

International Relations studies and theories in Japan: a trajectory shaped by war, pacifism, and globalization[†]

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Abstract

A common view of Japan's International Relations (IR) studies in the post-World War II period is that they are characterized by pacifism and historical approaches. This paper argues that while pacifism has continued to serve as the basis of them, the approaches adopted by researchers have become increasingly diversified. Specifically, although the main issues for Japanese IR studies in the postwar period (i.e. defense strategy, world political economy, and global issues) have been consistently addressed by researchers on the basis of pacifism, the theoretical orientation of researchers has continually become stronger. Finally, this paper argues that both changing and continuous characteristics of IR

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studies in Japan have been supported by global developments, and concludes that this trend will continue into the near future.

1 Introduction

As is true of many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, International Relations (IR) studies in each country have their own characteristics. IR studies in Japan also follow this rule. Methodologically, Japan's IR studies have been characterized by their historical approaches. The emphasis on these approaches has been considered an indication of Japan's low interest in theoretical development, and IR studies in Japan have sometimes been criticized for this. Some researchers challenge this conventional view and attempt to trace the theoretical bases of IR studies in Japan even back to the pre-World War II period. For example, [Inoguchi \(2007\)](#) argues that the arguments advanced by Kitaro Nishida, Shigejiro Tabata, and Yoshitaro Hirano are fledglings of Japanese IR theories. [Tanaka \(2009\)](#) goes further back, to the date of the early Meiji period, and describes the worldviews of [Yukichi Fukuzawa \(1878–1879\)](#), [Soho Tokutomi \(1989\[1886\]\)](#), and [Chomin Nakae \(1994\[1887\]\)](#) as similar to standard theories in contemporary IR studies, such as realism and liberalism (see also [Hatsuse, 1993](#), ch. 6). In addition, theoretical arguments about world order were actively presented in the 1930s and during World War II ([Sakai, 2007](#)). The new generation of international law scholars, such as Kaoru Yasui, criticized the normative argument that predominated after World War I. Including the argument made by [Yasui \(1942\)](#) for 'Toa Shin Chitsujo' (New Order in East Asia), many theories justifying Japanese foreign policy and the ongoing war were advanced at the time ([Ninomiya, 1992](#)).¹

These facts indicate that navigating relations with other countries has been a great concern for Japan since its entry into the modern sovereign state system and that IR issues have been actively discussed. However, in a stricter sense, it is fair to say that these arguments cannot be regarded as indicators of the emergence of IR theory as an academic discipline. These advocates were not specialists in IR studies, and some were active in a wide range of fields. For many of them, IR was only one of many

1 For more on the development of IR studies in the 1920s and 1930s, see [Ninomiya \(1992\)](#), [Kawata and Ninomiya \(1964\)](#), and [Haruna \(2007\)](#).

issues to be addressed at the time. In other words, they played a role in Japanese society similar to those historical figures who had discussed IR from broader perspectives, such as Kautiliya, Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Kant (Doyle, 1997).

However, it should also be noted that this situation of IR studies was not peculiar to Japan before the end of World War II. Although Morgenthau (1933) and Carr (1939, 1942) were among the most influential books in the world, as well as in Japan (Sakai, 2007, pp. 35–39), Morgenthau was an international law scholar at the time and Carr was essentially a historian. While the period in which IR studies emerged as a discipline is often debated (e.g. Schmidt, 1998), the theoretical orientation of IR studies around the world did not become well established until the United States began to lead developments in the discipline in the second half of the twentieth century.²

However, again, this fact leads to another question regarding the reason historical approaches have been considered the main characteristics of Japanese IR studies even in the postwar period, despite the strong cultural influence of the United States on Japan following World War II. The common answer to this question is that the most important research agenda for Japanese IR scholars after World War II was to investigate the causes that led to the tragic war and that the nature of this issue inevitably induced researchers to choose historical approaches. This paper does not argue against this conventional answer. However, it asserts that after a certain number of studies regarding the causes of the series of wars before 1945 had been produced by around 1970, IR studies in Japan became more receptive to various approaches, and their theoretical orientation has been strengthened since then.

Meanwhile, along with historical approaches, the agenda described above made the idea of pacifism another basis of Japanese IR studies immediately after the end of World War II. When discussing the debate between realists and liberals in Japanese IR studies during the Cold War period, strategic considerations by the former and idealistic orientations by the latter have often been emphasized and thereby the differences

2 There is a variety of definitions of the term theory. When discussing IR theories of specific countries, many researchers tend to use the term to refer to a national school of thought specific to each country (Chen, 2011). This article uses 'theory' to refer to studies that attempt to find generality and causality by whatever method (qualitative, quantitative, or mathematical), instead of focusing on specific cases.

between them have been stressed. In contrast, this article argues that if their debate is reexamined from the perspective of pacifism, their differences were not greater than they appeared. Although the specifics of their arguments obviously differed, the idea of pacifism deeply influenced not only the liberal but also the realist arguments at the time. As a result, in contrast to the trajectory followed by methodology, pacifism has continued to be a pillar of Japanese IR studies into the present. This article reveals the process that led to pacifism's persisting prominence in present Japanese IR studies and ensures its continuance into the future.

This paper proceeds as follows. The next section examines the period between the end of World War II and the 1960s. It first reviews the process through which pacifism and historical approaches became established in Japanese IR studies in the period immediately following World War II. Then, it expounds on how these focuses affected the debates surrounding Japan's defense strategy and the approaches adopted by researchers at the time. The third section investigates the period between the 1970s and 1990s, clarifying the process by which researchers' approaches began to diversify. The fourth section examines the characteristics of contemporary IR studies in Japan. This section argues that the trend observed in the fourth quarter of the twentieth century is more prominent today. The fifth section discusses why IR studies in Japan followed the trajectory that they did.

2 Establishment of two pillars

2.1 *The root of pacifism and historical approaches*

In postwar Japan, IR studies were required to address primarily two questions. The first question was to investigate Japan's motives for initiating a war that had tragic consequences. It seems natural that this question was first addressed in the IR studies in Japan immediately after the end of World War II, given the scope of the disaster that had an effect on not only the people of Asia and other regions of the world but also citizens of Japan. Meanwhile, during the 1950s and 1960s, although the Japanese people were remorseful about World War II, they also had to address new developments in IR, namely, the Cold War. Thus, the second question was related to Japan's strategy for coping with such developments.

In December 1956, the Japan Association of International Relations (JAIR) was established. Since its establishment through the 1960s, many studies conducted by members of JAIR addressed the first question. The declassification of government documents was also conducive to the investigation of this question (Yamakage, 2001, p. 276). For example, the records of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East were publicized, and documents of Imperial Japan were made readily accessible through microfilms by the General Headquarters (GHQ). The Library of Congress in the United States made copies of many of these documents. Moreover, the documents of both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and Japan Defense Agency were opened to the public. Thus, at the time, researchers could efficiently utilize these documents. The efforts of the JAIR researchers finally culminated in the publication of seven volumes (plus an additional one) of *Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai Taiheiyo Senso Gen-in Kenkyubu* (Subgroup for Investigating the Causes of the Pacific War, JAIR) (1962–63) in the early 1960s (see Morley (1976, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1994) for selected articles in English).

Given that the question addressed the causes of the specific series of wars, it seems reasonable that researchers would consider historical rather than theoretical approaches to be indispensable. At the time, diplomatic historians played a significant role in JAIR. As a result, the number of researchers who identify themselves as historians remains large even in contemporary Japan's IR studies. For instance, an analysis of the JAIR membership data in December 1998 indicated that the percentage of members with Japanese diplomatic history as their specialty (18%) was still higher than for any other specialty (Inoguchi *et al.*, 2002).³

Thus, pacifism and historical approaches established a firm presence in postwar Japan's IR studies at the outset.

2.2 *The response to the Cold War and the second debate*

With the Cold War dominating world politics in the 1950s and early 1960s, the second question gradually became prominent. A famous debate began as to whether Japan needed to continue its alliance with the United States or adopt a more neutral stance in the confrontation

3 The data were collected from 1994 onwards. Participants were allowed to select multiple answers (a maximum of three) when completing the survey.

between the United States and Soviet Union. Among many advocates on both sides, Yoshikazu Sakamoto and Masataka Kosaka played critical roles in the debate. Their positions can be summarized as follows. On the one hand, [Sakamoto \(1959\)](#) argued that since accidents alone might well cause nuclear warfare between the United States and Soviet Union, the security treaty between Japan and the United States endangered, rather than protected, the lives of Japanese people. Opposing the treaty, he proposed that Japan should be neutral and suggested that it could form a better defense by establishing a United Nations Police Force, which was similar to the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) deployed in 1956 and was comprised of forces from neutral countries. On the other hand, Kosaka argued against Sakamoto's position, claiming that Sakamoto had overlooked the balance of power in the Far East. [Kosaka \(1963\)](#) argued that neutrality was not a feasible option and that Japan should seek a more realistic policy that mitigated tension and brought peace to the region.

This debate has often been characterized as another version of the debate between idealism and realism that was reconstituted from the context of Japanese politics during the Cold War.⁴ However, an aspect that has not received much attention is that both sides predicated their arguments on the pacifism of postwar Japan. That Sakamoto's argument was based on this idea is not surprising. However, Kosaka also advanced his argument from the standpoint of pacifism as well as that of strategic considerations. He partly accepts Sakamoto's argument about neutrality, and recognized that values were important in diplomacy and that peace should be Japan's ultimate value. He writes:

Undoubtedly, the value that Japan should pursue is absolute peace that is provided in Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. Thus, I embrace the prohibition of possessing forces in this article as value. ([Kosaka, 1963](#), p. 41)

Thus, the most important contribution of neutralism is that it has brought the significance of value to this argument. It is insufficient that Japan's diplomacy merely ensures the security of Japan. It should be achieved in a way that realizes Japan's value. ([Kosaka, 1963](#), p. 42)

4 In reality, their debate was less ideological than it appeared. See [Fujiwara \(2004a, 2004b\)](#), [Yamakage \(2001, p. 280\)](#), [Murata \(2009, pp. 47–53\)](#), and [Nakanishi \(2000\)](#).

These are only a few examples and, certainly, there were a number of arguments made by realists other than Kosaka. Nevertheless, the above indicates the extent to which the value of pacifism in postwar Japan and article 9 of the constitution, which articulated it, constituted not only the liberal arguments but also a wider range of positions regarding international security at the time. Notably, a word in the title of Kosaka's article, *heiwaron* (an argument for peace), implies the state of the debate. Clearly, there was a variety of views on this issue in the Japanese society during the Cold War period. However, at least among academics, arguments were deeply influenced by Japan's postwar pacifism.

Meanwhile, regarding methodology, historical approaches remained dominant during this period. By the 1960s, the United States emerged as the leader of IR studies in the world. Along with this development, researchers in the United States became more conscious of the approaches they used, and the second debate occurred between traditionalism and behaviorism. In contrast to those in the United States, many researchers in Japan were not interested in behavioral approaches. Their disinterest can easily be attributed to the trajectory that Japanese IR studies had followed up to that point. To reiterate, IR studies in postwar Japan mainly focused on historical approaches, and diplomatic history constituted a large part of them. Under such circumstances, the prevalence of behaviorism, with its bent toward natural science, was considerably difficult for Japan's scholars to embrace. Certainly, some Japanese researchers attempted to adopt scientific methods, such as statistics, game theory, and computer simulation (e.g. Seki, 1969; Mushakoji, 1972). However, their efforts did not play a dominant role in Japan during this period. Thus, the second debate was largely absent in Japan.

3 Continuity and change

3.1 *New agendas: IPE and comprehensive security*

World politics and economy began to change around 1970. First, the *détente* relieved the tension between the United States and Soviet Union. Secondly, the Bretton Woods system collapsed and the oil crises arose. Third, Japan emerged as a global economic power. By the late 1960s, it was ranked the second largest country in the world in terms of GDP. These changes brought new agendas to IR studies in Japan. The first

agenda was to address the turbulence of the world economy and to mitigate trade friction with the United States. The second was to ensure Japan's international security in a world in which not only high but also low politics had become important. In order to investigate the first issue, IR studies in Japan shifted its focus toward the international political economy (IPE). Meanwhile, a new concept of security titled, 'comprehensive (national) security', was advanced in the interest of the second aim.

A number of studies on IPE were conducted during this period. For example, beginning in 1970, the articles that appeared in *Kokusai Seiji* (International Politics), a journal published by JAIR, evidenced strengthening interest in economic problems (Tadokoro, 2009, pp. 154, 156). Prior to that, between its 1st issue in 1957 and its 39th in 1969, the journal had published approximately 350 articles. However, only 15 articles could be regarded as being related to economic issues. Moreover, only 7 of these 15 articles included the term 'economy' in the title, while the other 8 did not feature economics as a primary topic of discussion. In addition, none of the featured themes of any volume during this period included the term economy.⁵ In contrast, 21 out of the approximately 200 articles published between 1970 and 1979 were related to economics. In addition, two issues during this period included the term economy in the titles of their featured themes. During the 1970s and 1980s, the IPE topic most intensively addressed by Japanese researchers was probably the economic friction between Japan and the United States. While numerous researchers grappled with the problem, Destler *et al.* (1979, 1982) were the most prominent studies, particularly because these works were based on cooperation between scholars from both sides of the friction. In addition, those who had supported the realist camp during the previously described debate on defense strategy also began to study this problem (Nagai *et al.*, 1972; Tadokoro, 2009, p. 158).

While many researchers focused on the first agenda during this period, the realists who addressed the second agenda contributed to a widening of the traditional view of security, revising the meaning of security to make it better suited to the reality of world politics in the 1970s and 1980s. The most famous argument proposed during this time

5 Each issue of *Kokusai Seiji* features a particular theme and includes a title that reflects that theme.

was the idea of comprehensive (national) security. This idea broadened the scope of security from an entirely military notion to one that covers threats to the economy, food, and energy. Confronted with the changes that occurred during the 1970s, people realized that US-dependent military power was insufficient and that multidimensional security guarantees that did not rely on a single country were necessary. Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira first proposed the idea of comprehensive security in the late 1970s. Kosaka served as a member of Ohira's Comprehensive National Security Study Group and played a leading role in the preparation of the 1980 report detailing Ohira's idea (Nagatomi, 1988; Murata, 2009, p. 52). It was the first systematic vision proposed by the government that addressed nonmilitary facets of security. Since then, the 1980 report has become a significant precedent for arguments about the concept of security in Japan.

The increased interest in IPE and nonmilitary aspects of security in Japan was undoubtedly influenced by the direction of world politics at the time. However, it should be emphasized that this interest was also affected by the pacifism of postwar Japan's IR studies. First, when researchers who were critical of the government during the war were reinstated after 1945, some played important roles in the reconstruction of IR studies. Among others, economist Tadao Yanaihara was eager to contribute. As is well known, his criticism of Japan's foreign policy led to the resignation from his university post in 1937. Later, in 1949, he was appointed as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo. He endeavored to establish curriculum in IR and introduced a course on IPE as early as the 1950s. Soon after, Tadashi Kawata, another economist, succeeded Yanaihara as the instructor for the IPE course. Kawata (1958) was to be among the standard textbooks for the next quarter of a century (Yamakage, 2001, pp. 267–268, footnote 25; Tadokoro, 2009, p. 153). Further, Kawata subsequently became the president of JAIR. Thus, the earlier incorporation of economic analysis in Japanese IR studies was a factor that favored the development of IPE in the 1970s. However, more important is that, as illustrated by Yanaihara and Kawata, the origin of IPE in Japan closely related to the pacifism of these founding scholars. In this respect, the rise of Japan's IPE in the 1970s was fully consistent with the tradition of IR studies in postwar Japan.

Secondly, it is also important to note that researchers of the younger generation, who were born in the 1940s and promoted studies of IPE and transnationalism in the 1970s and 1980s, shared war memories with the older generation. The motives many younger researchers had for studying IR were the same as those of older researchers. For example, Takehiko Kamo, who, as described below, led the new paradigm at the time, regarded the dominance of sovereign states in the international system as a primary cause of war. His interest in studying IPE and transnational relations focused on the question of whether or not the increasingly prevalent roles of non-state actors, low politics, and international integration were likely to prevent war. In this respect, the initial motive underlying IR studies in postwar Japan continued to influence the development of IPE in the 1970s and 1980s. Pacifism propelled younger researchers to explore the new agenda.

Finally, it would not be difficult to argue that the development of the security concept that emphasized nonmilitary dimensions was also congruent with pacifism. In fact, the development of the comprehensive security concept reflected the efforts of Japanese realists to promote peaceful approaches to security issues.

3.2 *The diversification of approaches*

In contrast to the robustness of pacifism, the approaches adopted by researchers began to diversify in the late 1960s. The emphasis on history weakened. *Nihon Gaikoshi Kenkyu Kai* (A Group for the Study of Diplomatic History of Japan), a subdivision of JAIR, ceased its activities in 1970. In addition, the content of *Kokusai Seiji* began to change. Although special issues that include the term ‘-shi (Rekishi)’ (history), such as ‘Kokusai kankeishi’ (History of IR) and ‘Reisenshi’ (History of the Cold War), in their titles are still published and historical approaches remain widely appreciated, no issues that include the term ‘Gaikoshi’ (diplomatic history), which implies a traditional historical approach, have been published since 1970 (Yamakage, 2001, p. 266). Moreover, *Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai* (1979), a special *Kokusai Seiji* issue published to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of JAIR, was divided into three sections (history,

area studies, and theory) and these sections carried equal weight (see also Yamakage, 2001, p. 269).⁶

This change in approach can be attributed to the following factors. First, although investigations of the war that occurred during the 1930s and 1940s continued, documents related to the Pacific War and the prewar era had been sufficiently investigated. Researchers had already produced a significant number of studies by the time of the cessation of the *Nihon Gaikosi Kenkyu Kai* in 1970. In other words, the task IR researchers had taken on in the newly postwar Japan was nearing completion and researchers began to search for new agendas. Secondly, the internationalization of IR studies in Japan influenced this change. Increasingly, younger researchers were being educated in the United States. Thus, the methodologies adopted in the United States began to permeate Japan. These new researchers were more interested in contemporary affairs.

This change brought the ambivalence of Japanese IR studies toward theory. On the one hand, studies of contemporary IPE issues inevitably required approaches other than historical ones, which made researchers eager to adopt theoretical approaches. For example, Kamo *et al.* (1979) was published around the same time that Keohane *et al.* (1977) appeared in the United States and presented a timely challenge to traditional perspectives. Kusano (1983) empirically examined the theory of transnational relations by scrutinizing the orange import issue in which the United States had demanded that Japan open its markets to imported oranges. Consequently, in contrast to the debate between traditionalism and behaviorism in the 1960s, Japanese and American IR researchers in the 1970s reacted similarly in the debate between state-centrism and transnationalism. IR studies in Japan as well as in the United States recognized the importance of addressing relations beyond borders, international institutions, nonstate actors, and nonsecurity issues. Thereafter, IR researchers in both Japan and the United States continued to broaden their perspectives and became open to addressing any problems that posed threats to human society, including issues related to ecology, gender, and immigration.

6 Although this issue also included write-ups on peace studies and reviews of textbooks, these sections were very short.

On the other hand, as is often acknowledged, IR studies in Japan were not interested in the debate between neorealism and neoliberalism that occurred during the 1980s. The theory advocated by Waltz (1979) was so simple that Japanese researchers, those who had long been familiar with research based on the scrutiny of documents and observation of actors' specific behaviors, found it difficult to apply to real-life situations. For example, Kosaka stated that the world described by neorealists did not appear to be the real world (Tanaka, 2009, p. 12; Murata, 2009, p. 53). This reaction among the Japanese research community evidenced that the tradition of valuing historical analyses also continued to persist.

Meanwhile, the reaction of researchers to theories and methods that emphasized historical perspectives, path dependency, and perception is of particular interest. On the one hand, Japanese IR researchers had a lukewarm response to constructivism that dominated in the 1990s. Since a historical analysis typically deals with the repetitive processes through which people with their own perceptions interact with each other and bring about social change, which in turn changes their perceptions, constructivist arguments that suggest preferences are changeable or norms and values are socially constructed did not strike Japanese researchers as innovative. Although the constructivists' arguments advanced their original agenda and did not merely rephrase traditional methodologies, the approaches of constructivism were similar to those of historical analysis and many of Japanese researchers did not appreciate them.

On the other hand, Japanese IR studies during the 1980s and 1990s were considerably interested in the theories of world systems and hegemonic stability. Although some researchers were more interested in Gilpin's theory (e.g. Kamo, 1990; Murakami, 1996), the argument advocated by Immanuel Wallerstein had a considerable influence on not only IR studies but also almost all fields in the social sciences and the humanities. Wallerstein's (1974, 1980, 1989) macroscopic theory based on rich historical detail fascinated many scholars who, while appreciative of the traditional emphasis on history, strove to develop general arguments about world politics, economy, and society. Although these scholars did not always fully embrace the ideological bent of Wallerstein's argument, many arguments pertaining to regional systems, particularly in Asia, were developed (e.g. Hamashita, 1990; Suzuki, 1993; Takaya, 1996). These studies were not always conducted by IR specialists. However,

Aruga *et al.* (1989), which had long been the standard handbook of IR studies in Japan, included the chapters ‘East Asia international system’ and ‘Islam international system’ by Takeshi Hamashita and Tadashi Suzuki, respectively, in the first part of the book. Meanwhile, the standard western IR theories such as realism and the theory of interdependence were placed in the second part.

These facts indicate that approaches to IR studies in Japan became more diversified by the end of the twentieth century. While researchers continued to appreciate traditional approaches, they were more willing to adopt theoretical approaches as well and attempted to develop their own theories from their Asian and historical perspectives.

4 The present day

4.1 *Globalization and Japan’s response to it*

Two agendas introduced by Japanese researchers in the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, IPE and comprehensive security, have recently been reformulated in order to address problems in ways more suitable to contemporary circumstances. To promote the IPE-related agenda, since the 1970s, IR studies in Japan have expanded their interests to include a variety of problems beyond economy issues. This change is most clearly articulated as an effort to advance studies of nonstate actors in relation to various issues. Since arguments emphasizing the roles of nonstate actors have affinities with pacifism, these studies have particularly attracted Japan’s IR researchers. The emphasis on studies of nonstate actors in contemporary Japan can be illustrated by the following facts. First, the fact that JAIR separates studies regarding nonstate actors into an independent division exemplifies the significance of these studies for Japanese researchers. Secondly, in contrast to *Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai* (1979), JAIR’s twentieth anniversary publication, which, as described earlier, included history, area studies, and theory, a volume focused on nonstate actors was added to *Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai* (2009) on the fiftieth anniversary. Thirdly, a recent newsletter for members of JAIR stated that theories regarding nonstate actors remained insufficient around the world and encouraged members to further address this problem (Tanaka, 2003).

Meanwhile, the idea of comprehensive security has advanced to include human security. As is widely known, the idea of human security

was popularized by the publication of UNDP (1994). In addition, while comprehensive security is largely related to national security, human security is based on individuals. Therefore, the notion of comprehensive security does not directly relate to that of human security. Nonetheless, the two concepts share a common perspective in that both emphasize a broader, nonmilitary approach to security. Therefore, when the UNDP report was published in 1994, the Japanese government immediately responded to it (e.g. Minami, 2004, p. 46). Japan's considerable interest in human security is illustrated by the initiative it took in establishing the Trust Fund for Human Security in the United Nations in 1999 (see also Nasukawa, 2007, pp. 69–73, for a discussion on the relation between comprehensive and human security). Similar to the role played by IR researchers, such as Kosaka, in comprehensively conceptualizing security in the 1970s and 1980s, the IR researchers (particularly younger ones) today actively encourage the study of human security (e.g. Kurusu, 2008). One of the most prominent illustrations of this trend is that universities are eager to offer courses and programs that focus on human security. Due to the war experience before 1945, many universities in postwar Japan have long been loath to study security issues and technologies, especially those related to the military. In this respect, the current initiatives by universities can be considered a notable change, and this change has been brought by the shift toward a security concept that is more in accordance with pacifism.

4.2 The increasing interest in theories

The theoretical orientation of IR studies continues to expand in the present day. First, researchers' interest in methodology is increasing, as illustrated by Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai (2009). The chapters in the first volume of this latest series address methodological problems from various perspectives (Miyaoka, 2009; Suzuki, 2009; Yamamoto, 2009). This emphasis on methodology has not previously been observed in books and special issues published in commemoration of JAIR's anniversaries. Moreover, even historians have become more aware of the importance of theory and methodology (e.g. Hoshiro, 2010; Tanaka, 2010). Secondly, as described earlier, when IR studies in Japan first attempted to adopt scientific approaches in the 1960s, researchers hardly appreciated these approaches. However, the development of technologies to

facilitate these approaches and the refinement of methodologies are revitalizing scientific approaches in Japanese IR studies. Congruent with trends in other political science fields in Japan, research that uses statistical and mathematical modeling is steadily increasing (e.g. [Sejima, 2000](#); [Togo, 2005](#); [Hamanaka, 2007](#); [Yamamoto, 2010](#)).

Thirdly, the interest in theories that stress historical perspectives, which was shown in the reaction to the theories of world systems in the 1980s, remains intact. The studies of the so-called English school have been diffused widely since the end of the twentieth century.⁷ Some researchers have assimilated the argument of this school and developed their own arguments regarding international order (e.g. [Shinoda, 2007](#)). Finally, the establishment of the *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (IRAP) in 2001 illustrates this trend. In comparison with *Kokusai Seiji*, which tends to publish a larger number of articles that employ historical approaches, IRAP more actively publishes articles based on theoretical perspectives. Such publications indicate that an increasing number of Japanese IR researchers are more eager than before to use a common lens to engage in dialogue with researchers around the world.

5 Conclusion

This article has shown the trajectory of the development of Japanese IR studies, which continues to base investigations on the idea of pacifism even though the theoretical orientation of research has become increasingly stronger. The final question that needs to be addressed is about why this type of development has taken place. The answer does not appear to be complicated. Throughout the three periods between the 1950s and the 2000s in this article, global changes have encouraged IR studies in Japan to follow this trajectory. On the one hand, although military power continues to be important, the global significance of both issues of low politics and nonmilitary aspects of security has grown during these periods. In this respect, the response of Japanese researchers to US–Soviet confrontations in the 1960s, economic issues and nonmilitary dimensions of security in the 1970s, and global governance in the 2000s represented an adaptation to changes of the global system in each period. However, at the same time, the broadening of the security

7 The translation of [Bull \(1995\[1977\]\)](#) into Japanese was published in 2000.

concept in the global system during these periods indicates that the interest in peace has been enlarged and enhanced at a global level and that, as a result of this global change, the interests of the global system and Japan have converged. Therefore, regarding this process, it should be noted that the global security concept has been coming to resemble Japan's postwar pacifism, not vice versa.

On the other hand, the system of knowledge informing the global system also evolved during these periods. Traditionally, theory in IR studies has referred to a certain type of political thought. As mentioned in the first section, a number of national schools of IR theory have been investigated in this context. However, as technology developed rapidly, the role of philosophy changed drastically in the second half of the twentieth century. In accordance with this change, the meaning of theory also began to shift. Although the rise of scientific approaches to the social sciences, such as statistical and mathematical modeling, is the most typical illustration of this shift, research designs that seek generality and causality with higher methodological consciousness have increasingly become popular in many qualitative analyses. Certainly, research that pursues general patterns and laws with large empirical data sets or strict deduction cannot be neutral, and researchers must remain cautious of the related philosophical and epistemological problems, such as cultural bias and subjectivity, when conducting such studies. Even so, given the state of the art, it would be difficult to reverse the direction of the contemporary knowledge system in the world. Thus, the increased orientation toward theory in Japan's IR studies closely relates to changes in the global cultural system. In this respect, in contrast to the circumstances surrounding pacifism, Japan is aligning itself with global trends, not vice versa. Although I deeply appreciate historical approaches and recognize that they continue to play a significant part in IR studies in Japan, these global trends will inevitably continue. Accordingly, the theoretical orientation of IR studies in Japan is also likely to continue in the near future.

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