwan. A combination of the above-mentioned factors could have been used to frame China as a threat to peace, or to argue against the normalisation of relations. China could moreover have been constructed as a threat on ideological rather than material grounds, and the issue of Chinese spies and collaborators spreading communist propaganda in Japan could easily have been securitised. This did not happen, however, and Japanese political discourse only differentiated China as inferior or lagging behind in a developmental sense. We anticipate the objection that China was not a *real* threat in 1972. However, while North Korea is currently framed as Japan's most imminent security concern, it is actually not clear that it is any more of a 'real' threat than China was in 1972.

In contrast, while there was broad agreement in and beyond academia that China was becoming *increasingly* assertive in 2009–12, this conventional wisdom has been seriously challenged in a number of recent studies.[145] The bottom line is that 'material factors' cannot be neatly separated from identity construction, because they do not have any exact meaning outside of the discourses in which they are constituted as objects.[146] This does not mean that the rearticulation of 'peace' in Japanese identity discourse has had nothing to do with China. Both the strong version of the peace state narrative (unarmed neutrality) and the moderate one (necessary minimum of self-defence) are at pains to explain why Japan has become the target of China's (and North Korea's)[147] 'aggressive' behaviour, despite its own 'peaceful' behaviour. Discourse theory argues that it is precisely in such moments of 'dislocation' – that is, when a discourse fails to account for or explain unforeseen phenomena – that its contingency is revealed and it risks being replaced.[148]

The new peace state discourse, which holds that Japan must 'normalise' or remilitarise and actively defend peace, has gained traction exactly because it allows Japan to reconcile its normative commitments to peace with changing international norms, and because it presents itself as a new solution to intersubjectively constructed 'threats' from China and North Korea at a time when the tried and tested military constraints no longer seem able to guarantee peace. The implication is that although 'peace' remains a key signifier in Japanese identity discourses, the emerging militarised meaning of 'peace' as a goal to be achieved through 'active measures', might do more to undermine than to stabilise peaceful relations between Japan and its East Asian neighbours.

[144] Fukuda Takeo (LDP), Budget Committee, HoC, 4 April 1972.
[145] Hagström, ' "Power shift" '; Alastair Iain Johnston, 'How new and assertive is China's new assertiveness?', *International Security*, 37:4 (2013), pp. 7–48; Björn Jerdén, 'The assertive China narrative: Why it is wrong and how so many still bought into it', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 7:1 (2014), pp. 47–88.
[146] Hagström and Gustafsson, 'Japan and identity change', p. 12; cf. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 108.
[147] Hagström and Hanssen, 'The North Korean abduction issue'.
[148] Torfing, *New Theories*, pp. 148–9.