Japan's response to the changing global order: the case of a 'Gaggle of Gs'

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Abstract

Over recent years, media, academic, and policy-makers' attention has focused on changes in the global order from a unipolar to a multipolar world. The emergence of the Group of 20 (G20) since 2008 as the 'premier forum for international economic cooperation', which includes a number of developed and developing countries, and its 'eclipse' of the Group of 8 (G8) summit are acknowledged as some of the most salient symptoms of this shift. This article takes the intensive period of 'G' summitry between 2008 and 2011 as a pertinent case study to begin to explore the concrete responses of key protagonists to this reconfiguration of the architecture of global governance specifically and thereby the recent shift in the global order more broadly. In the specific case of Japan, widely assumed to be a declining power, the article highlights both consistency and change in the responses of and strategies employed by Japanese policy-makers within 'G' summitry. Various theoretical positions can account for this to differing degrees which

also bring into relief the ultimately contradictory trajectory of Japan's response to the changing global order.

1 Introduction

Before, but particularly since, the global economic and financial crisis began in 2007, attention has been squarely placed upon the rise of a number of regional powers often referred to, but not solely including, Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC). The shift in the global order from a unipolar to a genuinely multipolar world as represented by their rise has been cast as the most significant structural change since the end of Cold War bipolarity. Equally, the consequent elevation of the Group of 20 (G20) to the centre stage of the architecture of global governance as the 'premier forum for international economic cooperation' that includes these rising powers has been regarded as a landmark outcome. Possibly more than any other, these developments acknowledge the fact that the central role of the Group of 8 (G8) and the global order it encapsulates was found to be lacking in terms of both capabilities and relevance in responding to a crisis.

This scenario presents a range of opportunities and challenges for rising, declining, revisionist, or status quo powers. With this in mind, both Cooper and Antkiewicz (2008) and Cooper and Alexandroff (2010) have explored in detail the changing global order from the perspectives of the rising powers. Schirm (2010) builds upon these country-specific studies by exploring the issues that emerging powers face in securing followers. In addition, Nabers (2010) has elucidated the relationship between power, leadership, and hegemony with a focus on rising regional powers and institution building. Invaluable as these contributions are to our understanding of the changing global order and the responses of the main protagonists, the focus has been firmly placed upon the rising powers. Even when attention has been shifted to other powers, it has tended to be placed squarely on the United States (Dumbrell, 2010; Ikenberry, 2010); Europe is dealt with schizophrenically, sometimes featuring as a rising superpower or sometimes as a declining power (Moravcsik, 2010; Whitman, 2010).

Nevertheless, as a result of this gadarene rush to identify the upcoming great powers, and by focusing on countries with everything to gain but

ignoring those with much to lose, our understanding of the changing global order is inevitably one-sided. More than any other country, it appears at first blush that Japan faces a number of challenges in relation to the changing global order, the rise of regional rivals, particularly China (Hughes, 2009), and the reorganization of the architecture of global governance (Dobson, 2010). In the case of the latter, this is a result of the importance that Japan accorded to the pre-crisis order based around the G8. An original member since the inception of this summit process in 1975, Japan was accepted by its fellow summiteers as a contemporary great power, has instrumentalized the summit to demonstrate its role as a responsible member of international society and has adopted the role of representative of Asia within these chiefly European and North American gatherings (Saito, 1990; Dobson, 2004). In terms of both status and identity, the G8 has mattered to Japan but all this now seems under threat. In this light and despite recognition of the pertinence of this particular case as a symptom of the broader, seismic shifts in the global order, it is peculiar that few serious attempts have been made in the extant literature to understand Japan's management of these recent and important developments in 'G' summitry (Ogura 2009a, pp. 54–55).

Thus, the initial objective of this article is to highlight the strategies instrumentalized by the Japanese government over recent years in response to this specific example of the changing global order. To this end, the article first of all adumbrates both debates surrounding the changing global order and the proliferation of 'G' summitry before then establishing what international relations (IR) theory can tell us about state responses to these developments. Based on a number of primary and secondary sources, in addition to attendance at G8 and G20 leaders' summits between 2008 and 2011and interviews with leading stakeholders in 'G' summitry, this article uncovers something of a curate's egg in the case of Japan. The focus includes an exploration of the Japanese government's motivations behind these responses and strategies. Finally, the conclusion comments on what they suggest about Japan's management of wider structural change and its trajectory in the international system.

2 The changing global order and a 'Gaggle of Gs'

Whether bipolarity, unipolarity, multipolarity, or even nonpolarity, the extant literature regards global order as denoting a stable pattern of

relations amongst sovereign states and attempting to predict and understand the nature of structural change is nothing new (Kennedy, 1989; Haass, 2008). Paul Kennedy's treatment of the US decline in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* continues to be a touchstone of much of the literature. Although the end of Cold War and the unipolar moment of the immediate post-Cold War period appeared to have proved Kennedy wrong, this phase of the US hegemony is seen to have now passed and for the most part it is accepted that the global order is now 'multipolar', as demonstrated in a range of indices of power, whether they be military, economic, institutional or ideational (Young, 2010).

Within recent debates on the rise of multipolarity and the emerging global order, the G20's move to centre stage in the architecture of global governance is only one symptom of the changing global order, but certainly one of the most salient. In response to the global economic and financial crisis, the US President George Bush adopted the template of the meeting of G20 finance ministers, which was established in 1999 in response to the East Asian Economic Crisis to supplement the work of G7 finance ministers, by inviting the G20 leaders to Washington in November 2008. The objective was to inject political leadership into the crisis by promoting dialogue, coordination, and consensus-building amongst the presidents, prime ministers, and chancellors of the developed and developing economies, supported through the year by an iterative sherpa process. Thus, the origins, genesis, nature, and objectives of the G20 are broadly similar to those of the G8 when it met as a G6 in November 1975 in response to a global macroeconomic crisis. However, the defining difference in membership is seen to make this new forum more representative and therefore legitimate than the G8. The G8 includes Canada, the EU, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the United States, and accounts for 66% of global economic output but only 14% of population. In contrast, the G20 includes 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and the United States), in addition to the EU as a twentieth member represented by the Presidents of the European Council and European Commission, accounting for 90% of global economic output and 67% of population. As Paul Martin, progenitor of the original G20 proposal, explained '[p]ut simply, the right countries were not sitting down at the same table at the same time' (2005, p. 2).

As a result, the perceived impotence of the G8 came sharply into relief at its L'Aquila Summit of July 2009, partly as a result of the sudden departure of Hu Jintao before the summit but also as a result of the limited capabilities of the G8 in responding to the global economic and financial crisis. In short, the G8 was seen to be suffering a hollowing out of its role and the G20 was now portrayed as the main front in tackling the global economic crisis. Thus, some have declared the age of the G8 to be over. In the words of Brazilian President Lula da Silva, 'We are talking about the G20 because the G8 doesn't have any more reason to exist' (BBC News, 2008).

However, the move from G8 to G20 is not a simple upgrade or replacement. Rather, it should be regarded within the broader context and history of the G8 struggling with the rise of multipolarity and the issue of representation in order to secure relevance and legitimacy, whilst seeking to maintain the effectiveness that a smaller number of participants promises. The frequency with which terms like 'BRICs' have found their way into G8 summit discussions and preparations, the number of initiatives like the Heiligendamm Process that predate the global economic and financial crisis, and a range of proposed and actual alphanumeric configurations from 2 to 20 and beyond are testament to this.

For example, at the 2007 G8 Heiligendamm Summit, an eponymous process was launched to foster dialogue between the G8 and a Group of 5 (G5) emerging economies, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa. The Interim Report on the Heiligendamm Dialogue Process (HDP) was presented to the Japan-hosted G8 Hokkaido-Toyako Summit of July 2008 and signaled the leaders' intention to 'intensify their co-operation … and launch a dialogue on equal footing that deals with issues of global scope and serves to enhance confidence and understanding among dialogue partners'.

The following year, the HDP's Concluding Report was presented to the G8 leaders at the L'Aquila Summit and included within the first joint G8/G5 declaration. It documented the extent of progress on a range of topics such as cross-border investment, intellectual property rights, African development, and energy efficiency. In addition, the joint declaration rebranded the HDP as the Heiligendamm-L'Aquila Process (HAP), reiterated its goal of 'foster[ing] a genuine partnership, in the context of a strengthened multilateralism', and extended its mandate for another two years until the 2011 French-hosted summit.

Although these processes would appear to have been eclipsed by the promotion of the G20 to the centre-stage of global governance, the narrative is not so simple and rather what we are left with is a 'messy multilateralism' or a 'Gaggle of Gs', the settlement of which remains unclear. This settlement, whatever shape and form it may take within the architecture of global governance, is beyond the remit of this article. What is important for this article is that these processes represent an intensive period of summitry between 2008 and 2011 that captures the dramatic shift in the global order. Not only have five G20 summits taken place during this time (Washington, November 2008; London, April 2009; Pittsburgh, September 2009; Toronto, June 2010; and Seoul, November 2010), four G8 summits have also taken place (Hokkaido-Toyako, July 2008; L'Aquila, July 2009; Muskoka, June 2010; and Deauville, May 2011) and will continue in Chicago in 2012. From its meeting in November 2011 in Cannes onwards, the G20 reverted to an annual rather than semi-annual schedule of summits, thereby signifying an end to this intensive period of summitry and its perceived transition from crisis committee to global steering committee. Thus, now is a pertinent moment in time to explore state responses to this symptom of the changing global order.

3 Japan's response to the changing global order and a 'Gaggle of Gs'

Over recent years, attention has also focused on the question, extent, and reality of Japan's decline across a range of areas and issues. These have included various measurements of economic strength and weakness, China's overtaking of Japan as the second largest economy, Japan's demographic challenge, and lack of political leadership, all possibly compounded by the response to and cost of the triple disasters of 2011 (Young, 2010; Jain and Williams, 2011). However, one area that has been overlooked within this literature is Japan's position within global governance and in particular within the 'Gaggle of Gs'. As outlined above, the previous global order and the exclusivity of the G8 now appear to be challenged by the broader configuration of the G20 in which Japan's position is diluted. This is a peculiar omission in our understanding of the reality and nature of Japan's relative decline as the ability to shape international institutions is widely regarded as an

important aspect of great power status (Young, 2010). Although it may be intuitive that Japan will favor the G8 over the G20, the specific strategies that the Japanese government has instrumentalized in managing this intense period of summitry have not been explored either in their own right or as an indication of Japan's broader response to the changing global order.

The extant literature points to a number of strategies available to states in managing changes in global order. Unsurprisingly, this literature is predominantly focused upon the United States and its perceived relative decline. In addition to the increase in power resources of a number of rising powers, the US relative decline is seen to be tied to its economic and financial resources and/or the absence of political leadership as a result of internal dynamics that previously sustained its primacy. Counterarguments stress how far the United States is still ahead of the rest, or can benefit from alternative structural and ideational resources, or even highlight how we have been here before, most notably with Paul Kennedy's declinist thesis of 'imperial overstretch', and that the United States has regularly displayed an unmatched self-renewing ability. Nevertheless, entering into debates on the existence, causes, or extent of the US relative decline is not the point of this article; rather, the focus is on how any country manages a changing global order and the focus of the extant literature has predominantly been placed on how the United States achieves this 'politely' or 'gracefully' over time.

The three 'usual suspects' of IR theory also suggest a range of such behaviors in response to the changing global order. In a world dominated by power politics and no overarching hegemon, the Realist literature highlights conflict as an extreme reaction on a spectrum of responses, including retrenchment, appeasement, bandwagoning, and various kinds of soft/hard balancing in order to promote the national interest (Kennedy, 1989). As Quinn has argued in the case of the United States:

> Facing this incipient period of decline, America's leaders may walk one of two paths. Either the nation can come to terms with the reality of the process that is under way and seek to finesse it in the smoothest way possible. Or it can 'rage against the dying of the light', refusing to accept the waning of its primacy (2011, p. 822).

Conflict is usually something to be avoided, whereas appeasement and surrender carry a heavy domestic price. Thus, MacDonald and Parent

(2011) focus upon the strategic response of retrenchment, which may include domestic adjustments and soft/hard balancing internationally, and argue that it can be surprisingly successful for the power in decline insofar as it often regains its previous position.

In contrast, Liberalism places a greater emphasis on cooperative arrangements such as engagement and institution building (Keohane and Nye, 1977). For example, in his treatment of the US response to rising states and rising institutions, Ikenberry (2010, p. 19) argues that the US policy-makers are faced with the challenge of 'whether they can make bargains and other arrangements – particularly in security cooperation – that allows the United States to remain at the center of liberal international order'. The proliferation of 'Gs' outlined above, alongside various proposals over recent years for the creation of a league of democracies to preserve the liberal order and socialize the rising powers therein (Kagan, 2008), is a manifestation of this approach. With regard to the post-crisis settlement of the 'Gaggle of Gs', this might suggest a more concrete future for the G8 in relation to the G20 than has been acknowledged.

Finally, Constructivism eschews any generalizations and predictions of predetermined behavior in favor of employing the analytical tool of identity forged out of the interplay between international and domestic norms in seeking to understand state behavior (Checkel, 1998). Thus, it is necessary to establish how a given actor perceives both the changing global order and its interests therein, and then trace how these perceptions shape choices and outcomes. Although Constructivism is often touted as the third main school of IR theory, it has also been regarded more as an approach than a full-blown theory that may be synthesized with Realism and/or Liberalism.

The position of great powers within the global order is also a central concern of the English School tradition, as are the strategies employed to secure recognition, inclusion, and status within international society (Simpson, 2004). In the specific cases of China and Japan, Suzuki has demonstrated how in attempting to convince counterparts of their claims to be legitimate great powers, both countries conducted a number of 'recognition games' that did not undermine but reinforce the global order. Ultimately, '… the allure of attaining status within the dominant normative structures in international society appears to be surprisingly strong. The result is a reproduction of the norms of international society, as well as surprising proof of their durability' (2008, p. 60).

Thus, in light of these literatures and approaches, what might we expect of the Japanese government in responding to the changing global order and the 'Gaggle of Gs' outlined in the previous section?

Recent history offers some insight. In response to the last structural change from bipolarity to unipolarity as represented by the end of the Cold War and the consequent reorganization of 'G' summitry from G7 to G8 at the leaders' level (the G7 finance ministers continued to meet thereby adding to the 'Gaggle of Gs') as part of the integration of Russia into international society, the Japanese government's reaction was one of resistance and its default setting was to rely first and foremost on the US bilateral relationship (Tanaka, 2009). This kneejerk bandwagoning was followed and even supersized in response to the challenges of 9/11, although this was no structural change on the scale of the end of bipolarity or the rise of multipolarity. Nevertheless, the track record of Japanese policy-makers appears to be predominantly reactive and bilateral.

Returning to the current changing global order and the 'Gaggle of Gs', one might therefore expect that Japanese policy-makers' response would be to resist the tide of change by continuing to play the supporter role to the US-established world order and attempting to prop it up through similar strategies of bandwagoning, only tinkering with it where necessary. In this light, the Japanese government's response has been characterized by Japanese summit observers as passive. The L'Aquila Summit in particular was seen as a low point and Prime Minister Aso Taro cut a lone figure as the G20 was promoted as the premier forum and accommodating the rising developing countries identified as the main summit theme (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 4 July 2009; Interview, L'Aquila, 7 July 2009). One Japanese journalist blogged along these lines lamenting Japan's traditional reliance on the United States and the lack of engagement with the leaders of an expanded G13 of the G8 plus G5 (Tamaki, 2009).

Although this is accurate to an extent, it does not fully explain examples of engagement and proactivism, as seen in the reallocation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) staff from developed to emerging countries and the establishment of an 'Emerging Countries Division' in the Foreign Policy Bureau to reflect their growing importance (Rathus, 2010). Moreover, as discussed below, the Japanese government has engaged in a spate of institution building such as creating a space for the emerging G5 at the 2008 Hokkaido-Toyako Summit. In the eyes of one

seasoned summit observer, Japan has earned itself the title of 'a committed contributor and indeed a leader [in the G20], even in the face of domestic difficulties, a rising Chinese neighbor and renewed leadership under Barack Obama in America itself' (Kirton, 2009a). Thus, Liberalism and Constructivism, particularly the continuing resonance of norms that shaped Japan's behavior in the G8, may also offer some explanatory power in these cases.

Taking a theoretically eclectic position, the remainder of this article proceeds by highlighting three responses that have come into relief thus far. First, the Japanese government has continued to play a proactive, internationalist role designed to ensure the success of the G20 and Japan's position as a responsible member of international society; however, this internationalist zeal is qualified, possibly fatally. Secondly, it has sought to continue promoting Asian issues and representation within the 'Gaggle of Gs'; for example, Australia, Indonesia, and Korea were included at Japan's instigation alongside the G13. However, now that it is faced with regional rivals, it has also begun to display more competitive tendencies than previously. Thirdly, undergirding these behaviors is a new development within 'G' summitry based on an old idea; namely, the revival of value-oriented diplomacy propounded first by Aso but continued at least in spirit if not in name by DPJ Prime Ministers Hatoyama Yukio and Kan Naoto. Having evaluated the Japanese government's strategies in responding to this specific shift in the architecture of global governance, the article then proceeds to suggest what this case study might tell us about Japan's response to this structural change more generally.

3.1 Qualified internationalism

From a Liberal/Constructivist perspective, the norm of internationalism has shaped both Japan's role in the world since the end of the Second World War and particularly within multilateral fora such as the United Nations (UN) and the G8. A seat at the G8 table in particular ensured that Japan's status as a contemporary great power was recognized and in return the Japanese government has sought to be seen to be a responsible member of international society so much so that 'Japan in the G8 seems to be uniquely committed to complying with G8 commitments, from the G8's past and through and with the multilateral institutions in the world'

(Kirton, 2009a, p. 4). In the simplest of terms, this can be seen in its hosting of consistently successful G8 summits (as graded by the University of Toronto's G8 Research Group) in the case of Tokyo in 1979, 1986, and 1993, Okinawa in 2000, and Hokkaido in 2008. Japan has also been an innovator in the development of the G8 as a forum as seen at Okinawa, where African leaders attended for the first time and civil society groups were given a center for their operations (Dobson, 2004).

In this context, consistency can be observed in the Japanese government's response to the 'Gaggle of Gs'. It reacted to the HDP by seeking to build a framework including the emerging countries to address initially the specific issue of emissions. As Prime Minister Abe Shinzo stated in his press conference after the Heiligendamm Summit:

> Japan's proposal is to build an international framework in which all major emitting countries would participate and the G8 gathering did show understanding to this proposal. I should like to continue to appeal for further cooperation *vis-à-vis* all major emitting countries – the US, China, and India included (MOFA, 2007).

This trend continued the following year at the Hokkaido-Toyako Summit when Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo declared his readiness at an early stage to engage with the rising powers by hosting a meeting of the G5 on the final day of the summit as part of the HDP (MOFA, 2008a). Thus, in the spirit of institution-building, Japan created a space for the G5, G13, and Major Economies Forum (MEF) (the G13 plus Australia, Indonesia, and South Korea) for the first time at this summit. Japan's innovations in G8 summitry faced by the shift in the global balance of power left an impression on fellow summit countries; the Italian government was so impressed by the way the Japanese hosts structured discussions (G8 leaders alone on one day, with G5 on another day and with African leaders on another day) that it adopted the same format for the following year's L'Aquila Summit.

Before then, at the first G20 summit in Washington in 2008, the 'Aso Initiative' furthered Japan's cooperative response as summarized in Aso's post-summit press conference:

> I have felt very keenly the weightiness of the role that Japan is expected to play, and the role that Japan must fulfil. One of those

roles is to present Japan's experiences. The experience of the collapse of the bubble and of overcoming it. Japan overcame that major crisis all by itself, of course also with major sacrifice. The other role is for Japan to take the lead in the building of a new framework. In order to respond to such expectations I made some concrete proposals, and I believe they have been reflected in the leaders' declaration today (Kantei, 2008).

Moreover, Japan did not follow the 17 countries and regions (including its Asian neighbors China and Indonesia) that ignored their leaders' promises and introduced protective measures, despite the fact that Japan's was one of the economies hardest hit in terms of falling exports. This internationalist trend continued at the 2009 London Summit with Aso's publicized commitment to provide the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with US$100 billion and plan of doubling member countries' contributions to the IMF's general fund from US$320 billion. This was part of Aso's proposed three-stage reform plan for the IMF in the short, mid-, and long term that received the praise of IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Yomiuri Shimbun, 17 November 2008).

In addition, Aso used the London Summit to promote cooperation in a range of other areas including increasing overseas development assistance with a contribution of US$22 billion. Aso's contribution was recognized when he was asked by Brown as host to speak at the breakfast meeting on the second day of the summit. Aso also sought to use the summit to discuss North Korea and its nuclear and missile development with fellow leaders, as his predecessors since Koizumi have done. Although not charged with addressing security issues as yet, it might be that the G20 moves in this direction, as happened previously with the G8 (Asahi Shimbun, 3 April 2009).

Writing after this summit but looking back at the initial flurry of summitry, one long-standing summit observer concluded that:

In the field of the resources and reform of international financial institutions, Japan's G20 leadership has been unmatched. At the time of the Washington Summit, it pledged to make a contribution to the international financial institutions, and offered an impressively large $100 billion loan. Only at the end of the London Summit did China contribute, in much more modest proportions and in a more opaque

way … [I]n G20 diplomacy and in Bretton Woods governance, China followed while Japan led (Kirton, 2009a, p. 7).

Japan's role has been to advocate policy initiatives and then back up it by providing the funds needed to navigate the world's economies through the crisis. To this end, Aso was active in the first two G20 summits in Washington and London in terms of publicizing the measures taken in Japan to promote domestic recovery, supporting the IMF and its reform (especially in quotas and special drawing rights), and upholding the dollar as the central currency.

However, the flipside to this rose-tinted view of Japan's participation reveals a degree of frustration, particularly in failing to secure the role of chair and host of the G20 summit (Yomiuri Shimbun, 17 November 2008; Mainichi Shimbun, 3 April 2009). At the time it lost out to London in hosting the second G20 summit, Japanese summit watchers expressed fears that Japan might disappear in the gap between the rising powers on the one hand and the United States/Europe on the other hand (Mainichi Shimbun, 17 November 2008). The Japanese government lost out again the following year and was ultimately in the position of having to attend the first Asian G20 summit in Seoul in Autumn 2010 as a guest rather than in the central role of host. This stood in contrast to the pride it exhibited in 1979 when it hosted the first Asian G7 summit in Tokyo.

Partly as a result but also more generally, opinion-makers have cast doubt on the value of participation in an expanded forum and focused attention on Japan's weakening presence at the G20, sometimes in rather emotional terms (Yomiuri Shimbun, 17 November 2008; Mainichi Shimbun, 3 April 2009). One editorial argued that the government should articulate its view of the new global order rather than simply become the provider of funds (Yomiuri Shimbun, 4 April 2009). In order to capture Japan's perceived marginalized position, one typical technique in the Japanese media has been to use the metaphor of the prime minister's peripheral position in the family photo or at the summit dinner table.

Thus, examining Japan's response to the 'Gaggle of Gs' through a Realist lens highlights different responses and strategies. On the one hand, Japan's initial strategy was to stonewall and avoid opening the can of worms of the G8's future. As a result, there was little discussion at the

Hokkaido-Toyako Summit under the Japanese chairmanship of the future shape of the G8 or expansion of the G8 membership (MOFA, 2008b; Interview, Rusutsu, 8 July 2008). Ito Takatoshi has noted that 'Japan has been conspicuously absent from hot debates regarding reforming global financial architecture, and agenda-setting in the G20 Summit process'. Although he cites domestic inertia as the cause, its position on the G8–G20 settlement is equally a reason. In short, for Japan 'one could say that the G20 is simply a new "addition" to the various international network forums for coordination, cooperation and consultation. It is not in any sense a forum that 'replaces' the others' (The Japan Times, 26 May 2009).

On the other hand, efforts at balancing against the rising powers within an expanded G20 can be seen. MOFA sources have stressed the limits of the G20 and the importance of the G8 as a mechanism for coordinating interests and addressing issues in a time of uncertainty (Hokkaido Shimbun, 3 July 2009). One source was quoted as saying that 'it is important to set the direction for discussion and take joint owner-ship of issues, even if issues cannot be resolved in the G20', suggesting the core role of the G8 in relation to the G20 in Japan's eyes (Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun, 25 June 2010). Another MOFA official emphasized that even if the G8's presence declines there continues to be meaning in the G8 sticking together, citing the example of Kan's ability to include a statement in the G8 leaders' declaration on North Korea at Muskoka and how this would have been unlikely in the UN Security Council (UNSC) with China's veto power (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 29 June 2010). In addition, at this summit under Canada's chairmanship of the G8, attempts were made to strengthen the G8's functions so during lunch and dinner on the first day of the summit bureaucrats were ban-ished and a free and frank discussion amongst the leaders was held – returning the G8 to its roots. The Japanese position was to support this and stress the significance of G8 coordination.

In its briefing documents distributed at these summits, MOFA stated that:

> The G8 provides an opportunity where major advanced countries underpinned by shared values gather to show their leadership and the G20 as an opportunity where advanced and emerging countries take coordinated action for tackling global challenges.

The issues described in this document as 'global challenges that require continued leadership by advanced countries' – North Korea, Iran, MDGs, and Africa – are all framed within the role that the G8 can play, not the G20. Former sherpa Ogura Kazuo has also stressed the distinct roles that the G8 can play in creating consensus and raising consciousness on specific issues (2009b, pp. 8–9). According to one MOFA official 'BRICs countries are ultimately those that react' to what the G8 offers … G20 meetings are essentially run by proposals by G8 members' (The Japan Times, 8 July 2009). To this end, former senior MOFA bureaucrat Tanaka (2008, p. 22) has stressed the G8 as the core institution and the strengthening of its role in supporting global order as the leading democracies of the world, relegating the G13 to the status of a peripheral consultative grouping. In the case of the G20, although he does not explain how it might work, he sees the role of the G8 as a lighthouse that needs to continue even as the G20 takes on the management of the global economy. So, the configuration would be the G8 as the inner circle and the G20 as the outer circle coexisting together as the basic shape of global governance (2009, pp. 2–3). At the G20 Toronto Summit of June 2010, Kan echoed these arguments by arguing that a realistic and clear division of labor should be that the G8 is in the ascendancy as the place for communication between leading countries, whereas the G20 is the place for coordination with developing nations; an unspecified number of other leaders agreed that there was value in the G8 continuing in this way (Yomiuri Shimbun, 26 June 2010).

Thus, a dual position comes into relief of working for the success of the G20 but in a qualified manner that preserves the G8. Before returning to the strategies used to support this position, it is necessary to explore another salient response to the 'Gaggle of Gs'.

3.2 Arrested Asianism

A similar admixture of Liberalism and Constructivism can be seen in another traditional Japanese position within the G8. Asianism has provided a strong normative impulse in Japan's IR that it should engage with its immediate region and play a leadership role as a counterweight to its historical preference for bilateralism. Specifically within the G8, Japan cherished its self-appointed role of Asia's only representative (*Ajia no daihyo*) and this informed its behavior across the four decades of

summitry in terms of agenda-setting and outreach to Asian countries (Dobson, 2004). With an expanded Asian membership in the G20 of six countries in total – Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea – Japan's response has been to continue to provide leadership, whilst engaging with these new members by socializing them into the practices and values of summitry.

As mentioned above, Japan was active in establishing the MEF meeting on the third day of the Hokkaido-Toyako Summit that brought the G8 together with the G5 and invited the three Asian countries of Australia, Indonesia, and South Korea. These were also the three countries that were most vocal in their support for the G8's long-term goals, Japan's position, and the 'Fukuda Vision' on climate change (MOFA, 2008c). Thereafter, Japan was active in creating the consensus that this forum had a role to play and should continue, particularly in shaping the debate on climate change within the UN (Asahi Shimbun, 10 July 2008).

The continuity in this role was still evident in Aso's press conference after the first G20 Summit in Washington:

> … regional cooperation that is open to outside the region, such as regional cooperation in Asia, I believe complements globalism. In the run up to the ASEAN + 3 Summit in December and the East Asia Summit Meeting that also takes place during December, Japan shall strive to make efforts to strengthen financial cooperation in Asia and to support self-sustained development. Japan feels the need to translate the result of this meeting into concrete action, and also Japan shall strive to exercise leadership toward the realization of an international economic system that corresponds to the new world economy and finance (Kantei, 2008).

Influential voices within Japan have also urged the continuation of this role: '[i]t is to be hoped that Japan will show leadership in encouraging other Asian countries to play a more forward-looking and constructive role … Japan, while playing its own leadership role, should encourage its Asian neighbours to speak up from positions of responsibility concerning global issues and should play a major part in conveying Asian opinions to the rest of the world' (Kashiwagi, 2009, pp. 35–36).

The spirit of engagement also led Kan to make a proposal at the leaders' dinner on the first day of the G8's 2010 Muskoka Summit of inviting China to join the G8. Kan's strategy of engaging China at this

summit was aimed at socializing it into responsible behavior as a great power. For example, as regards aid to Africa (an area of Sino-Japanese rivalry), the G8 leaders declared their hope 'that emerging economies will somehow accept such established disciplines and rules in ensuring the efficiency and transparency of aid money' (MOFA, 2008d). Kan's aim was not only to tie China into accepted international norms of behavior but also, motivated by concerns over the issue of North Korea and the influence G8 statements can have when China is not included, to provide the G8 with greater legitimacy (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 29 June 2010).

However, in response to the new Asian participants within the G20 and the challenge that they might represent to Japan's leadership role, a more Realist response can again be discerned. On the one hand, Japanese governments have engaged in competition with their regional neighbors. Losing the role of chair and host of the G20 to South Korea was mentioned above, and although Japan's hosting of APEC immediately after the 2010 Seoul Summit provided it with an opportunity to assert its leadership credentials, according to one MOFA official, Japan had lost its G20 leadership role to Korea (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 11 October 2010). In reaction, the response has been to criticize and question the ability of its Asian neighbors to behave in a responsible manner, thereby bringing into contra-distinction Japan's own. Both Kan and Finance Minister Noda Yoshihiko at a Lower House budgetary committee meeting on 13 October 2010 accused both China and Korea of artificial manipulation of their currencies that diverged from the agreements of the G20 and stressed that they need to behave in accord with commonly agreed rules and shared values. In practice, they were publicly questioning both countries' responsibility as members of the G20 and Korea's qualification to host and chair the G20 (Chosen Nippo, 14 October 2010).

On the other hand, the Japanese government's efforts to engage with its regional partners can be understood through the Realist strategy of balancing. This development is probably most acutely seen in Japan's relationship with China. Two years prior to Kan's proposal of inviting China, the Japanese media highlighted during the Hokkaido-Toyako Summit the fact that a Chinese newspaper had declared that MOFA was attempting to solicit the support of the United States in preventing China from joining the G8 because of its fear of losing its position as the

only Asian member (Asahi Shimbun, 9 July 2008). At the same time, promoting the MEF that includes Australia, Indonesia, and South Korea alongside the G8 and G5 has been regarded as an attempt to counter the importance of the G5, and China in particular, by diluting their presence (Gnath, 2010). Some in MOFA have argued that Japan must cooperate with regional neighbors in the G20 like Korea, Australia, and India in approaching China (Mainichi Shimbun, 7 July 2010). Thus, ahead of the G20 Seoul Summit, it was reported that the Japanese government's basic strategy was to use multilateral meetings as the venue for 'diplomatic battles' with China, and India had been identified as a key partner in this strategy. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in October 2010 was seen by MOFA as particularly significant in this context (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 11 October 2010).

3.3 Value-oriented diplomacy redux

In order to support the responses highlighted above, and regardless of whether one uses Realism, Liberalism, and/or Constructivism to make sense of them, one increasingly salient strategy has been the Japanese government's adoption of value-oriented diplomacy as the ideological glue in a 'recognition game' that is evident in both its Realist competition and balancing, as well as its Liberal engagement and institution building.

On 30 November 2006, when still foreign minister, Aso gave a speech entitled 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan's Expanding Diplomatic Horizons' to the Japan Institute of International Affairs. In this speech, he defined 'value-oriented diplomacy' as:

> … placing emphasis on the 'universal values' such as democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and the market economy as we advance our diplomatic endeavors (Aso, 2006, p. 1).

In addition to these specific values, Aso defined the geographical remit of this 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity' (AFP) and Japan's role therein. To this end, he stressed his belief that within:

> this sweeping arc stretching from Northeast Asia to Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkey, Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, Japan will serve as an 'escort runner' to support these countries that have just started into this truly never-ending marathon ….

Japan must make its ties even firmer with friendly nations that share the common views and interests, namely of course the United States as well as Australia, India, and the member states of the EU and NATO, and at the same time work with these friends towards the expansion of this 'arc of freedom and prosperity' (Aso, 2006, pp. 4–5).

Characterized by some as a 'diplomatic revolution' (Ina, 2007, p. 30), the LDP implemented the AFP with the intention that 'deepening strategic relationships with like-minded partners beyond the US would expand Japan's diplomatic and strategic horizons in a more competitive international system' (Taniguchi, 2010). Doubts were expressed as to how original this policy was, what the underlying values of Japan's diplomacy might actually be in addition to its capacity to implement such a strategy (Togo, 2009). Moreover, the LDP's subsequent defeat in the Lower House election of 31 August 2009 appeared to sound the death knoll of this strategy. Nevertheless, it has continued to have a longer-lasting resonance and has emerged in areas of the DPJ's diplomacy. Although not labeled as such, it has been argued that, '[w]hatever the branding, the principles that underlie the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity will therefore continue to help Tokyo to leverage its influence, and secure strategic space for itself' (Taniguchi, 2010, p. 5).

The AFP and value-oriented diplomacy have been written about mostly in terms of Japan's bilateral diplomacy – in particular, the core relationship with the United States and newer bilateralism-plus initiatives with Australia and India. The unspoken target of the AFP was again seen to be bilateral, particularly in relation to China (Laurence, 2007; Taniguchi, 2010). However, it is in the field of 'G' summitry that successive Japanese governments have chosen to continue to pursue value-oriented diplomacy.

A subsequent speech given by Aso as prime minister on 5 May 2009 related this strategy to the changing global order and the architecture of global governance in support of a continuing G8:

The various issues facing the world cannot be dealt with by the G8 alone. Japan looks forward to working together with countries, which have the will and the capability to fulfil responsibilities and prove this through the [MEF and G20] … At the same time, Japan believes that the importance of the G8 has increased. The G8 shares common values such as democracy and market economies. It has also made

contributions towards the resolution of a multitude of global issues in a responsible manner. Good examples of this include issues related to development and Africa. With the G8 at the core, dialogues and international coordination with emerging economies and others should be strengthened (MOFA, 2009).

Despite initially promising a break with the LDP, the DPJ has continued these initiatives. At a working dinner on the first day of the 2009 G20 Pittsburgh Summit, Hatoyama highlighted the importance of political leadership in global governance as opposed to a bureaucratic-led model, and how this was more easily achieved when the participating countries were fewer in number (Sankei Shimbun, 26 September 2009). He also stressed Japan's credentials as a democratic country (especially in light of his recent assumption of power) in his post-summit press conference:

I believe that the G8 should not be discarded … The G20 involves twenty or twenty-five people gathering and discussing. It is extremely difficult to reach conclusions in such setting … On the other hand, at the G8 political leaders can hold very frank and candid discussions with each other. The Canadian Prime Minister expressed exactly the same view when I had a short meeting with him today. He said that the merit of the G8 was that leaders whose values are similar can speak their own minds as much as they wish. I believe that a good political reason for the G8, a meeting of the developed countries, will continue to exist.

On the other hand, G8 is not a gathering of just developed countries. Leaders of developing and emerging countries will take part as well [in the outreach meetings etc]. I think there are important discussions to be had in this format. It is all right to consider the G20 as being the premier forum, but that does not make the G8 irrelevant (Kantei, 2009).

Moreover, Kan wrote in a similar tone ahead of the 2010 Canadian summits that '[t]he G8 has played a significant role in meeting each of these global challenges. The importance of the G8, underpinned by a shared sense of fundamental values such as freedom and democracy, remains unchanged…. Tied together by common fundamental values, G8 members have a shared responsibility for international peace and security' (2010, p. 25). Although attention at the 2011 Deauville Summit

was focused on Japan's triple disasters, Kan still stressed the basic values shared with the EU (Kantei, 2011). Thus, as part of a 'recognition game', shared democratic values are the ideological glue regarded as binding together a core group of G8 summit leaders within a G13 or G20.

Sections of the Japanese media have argued along similar lines claiming that the G8 has not suffered a loss in its significance as it remains the only venue where economies with the shared values of liberal democracy can meet once in the year to discuss a range of pressing topics. This coherence, it is argued, cannot be compared with the diversity in political systems seen in the G20 and as a result the G8 members of the G20 may act as its executive board (Yomiuri Shimbun, 29 June 2010). At the Canadian-hosted summits of June 2010, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Obama expressed sentiments close to Japan by stressing the importance of the G8 as a venue for discussing common problems with major allies (Shinano Mainichi Shimbun, 27 June 2010), thereby allowing MOFA sources to talk of the rejuvenation of the G8 after Muskoka (Interview, Toronto, 27 June 2010).

This position echoes the idea of a concert or league of democracies and also mirrors Japan's frustrated efforts after the end of the Cold War to resist the expansion of the G7 summit at the leaders' level to a G8 that included Russia. There is also a degree of consistency here in that this strategy taps into the original Declaration of the 1975 Rambouillet Summit with its emphasis on 'open, democratic society, dedicated to individual liberty and social advancement' that has acted as the closest thing to membership criteria in the G8. Thus, although Japan has provided leadership in terms of supporting the G20, reforming the architecture of global governance and representing Asia, these responses are qualified in that they ultimately aim towards reinforcing the position of the G8. Moreover, shared values, not the level of economic development, are stressed as the ideological glue in a 'recognition game' that maintains the G8 as a central forum of global governance.

4 Conclusions

Naturally, depending on the theoretical lens employed, specific aspects of any issue will be highlighted whilst others obfuscated. As a result, in the case of the Japanese government's response to the 'Gaggle of Gs', we are

presented with a curate's egg of both Realist and Liberal-inspired responses with norms continuing to inform these behaviors. Whereas Liberalism and Constructivism help us to highlight the default setting of Japan's behavior within the G8, and understand why it has continued to support and innovate in the architecture of global governance and promote the Asian region therein, equally signs of Realism are appearing in Japanese policy-makers' response to the G20. As a result, clear limits and contradictions have emerged. On the one hand, Japanese policy-makers have promoted reform, but this reform has been limited as they campaign for the integrity and continuation of a favored forum of global governance within a wider constellation of 'Gs'. On the other hand, its advocacy of Asianism within the G20 has been much more muted than in the G8. Faced by a dilution of its role as Asia's representative, Japan has begun to engage in competition with its regional neighbors through various mechanisms. However, regardless of the theoretical approach employed and the position thereby revealed, it is clear that value-oriented diplomacy is the ideological glue instrumentalized by the Japanese government.

As regards how this specific case study relates to the broader picture of the changing global order, there are three aspects that come into relief. First, although theories of IR can begin to explain aspects of Japan's response, the English School's emphasis on 'recognition games', usually associated with rising powers seeking to attain great power status, helps explain what might appear to be contradictory and reactionary behavior. The case study of the 'Gaggle of Gs' demonstrates that even when Japan is clearly identified as a legitimate great power, policy-makers have played these 'games' when attempting to maintain status in their response to the rising powers, the changing global order, and the emerging central role of the G20. As a frustrated great power and with the objective of securing its own position alongside that of the G8 as a dominant normative structure, Japan has conflated the two together in a series of 'recognition games' that use value-oriented diplomacy. Thus, even its attempts at innovation and institution building in global governance explored above have actually been aimed at reinforcing the status quo. As mentioned above, policy-makers have played these recognition games in other areas of Japan's IR, and might well continue to do so in the future.

Secondly, there appears to be greater continuity than has been acknowledged in the policies of the LDP and DPJ, whose rise to power

of 30 August 2009 coincided with the intense period of summitry under examination. Both LDP and DPJ governments alike have adopted value-oriented diplomacy either explicitly or implicitly in support of their responses and strategies. This suggests that predictions of the death of Aso's emphasis on shared values were premature. At the same time, it suggests that the DPJ's assumption of power does not represent a watershed in terms of foreign policy and that the DPJ lacks a coherent vision of what a multipolar world might look like and Japan's position therein. In this specific case, necessity has not been the mother of invention and the DPJ has fallen back on a retrograde and widely dismissed position.

Thirdly, MacDonald and Parent have argued that 'there are significant pressures on policymakers in declining great powers to put aside their parochial interests ... It is precisely in periods of acute relative decline that one should expect partisan rancor and sectoral rivalry to recede' (2011, p. 12). Despite these predictions of domestic coherence and unity in reaction to relative decline, in reality Japan's response to the 'Gaggle of Gs' has highlighted the opposite on occasions. For example, in the case of China, the dual response of Realist balancing whilst pursuing Liberal engagement and institution-building has created some ironies. At the 2010 Muskoka Summit other G8 leaders argued that the G20 had played an important role in the financial crisis but the problem was how opinions could be made to converge in the future. In contrast, they praised the G8 as a venue for the frank exchange of opinions amongst countries with the same values. In this context Kan's unilateral proposal for inviting China to participate in the G8 stood out in relief and in effect some G8 leaders were repeating back to Kan the mantra that has been the position of Japan in justifying the continuance of the G8 (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 27 June 2010). According to a statement made by State Secretary Takemasa Koichi on 28 June 2010, it subsequently emerged that Kan's proposal was made unilaterally without discussion with MOFA. As a result, doubts were expressed within MOFA as to Kan's style of making announcements without doing the appropriate groundwork (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 29 June 2010). Despite traditionally close cooperation between the prime minister and MOFA in G8 summitry (Dobson, 2004), clearly this was an ill-conceived proposal that stepped back 10 years or more to the debates on expansion/outreach of the G8 and ignored the intervening developments. This may cause concern for as

Quinn argues 'wise or foolish policy can influence the speed and character of an upward or downward journey' (2011, p. 803).

This article represents an initial exploration of this intense period of 'G' summitry that still stands at a liminal stage in the inchoate global order. The post-crisis settlement remains unclear and a number of reasons exist to suggest that the G8 will in fact continue and its founding principles outlined in the Rambouillet Declaration have even started to shape the G20's agenda (Kirton, 2009b, p. 157). In the case of Japan, Funabashi (2010) captures this liminality when he argues that '[Japan] cannot continue to cling to the G7 forever. At the same time, it remains to be seen if the G20 can serve as the new control tower for macroeconomic policy'. In short, much is still up for grabs in the evolving architecture of global governance.

Personal interviews

Senior MOFA bureaucrats (anonymous), 7–9 July 2008, Rusutsu; 6–8 July 2009, L'Aquila; and 27 June 2010, Toronto.

Acknowledgements

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