Desecuritization and The Politics of Security

A comprehensive study on the nexus between politics and security through the focus on desecuritization illustrated by the case of Japan in the period between 2011 and 2014

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Abstract:

Security has long been a major interest in the studies of international politics. The end of the Cold War marked a turning point in international politics and security studies, creating avenue for critical security studies to soar. The development of security studies sees the establishment of securitization and desecuritization as the new framework to study security, and many critical security scholars have embarked on the discussion on this framework. However, desecuritization has been much less focused compared to securitization, and therefore, the thesis attempts to conduct an in-depth study of desecurtization, and through it, contribute to critical security studies. The thesis will employ the study on identity to explain for how identity influences the government's decision to securitize or desecuritize an issue. The case study is Japan in the period between 2011 and 2014, right after the 3-11 Triple Disaster at Fukushima.

List of acronyms:

CS: Copenhagen School

CSS: critical security studies

DPJ: Democratic Party of Japan

FTA: Free Trade Agreement

LDP: Liberal Democratic Party

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NSS: National Security Strategy

PM: Prime Minister

SDF: Self-Defense Forces

TPP: Trans-Pacific Partnership

US: United States

WW2: World War 2

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Security has long been a major interest in the studies of international politics. Neorealism sees security crucial to states' survival, and hence states need to maximize their security in an anarchic self-help system (Waltz, 1979). A neorealist approach to security studies would focus on states as the main actors and consider security in terms of military and political power (Krause & Williams, 1996). The end of the Cold War marked a turning point in international politics and security studies, and in order to accommodate contemporary events, academic community proposes a "wide" version of security studies (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Since then, books and academic journals see the surge of conversations on critical security studies (CSS).

One of the merits of CSS is that it opens up the discussion on security to other sectors, namely economic, social and environment security and allows scholars to study the inter-relations of these sectors. This is necessary because contemporary events are hardly single-issue (Newell, 2001). They tend to have many facets that inter-connect with one another, where a change on one facet will lead to the change on the others (ibid.). And so is security. The conversation on security nowadays is no longer limited to military and politics. but entails military, politics, economy, society and environment (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998), which influence one another. Therefore, it is crucial to study the dynamic between these sectors for better understanding of the current security.

Thereby, this thesis is going to study securitization and desecuritization by examining the complex interconnectedness between different sectors to illustrate how governments use securitization and desecuritization as domestic political strategy to legitimize themselves. Securitization first appears in the work of the Copenhagen School (CS) as the process to remove specific issues from the practice of normal politics to legitimize the use of extraordinary means in response (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Meanwhile, desecuritization is the reverse process of bringing the issues back to normal politics (ibid.). However, this approach studies securitization/desecuritization separately from politics, and this, unfortunately, overlooks the dynamic between them. Therefore, it is significant to study securitization and desecuritization and how they become domestic political strategy. With limited space and time, and because the majority of current literature have already discussed

about securitization, the thesis will focus more on desecuritization and attempt to answer the following question:

Under what conditions desecuritization occurs, and how is it used as a political strategy to sustain government legitimacy?

After answering the questions, this thesis will also address a normative discussion with regard to securitization and desecuritization. The CS scholars places the two phenomena in the two opposite ends, indicating that desecuritization is more desirable as it brings the issues back to the realm of normal politics. To what extent desecuritization is more just and more desirable? I will come back to this at the end. Hopefully, the answer can give people and the institutions that represent them better picture of security-related issues, which is the basis of any emancipatory project.

To answer the research questions, the thesis will employ politics of identity to explain for the underlined motivation of securitizing and desecuritizing moves. Specifically, it will investigate how the perception of self-identity drives the political strategy to securitize or desecuritize issues. The thesis will also challenge the concept of speech act. The CS literature defines securitization as a speech act, which means that IR scholars often rely on discourses of political leaders to detect the pattern of securitization (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998; Wæver, 1998). However, this approach limits the empirical evidence to only the discourses of political leaders while leaving out practices and other forms of representation of securitization/desecuritization (McDonald, 2008; Floyd, 2011). For this reason, not only discourses but also practices of political elites will be the source of empirical evidence to identify securitizing and desecuritizing moves of the chosen case study.

The case study is Japan after the 3-11 Triple Disaster in 2011 under the Yoshihiko Noda's administration (2011-2012) and Shinzo Abe's second administration (2012-2014). Abe became Japanese Prime Minister (PM) in 2006, but he abruptly announced his resignation in 2007 citing health issues. He left on a bad note with multiple political scandals of members in his cabinet and the loss of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the upper house election 2007 under his leadership (Govella et al., 2008). He then returned in 2012 to become the leader of the LDP and Japanese PM.

Japan during this period is a deviant case[1] to study securitization and desecuritization as Japanese governments started to have a relatively more aggressive stance on foreign policy

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[1] According to Gerring (2017). Elaboration is in chapter 3.

and to actively seek to remilitarize the country . After World War II (WWII), Japan adopted the Yoshida Doctrine, stating that Japan will only use force for the purpose of self-defense. In accordance to this doctrine, Japan does not have an army, but only the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). Abe, since his first term, has attempted to reinterpret the consitution. He then successfully passed the legislation regarding to Article 9 reinterpretation through the parliament in 2013. His proposed reinterpretation promotes the notion of "proactive contribution to peace", which emphasizes on the moral obligation of Japan to be more proactive in international security cooperation to ensure collective security in an "increasingly severe security environment" (National Security Strategy, 2013, p.3). Specifically, the National Security Strategy (NSS) defines challenges to Japan security in the Asia Pacific region as "North Korea's military buildup and provocative actions" and "China's rapid rise and intensified activities in various areas" (p.11 & 12).

Theoretically, (neo)realism can offer balance of threat and balance of power as the explanation for this. North Korea has been upgrading its capability of WMDs and conducting different provocative military activities, including the testing of nuclear power, and some of that directly aim at Japan territory. Meanwhile, the increasing spending of China on military in combination with its offensive military activities in the seas and airspace around Japan as well as the challenge China poses to the global power balance upset not only Japan but also the United States (US), Japan's closest ally. It does seem that (neo)realism can sufficiently explain for the militarization of Japan and its transition to proactive pacifism.

However, it is questionable if Japan indeed requires militarization as (neo)realism suggests to counter-balance the threat posed by North Korea and China. Even though the operations of the SDF are limited by the Constitution, Japan might not face serious threat as (neo)realism would suggest due to the fact that it has multiple security agreements with the most powerful state in the world, the US. The two countries signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, establishing United States Forces Japan, providing obligations for the US to protect Japan together with the SDF. In March 2010, it was revealed that Japanese government signed a secret agreement that allowed the US to store nuclear weapons thorough Japan (The Japan Times, 2010). Even though the agreement has ended and the US has offloaded all nuclear weapons from Japan, there are currently more than 100 active US military bases across Japan. Therefore, Japan can conveniently continue to be the free rider to ensure its security by having American troops stationed there. The context of Japan and its security status here shows that the (neo)realist explanation is not sufficient.

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Similarly, constructivist approach also has difficulty in explaining the remilitarization of Japan. The end of World War II is still very much impactful in this country, and the majority of the people are pro-pacifist (Kingston, 2016). Every year, peace ceremony in Hiroshima attracts thousands of pacifist supporters to emphasize and reemphasize the importance of peace. Nagasaki, despite not holding such event, is given nation-wide one-minute of silence to commemorate the victims. In other words, pacifism is the widely shared idea and culture in Japan. As a consequence, constructivism will not predict that any counter-pacifist change is likely to happen in this country. However, Abe, since his first term, has been implementing different measures to alter the pacific culture of this country and challenge the pacifist Constitution. For this reason, this thesis attempts to offer the alternative explanation by using securitization/desecuritization theory and studying the second image of Japan to investigate whether domestic factors influence Japan's decision on securitization and desecuritization.

In Japan's context, securitization becomes the strategy to manipulate the dominant narrative to undermine the current pacifist Constitution. This transformation is crucial to the legitimation of the current regime since the economic development and later on, stagnation and the rapid societal change have created the legitimacy crisis to Japanese government. It manifests in the volatile party politics and the rapid turnover of prime ministers (2006-2012). The trust in government is seriously challenged after the corruption scandals in the late 1990s and 2000s and especially after the 3-11 Triple Disaster at Fukushima in 2011. Within this context, foreign policy's diversionary theory suggests that it is crucial for Japan to divert public attention to external problems, creating a sense of external threats to promote patriotism and unity. This is when the ruling elites try to do the securitizing move to create the rally-around-the-flag effect and legitimize its government.

However, although securitization dominates the narrative, it is not the only movement here. Since PM Abe's ambition is to change the Constitution to legitimize the operation of SDF, desecuritization, through institutionalization, is expected to happen to normalize the aggressive foreign policy. Furthermore, liberal economy and globalization also discourage tension in international relations as it threatens the global economy. In order to take these into account, desecuritization, again, is expected in the picture to avoid escalation with its neighboring countries. Therefore, desecuritization is necessary as a complementary strategy to securitization. Another notable event under PM Abe's second administration is that Japan

started to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiation, which potentially provides empirical materials to examine securitization and desecuritization of the economy.

For these reasons, Japan is an ideal case to answer the following specific questions: under what conditions desecuritization occurs, and how is it used as a political strategy to sustain government legitimacy? Particularly, the thesis will look into the domestic context to study how domestic socio-economic and political factors influence Japanese government's decision to desecuritize issues of international politics. It will also argue that the acts of desecuritization are significant to the legitimacy of the government.

1.1 Scientific relevance

The purpose of the study is to improve the current research on desecuritization, which is often underdeveloped in the literature of CS and CSS (Floyd, 2007), and thus contributes to security studies in general. It furthers the understanding of how identity can drive the political decision to securitize or desecuritize issues. It also points out the limitation of (neo)realism and constructivism's explanatory power, and tries to provide an alternative explanation from the perspective of CSS. Additionally, it attempts to bridge security studies with foreign policy analysis by incorporating diversionary theory of foreign policy into CSS to improve the explanation of states' behaviors.

1.2 Societal relevance

The findings of the thesis will show that desecuritization is not always more desirable as Wæver suggests. Rather, desecuritization can be a political tool that political elites adopt to legitimize their power. Therefore, it is important to scrutinize and challenge not only securitizing discourses but also desecuritizing ones. Through writing about this, the thesis hopes to increase the overall awareness of security-related issues, and with better understanding, the people can be more critical about security-related issues surrounding their everyday lives.

The thesis will begin with the theoretical framework chapter on securitization/securitization theory based on the work of Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde and other CS's authors, then it will take on the work of Fierke and other critical scholars to study the political implications of securitization and desecuritization. More importantly, the thesis will closely examine the characteristics of identity in order to establish hypotheses for desecuritization. Then it will move on to discuss the choice of methodology and case study before analyzing the chosen case study (Japan) and discussing the generalizability of the findings. It will address the normative discussion on the use of securitization and desecuritization in the concluding remarks alongside with limitations of the study and future research suggestions.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This chapter gives an overview of the existing literature written on security studies and securitization/desecuritization theory. It starts with the discussion on the definition and the scope of *security*, then moves on to securitization/desecuritization theory and its political implications. Within the political implications section, it will zoom in the characteristics of identity and conceptualize how these characteristics facilitate states' decision to securitize or desecuritize.

2.1 The social construction of security

Traditional security studies conceptualize security as a reality irrespective of interpretation, and as a phenomenon that mainly regards military issues, especially the use of force (Wæver, 1998). Insecurity indicates threats, and hence there is a need to maximize security (ibid.). In such a situation, a state has the obligation to wield all possible measures to bring security back, or in another words, the "security" label hands great power into the hands of the representatives of state.

CSS, on the other hand, challenges the notion of security as something given and conceptualized in determinist terms (e.g., security is there, or not there) (Fierke, 2007). To begin with, CSS, in line with Wendt and his theory on social constructivism, questions the assumptions of the exogenously given nature of state and their interests, and argues that the social dimension of states is crucial in determining what the interests are and how states maximize these interests (Wendt, 1999; Fierke, 2007). International politics is not a one-way causal relation where the international system decides states' behaviors, determining the course of action of states' representatives like neorealism suggests (Wendt, 1999). Rather, it is a mutually constructed system where states' representatives interact and produce and reproduce the international political culture. Therefore, the decisions and the actions of states' representatives - the political elites, matter. Based on this, CSS raises two core issues in the discussion of security and politics. The first one involves the question of the political relationship between the protector and the protected, whereas the second one concerns the definition of threats and also the means to address the threats in concern (Fierke, 2007).

Traditionally, the protector is the state that protects internal security from external threats (Fierke, 2007). Realism argues that due to the security dilemma produced by the anarchic system of international politics, states seek to maximize their security for the sake of their own survival by improving their material power. CSS, however, criticizes the realist approach for over-emphasizing the material cause for political acts in the name of "state's survival". Fierke points out that an existential threat poses a challenge to a state's survival, but a state's survival is not simply physical survival. In modern days, it is rather a "way of life" that political elites would like to preserve. Therefore, security is an "essentially contested concept" (Fierke, 2007, p.34). Even though people share a broad understanding of security, the application of it remains opened and debatable because it involves ideological and moral elements (ibid.). "Contestation often is not merely about the concepts of politics; the disputes are a part of politics itself" (p.34), and hence, the politics of the "essentially contested' security is a political negotiation between political elites and the people (ibid.). Rather than the exogeneous material cause that drives political action, the political comes into realization from the engaging interactions and dialogues between different actors across the levels to mutually construct the shared perceived reality. This constructed reality then constitutes the decision of interests to pursue and when these interests are at threat. Therefore, an existential threat is the status defined through a political process, and security is not above politics, but a part of domestic and international politics. For this reason, she argues that we

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need to pay close attention to the political dimension of threats identified and framed by political elites. The question on the social construction of threat and the means to deal with it should be subject to normative debate and change (Fierke, 2007).

However, although security and what constitutes it transforms overtime, the central element – the challenges to sovereignty – remains unchanged (Wæver, 1998). Sovereignty entails recognition, legitimacy, and governing authority, so regardless of whether the threat is from military or from any other sectors, as long as it poses a threat to sovereignty, it can be framed as a security issue (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). By framing more issues as security (e.g., climate change, refugees), political elites enable the spilling over of security into other sectors, including politics, economy, society and environment. Wæver (1998) names this act of the elites a *securitizing move*, and gives birth to the notion of securitization.

2.2 Securitization as a speech act

CS defines securitization as a speech act: it is the act of uttering the word "security" itself that constitutes a security issue (Wæver, 1998). More often, due to the power and capability, it is the political elites that declare security. Although some civil organizations nowadays are able to mobilize enough political support to frame certain issue as security, the speech act itself is usually carried out by political elites. In another words, "security is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice, by elites" (Waever, 1998, p. 48).

More importantly, the securitizing speech act entails consequences. It allows political elites to remove the security issue out of the realm of normal politics which abides by democratic procedure. According to CS, this is possible because security is above politics (p. 23) due to the fact that it is the existential threat to state sovereignty (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Securitization then becomes the instrument that political elites use to move an issue into the specific area of security to allow exceptional measures to block the issue development. Anything that is successfully securitized will become an exception, granting political elites the legitimation to bypass the democratic institutions and procedures to carry out exceptional measures beyond rules and expectations (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). This is possible due to the emergency condition that security frame creates.

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However, the speech act to securitize an issue – *the securitizing move* – alone does not create securitization. Securitization is only complete when the securitizing move receives the acceptance of the target audience. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) identify three facilitating conditions that help constitute a sucessful speech act. First, the speech has to be in the language and the grammar of security that conveys a narrative of "existential threat, point of no return, and a possible way out". The second relates to the social and political relationship between securitizing actors and the audience that can effectively increase the likelihood of audience acceptance. Finally, the external behaviors of this alleged threat also contributes to the success, or failure, of securitizing move.

2.3 Desecuritization – the under-developed twin

The next section discusses about desecuritization, the underdeveloped twin theory of securitization.

Desecuritization refers to the reverse process of securitization. According to CS, it brings issues back to normal politics, enabling political discussions and negotiations and bringing back democratic procedure (Wæver, 1998). Surprisingly, even though they are two sides of the same coin, compared to securitization, desecuritization is a "largely under-theorized and open to interpretation" concept in CS theory (Floyd, 2007). In their seminal study *Security: A New Framework for Analysis,* Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde (1998) hardly analyze desecuritization in the majority of the book. Only in the last chapter, the authors briefly discuss the relation between desecuritization and liberal economy.

According to Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, desecuritization is a part of the liberal project to foster economic relations between states (1998). It allows states, private sectors and their people relatively more space to pursue economic cooperation and development, creating the potential win-win scenario for both sides without concerning too much on relative gain. States' borders are no longer strictly closed, and the freedom of movement is promoted to be one of the most essential human rights, especialy in the West (e.g. the European Union and the Schengen Area project). Desecuritization of the economy happens when states voluntarily enter international agreements (bilaterally or multilaterally) on certain issues and ratify the agreed terms into domestic laws and policies. Economic desecurtization also entails market

orientation and limited intervention of states into the economy. Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde state that "the desecuritization of economics is central to the ideology of capitalism" (p.).

However, the economic sector is not the only area in which desecuritization manifests itself, and even though CS acknowledges the spillover effect of economic desecuritization into other sectors, it rarely explores this. The underdeveloped status of desecuritization, hence, inspires a lot of scholars to draw inspiration from different political theorists to explain the securitization/desecuritization nexus. From Carl Schmitt and Jürgen Habermas to Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, Max Weber, authors take up different theory schools to explain this phenomenon.

Notably, Derrida's logic of supplementarity explains why the existence of desecuritization theory is necessary (Hansen, 2012). Following this logic, securitization can be seen as the original one with real essence, whereas desecuritization is its supplement that needs to exist in order to complete the definition of the former one (Hansen, 2012). Neither theory can stand alone. Both co-constitute each other and complete the understanding of the concept. However, by viewing desecuritization as the supplementary theory to provide additional clarification to securitization, it consequentially locates desecuritization at the inferior position to securitization, which in turns explains the lack of development of desecuritization theory (Hansen, 2012).

Another potential explanation for the under-theorized status of desecuritization comes from the conceptualization of desecuritization. Since securitization is conceptualized as a speech act, analysts can trace it in elites' discourses and identify securitizing pattern. In contrast, it is relatively more difficult to trace desecuritizing pattern. Wæver (1995), when studying European Integration, argues that there is desecuritizing discourse, but emphasizes that it is a long-term process involving years of political writings and negotiations to desecuritize issue. Hansen (2002) calls it *stabilization*, which is the act of naming the issues in other terms rather than security even though the issues are still there. However, this is only one among the four conceptualization of desecuritization. According to Hansen (2002), aside from *stabilization*, there are also *replacement, rearticulation, and silencing*. *Replacement* happens when the states want to re-prioritize the issues on hand, so they desecuritize one issue to securitize another issue; *rearticulation* is to move the issues from security realm to political realm when the actors involved reach some degree of resolution; finally, *silencing* is when "desecuritization takes the form of a depoliticization" (p. 529), that the issue gradually disappears in both security and political agenda. Bourbeau and Vuori (2015) provide a more

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nuanced conceptualiztion by looking at the timing of desecuritization. They point out that Wæver and CS often study desecuritization as the unamking of securitization, but desecuritization can even happen before the securitizing move takes place (Bourbeau & Vuori, 2015). The latter refers to the act of preventing the issue to be securitized, and argues that desecuritization can be pre-emptive (Huysmans, 2006).

The next section will discuss about the political implications of the securitization and desecuritization nexus.

2.4 The political implications of securitization and desecuritization

To begin with, it is widely acknowledged that Wæver draws inspiration from Carl Schmitt's politics of exception that allows political elites to utilize exceptional means to tackle security issues (Huysman, 2006; Behnke, 2006). However, Wæver diverts from Schmitt[2] in his emphasis on the intersubjective construction of security status (Wæver, 2000). Particularly, a securitizing move cannot succeed without audience acceptance, which means that the notion of securitization entails the political negotation to convince the audience before sucessfully label it "security" and move it out of normal politics. Since securitization is highly political, desecuritization, as its supplement, is inevitably political in itself too (Hansen, 2012).

Wæver (1998) describes the process of desecuritization as the political negotiation over the security threshold. Issues that lie below the threshold are referred to as challenges, and those above are referred to as threats. Therefore, where to establish this threshold is the key to securitze, or desecuritize issue. If political actors wish to desecurtize an issue, they need to carry out desecuritizing discourse to convince other actors and audiences to move the threshold upwards in order to keep the issue a challenge rather than a threat (Wæver, 1998). This leads to the question of what can influence the decision of when an issue is a threat (to be securitized) and when it is a challenge (to be desecuritized). This thesis attempts to answer this through the politics of identity.

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[2] According to Huysman (1998), Schmitt argues that the distinction between friend and enemy is the crucial core of all political community, and it is the dictatorial political leadership that decides who is friend and who is enemy.

2.4.1 The politics of identity

When securitization relocates an issue to the specific area of security by framing it an existential threat, it effectively puts the challenger in the category of enemy and constructs the "us versus them" narrative. Through this, it emphasizes the different identities between "self" and "other".

It is important to note that identity is not static and exogeneous. Rather, identity exists as an intersubjective relationship where a state's identity is attributed not by itself alone but by "the other" as well. Goff and Dunn (2004) argue for the four dimensions of identity, including *alterity, fluidity, constructedness and multiplicity*. The following section will focus specifically on *alterity*. *Fluidity, constructedness* and *multiplicity* will be addressed in the later part of the chapter.

Alterity suggests constructing identity through differences, meaning that state constructs the "self" via depicting the different "other" (Goff & Dunn, 2004). One of the consequences of this narrative is the construction of hierarchy. By using the dichotomic language system to project the "other", one is able to set up the inferior status for the "other" and generate the power of exclusion (Fierke, 2007). More often, the "self" appears with all the good attributes, such as order, progress, democracy and ethics. Meanwhile, the inferior "other" represents the opposite values, namely anarchy, backwardness, violence, and the primacy of power (ibid.). Campbell (1998) takes a further step, suggesting that it is mainly the representation of threat that constructs a state's identity. The US is the case study he uses to illustrate his philosophical arguments, and he points out that the "otherness" and the evil it projects constitute US identity over time. Therefore, he argues that a state has to redefine the parameter of the "otherness" to legitimize the state identity (Campbell, 1998). Following this logic of differences, when the "self" experiences identity crisis, the "self" has to divert the focus to the construction of the "other" to sustain the "self".

The tendency to export problems to the outsiders is not a new concept in international politics. Diversionary foreign policy suggests that when facing with domestic turmoil, in order to retain power and sustain domestic support, political leaders might choose to divert the attention to external threats (Smith, 1996). Reasons for adopting this policy is to create the rally-around-the-flag effect and at the same time to prove the competence of political leaders (ibid.). This diversion does not necessarily involve the actual use of force; it can be

the threat to use force and other violent means, showing the willingness to use exceptional measures to address external threat (Kanat, 2014). In a democratic system, the use of exceptional measures can only be justified when the issue at hand is a security issue, and this is when securitization allows political elites to accomplish that. In another words, similar to diversionary foreign policy, political elites may invoke securitization not out of national interests. Securitization, then, is a political choice based upon individual/group's interests.

However, as Richards et.al. (1993) point out, this diversionary strategy can only work in the short term. The surge of domestic support does not last long, and this strategy does not alter the people's perception of the ruling elites. Therefore, securitization cannot be a long-term strategy. Zimmermann (2017) argues that after a successful securitization, a successful desecuritization needs to follow in order to maintain the desired effect of securitization and institutionalize the change so that future development does not require another securitizing attempt. By successfully desecuritizing and institutionalizing the issue, the political elites can reinforce the legitimacy of their securitization act and prove their competence to domestic audience.

HYPOTHESIS 1: A successful desecuritization is a condition to maintain the desired effect of securitization when securitization is used as a diversionary strategy to sustain government legitimacy.

Additionally, Goff and Dunn (2004) also emphasizes on identity's *fluidity* and *constructedness*, arguing that identity is socially and politically constructed, and hence there is no fixed or static identity. An identity can be reproduced by the continuation of the same discourse, or it can also be reconstructed by the change of discourse. Similarly, the enemy identity a state imposes on the "other" can be altered over time. However, it is often not a "speech act" to declare that the "other" no longer poses a threat. Rather, the reconstruction of the identity is reflected in the change of discourse and practice over time. As mentioned above, Wæver (1990) argues that desecuritization involves many years of speechs and writings to phase out the friend-enemy dichotomy and consequentially moves the issue out of the area of security. Sometimes, due to the co-construction of identity, it even involves the transformation of the idenity of both the "self" and the "other" (Hansen, 2012). The "self"

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changes, and hence what constitutes the "other" changes (or vice versa), and hence the state that once was the enemy no longer belongs to the enemy category.

Lastly, identity is *multiplicity*, which means that each individual, or state, can carry multiple identities at the same time. These identities can be in harmony, yet at times can also be at conflicts with one another. The UK is a notable example for the conflicting identity complex as it envisages itself as an independent state with great power (e.g., the reminiscence of the autonomous powerful past and Brexit), yet at the same it would like to remain in the close economic interdependent relation with the European Union to foster economic cooperation and development. Therefore, constructing the enemy identity for a challenger does not necessarily mean that "us" and "them" are at conflicts in all dimensions. In contrast, it is highlighting a specific dimension and drawing extensive focus on it while actively ignoring other narratives through which political elites construct the enemy identity. That leaves room for the project of desecuritization of other dimensions of the identity of the "other".

In fact, desecuritization and securitization often happen simultaneously. Behnke (2006) indicates that "desecuritization can never really happen" (p.65). Due to *alterity*, securitization needs to happen to construct and reconstruct national identity, so desecuritization happens when one issue no longer serves the purpose and leaves the space for "more powerful and stirring imageries" (ibid.). This argument is empirically supported when looking at Turkey's relations with Syria and Iran in the early 2000s. Turkey desecuritized issues related to political Islam, Kurdish and other minorities, but securitized the relations with Northern Iraq occupied by the US (Aras & Polat, 2008).

Furthermore, Kim & Lee (2011), when studying securitization and desecuritization in the Asia Pacific, point out one of the potential reasons for securitization and desecuritization to happen simultaneously is limited resources. Securitization will elevate a certain issue from low politics to high politics, gaining significant attention, and hence attract significant resources to tackle the securitized issue. Therefore, limited issues can be securitized at one time point; negotiation happens between different interest groups to define the prioritized threat (the new threat) to securitize while desecuritizing the other (older) threats (Kim & Lee, 2011). This suggests that desecuritizing move happens simultaneously with securitization.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Due to the multiplicity of identity, when a state securitizes an issue in one sector, it will desecuritize the other sectors.

2.4.2 Liberal economy, globalization and identity

This session will draw on the current literature of liberal economy and globalization and its impact on the relation between liberal economy and desecuritization.

As mentioned previously, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde explicitly endorse the desecuritization of the economy as an essential part of the liberal project as it allows states and economic actors to pursue economic cooperation and development. Empirically, it is supported. European Integration sees many former enemy states, such as France and Germany, desecuritize their relation and opt for cooperation to foster the economies (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Pusane (2019) studies Turkish foreign policy towards Nothern Iraq during the period of 2008 to 2017 and points out that the economic benefits, namely market expansion and energy supply, were the motivation for Turkey to desecuritize its relation to Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government before the Iraqi Kurdish independence referendum in September 2017. Similarly, under the pressure of economic recovery, Egypt under President Mursi desecuritized the Nile River problem with Ethiopia in the period between 2011 and 2013 (Lawson, 2016).

However, liberal economy can also deepen the "us" versus "them" narrative and hinder economic desecuritization due to globalization backlash. Liberal economy promotes free trade, free movement and cross-border flows of resources, goods and services, which all constitute the concept of globalization. Globalization is the concept that can be traced back to the start of the industrialization age, but its impact has become intensified nowadays due to the development in information technology and the improvements in communication and data processing (Kaldor, 2012). The development of transportation industry also contributes to the widespread impact of globalization. The below section will discuss globalization's impact on the politics of identity and how it affects securitization and desecuritization.

To begin with, globalization promotes the concept of global citizenship and "a borderless world". The problem emerges from the concept of "a borderless world". Borders do not simply refer to the physical boundaries that define states' territories, but also embody emotional attachment and the shared identity of the people living within these borders

(Diener & Hagen, 2009). In that sense, by promoting "a borderless world", globalization threatens the shared national identity people living within the borders uphold. Furthermore, the "race to the bottom" has shifted non-skilled jobs to cheap labor countries, which has caused the increasing income disparity between the winners and the losers of globalization (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2007). As a consequence, identity debate has gained its salience in political agenda, "creating an environment in which the global, the national and the local compete for loyalty" (p.9).

In addition, the increase of economic migrants disrupts the natives' normal life, exposing them to multiculturalism despite their wills (Varsanyi, 2011). More often, the winners that benefit from globalization can adapt better to multiculturalism, while the losers suffer the sense of alienation and disorientation right in their livelihood, leading to "a crisis of identity" (Kaldor, 2012). This negative emotion creates avenue for backward-looking sentiments and an idealized nostalgia representation of the past (ibid.) where social cohesion was not threatened. According to Kaldor, the backward-looking project and exclusivism gain meaning from insecurity and constitute the politics of identity. Noticeably, the politics of identity does not only manifest in the more advanced economies, but Botswana, Turkey, Eastern European countries, and other Global South nations also develop nationalist discourse and anti-immigrant, anti-foreigner sentiments due to the experience of exploitation by transnational corporations (Fernández-Kelly, 1983; Goldsmith & Mander, 2001). The empirical studies on 64 countries in the world from the data obtained from World Values Surveys (waves 3-5) by Kaya & Karakoç (2012) also supports the negative impact of globalization on anti-immigrant prejudice. This all deepens the "us" versus "them" narrative, motivating states to secure their own identities and undermining the desecuritization project of liberal economy as suggested by Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde. The most notable consequence of globalization backlash is the rise of populism, claiming that the political elites do not respect the values that are important to the people (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2007). Even though populist parties are not the dominant force in parliaments of the majority of states, they successfully put new issues on political agenda (i.e. populist right advocates for immigration issue, populist left advocates for anti-capitalism and anti-globalization) and force some of the mainstream parties to shift their positions on these new issues (Akkerman et al., 2016).

In fact, immigration has long been a securitized issue in many countries. Empirical studies have highlighted the trace of the securitization of immigration in European Union

(Huysman, 2000; Menjíıvar, 2014), the US (Menjíıvar, 2014) and Canada (Ibrahim, 2005). Economic securitization is still an uncommon phenomenon as a growing number of states and population are enjoying the benefits of globalization, but there are evidences of increasing government intervention and global protectionism (Erixon & Sally, 2010). For instance, the creation and protection of "national champions" in France, the Russia's restriction on foreign investment in the energy sector, the re-industrialization plan of the European Union, etc.. Research have found that globalization backlash is the main drive for this phenomenon and that the phenomenon is typically found in more economically advanced states (ibid.). Therefore, this thesis would like to evaluate the desecuritizing effect of liberal economy proposed by Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde and hypothesize that globalization backlash hinders liberal economy's desecuritization attempt in more economically advanced states.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Liberal economy promotes economic desecuritization, but globalization backlash hinders the attempt in more economically advanced states.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter will start with the section on research design which presents the justification for the chosen methodology. Then it will move on to the operationalization of the main concepts. Next, it will discuss the case selection and finally, it will conclude the chapter with data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research design

This thesis will perform a single case study to test the hypotheses generated in the previous chapter. As stated earlier, (neo)realist explanation focuses on material interests as the main driver for political actions, but there is no exogenously given reality to determine what identity a state has and what interests to pursue (Fierke, 2007). Social constructivism takes the construction of reality into account, but it fails to theoretically and empirically examine the materially embodied social structure (e.g., identity construction) and its consequences (Kurki & Sinclair, 2010). Critical approach, on another hand, allows the study to employ

methodological individualism to zoom in on domestic politics in order to understand foreign policies. Therefore, a single case study approach with process tracing is preferable as it allows an in-depth analysis of the chosen case study.

Specifically, process tracing allows the research to identify the existence of not only the effects, but also the underlined causal mechanisms from observational data (Gerring, 2017). The virtue of causal mechanism is widely acknowledged since without a clear causal pathway, it is impossible to evaluate whether causal relation exists, or it is a mere covariation (ibid.). Therefore, a single case study is used here to enable the stepwise reconstruction of how the politics of identity in the domestic setting can influence a state's decision on the securitization or desecuritization of an issue. By strategically selecting the case study, it can draw causal inferences to a larger population (Gerring, 2017). Additionally, process tracing also opens to the possibility of alternative variables that might also influence the outcome of a phenomenon. Thanks to this, it helps evaluate the explanatory power of the proposed hypotheses.

This merits of the single case study approach come with tradeoffs as it cannot evaluate whether the hypotheses are also applicable in other cases, and whether they are necessary for the outcomes to occur (Gerring, 2017). However, the critical approach employs the heavy focus on the social construction of a state identity and threats, and these elements are all case-specific. Therefore, conducting a quantitative test is not suitable. In contrast, "because the case study format is focused and intensive, it facilitates the interpretivist's quest, to understand social action from the perspective of the actors themselves" (Gerring, 2017, p. 249). With a single case study approach, the thesis can examine the specific socio-political context of Japan and how that influences Japan's foreign policies.

3.2 Operationalization

The operationalization of desecuritization will be based on Hansen (2012)'s four conceptualizations of desecuritization, including *stabilization, replacement, rearticulation* and *silencing*. For the chosen case study, *replacement, rearticulation* and *silencing* will be the main lenses to identify desecuritizing patterns.

In addition, the thesis will conceptualize securitization and desecuritization as practices rather speech acts. In fact, the CS conceptualization of securitization itself is

conflicted. It conceptualizes securitization as a speech act, yet at the same time argues for the intersubjective dimension of securitization and emphasizes audience acceptance as the condition for a successful securitizing move. Many scholars have pointed out this and criticized its ambiguity. McDonald (2008) argues that the speech act conceptualization ignores other forms of representation (images, material practices) and heavily focus on the specific moment of the speech itself without addressing the incremental processes and representations over time to construct threats. Rita Floyd (2011) indicates that a compete securitization has to include the change in relevant behavior following the speech act and advises to revise the theory as *securitization = securitizing move + security practice* (p. 429). Balzacq (2019) also endorses the regime of practices to study securitization as it provides "an integrative approach… to appreciate the interplay of verbal and non-verbal practices" (p. 332). More importantly, if securitization is understood as the intersubjective construction of threats, the speech act conceptualization cannot encompass the audience in the analysis.

Therefore, the study will look for patterns of securitizing and desecuritizing through speech and practices to fully captivate the dynamic between securing actors and their audiences. Practices here are "socially meaningful patterns of action which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world" (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 6). The focus on practices also allows the exploration of the dynamic between the materials and the ideas that stabilizes, reproduces or transforms political structures.

3.3 Case selection

The chosen case study, Japan, is a deviant case according to Gerring's case study typology as it produces the outcomes that are different from the predictions of (neo)realism, neoliberalism and social constructivism. (Neo)realism would predict Japan to continue to be a free rider to the US, whereas social constructivism would expect Japan to adopt foreign policies that are aligned with the dominant pacifist/anti-militaristic culture. Yet, empirical evidence shows that Japan has sought to remilitarize to become a "normal state" and pursue proactive pacifism. On another hand, neoliberalism would support Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde's desecuritization of the economic sector, but Japan has exercised several protectionist policies for some economic sectors. The use of a deviant case here enables us to showcase the

limitations of the three International Relations grand theories and the necessity of critical approaches to security studies. Specific arguments will be discussed further in the empirical analysis.

Although Japan is a deviant case according to Gerring, the constructed hypotheses in this thesis can travel to other states, particularly more economically advanced states as they tend to suffer more globalization backlash (see explanation above). The arguments in the theoretical framework chapter are all based on general theories at abstract level to construct hypotheses for desecuritization. The purpose of the case study is to test the hypotheses to see whether the case of Japan supports the hypotheses, and I encourage other research to further test them with other cases to gain better understanding of their explanatory power.

The time period covered in this study starts from the post 3-11 Triple Disaster in 2011 when Japan was under the Yoshihiko Noda's administration (2011-2012) and Shinzo Abe's second administration (2012-2014). The reason for focusing on this time period is because the 3-11 Triple Disaster was a great shock to the contemporary Japan that produced a legitimacy test for the ruling government. Since the study focuses on the extent to which identity influences the decision of securitization and desecuritization, post-crisis period often elicits reflection of the self-perceived identity, and for this reason, it offers a hoop test for the proposed hypotheses.

The securitizing actor is the ruling political elites, including PM Shinzo Abe and his cabinet, and the audience includes opposition politicians and Japanese population. Although several studies have highlighted the importance to distinguish different groups of audiences because they require different sets of rules, norms, practices and language (Salter, 2008; Bourbeau, 2011), due to the limited scope, the thesis will study them under one category of audience.

HYPOTHESIS 1: A successful desecuritization is a condition to maintain the desired effect of securitization when securitization is used as a diversionary strategy to sustain government legitimacy.

Desecuritization in hypothesis 1 brings the issue from security realm back to political realm, so according to Hansen's conceptualization, it is an act of *rearticulation* (Hansen, 2012). In order to support hypothesis 1, the empirical study expects to find the evidence of a crisis of government legitimacy in Japan after the 3-11 Triple Disaster in 2011 through grassroot

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political movements in Japan. It then closely observes the actions of the government right after that vis-à-vis the government's attitude towards territorial dispute with China and Taiwan over Senkaku Islands/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai[3] to identify securitizing patterns. Desecuritization is expected to manifest through the institutionalizing attempt (e.g., the change of the Constitution). At the same time, reaction from Japanese population through protests and op-ed columns will also be a part of the study to evaluate the success of the securitization and desecuritization moves.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Due to the multiplicity of identity, when a state securitizes an issue in one sector, it can desecuritize the other sectors.

Following up hypothesis 1, the relationship between Japan and Taiwan will be the specific case to test hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 1 expects to see the securitization of the Senkaku Islands, which would result in the increasing tension between Japan and Taiwan. Hypothesis 2, on another hand, expects that the tension is not significantly increased because of the desecuritization of another issue (i.e., fishery) through official bilateral agreement. Desecuritization in this case is *replacement* according to Hansen's conceptualization (Hansen, 2012). Being able to reach an official agreement on a non-sovereign issue when tension on sovereign issue is high reflects the multiplicity of identity.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Liberal economy promotes economic desecuritization, but globalization backlash hinders the attempt in more economically advanced states.

Japan is a relatively more economically advanced state. It is the third-largest economy in the world with $5 trillion GDP in 2019 (Silver, 2020). The unemployment in 2019 is at 2.41 percent, which is lower than many industrial and emerging economies (Plecher, 2020). Japanese economic freedom score is 73.3, ranking at the 30th position in the 2020 index (The Heritage Foundation, 2020).

Similar to many advanced economies, Japan suffers from globalization backlash, particularly income disparity. The research done by Kitao and Yamda on the subject of income inequality shows that from 1984 to 2014, "inequality in earnings, income and wealth

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[3] The Islands are called Senkaku (尖閣) in Japanese, Diaoyu (钓鱼) in Chinese and Diaoyutai (釣魚台) in Taiwanese.

all increased during the last three decades" (2019). The findings suggest the causes are "againg demographics, changes in typical household structure, and macroeconomic trends of the past decases including the financial bubble perioad and a decades-long slow-down thereafter" (ibid.). Therefore, Japan qualifies the conditions to be tested for hypothesis 3.

In terms of conceptualization, economic desecuritization promoted by liberal economy is Hansen (2012)'s *silencing* as liberal economy's notions of trade liberalizaiton and limited intervention for economic development have become the dominant norm, and hence economic desecuritization no longer belongs to either security or political realm. However, hypothesis 3 expects to see more trade protectionist policies from the government to protect the relatively more vulnerable sectors. In fact, despite being a liberal economy, Japan often meets criticism from its counterparts for the protectionist policies for agriculture and other sectors (e.g., car market) (Vogel, 1992). This means that hypothesis 3 is supported only if there was a new protectionist sector or higher level of protection for the sectors that have already been under the government's protectionsim.

3.4 Data collection & analysis

Data collection and analysis is crucial in single case study method as process tracing is not mere story telling but offers stepwise tests for each part of the proposed causal mechanisms. Therefore, data collection needs to ensure reliability and validity.

This study will rely on the data from official minutes/reports published by Japanese government and Japanese political parties as well as reports in the media and the official outcomes/results as the main primary sources. It will also gather information from other research on Japanese foreign policies as they provide reliable and valuable insights and analysis.

Chapter 4: Empirical study

Before going into the details that are selected to test the three hypotheses, the chapter will start with an overview of Japanese domestic politics and of Japanese post-war militarization in order to provide the background in which the governments in the period of 2011 to 2014 exercised their decisions. It then will move on to discuss the impact of the 3-11 Triple Disaster 2011 on government legitimacy and domestic politics to test hypothesis 1. Next, it will shift the focus from the domestic sphere to the international sphere to look at the Japanese relation with Taiwan and the TPP negotiations. The chapter will conclude with the theoretical discussion to link the empirical evidence back to the hypotheses proposed in chapter 2.

4.1 A brief overview of Japanese domestic politics

This section includes four parts: Japanese political system, the political power of agricultural sector, and civil society engagement in Japan.

4.1.1 Japanese political system

Despite having a centralized government with a dominant majority party, the policy-making process in Japanese political system has been largely bottom-up and fragmented (Krauss & Nyblade, 2005). Before the 1990s reforms, the role of the PM was limited and uninteresting, and it was the factional politics within the LDP[4] itself that exerted most influence in Japanese domestic politics (ibid.).

Described as "a federation of factions rather than a homogenous organization", the LDP consisted of different factions that were "established on the basis of interpersonal relations, not ideology" (Zakowski, 2011). These factions were constantly at conflict with

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[4] The LDP has been the dominant party in government coalition since its establishment in 1955 with the brief interruption in 1993 and the period between 2009 to 2012 when the Democratic Party of Japan took over the government and formed a coalition with two smaller parties. Therefore, factional politics within the LDP is relatively more significant than the other parties.

each other to compete for the post of party leader (ibid.). Moreover, the electoral system before the 1993 reform promoted intraparty competition where each politician entered the election independently from their party affiliation and mobilized their own support base (Krauss & Nyblade, 2005). Meanwhile, the policy-making process involved different interest groups competing and bargaining with one another rather than a top-down decision imposed upon all (ibid.). Therefore, the role of PM was not the leader of the ruling party, but a person who facilitated and co-ordinated political negotiations between interest groups.

A series of reforms happened in the 1990s that increased the importance of party affiliation and the role of PM in Japanese politics. The 1993 reform removes the medium sized district system and replaces it with a mixed electoral system with 60% coming from single member district votes and 40% coming from the votes based upon the party list system of proportional representation (Nyblade, 2011). The reform also attempted to remove the intra-party competition to encourage "more voting based on party and issues" (Krauss & Nyblade, 2005, p. 360). After that, another reform adopted in 1999 to increase the power of the cabinet office. It allows the PM to have more power in strategic policymaking and triples the number of staffs working in the cabinet (Mulgan, 2005). Since then, research find that "the impact of PM's popularity on voters has increased significantly" (Krauss & Nyblade, 2005, p. 367), and the policy-making is gradually changed into a top-down system (Mulgan, 2005, p. 273).

4.1.2 The political power of agricultural sector

The agricultural sector in Japan has long been enjoying economic protection from Japanese government (Mulgan, 2005). The sector requires protection because it is an "internationally uncompetitive and low-productivity sector" among all Japanese economic sectors (ibid.). It is able to receive and sustain such level of protection because the support from farmers and the rural communities has constituted and ensured the dominant position of the LDP (ibid.).

Before the series of reforms in the 1990s, the agricultural sector was able to maintain the high level of representation in the National Diet (Japanese legislative) thanks to successful electoral and policy campaigns by farm organizations. The electoral reform in 1993 poses challenges to farm groups as the new electoral system requires candidates to win a much higher proportion of vote, which forces them to expand their support base to non-

agricultural voters (Mulgan, 2005). At the same time, the declining population of farmers also weakens the power of the agricultural sector (ibid.).

However, the sector is able to maintain high degree of power in Japanese domestic politics thanks to the bureaucratic power of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Mulgan, 2005). Additionally, the agricultural sector is able to establish connections to "the entire LDP administration including the prime minister, the Cabinet Office, and the LDP's executive ranks" (ibid., p. 286-287). Meanwhile, the LDP still relies heavily on the rural support for its stay in power (ibid.). Therefore, agricultural sector still holds great political power and obstructs any attempt of structural reform.

4.1.3 Civil society in Japan

Civil society organization remain limited in size and quality despite its modernization and its mature democratic society (Yutaka, 2003). The strong and centralized government limits civil societal activities by creating relatively strict regulations (ibid.). At the same time, the Confucian culture highlights the importance of hierarchy in the society, and people are taught to conform with the regulations to protect the value of social harmony (Ornatowski, 1996). Despite the emergence of grassroot movements such as the establishment of non-governmental organizations and non-profit organizations, civil society activities remain limited (Yutaka, 2003). Empirical research has found that "unlike the American pattern, the growth of Japanese associations has been strongly influenced by economic growth" (p. 114) with nearly 40% of the civil society associations are business-related (e.g., business, labor, agricultural associations) (ibid.). When taking a comparative look at the advocacy organizations, the Japanese civil society shows to be weaker and more vulnerable than the counterparts in the US and Korea (ibid.). Therefore, Japanese people tend to prioritize conformity and social harmony; they are not prone to react to governmental policies.

The next section will provide a brief overview on Japanese post-war militarization as it is the foundation to understand the reason why the domestic environment is divided with regards to the military matter.

4.2 A brief overview of Japanese post-war militarization

After the defeat of the Japanese Imperial Army in World War 2 (WW2), Japan was under the occupation of the Allied (Smith, 2019). General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, headed the occupying team. He pushed for a new Constitution to be written, and offered the three principles that served as the foundation for the 1947 Constitution, which is still in act up till now (ibid.). The three principles include:

1. The emperor has to act in accordance to the Constitution, and he has to be accountable to the people.

2. "War as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished. Japan renounces it as an instrumentality for settling its disputes and even for preserving its own security."

3. The inherited power of the aristocrats would be abolished. (Hussey, 1946)

The "no war" guideline was specifically reflected in Article 9 of the Constitution.

> *Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order,* ***the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.*** *(2)* ***In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.***

Despite the US pressure to remilitarize due to the perceived Soviet Union's threat, the first elected government adopted the Yoshida Doctrine which emphasized that the country would focus on economic recovery and rely on the US for military protection, and since then, the Yoshida Doctrine has been the grand strategy of Japan for many decades (Sugita, 2016). Additionally, the deep commitment of the Japanese people to pacifism has contributed to the dominance of the pacifist/anti-military security discourse (Izumikawa, 2010).

However, since the LDP became the dominant party in government coalition in 1955, the legitimacy and the operation of the SDF has constantly been the topic of debate in the National Diet due to the LDP's factional politics (Smith, 2019). Over the years, the security guidelines have been revised. Japan signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with the US, allowing the US to set up military bases across the country and utilize "land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan" (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security

between Japan and The United States of America, 1960, Article VI). Japan was home to 54,000 US military personnel, the largest number of American soldiers stationed in foreign countries in 2016 (Beech, 2016). Additionally, the Defense Intelligence was established in 1997, signifying that Japan no longer depended on the US as its main source of intelligence, and that it could develop its own intelligence capacity and share intelligence information to the US and other states (Smith, 2019). Besides, despite its renouncement of war and the commitment to spend only 1% of its GDP in military, due to its large economy, the defense budget has consistently been in the top ten globally (ibid.).

The 9/11 event motivated the Koizumi Junichiro government to pass the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law to allow the SDF to provide rear area support to adjacent non-combat areas (Japan Ministry of Defense, 2008). Specifically, Japan sent its Maritime Self-Defense Force to the Indian Ocean in November 2001 to assist the US operation in Afghanistan (ibid.). Then in 2003, Japanese Ground and Air Self-Defense Forces to join the US "coalition of willing" after the major battles were over (Izumikawa, 2010). Since then, the SDF operation was no longer limited to defense of the homeland, but extended to international humanitarian assistance and pirate policing (ibid.).

Nevertheless, it was not until Abe came into power that the Japanese government sought to change its Constitution and the Article 9. Abe's ambition became much clearer when he took the office the second time in 2012, heating up the debate over the role of the SDF vis-à-vis collective security.

4.3 The Triple Disaster in 2011 and the Japanese identity

Japan began to open itself to Western trade and embraced modernization while building up its imperial army to conquer other territories after the Meiji Restoration in 1867 (History.com Editors, 2009). It is the only East Asian country that did not fall under colonization. In combination with the close alliance with the US and the rapid economic development in the post-war period, Japan constructs its identity based on industrial modernity and economic prosperity (Wirth, 2018). It aspires to be a "tier one" country[5] with an advanced economy, democratic institutions and a global (Western) values guarantor, similar to other Western

[5] During the visit to the US in 2013, PM Abe announced: "Japan is not, and will never be, a tier-two country" in response to Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye's question: "Does Japan desires to continue to be a tier-one nation, or is she content to drift into tier-two status?".

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powers (Abe, 2013). Therefore, the rise of China and Japan's economic recession threaten this self-perceived identity.

This self-perceived identity received a great blow in 2011 when the country went through the 3-11 Triple Disaster, including the earthquake, the tsunami and the meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants. The event revealed many shortcomings not only in crisis management but in the whole governance and political leadership. There was a lack of preparation for a nuclear disaster at almost all levels which resulted in indecision, bad judgement, incomplete information and communications breakdown (Funabashi & Kitazawa, 2012). It also revealed the public myth of "absolute safety" of nuclear plants which contributed to the inability to handle the situation (ibid.). This raised the question of the technology mastery reputation and the image of a post-war "safe" country that Japan tried to build (Wirth, 2018). More seriously, the "iron triangle" between politicians, bureaucrats and business that dominated Japanese politics was exposed and critically challenged by the public (Murphy, 2014). This was unusual because the system of centralized government with strict regulations and the weak civil society as presented in the previous section on Japanese domestic politics often discourage people to react against governmental policies. However, the aforementioned result from the investigation into the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants accident raised serious questions on the competence of political leadership. Moreover, although the disaster at Fukushima Daiichi was the second worst nuclear accident in human history, the "iron triangle" still tried to advocate for the continuation of nuclear energy, epitomized by the nationalization of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the LDP's call for reactor restarts, and the reaffirmation of the export of nuclear power plants (Murphy, 2014). Interestingly, this met fierce oppositions from Japanese population, who used to be considered largely political inactive (ibid.). A rally of 60,000 people in a Tokyo park, a petition with millions of signatures and other civil activities expressed deep concerns about the continuation of nuclear plants in Japan, forcing the pro-nuclear LDP to give up its plan to restart the reactors (ibid.). The LDP was reelected in the 2012 election, but multiple public opinions polls showed that people voted for the LDP for the economy and social security policies but remained opposed to nuclear power (ibid.). Meanwhile, the grassroot movement was able to highlight the issue and mobilize the people. This revealed the distrust of the people and signified the legitimacy crisis of the ruling government. At the same time, the Japanese identity built upon the image of a safe, technological advanced nation with effective governance was in deep crisis. These challenges constituted the context in which

securitization and desecuritization happened. The next sections will closely trace the discourses and practices of Japanese government to identify securitization and desecuritization.

4.4 Post 3-11 securitization: Senkaku Islands nationalization

4.4.1 Empirical description

After the 3-11 Triple Disaster, the then-PM Naoto Kan resigned, and Yoshihiko Noda replaced him as the leader of the the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and took over the PM position. During his time in the government, the Senkaku Islands nationalization happened. The event started when Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara announced Tokyo's attempt to buy the three uninhabited Senkaku Islands from their private owner in the speech he gave at Heritage Foundation in Washington DC. in April, 2012 (BBC, 2012). Ishihara was famous for his ultranationalist approach and revisionist beliefs in Japan's imperial history (Green et al., 2017). He vocally criticized PM Noda's approach to the increasingly aggressive activities of China in the disputed area (ibid.). The move was first opposed strongly by Japanese central government.

Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba disagreed with the criticism of Ishihara, affirming that there was no need of islands nationalization (Green et al., 2017). Some advisers suggested that the government should nationalize them instead of letting Ishihara proceed with the deal (ibid.). PM Noda shared the concern over China's aggression, but he was wary of China's retaliation to any effort from the Japanese government to strengthen the control of the disputed islands, and hence, he was reluctant to the idea of nationalization (ibid.). Beijing did voice up after the announcement of Ishihara, with Liu Weimin, a foreign ministry spokesman stated that Ishihara's attempt would "not only damage the overall state of China-Japan relations, but also harm Japan's international image" (McCurry, 2012). However, Ishihara's action was widely supported by the public with the support of 70 percent of the respondents in a public opinion poll (Tanaka, 2012). Tokyo claimed that it had received several hundred thousand yen donated by 37 private citizens as a support for the initiative on April 27, 2012, and the number rose to 16.3 million US dollars by July 7 (Green et al., 2017).

The next phase of the event saw the government's position changed, and PM Noda openly considered nationalization and finalized the purchase in September 2012, which surprised China, Taiwan and the US (Greene et al., 2017). China referred to it as "a disruptive change in the status quo" (Oros, 2017, p.119). Political pressure caused by governor Ishihara and members of the LDP was often cited as the explanation for PM Noda's decision, but PM Noda and his cabinet also stated that they believed in the necessity of it. The reception was not positive. At the international level, Japan ignored the US's warning against the nationalization of the islands. US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and Assistant Secretary Campbell both expressed skepticism over the necessity of the nationalization (Oshima, 2014). Besides, Japan damaged its relations with both China and Taiwan, giving China reasons to escalate its maritime operation in the disputed area. At the domestic level, although the support for the nationalization was high, the public expressed the disapproval of the government's foreign policy to China (Midford, 2013, p. 188). According to a poll released by Asahi, in response to the question of whether Japan should follow a hard line or a flexible stand to China, 50 percent of the respondents endorsed the hard line, while 39 percent said flexibility would be better (ibid.).

4.4.2 Analysis

In short, despite the warnings from the US, Japanese government shifted its position in the event of Senkaku islands nationalization. Although the government insisted that the nationalization of the three islands aimed at "the peaceful and stable maintenance and management" and that the decision to "acquire the property rights to the Senkaku Islands is not a major change of the current situation" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan, 2012), in practice it escalated the tension between Japan and its neighbor countries and brought the issue on the security agenda, and hence, it was a securitizing move, and with the support of the public, was a successful securitization.

On the other hand, realism fails to explain this decision. Even though Japan had been in dispute with China and Taiwan over the islands for long time, the administration right[6]

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[6] According to the MOFA Japan (2016), "the following are some examples of valid control after the reversion to Japan of the administrative rights over Okinawa including the Senkaku Islands.

   (1) Patrol and law enforcement. (e.g. law enforcement on illegal fishing by foreign fishing boats)

   (2) Levying taxes on the owners of the Islands under private ownership. (in Kuba Island.)

   (3) Management as state-owned land (in Taisho Island, Uotsuri Island, etc.)

belonged to Okinawa Prefecture of Japan. Nationalizing the islands did not change the political status of the issue, yet intensified the existing tensions and provided justifications for China to increase its maritime military operation, leading to the Chinese establishment of the Air Defense Identification Zone in 2013. Besides, Japan at that time was struggling with the increasing public debt and the reconstruction after the 3-11 Triple Disaster, so the necessity to spend 2 billion yen to nationalize the islands was questionable. Additionally, the securitization happened right when the public support for Noda and his party's performance was in deep decline, suggesting that domestic political motives were behind the move. Unfortunately, public support was only for the nationalization event itself, not for the government, and PM Noda received few credits for the event (Midford, 2013).

4.5 The election of Shinzo Abe

4.5.1 Empirical description

On November 16, 2012, the Noda government announced the dissolvement of the government due to the need for an emergency budget and to the lack of funds for governmental operations (Zolbert & Wakatsuki, 2012). As a result, a national election took place one month after that, and the LDP secured the "largest victory ever" in terms of seat gained, although it lost voters in absolute numbers (Pekkanen, 2012). The result suggests that the election was an indication of the rejection of the DPJ, not the approval of the LDP (due to the loss of voters), and among all parties, the LDP seemed to be the least-bad option (ibid.). Abe's campaign was famous for the so-called Abenomics, the economic policies that promised to boost the declining economy, and for its hawkish security policy to legitimize the operation of SDF by revisiting the Article 9 of the Constitution. As indicated above, the LDP had obtained its victory thanks to its economic and social security policies and to the disappointing performance of the DPJ in the period of 2009-2012. The Senkaku Islands nationalization also shifted public opinion to favor the LDP's conservative standpoint.

(4) As for Kuba Island and Taisho Island, the Government of Japan has offered them to the United States since 1972 as facilities/districts in Japan under the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement.

(5) Researches by the Central Government and the Government of Okinawa Prefecture (e.g. Utilization and development research by Okinawa Development Agency (construction of temporary heliport, etc.) (1979), Fishery research by the Okinawa Prefecture (1981), Research on albatrosses commissioned by the Environment Agency (1994).)"

Retrieved from https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/qa_1010.html#q3

After his election, PM Abe wanted to make use of the Senkaku Islands nationalization momentum to push for the reinterpretation of the Article 9 in order to institutionalize the re-militarization. First, he increased the defense budget in 2013, marking the first increase in 11 years (Takenaka, 2013). He also passed the controversial secrecy law that allows the government to prosecute any individual (e.g., government officials, defense industry employees, journalists, activists) for leaking state secrets (Pollman, 2015). The decision to classify secrets totally lies in the hand of the government without any third-party involvement. The law also takes away the whistleblower protection right, endangers the freedom of press, and creates more room for power abuse (ibid.). This is specifically problematic in Japan because Japanese political culture often sees government officials destroying evidence, or not producing evidence of political debates in the Diet. For instance, there was no record of the internal discussions related to security issue that led to the reinterpretation of the Constitution in 2014 to legitimize collective self-defense (The Japan Times, 2015). In another words, the secrecy law opened the avenue for PM Abe to pursue his security policy and bypassed any inconvenient opinions.

In December 2013, the government issued a new document on the NSS to provide national security policy guidelines for the next decade, advocating for collective security responsibility of Japan, which diverted from the renunciation of war mandated in the Constitution. The NSS justified the need of collective security by emphasizing the responsibility Japan has in a globalized world and presenting the threat from China and North Korea. In May 2014, PM Abe submitted the report of "the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security", opening the parliamentary debate on the reinterpretation of the Article 9 (MOFA of Japan, 2014), which was eventually passed by the parliament which was under the LDP-led coalition control in July (BBC, 2014). The announcement from the MOFA of Japan stated that:

… when considered in light of "the right (of the people) to live in peace" as recognized in the Preamble of the Constitution and the purpose of Article 13 of the Constitution which stipulates, "their (all the people's) right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" shall be the supreme consideration in governmental affairs, **Article 9 of the Constitution cannot possibly be interpreted to prohibit Japan from taking measures of self-defense necessary to maintain its peace and security and to ensure its survival** (MOFA, 2014).

Meanwhile, collective security was framed as a crucial element of national security. In September 2019, the Legislation for Peace and Security that could allow the government to send the SDF to combat zones overseas was also passed (The Japan Times, 2016). The attempt to institutionalize the reinterpretation of the Article 9 would allow the Japanese government to send the SDF on a collective security mission without having to justify its action every single time. By consequence, the government could also justify its military budget increase relatively easier. As Zimmerman suggests, elites seek to institutionalize, or in another words, desecuritize the approved securitization in order to change the language from "reaction to threat" to "a solution to the problem" (2017). Similarly, public support for the Senkaku Islands nationalization signaled the acceptance of Japanese audience for a more aggressive foreign policy, and the Abe government took the opportunity to pursue the remilitarization agenda and successfully passed the legislative concerning the reinterpretation of Article 9 through the parliament. The reinterpretation was the desecuritizing move of PM Abe to legitimize his aggressive foreign policy.

However, anti-militarism is ingrained in Japanese culture (Kingston, 2016), so this desecuritizing move received fierce opposition. Regarding to the secrecy law, the Social Democratic Party released an announcement to express its resentment to the law, accusing Abe of his tyrannical government and warning that the law would endanger the pacifist Constitution (Social Democratic Party, 2013). Meanwhile, the DPJ representative Kaieda pushed for a no confidence vote, calling Abe's administration a strange totalitarian government that puts the country, the democracy, peace and human rights at stake (The Democratic Party of Japan, 2013). Reactions to the event in July 2014 were also very strong. A man set himself on fire in Tokyo to make his stand against Abe's "proactive pacifism" (BBC, 2014). The grassroot organization *Article 9 Association* called it the security legislation a "destruction of constitutionalism" (2014). In an interview with *The Guardian*, Ishida, a professor emeritus at Tokyo University, said "what Abe is doing is destroying the principles of our pacifist institution" (McCurry, 2014). A rally of 10,000 people protested outside of Abe's office to express their disagreements (ibid.).

Knowing that his ambition to revise the Constitution was not popular, PM Abe advocated for the reinterpretation of Article 9 in 2014. Later on, in 2016, when campaigning for a new election, he adopted the "bait-and-switch" campaign strategy to secure the LDP's victory (Kingston, 2016). His campaign's message relied on Abenomics and carefully hid his real agenda. Right after securing "a supermajority" in the upper house in the 2016 election, he

revealed his plan to rewrite the Constitution (McCurry, 2016). Rewriting the Constitution would be the final step to legitimize the operation of the SPF, allowing the SDF to act as a conventional army (ibid.). The amendment would require the support of two-thirds of each house and the majority support in a national referendum, but public polls by the three major newspapers all showed that the majority of Japanese were reluctant to change. The newspapers poll results were summarized in an article by Council on Foreign Relations as below:

> *The Yomiuri Shimbun poll in March revealed that 49 percent of its respondents supported revision while 50 percent opposed it. The Asahi Shimbun reported in May that 37 percent of its respondents opted for revision and 55 percent were against it. Finally, the Nikkei reported also in May that 40 percent of its respondents were pro-revision while 50 percent were not.* (Smith & Teraoka, 2016).

Additionally, all three magazines' polls showed that the enthusiasm for constitution revision was higher during the 2000s, and then declined after the reinterpretation of Article 9. Without public support, the desecuritization by institutionalizing the re-militarization did not succeed. The plan to rewrite the Constitution in 2016 failed, and the security legislation in 2015 took effect in 2016, but it did not significantly expand Japan's international military role (The Japan Times, 2016). Therefore, security and military intervention remained "exceptional", and the government still has to carry on securitization every time it wishes to participate in military intervention.

4.5.2 Analysis

After the nationalization of Senkaku Islands, the domestic support for a fierce foreign policy to protect Japanese sovereignty was high, which was aligned with the policies advocated by PM Abe. The decisions by PM Abe and his administration show their ambitions to legitimize the operation of SDF through institutionalization by reinterpreting Article 9. However, the momentum of the Senkaku Islands nationalization was not sufficient to depart from the pacifist culture. In another words, in this case, desecuritization was not successful to maintain the desired effect earned from the successful securitization.

4.6 Japan – Taiwan 2013 Fishery Agreement

4.6.1 Empirical description

Japan and Taiwan, despite the colonial relation in the past and the islands dispute, in general have enjoyed a good relationship (Kawashima, 2013a). Public opinion polls by Nippon.com's office in Taipei have consistently shown the favorable view of Taiwanese people of Japan[7]. After the 3-11 Triple Disaster in 2011, Taiwan donated 20 billion yen to Japan, which gained deep appreciation from the Japanese people (ibid.). However, the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands in September 2012 strangled the relation, especially because it occurred right after Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou introduced the East China Sea Peace Initiative in August 2012.

The MOFA of Taiwan released a press release on September 11 calling for Japan refrainment from unilateral act over the disputed area to avoid "damaging bilateral cooperative relations and generating tension in East Asia" (MOFA of Taiwan, 2012). In the press release, the MOFA of Taiwan listed the three historical pieces of evidence to emphasize Japan's lack of "historical and legal grounds to claim sovereignty over Diaoyutai (Senkaku Islands), much less to "nationalize" the islands" (ibid.). At the same time, Taiwan recalled its envoy to Japan to protest against the unilateral act of Japanese government (South China Morning Post, 2011). Domestically, the Taiwanese President was under heavy criticism for his weak stance on Taiwanese sovereignty over Diaoyutai against the claim from Japan and China. His public approval rating dropped to 15.2 percent in October, which was the lowest level since the day he took the office (Cole, 2012). A protest of hundreds participants broke out in Taipei to oppose the Japanese nationalization of the islands (Taiwan News, 2012).

In order to ease the tension with Taiwan, Japan's Foreign Minister Koichiro urged the resumption of the fishery negotiations between the two countries[8]. The Mayor of Ishigaki,

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[7] "In a public opinion poll conducted by the organization's Taipei office during December 2009 and January 2010, 52% of respondents cited Japan as their favorite country after Taiwan, and 62% indicated an affinity for Japan. In a subsequent survey conducted from January to February of 2012, some ten months after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, only 41% of those polled named Japan as their favorite nation but 75% said they felt close to the country. In the most recent survey, conducted in January 2013, 43% of respondents cited Japan as their favorite country; 65% indicated an affinity for Japan" (Kawashima, 2013a).

[8] Taiwan, or Republic of China, is not internationally recognized as a sovereign state, but it is a territory with its own government operating independently from China. Therefore, this thesis regards Taiwan as a self-governing independent country.

Okinawa, paid a visit to Taiwan and held conversations with Taiwanese fishermen regarding the fishing rights in the disputed area (The Japan Times, 2012). A fishery agreement was concluded in April 2013 after 17 years of negotiation.

Reports have shown that the agreement was signed despite domestic opposition in both countries. In Japan, the MOFA met strong criticism from the Fisheries Agency and the local fishing industry organizations and Okinawa Prefecture (Kawashima, 2013b). It was reported that PM Abe might have pushed the agreement despite domestic discord (ibid.). The research also found dissatisfaction among the fishing communities in Yilan County in Taiwan, which suggested that the Taiwanese government put aside a lot of demands from the local fishermen to enter the fishery agreement with Japan (ibid.).

4.6.2 Analysis

Once again, a sovereignty dispute was shelved. The 2013 fishery agreement is another epitome of the determination to keep the two issues related to Senkaku Islands - sovereignty and fishing rights - separated (Fatton, 2013). The agreement might be an attempt to avoid escalation and to cooperate strategically to deter China's aggressiveness, but it also shows that cooperation between the two countries is possible despite ongoing territorial conflict. On the other hand, the 2013 fishery agreement clearly was a desecuritizing move by Japanese government. The Abe administration circumvented opposition from the fishery industry to conclude a 17-years negotiation amid the tension caused by its securitizing move of nationalizing disputed islands. The separation of sovereignty issue from fishing rights issue in Japan and Taiwan relation supports the occurrence of the notion of the multiplicity of identity, as distinguished in chapter 2. Both countries vehemently claimed their sovereignty rights over Senkaku Islands/Diaoyutai, and at the same time, peacefully worked together to achieve a fishery agreement. Hence, desecuritizing fishery issue happened even when the tension from the securitization of Senkaku Islands was high.

4.7 PM Abe and Trans-Pacific Partnership

4.7.1 Empirical description

Trade protectionism remains a topic of criticism of Japan trading policies (Vogel, 1992). Japan joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1955 with the reservation on Article 12 to continue its import quota control system (Cortell & Davis, 2005). Only when 14 out of the then 34 members invoked Article 35 to refuse Japan from their reduced tariffs did Japan start to internalize trade liberalization. In spite of pressure from the US, mercantilist practices did not take shape until the 1980s (ibid.). However, research has shown even after national institutions incorporated the international liberal norm of trade liberalization, the pre-existing norms of economic protectionism still infuse the country's contemporary economic practices (ibid.).

Notably, agriculture is the sector that enjoys most protection with the government resisting foreign pressure to open up its agricultural market (Horiuchi & Saito, 2010). On the other hand, Japan also exercises trade protectionism through consumer protection and environment protection. Japanese safety regulations for manufactured and agricultural goods de facto act as trade barriers because they are often more detailed and stricter than the US and the EU (Vogel, 1992). In fact, the standards were drafted without the participation of foreign manufacturers. "The standards are often unavailable in English or difficult to obtain and have frequently been changed without notice" (ibid., p. 143). Additionally, in 2005, Japan implemented a subsidy policy to promote the sales of eco-friendly cars, which was supposed to last from 2009 until 2012, but was then later prolonged to 2015. It is argued that the limited fuel economy standard could not help achieve the environmental goal (Kitano, 2015), and that the policy was to support the car producers by increasing domestic markets at the time international sales declined (Alhulail & Takeuchi, 2014). These trade barriers have been creating friction between Japan and its trading partners. However, the economic recession challenged the old economic practices and demanded reforms, and that led to the interest in the TPP.

The Japanese government, by the time Abe took the office for the second time, had expressed its interest in the TPP, but domestic opposition, especially from agricultural interest groups, prevented the Kan and Noda governments to pursue it (Solís & Urata, 2018). Japan started to enter Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in the late 1990s, but these agreements were only with small countries that did not fundamentally affect the domestic economy and did not

require domestic reforms (Katada, 2016). Therefore, the TPP was very much different from the FTAs that Japan was familiar with because the TPP required agricultural liberalization commitments, and agricultural interest groups were not willing to give up. They argued that their agricultural sector was very sensitive to international competitiveness, so the TPP would cause significant harm to the sector and threaten the livelihood of many farmers (Jamitzky, 2015).

To prevent the Japanese government from entering the TPP negotiation, the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives, the most influential agricultural group in Japan, was able to mobilize nearly half of the commercial farmers in Japan to oppose the participation in the TPP negotiation (Jamitzky, 2015). It later formed an alliance with labor unions and Japan Medical Association as well as the insurance service industry in order to protest against it (ibid.). Several members of the LDP from different factions were also against it. Additionally, despite reports on potential economic gains from the TPP, the opposition was able to split the public opinion, turning the participation in the TPP negotiation became the national debate (ibid.). Both sides published books and articles to defend their arguments with both sides agreeing that the outcome of the debate would decide the future of Japan.

However, the opposition did not succeed. PM Abe advocated fiercely for the TPP as he argued that it was the way to recover the national economy after the long recession. The improvement of US – Japan relation was also part of the discourse to promote the TPP. Besides, speeches from political elites also revealed the ambition to create a trade framework for the East Asian rising economies and to challenge the influence of China (Mulgan, 2016). For instance, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry emphasized the importance of the TPP as a means for Japan to take "a central role in the formation of rules for the new Asia-Pacific region" (ibid.). PM Abe himself also affirmed the leading role that Japan had to take in setting the foundational rules for the future FTAs in the Asia-Pacific area through the TPP (ibid.). PM Abe then promised the agricultural sector that he would protect the five "sacred" agricultural products, including rice, wheat, dairy, beef and pork (The Economist, 2014). By linking different issues together, and his high approval rate at the beginning of his second term and his promise to the agricultural sector, PM Abe took Japan to officially join the TPP negotiation in July 2013, 3 years and 4 months after the negotiation started. Even after Trump decided to withdraw from the TPP, Japan insisted on the continuation of the agreement and took the leadership in the finalization of the agreement.

After WW2, Japan, with its Yoshida doctrine of prioritizing economic development, saw incredible economic growth till the 1990s. However, unlike other advanced economies, Japan has the tradition of trade protectionism for some specific industries (e.g., agriculture). Due to long economic recession, socio-economic issues have gained more saliency, and Abenomics was famous for its contribution to the return of the LDP and the election of PM Abe. With Abenomics, Japan differed from theoretical expectation. Rather, it seemed to embrace more economic liberation. Specifically, despite oppositions by many interest groups, PM Abe decided to engage Japan in the TPP, which would require Japan to open up its economy more. However, the five "sacred" agricultural products continue to enjoy protection despite TPP membership as PM Abe, in order to join the TPP negotiations, made a promise to the agricultural groups to continue to protect the five products.

4.8 Theoretical discussion

HYPOTHESIS 1: A successful desecuritization is a condition to maintain the desired effect of securitization when securitization is used as a diversionary strategy to sustain government legitimacy.

The case study supports hypothesis 1.

Japanese government did suffer legitimacy crisis after the 3-11 Triple Disaster 2011. Rather than focusing on post-crisis management, PM Noda government decided to pursue the Senkaku Islands nationalization. It was unusual because the government did not support the idea at the beginning when the media broke the news of Ishihara's intention to purchase the islands. Only after seeing Tokyo's support for Ishihara did the government change its position. Furthermore, the nationalization's necessity was very much questionable, which was reflected through the comment of the then US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and the then US Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell. Therefore, the Senkaku Islands nationalization was more likely to be the securitizing move to protect the then government's legitimacy by distracting domestic attention from the domestic post-crisis

problem. Unfortunately, it did not help the DPJ to win in the 2012 election. The LDP returned to be the dominant political party, and Shinzo Abe took over the cabinet.

The domestic support for a strong stance on sovereignty issues at that time seemed to fit the remilitarizing ambition of the newly elected PM, and PM Abe decided to push for Article 9 reinterpretation and even the rewrite of the Constitution. This is an act of desecuritization because by institutionalization, the operation of SDF would no longer be "exceptional". Rather, it would become a part of the "normal" politics of Japan, lending weights to the government to pursue fierce foreign policies whenever the government deems necessary. In this scenario, Japanese government would not have to securitize issues that require military intervention every single time. It would also legitimize the ambition to revise the Constitution and remilitarize the country of PM Abe. Although the Japanese government did not successfully desecuritize the use of force in the case study, hypothesis 1 is still supported.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Due to the multiplicity of identity, when a state securitizes an issue in one sector, it will desecuritize the other sectors.

The case study supports hypothesis 2.

Japan, in the period after the 3-11 Triple Disaster, securitized the sovereign issue, but it was willing to desecuritize the fishing rights issue with Taiwan. In fact, the negotiation came to an end after 17 years of negotiation thanks to the previous securitizing move of Japan. The two government reached an agreement to avoid escalation in the East Asia security complex that involved the aggressive China, but the agreement also supported the legitimacy of Japanese government. There was opposition to the agreement, but it was from the fishery industry alone. Japanese people, in general, express positive opinions on Taiwan, especially after the donation from Taiwan to help with post-crisis reconstruction. Therefore, allowing escalation to happen with Taiwan could have gone against the people's will and put the country at greater risk. Nevertheless, regardless of the real motives behind the agreement, desecuritization did happen right after securitization, and the effort to keep the two issues separated from each other by both Japanese and Taiwanese government reflects the multiplicity of identity.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Liberal economy promotes economic desecuritization, but globalization backlash hinders the attempt in more economically advanced states.

Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Japan does suffer from globalization backlash. Additionally, anti-foreigner attitude exists as a part of the culture, but with more and more economic migrants, the attitude is exacerbated (Ryall, 2019). More importantly, during the chosen time frame of the case study, the country was suffering from long economic recession and trying to recover from the 3-11 Triple Disaster. However, the level of trade protectionism did not increase after that. In fact, the contrary phenomenon happened. Japan entered the TPP negotiations, willing to open up its economy more. There was no new protectionist policy, and the protected sectors did not enjoy higher level of protection. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported by the case study.

However, the case study does not reject the hypothesis completely. Due to the opposition from agricultural groups, in order to join the TPP negotiations, PM Abe made a promise to continue to protect the five "sacred" agricultural products. Even though they did not receive higher level of protection, they could consider the concession as a success amid the strong commitment to liberal economy that PM Abe made.

Moreover, there was an extra variable in this case study, and it was the rise of China. In order to strategically balance the increasing influence of China in the area, Japan had to enhance its relations with the neighbor states by using economic diplomacy, Japan's most powerful weapon (Okano-Heijmans & Asano, 2018). Therefore, the TPP is not simply an economic agreement, but it also entails security and geopolitical interests of Japan. This is where political sector and economic sector interact with one another, and economic desecuritization does not only work for the sake of economic development but also to improve Japan's geopolitical position in the East Asia security complex.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter will offer a summary of the thesis and answer the research question presented in the introduction chapter. It then will reflect upon the findings and hold a normative discussion on them. The chapter will conclude with the research limitation of the thesis and further research recommendation.

5.1 Summary

The focus of the thesis is desecuritization, the underdeveloped twin of securitization theory. The two theories were introduced by Wæver, and then explored further in the book he later wrote with Buzan and de Wilde. The purpose of the book was to offer a new framework to study security, and it has proved to be a useful one. However, desecuritization has been much less focused compared to securitization, and therefore, the thesis attempts to conduct an in-depth study of desecurtization, and through it, contribute to critical security studies. The research question is:

> *Under what conditions desecuritization occurs, and how is it used as a*
> *political strategy to sustain government legitimacy?*

In order to answer the research question, the thesis starts with the general introduction to securitization and desecuritization outlined in the work of CS scholars. At the same time, it critically reflects the limitations of the framework and argues for the close relation between political interests and securitization/desecurtization decision. It reaffirms the argument that security is not above politics, but a part of politics. It then employs the study of identity characteristics and use it as the foundation to establish three hypotheses:

HYPOTHESIS 1: A successful desecuritization is a condition to maintain the desired effect of securitization when securitization is used as a diversionary strategy to sustain government legitimacy.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Due to the multiplicity of identity, when a state securitizes an issue in one sector, it will desecuritize the other sectors.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Liberal economy promotes economic desecuritization, but globalization backlash hinders the attempt in more economically advanced states.

The case study is Japan post 3-11 Triple Disaster, and the Noda government (2011-2012) and Abe's second term (2012-2014) were the main timeframe of focus. Through process tracing of this single case study, the thesis concludes that the case study supports hypothesis 1 and 2, whereas the empirical evidence of Japan did not satisfy the expected outcome derived from hypothesis 3.

In more details, Noda government securitized the territorial dispute over Senkaku Islands with China and Taiwan amid the government's legitimacy crisis caused by post-crisis management of the 3-11 Triple Disaster and the declining public support for his government. The nationalization of the islands received great support from the people, but the support was for a more aggressive stance over Japanese sovereignty, not for his government, so it did not lead to the DPJ's succeed in the 2012 election. The LDP won the election thanks to the rejection of the DPJ, and Shinzo Abe took over the office. A more agreesive foreign policy stance fitted well with Abe's ambition to remilitarize the country, so he took the opportunity to push for the reinterpretation of Artice Nine in the Constitution and the legitimization of the SDF. Its effect was to institutionalize the relatively more aggressive foreign policy and to advocate for a "normal" Japan with military responsibility to collective security. Successful institutionlization of the matter would bring the operation of SDF back from politics of exception to normal politics, which also would legitimize the intention of the LDP and PM Shinzo Abe. Therefore, it was the desecuritizing move to legitimize aggressive foreign policy and the ambition to remilitarize Japan, which supported hypothesis 1. However, even though PM Abe was able to pass multiple legislations related to the issue through the government, he did not have the public support, and as a result, military operation remains in the realm of exceptional politics. The government still has to securitize issues that require aggressive foreign policy and the SDF operation.

The aforementioned practice was what happened domestically. Internationally, the Abe government also seeked to desecurtize its relation with Taiwan by concluding a 17-year negotiation over fishery rights in the area surrouding the disputed islands. Japan successfully continued to separate sovereign issue from fishery issue and sustained its legitimacy by limiting escalation and maintaining a friendly relation with Taiwan, which supported hypothesis 2. The fishery agreement also illustrates the ability to cooperate with each other despite tensions over disputed territories and that East Asian states are capable of desecuritizng their relations to achieve mutual interests.

In terms of economic sector, Japan joined the TPP negotiations 3 years and 4 months after the negotiations started, supporting the economic desecuritization argument put forth by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde rather than the constructed hypothesis 3 in the thesis. However, liberal economy was not the only motivation for the decision to join the TPP negotiations. Geopolitical interests were among the political motivations as Japan wanted to counter the increasing influence of China and strengthen Japan's strategic position in the security

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complex of East Asia. In other words, the economy was desecuritized, but the TPP was securitized for geopolitical and security interests (Mulgan, 2016). Therefore, the mechanism leading to economic desecuritization offered by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde was not sufficient to explain this phenomenon. On another hand, the hypothesis 3 was constructed based on societal factors, such as globalization backlash exarcerbating income inequality, and expect them to have an impact on economic policies without taking the political aspect into account. Therefore, further research on economic desecuritization should study the interaction of all three sectors for better explanation.

In general, the case of Japan illustrates that desecuritization does happen as a part of the political strategy to sustain the legitimacy of the governments. More often, the trail of desecuritization can be found whenever securitization happens, either to maintain the desired effect of securitization or to deescalate the rising tensions with other states which result from securitization. On a more abstract level, identity influences states' decisions to securitize and desecuritize the issues in concern. The need to demarcate the "self" from the "other" to reinforce the self-identity potentially motivates states to securitize certain issues (*alterity*). Desecuritization follows afterwards in order to sustain the newly, or re-established self-identity of the states. However, that does not mean cooperation is not possible. States that are at conflict with each other over one issue can still desecuritize their relations by cooperating on the other issues as states carry in itself multiple identities differing from each other depending on different sectors (*multiplicity*). Finally, the thesis suggests that the study of securitization should not be separated from desecuritization as they are closely connected to one another. Removing one from the other would result in an incomplete study of the complex contemporary security environement.

5.2 Reflection and normative discussion

Originally, CS scholars argue that "security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics", and because desecuritization moves the issue from the exceptional politics to "the normal haggling of politics", desecuritization is preferably the "optimal long-range option" (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 29). Although the intention is to establish a new framework to study security, the language here shows that the three authors also engage themselves in the normative debate and indicate their preference on desecuritization over securitization.

However, as consistently presented through the thesis, security is not above politics, and both securitization and desecuritization can be political strategies of the ruling elites to legitimize their power. Separating politics from security would undermine the ability to critically reflect on securitizing and desecuritizing moves and distant security from the complex environment in which security happens. Therefore, it is important to study both of them in tandem. Once the nexus between politics and security is closely evaluated, political motivations can be found in every decision to securitize or desecuritize the issue in concern as illustrated by the case study in this thesis.

Based on this understanding, it is problematic to indicate desecuritization is more desirable than securitization. For instance, PM Abe's ambition to institutionally legitimize the operation of the SDF goes against the will of the people. In this specific case, desecuritization is hardly a desirable option to Japanese people. Rather, it challenges the pacifist Constitution and the pacifist anti-war attitude embedded in the culture. Therefore, scrutiny and deliberation, and evaluation of all kinds of security discourse (securitizing and desecuritizing) are crucial to exercise the democratic power of the people.

5.3 Research limitations and recommendation:

The first limitation of the thesis is that it does not study the pre-emptive desecuritization, which is the desecuritization happens to prevent an issue to become securitized. The actors actively seek to keep the issue in concern below the threat threshold, so the issue has never been securitized. This thesis only focuses on the desecuritization that happens after securitization and leaves out the pre-emptive desecuritization. Therefore, future research can explore this aspect of desecuritization, starting with the question of whether pre-emptive desecuritization is feasible in practice.

Secondly, as presented in the summary section, hypothesis 3 fails to take political interests when studying the dynamic between societal factors and economic factors. The work on economic desecuritization is still very limited and oversimplified, so further research on the subject is recommended in order to "open the black box" of the motivations behind economic desecuritization in the contemporary world.

Another limitation of the thesis lies in the limited analysis on audience acceptance in the intersubjective relation between political elites and the people in securitization and

desecuritization. As audience acceptance is one of the three conditions for a successful securitization/desecuritization, studying the people's perceptions on the issue in concern would allow researchers to understand how political elites adapt security discourses so that the people accept securitization/desecuritization. However, audience acceptance is still undertheorized in the study on securitization and desecuritization in general, and this thesis only examines it limitedly in hypothesis 1, so extra focus on this aspect is necessary to fully understand the dynamic between the elites and the people when security frame is in concern.

In overall, writing the thesis on desecuritization reveals many opportunities to conduct further research on desecuritization. The theory is largely underdeveloped, which allows researchers more room for scrutiny and creativity. More importantly, studying desecuritization also challenges the dominant narrative that over focuses on security in the study of International Relations. The change of discourse will reveal the ability and the opportunity to desecuritize issues in international and domestic politics, facilitating more political participation of relevant actors and cooperation between all. Studying desecuritization also completes the study of securitization as they are complementary to one another, and altogether contribute to security studies.

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