

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Norms, Interests, and Power in Japanese Foreign Policy**

Yoichiro Sato and Keiko Hirata (eds)

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By examining the role of norms in Japanese foreign policy in a wide range of issue areas, this edited volume makes contributions that are both empirical and theoretical. On the empirical side, this volume contains nine case study chapters, each of which can be read individually for a thorough understanding of Japanese foreign policy in the given issue area. The first four case study chapters focus on security issues: the emergence of the norm of antimilitarism, the adoption of the international anti-landmine norm, the consolidation of the norm associated with the ‘four islands return’ claim in the territorial disputes with the Soviet Union/Russia, and the pursuit of the collective defense norm concerning the dispatch of the Self Defense Forces overseas. The next three chapters concentrate on economic issues: the limited influence of humanitarian norms on official development assistance (ODA) policies, the prioritization of the domestic ODA norm of reciprocity or mutual benefits over the international norm of aid conditionality, and the compliance with the international norm concerning the management of the Latin American debt crisis. The remaining two chapters focus on environmental issues: the rejection of the anti-whaling norm, and the influence

of the domestic norm which calls for international leadership in dealing with non-military challenges such as global warming.

Critics may point out that this volume uses the notion of norms too broadly to describe almost every kind of political phenomenon. However, the broad perspective adopted should be considered a strength, rather than a weakness. It should be regarded as a reflection of the editors' attempt to put a wide range of issues on the table without adhering to any particular theoretical orientation. Through its broad perspective, this volume covers a variety of cases with different theoretical implications. Some of them can best be captured from the view of rationalists – realists or neoliberals – that norms are inseparable from fixed interests, which are usually defined in material terms. Others have implications for items on the constructivist research agenda, centered on the view that ideational factors can play an independent role in defining actors' interests. By covering a variety of cases, this volume offers a comprehensive set of pictures, illustrating from different angles the position of norms in Japanese foreign policy. Furthermore, on the basis of the case studies, it explores some theoretical issues.

On the theoretical side, the volume as a whole constitutes a comparative analysis, exploring mainly two significant points at issue: how and under what conditions do norms guide foreign policies, and how do norms intersect with material interests and power? With regard to the first point, it identifies six conditions under which states comply with international norms: the presence of norm entrepreneurs or norm teachers; the strength of international norms, which can be measured in terms of their commonality or prevalence in a given community and of their specificity; the power structure at the international or the domestic level which is favorable to norm diffusion; the presence of material interests associated with norm compliance; the development of the process of socialization; and the ideational match between international and domestic norms. To provide examples, norm entrepreneurs played a role in promoting the anti-landmine norm. The norm of international debt management was strong, in that it was prevalent in the international community. This norm was also backed by the international power structure founded on the material capabilities of the United States. In this respect, the material interests of Japan in complying with this norm were clear. In the case of landmines, the Japanese policy-makers were socialized into the international anti-landmine norm. In the case of whaling,

the international norm of anti-whaling was in conflict with the ideas shared in the Japanese domestic political arena.

In addition, the volume argues that four of the above six factors also condition the role of domestic norms in foreign policy-making – namely, the strength of norms, the power structure, the presence of material interests, and socialization. To give examples, the pro-whaling norm was domestically strong in that it was widely supported by the Japanese. The anti-militarism norm was backed by the domestic power structure dominated by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. The ODA norm of reciprocity clearly reflected Japanese business interests. In the case of whaling, the Japanese policy-makers were socialized into the pro-whaling norm at the domestic level, and had come to believe that it is culturally appropriate to eat whale meat.

With regard to the second point, this volume supports both the rationalist and constructivist views of the relations between norms and material interests/power. On the one hand, in accordance with the rationalist view, the volume maintains that states tend to follow international or domestic norms when doing so will serve their material interests, and when norms are backed by powerful states at the international level or by the dominant political group at the domestic level. For example, Tokyo complied with the norm of international debt management because it did not want to sever its relations with the United States. On the other hand, in line with the constructivist view, the volume maintains that, even in the absence of material interests and power relations, states may adopt norms as the process of socialization develops. In this respect, as noted above, socialization took place in the cases of landmines and whaling.

All of these theoretical claims are significant; however, students of Japanese diplomacy, including the editors and those who contributed chapters to this volume, should make further efforts to examine the role of norms in Tokyo's foreign policy-making, so as to make greater theoretical contributions. Most of the theoretical claims above confirm the existing constructivist hypotheses. What are now needed are efforts to fine-tune or challenge these existing hypotheses, concerning the two points at issue mentioned above – how and under what conditions norms guide foreign policies, and how norms intersect with material interests and power. A number of questions are worth exploring: in what ways do domestic factors in Japan facilitate or block the activities of

norm entrepreneurs? How does Japan's identity affect its willingness to conform to prevalent norms in the global society? Is there a distinctively Japanese way of socialization? To what extent do Western norms resonate with the traditional Japanese values? Does Japanese culture favor material interests or ideational elements?

There must be great opportunities for students of Japanese diplomacy to fine-tune or modify the existing constructivist hypotheses. This is because Tokyo's foreign policy can be considered an unexplored area in the constructivist literature, at least in relative terms. In this respect, this volume is a must-read item for students of Japanese diplomacy. It should be regarded as an important first step on their part to making significant theoretical contributions to the constructivist literature.

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## Japan's Aggressive Legalism: Law and Foreign Trade Politics beyond the WTO

Saadia M. Pekkanen

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Japan has been trying hard, for at least 20 years, to shed its image as a 'reactive state'. Kent Calder assigned this label to Japanese foreign economic policy in the late 1980s after watching the nation struggle with international pressure to liberalize its market. Japan was not able to act proactively to liberalize on its own, and even when faced with complaints, it delayed action until the *gaiatsu* built up to the point where it was on the verge of facing sanctions. Then it would dutifully concede just enough to avoid punishment. When Calder assigned this label, Japan focused exclusively on defending its own trade policies and almost