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Domestic hurdles for system-driven behavior: neoclassical realism and missile defense policies in Japan and South Korea

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, Japan and the Republic of Korea have chosen dissimilar policy options with respect to the US-led missile defense (MD) systems in East Asia. What explains the two countries' dissimilar MD strategies? Inspired by neoclassical realism, this study introduces a framework of domestic hurdles that combines Randall Schweller's cohesion model and Jeffry Taliaferro's resource extraction model. It sheds light on the degree of elite cohesion and social and economic impediments as key causal determinants that impede balancing against external threats. Although the influence of systemic variables that suppose optimal policy options, such as balancing, domestic hurdles impede or delay such options. This study will provide useful contributions to international relations by offering comparative and theoretical analyses on different paths that Tokyo and Seoul have chosen for their MD policies.

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1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have chosen dissimilar policy options with respect to the US-led missile defense (MD) systems in East Asia. Japan agreed to join the US MD programs and co-develop technologies with the United States, although it experienced some delay in developing multi-layered MD systems. In contrast to Japan, South Korea constantly refused to participate in the US MD programs and pursued indigenous anti-missile shields. The choices of the two US allies in East Asia were utterly disparate even though both countries lacked the ability to ward off ballistic missile threats. What explains the two countries' dissimilar MD strategies? More specifically, why did Japan agree to cooperate with the United States, but procrastinate in the process while South Korea forwent an opportunity to join the US-led MD systems? Major theories on international relations can offer explanations for why Japan and South Korea took different stances on MD, but they are not without problems. Systemic theories, such as balance of threat, can provide necessary conditions for Japan and South Korea to seek anti-missile technologies, but they are not sufficient to explain why one has agreed to work with the United States whereas the other has chosen not to. Focusing on the dominant influence of domestic politics, state-level theories and liberalism can explain the variations of policy options by Japan and South Korea, but their explanations are indeterminate.

In the spirit of neoclassical realism (Rose, 1998; Schweller, 2004, 2006; Taliaferro, 2006; Rathbun, 2008; Lobell *et al.*, 2009), this study argues that 'domestic hurdles' influenced the two Asian states' respective MD policies at the critical decision points for the past 20 years. The new framework is derived from the combination of two neoclassical realist models: Randall Schweller's cohesion and Jeffry Taliaferro's resource extraction (Schweller, 2004, 2006; Taliaferro, 2006). In line with neoclassical realism, the model of domestic hurdles demonstrates that both systemic and domestic forces shape the range of a state's foreign policy outcomes. In particular, it sheds light on the degree of elite cohesion and social and economic impediments as key causal determinants that impede balancing against external threats. Accordingly, a state's policy behavior with respect to external threats does not take a simple form of balancing as expected by the balance of threat theory. In fact, the

influence of domestic hurdles yields various forms of balancing: an effective balancing response, a slow balancing response, an inconsistent balancing response, and a chaotic response. The main characteristic of this model is its emphasis on domestic impediments to a system-driven behavior. Although the influence of systemic variables that suppose optimal policy options (such as balancing) vis-à-vis external threats, domestic hurdles impede or delay such options. This study will provide useful contributions to international relations by offering comparative and theoretical analyses on different paths that Tokyo and Seoul have chosen for their MD policies. It will also expand our understanding of Japan and South Korea, the key alliance partners for the United States in East Asia.

It is worth mentioning why Japan and South Korea are selected as the case study. These two Asian states make most similar cases that are analogous on all measured independent variables except the explanatory variables of the new model (Przeworski and Teune, 1970; Lijphart, 1971; George and Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Elman, 2007; Gerring, 2007; Seawright and Gerring, 2008). Both countries share similar external settings because they have a common alliance partner and perceive ballistic missile threats from regional powers. Moreover, Japan and South Korea have domestic similarities including their Asian-style capitalist economies, egalitarian society, ethnic homogeneity, and cultural heritages with the influence of Confucianism and Buddhism.[1] Internal and external similarities between Japan and Korea help us to clarify the causal variables of domestic hurdles and disparate policy choices by the two Asian states. Since structural and some domestic variables are held constant across the two cases, domestic hurdles that differ in Japan and South Korea cause the variations of policy outcomes. However, the major problem of a most-similar case comparison is associated with the value of the explanatory variable of the new model because rival hypotheses may have causal influences on outcomes (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 215). A method to overcome this weakness is to employ process tracing 'to show the independent variable of interest that differs between the cases does in fact affect their outcomes' (Bennett and Elman, 2007,

1 In a most-similar case comparison, it is not necessary to measure control variables to control for them. Gerring (2007, p. 133) argues that researchers can simply assert that they are more or less constant across the cases.

p. 175). The process tracing method will evaluate causal chains behind the new model and identify alternative causes that might lead to the same outcome that the new model explains.

The remainder of this article is divided into five sections. The first will examine how existing literature explains disparate decisions that Japan and ROK have made and why it is deficient in answering key questions that this study explores. Next, inspired by works on neoclassical realism, this study will develop the theoretical framework of domestic hurdles. Applying the framework, the third will delve into MD policies that Japan and South Korea have chosen. The fourth part will compare cases on Japan and South Korea and summarize the study. Finally, this article will conclude by assessing how the framework explains the cases and by exploring avenues for future research.

2 Research questions and alternative explanations

Why did Japan and South Korea choose dissimilar policy options with respect to the US-led anti-missile shields? What explains their respective MD policies over 20 years? Structural realism and balance of threat theory would purport that Japan and South Korea have employed dissimilar policy choices since their perceived threats are different (Waltz, 1979, 1987; Jervis, 1997; Mearsheimer, 2001). For South Korea, severe threats come mostly from conventional weapons in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Several thousand pieces of artillery deployed near the 38th parallel are aimed at South Korea, and the US-led MD systems, which are suitable for intercepting longer ranged ballistic missiles, would not improve ROK's defense posture to hold off North Korea's strikes.

On the other hand, Japan's military strategy covers broad security challenges in the region. Japan not only perceives threats from North Korea but also wide-ranging potential military threats from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Beijing has modernized its ground, air, and navy forces and made considerable progress in missile forces. Short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), whose number has grown quickly up to 900, are located on the east coast to target Taiwan and neighboring countries (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008, p. 376). China's missile tests in 1995 and 1996 over the Taiwan Strait led Japan to question China's prudence as a military and nuclear power and provided

enough reasons for Japan to make a strategic transformation by joining the US MD architecture (Hugh, 2004; Pyle, 2007). On the contrary, the South Korean government has not yet verbalized negative views since China's projection capabilities are intended mostly to deter Taiwan from seeking an independent political identity (ROK Ministry of National Defense, 1996, p. 39). China's strong opposition to the US MD also makes ROK consider the practicality of anti-ballistic missile systems. Why would Seoul need unproven anti-missile technologies that could not guarantee the defense against Pyongyang's guns and missiles while deteriorating relations with Beijing?

State-level theories and liberalism can offer explanations for differences between Japan and Korea by focusing on domestic politics (Gorevitch, 1978; Doyle, 1986; Milner, 1997; Moravcsik, 1997). They have a 'bottom-up' view of international politics and assume that fundamental actors of international politics are individuals and private groups within states (Moravcsik, 1997, pp. 516–517). Liberal theory would argue that a states' security policy is the result of coordination or conflict between social actors with differentiated preferences, resources, and social commitments in the process of maximizing their influence in the society (Milner, 1997, pp. 14–17). Therefore, dissimilar MD policies by Japan and South Korea reflect a number of factors in their domestic politics: social actors' divergent beliefs, their political power, and available resources (Moravcsik 1997, p. 517). Moreover, liberal theory can explain why Japan has procrastinated in following through on its commitment to co-develop missile technology with the United States over the past 20 years. It claims that consistent interstate tension and conflicts among actors over the distribution of resources are responsible for the delay of Japan's cooperation with the United States.

However, existing works based on structural realism are not without problems. Although systemic analyses show that different threat perceptions cause disparate MD policies, they are still insufficient to explain why Japan and South Korea interpret external environment differently. Moreover, a careful study reveals that both Japan and South Korea are equally exposed to SRBM threats from regional powers. Although a ballistic missile needs about an hour or less for preparation, its flying time between launching sites and designated targets is extremely short. For instance, North Korea's Scud elements can destroy major military and civilian assets 500 km away in South Korea and Nodong missiles

can reach objects 2,000 km away in Japan (Lenox, 2007, pp. 90–100). A recent intelligence report has found out that North Korea has been developing light nuclear warheads for Scud and Nodong missiles (Yonhap News, 2010).

State-level theory and liberalism are indeterminate in explaining the cases of Japan and South Korea. Idiosyncratic domestic politics in Japan and Korea generated dissimilar MD policies and override systemic influence constantly. By marginalizing international pressures, liberals claim that Japan and South Korea have chosen their respective MD policies not because they have to confront external threats but because significant individuals and bureaucrats in each state believe that such options will maximize their influence in society. In this course of action, social actors choose security strategies to serve their individual interest instead of national interest and unwittingly lead the nation to fail to meet external threats. However, liberal theory that turns to domestic politics to explain foreign policy outcomes do not necessitate such military policies at the outset. If MD policies by Japan and South Korea are the product of changes in domestic politics rather than missile threats from other countries, why is MD needed as opposed to other security strategies from the beginning and why does the issue of MD even matter? The limitation of liberalism lies in the fact that it disregards systemic influences as a major cause of state behavior.

3 Theory: domestic hurdles for system-driven behavior

3.1 Neoclassical realism

What causes states to choose dissimilar policies when facing similar international environment? Neorealism that regards systemic variables as a key cause of state behavior does not offer sufficient explanations. It assumes that balancing is the most likely response because such a strategy best serves the purpose of survival in the international anarchy (Waltz, 1979). Systemic analyses like neorealism give only a general direction of foreign policy. They are not precise enough to determine the specific details of state behavior nor are they interested in addressing why and when international system matters (Elman, 1996; Rose, 1998). However, neoclassical realism tackles this question by considering both

international and state-level variables (Barnett and Levy, 1991; Morrow, 1993; Sterling-Folker, 1997; Rose 1998; Bueno de Mesquita, 2002; Schweller 2004, 2006; Taliaferro, 2006; Lobell *et al.*, 2009). As Jeffrey Taliaferro, Steven Lobell, and Norrin Ripsman have mentioned, 'neoclassical realism seeks to explain variation in the foreign policies of the same state over time or across different states facing similar external constraints. It makes no pretense about explaining broad patterns of systemic or recurring outcomes' (Taliaferro *et al.*, 2009, p. 21). Neoclassical realism assumes that systemic forces are the ultimate driver of policy behavior, but they are filtered through domestic factors (Rose, 1998; Taliaferro *et al.*, 2009). In other words, it considers systemic forces independent variables and domestic attributes intervening variables (Taliaferro *et al.*, 2009, p. 20).

Neoclassical realism does not simply blend unit-level variables with systemic-level causes. Nor does it argue that the causes of external behavior lie merely in state-level factors. Systemic elements and relative power distributions define the parameters of a state's behavior while internal processes work as a secondary influence to guide state responses to international environment (Lobell *et al.*, 2009). Neoclassical realism differentiates itself from liberalism that focuses on 'bottom-to-top' causal chains and highlights the importance of systemic factors because 'over the long run a state's foreign policy cannot transcend the limits and opportunities thrown up by the international environment' (Rose, 1998, p. 151). It is different from classical realism for similar reasons. The former places its emphasis on the constraints of international system, whereas the latter pays little attention to international pressures. In contrast to neoclassical realism, the primary concern of classical realism lies in internal attributes of states and therefore it has never been 'a coherent research program but rather a vast repository of texts written by different authors for different purposes and in different contexts over the course of 2,500 years' (Taliaferro *et al.,* 2009, p.16).

Neoclassical realism shows that foreign policies are chosen by actual policy leaders, not by 'states'. Policy elites, military leaders, and politicians make foreign policy choices based on their perception of international environments and their assessment of the relative power of the nation. They are 'sitting at the juncture of the state and the international system, with access to privileged information from the state's politico-military apparatus, are best equipped to perceive systemic constraints

and deduce the national interest' (Taliaferro *et al.*, 2009, p. 25). Therefore, neoclassical realists examine how policy-makers agree or disagree with one another about interpreting external threats and argue that it is its leaders' perception that matters in a country's foreign policies. Although elites are relatively autonomous from society, they are involved in political bargaining with other domestic actors to sell coercive and assertive strategies and to extract resources for military mobilization from society. Economic, political, and legal constraints are critical, because they can hinder internal mobilization when external threats emerge.

This article introduces a framework of domestic hurdles that combines Randall Schweller's cohesion model and Jeffrey Taliaferro's resource extraction model. Among several neoclassical works, these two models are useful to answer key questions that neoclassical realism focuses on. How do decision-makers assess external threats and who decides how to respond to international threats? How do states mobilize resources to implement their chosen security policies? (Taliaferro *et al.*, 2009, pp. 33–32). While Schweller's work presents useful analyses on how policy elites assess external threats and how they make policies, Taliaferro's model examines how domestic impediments to mobilize resources influence security policies. The two models are compatible because both recognize domestic constraints that prevent states from carrying out their chosen policies and more specifically why states fail to employ a balancing strategy. Combining the two models, the new framework offers a sophisticated theoretical analysis. Although external threats require a state to choose a balancing strategy, domestic hurdles preclude such an option and yield various forms of balancing.

3.2 Defining domestic hurdles

Randall Schweller's cohesion model demonstrates that the degree of state cohesion generates various foreign policy behaviors. European history has revealed that on many occasions states 'have failed to recognize or present proper reaction' to mounting threats (Schweller, 2004, pp. 159–160). Despite growing external threats, states have avoided building up arsenals and revamping alliance treaties. Schweller has argued that the reason lies in the cohesion or fragmentation of domestic politics (Schweller, 2004, pp. 168–181). Internal cohesion emerges when most elites agree with the interpretation of external threats and the society

accepts this view. Conversely, a domestic fragmentation occurs when elites disagree on the interpretation of external threats and policy planners cannot reach a consensus regarding how to respond to them. Eventually, the domestic fragmentation prevents states from employing effective balancing. It is similar to the failure of deterrence due to the lack of willingness and capacity to counter aggressors. According to Schweller, British elites were divided into two factions with respect to how to deal with Germany during the interwar period. While the majority of the conservative party promoted appeasement and limited British military build-up, the majority of the labor party favored deterrence and encouraged rearmament. In the end, Chamberlin and his governing conservative party committed themselves to appeasement since they believed that a peaceful policy toward Germany could strengthen their political position as well as check their domestic rivals in the labor party who favored full mobilization against Berlin.

Jeffrey Taliaferro has noted that not all states successfully develop military strategies to deal with external vulnerability. An international system provides incentives for states to counter external threats through 'emulating the most successful political, military, and technological practices of leading states, but domestic variables limit the efficiency of their responses' (Taliaferro, 2006, p. 467). The degree and the speed of developing military strategies hinge on a country's capacity of extracting and mobilizing resources. Confronting external pressures, states that enjoy high capacity of mobilizing resources are likely to emulate successful examples to pursue technological, political, and military innovation. However, states that are short of mobilization capacity experience great difficulty in working on innovation. Taliaferro's resource extraction model shows that leaders often encounter major difficulties in convincing the public to make significant sacrifices for national security, even though such efforts are in the public's long-term interest (Taliaferro, 2006, p. 490).

Problems of extracting resources also occur in managing alliance. Since alliance is one way to increase relative power quickly vis-à-vis external threats, states would choose alliance over internal arms build-up when the cost of getting assistance from others is lower than increasing force by themselves (Morrow, 1993, pp. 214–215). However, maintaining alliance becomes onerous when allies ask for sharing the cost of military operations and improving military technologies. If new alliance tasks

require states to mobilize resources to a great extent or run against legal norms and institutions, states find it difficult to cooperate with their alliance partners. Andrew Bennett, Joseph Lepgold, and Danny Unger found out that some of the US allies that contributed to the United States during the Gulf War had faced strong domestic oppositions (Bennett *et al*., 1994). Germany and Japan had to overcome popular resistance and legal constraints to offer assistance to the United States. Taliaferro's work provides significant implications for alliance politics. Cooperation with alliance partners depends on whether or not states can successfully mobilize resources. In other words, mobilization can block or facilitate alliance cooperation. States without domestic obstacles in extracting resources are highly likely to share the burden of new alliance tasks. Conversely, states that have trouble in mobilizing resources are not likely to meet their allies' demand to share the cost.

Schweller's cohesion model and Taliaferro's resource-extraction model have shown that a country's foreign policy behavior is not the output of systemic factors but the product of both international and domestic elements. These models not only illuminate why and how domestic politics matter but indicate when they matter. As Fareed Zakaria squarely maintains, 'the external structure does not always determine outcomes, but if structural causes are not separated from domestic ones we cannot know when it does' (Zakaria, 1992, p. 188).

The new framework of domestic hurdles explores two key elements of domestic constraints in security strategies. The first element is an elite fragmentation that Schweller has discussed. When policy elites have similar views on international environment and reach a consensus in interpreting external threats, a coherent and effective balancing policy, such as a competitive or aggressive strategy, becomes evident. Conversely, a rigid elite division creates policy debates and prolongs the process of forming policies. Although, in the end, policy choices would generally reflect what dominant political parties pursue, the elite division is not easy to compromise. If political factions can never reach an agreement and dominant political parties in the government continually change, state policy options shift along with the government's political orientation. The second element is a social, economic, or legal obstacle to extracting resources based on Taliaferro's theory. When policy-makers receive an approval from members of society that support legitimate institutions and mechanisms, extracting resource to implement foreign

policies is easy. However, social impediments, such as public opposition, legal processes, and budget constraints, can limit access to resources and block the implementation of foreign policies.

There is a possibility that an elite consensus coexists with social impediments. Even when elites reach a consensus on how to respond to external threats, strong public opposition and legal institutions create difficulty in carrying out foreign policies. Although elites attempt to employ deterrence against external threats, they may have to make a tremendous effort to mobilize pubic support and extract enough resources. On the other hand, the combination of an elite division and social constraints can generate a chaotic situation. Since elites are divided in interpreting external threats, they have difficulty in forming coherent policies. Even after policies are formed, the existence of social obstacles slows down the process of implementing policies. To convince the general public and overcome the political opposition, elites in the government have to spend enough time and energy on publicizing and operating the policies. In the worst-case scenario, this can cause a policy disaster, i.e. failure to meet external threats. This type of behavior is similar to Schweller's underbalancing, which refers to an inefficient response to dangerous powers because of a lack of military mobilization and the failure of creating cohesive balancing policies (Schweller, 2006).

Table 1 shows the combination of two hurdles, an elite fragmentation and a social obstacle for a state to employ a system-driven balancing behavior. States with an elite cohesion and minimal or no social obstacles are likely to respond to external threats fast and effectively. However, states that face an elite cohesion and social obstacles are likely to choose slow responses toward external threats. It takes time for a foreign policy to be implemented since social obstacles delay the process. States with an elite division and minimal social obstacles are likely to have inconsistent responses. Although social obstacles in extracting resources are minimal, the elite division can cause frequent changes in foreign policies.

Table 1 Domestic hurdles and strategic responses to external threats

	Elite cohesion	Elite division
Minimal or no social obstacles	Effective balancing response	Inconsistent response
Social obstacles	Slow balancing response	Chaotic response

Finally, states with an elite fragmentation and social constraints are likely to face chaotic situation and fail to respond to external threats.

3.3 MD as an optimal policy?

One might ask whether there is an optimal policy for Japan and South Korea to handle ballistic missile threats. In other words, is the MD system the best policy option for Japan and South Korea? The fact that other countries have ballistic missiles does not necessitate one's MD systems. However, without proper missile shields, not to mention ballistic missiles, Japan and Korea have been exposed to uncertainties caused by regional arms race. Although both Tokyo and Seoul may not be interested in intercepting long-ranged ballistic missiles heading toward the third country, they still need to ward off short- and medium-ranged missiles against their own territory. The lack of reaction can give a wrong signal to other regional powers that Tokyo and Seoul give a tacit approval to the development of ballistic missiles (Cambone, 1997).

The next section will examine how the logic of the new framework plays out in MD policies in Japan and South Korea. While this article does not ignore systemic analyses completely, it will show that considering domestic factors is significant in understanding foreign policy behaviors because international pressures alone do not provide sufficient explanations.

4 The case of Japan

4.1 Japan's interest in theater MD in 1993

A series of North Korea's missile tests in May 1990 and May 1993 presented clear threats to the United States as well as Japan (Hildreth, 2008). North Korea's Nodong missile, tested in 1993, would be able to attack Japan in approximately 10 min. According to North Korean defectors' statements, Pyongyang was eager to develop ballistic missiles to target the US bases in Japan and Korea (Daily Yomiuri, 1998). Japan's Defense White Paper immediately recognized North Korea's ballistic missiles as serious security problems.

An elite division was not obvious with respect to the existence of missile threats from North Korea. The majority of policy officials were shocked by North Korea's missile test in 1993 and argued that existing

first-generation Patriot interceptor systems could not offer comprehensive protection against ballistic missiles. Japan immediately showed interest in the US Theater MD (TMD). Chief of Defense Agency, Keisuke Nakanishi, recognized the necessity of TMD and stated that Japan would consider cooperating with the United States.[2] Seiroku Kajiyama, one of the influential figures in the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), stated that Japan should have legislation to enable its military force to provide for all emergency defense situations.[3]

After the North Korea's missile test, Japan launched a joint research project with the United States. In September 1993, Japan and the United States established the bilateral United Staes–Japan TMD Working Group (TMDWG) to examine technical requirements for MD and potential cooperation between the two countries. In December 1993, the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) announced a plan to replace an existing defense policy that was outlined in 1976 with a new strategy, noting that the existing defense framework was too outdated to deal with new missile threats. The new defense policy was designed to reinforce Japan's air defense capability of tracking and shooting down enemy missiles. While Japanese Air Self Defense Force (JASDF) was paying attention to a domestically driven program, Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF), which already had the platforms such as Aegis ships, showed interest in the joint research project with the United States. JDA promptly noted that an area for possible cooperation with the United States was a sea-based system or the Navy Theater Wide (NTW) program (Cronin *et al.*, 1999, p. 172). This result reflected the JMSDF's preference; Japan's geography as an island state and the government's consideration for creating opportunities for Japanese companies to participate in developing MD technology (Kaneda *et al.*, 2007, p. 55).

Japanese leaders did not face major economic constraints that might hamper Japan's effort to work with the United States. Japan invested constant effort to the study of technical viability. Japan and the United States met 12 times after they created the TMD working group in 1993 until they replaced it with the bilateral study of ballistic MD (BMD) in 1994 (Oros, 2008, p. 159). Between 1995 and 1998, the Japanese

2 Keisuke Nakanishi's comments during the meeting with US Defense Secretary Les Aspin, 27 September 1993.

3 Seiroku Kajiyama, 16 July 1997.

government spent 560 million yen (about 7.3 million dollars) for the study of BMD (Kyoto News Service, 1998).

4.2 A rocky road to the US MD system, 1994–99

The Japanese government confronted growing economic and legal challenges as it tried to improve cooperation with the United States in the late 1990s. One major obstacle included economic constraints. Japan was planning to participate in the NTW/TMD program designed by the United States in the summer of 1997, but it had to defer its participation because of a defense budget cut. The MD research had required the Japanese government to increase defense spending by sacrificing vital military projects. It was a great burden for the Japanese government to add high-priced items like MD to the existing defense budget that was already 'crowded with other procurement plans' (Green, 1995, p. 137). Experts estimated that if Japan participated in the US MD, Japan would have to spend about 10 billion dollars on the MD project for four to five years, which would take approximately one-fourth of the total military expenditure in Japan (*New York Times*, 1997). The Japanese government and the leading party proactively sought more funding for technological research on the MD project to assure the US partner of its commitment. Taku Yamasaki, head of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)'s Policy Research Council, told the US officials that although the Japanese government was not able to receive enough funding for TMD, they would draw up an additional request in the budget meeting of the Diet to secure the MD project.[4] Nevertheless, JDA did not receive enough finance for the TMD study.

Japan also faced legal obstacles to promote TMD research. As scholars have argued, Japan's military development, even if it meant defense, was circumscribed by domestic regulations (Berger, 1993; Katzenstein and Okawara, 1993). The development and deployment of MD would go against the Japanese constitution that forbids collective defense arrangements. One of the key questions is whether the system will be operated solely by Japan or jointly operated with the United States (Oros, 2008, p. 167). For now, a joint operation is preferable because the United States has more advanced technology than Japan (Kaneda *et al.*,

4 Taku Yamasaki, 27 May 1998.

2007, p. 86). Although some officials have argued that Japan's participation in TMD is designed particularly to protect the nation, coordinating with the United States could make Tokyo provide satellite information and perhaps military assistance for the United States with respect to the security of US friends and allies (Jimbo, 2002, p. 58; Fouse, 2003, p. 3). Moreover, Japan's participation in TMD runs contrary to the 1969 Diet resolution that restricts the use of outer space only to peaceful purposes. The fundamental issue is how to interpret peaceful – whether it means non-military, non-aggressive, or defensive. BMD challenges the concept of a peaceful use since there is little doubt that the system is military, including an offensive measure to destroy adversaries' missiles in space.

Some Japanese elites, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, evinced concern because MD would deteriorate bilateral relations with China and instigate an arms race in Northeast Asia. Japan's cooperation with the United States to develop MD systems would cause China to view Japan's intention as offensive (Urayama, 2000). In fact, China began its own MD capability with the help of Russia in response to the US-led MD programs. China has deployed Hong Qi 10 and Hong Qi 18, similar to the US Patriot systems, to intercept short- and medium-ranged ballistic missiles (Kaneda *et al.*, 2007, p. 27). However, opponents of TMD in Japan argued that the missile threats from China were overestimated (Jimbo, 2002, p. 60).

An elite division in Japan was not obvious although some policy elites in Japan were suspicious about TMD. In fact, the majority of Japanese elites in the government agencies advocated TMD. Moreover, because of Japan's political turmoil, leaders who were politically weak and originally against MD had to comply with the majority of elites in a different political party that supported the MD. Drastic changes in the party systems in 1993 brought an end to the 38-year domination of LDP and the political upheaval changed the Japanese politics to a great extent. Political coalitions became norms such that even an unthinkable coalition between right-wing LDP and left-wing Japan Socialist Party (JSP) occurred in 1994 (Inoguchi and Jain, 1997). Because of unexpected political turmoil between 1993 and 1994, Japan had four different prime ministers within 11 months.

As a result, the Japanese government, under the socialist party's leader, made constant effort to increase cooperation with the United States. In 1994, JSP joined LDP's political coalition to replace the prime

minister, and Tomiichi Murayama, the head of the Socialist party, came into office. JSP, established in 1955, regarded Japanese Self-Defense Force as unconstitutional, opposed the United States–Japan alliance, and supported unarmed neutrality. In line with JSP's principles, most members of the party were critical of TMD.[5] However, after Murayama headed the government in 1994, JSP no longer held ideological principles tenaciously. The Socialist party supported the Murayama administration's proposals to purchase Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) and Patriot missiles in 1995, critical elements for the MD systems (Pyle, 1996, p. 160). Originally, JSP declined JDA's budget to buy AWACS and patriot equipment in 1993, arguing that Japan did not need to upgrade the military in the post-Cold War era (Daily Yomiuri, 1993). The change in the Socialist party was caused in part by their desire to hold on to political power in the administration by soothing LDP in the political coalition. LDP, promoting alliance with the United States, dominated the Murayama cabinet as well as the Diet's security committee. Because of the pressure of their conservative partners, the Socialists abandoned their principles and opened a door for Japan to step into the US-led MD programs.

However, Japan's continuous political turmoil made policy elites careful about increasing the budget for MD research. Ryutaro Hashimoto, an LDP politician, became Prime Minister after Murayama resigned in January 1996 and LDP took the head of the government back. However, it was not able to keep a firm grip over the Diet. Like JSP during the Murayama era, LDP, which did not hold a majority in the upper House, had to accommodate the Socialist party and the New Party Sakigake (Pioneers) that threatened to leave the governing coalition. The Hashimoto government faced bureaucratic obstacles for an MD project as the Diet cut the defense budget in 1997. The political struggle among coalition partners made the Japanese government cautious about a budget increase for MD research. However, Japan tried to improve the research as government officials and LDP members envisioned the growing role of Japan in the United States–Japan alliance after they signed a new security guideline in 1997. Accordingly, JDA

5 The Socialist Party argued that TMD would go against the 1969 Diet resolution and a few members asserted that Japan did not need missile defense against North Korea because the two countries could improve bilateral relations.

proposed an ambitious plan to increase the budget to one billion yen (about 13 million US dollars) for 1998, but the budget plan was rejected.

North Korea's test on a long-ranged missile in 1998 had a huge impact on Japan. It aroused public concerns about Japan's vulnerability to ballistic missile attacks and changed the key point of elites' debate. The major issue of discussion between elites was not why TMD was necessary for Japan, but how effective TMD would be. After North Korea's unexpected missile test, in August 1998, the Japanese government received an approval from the Diet to step up the research by allocating 960 million yen (almost 13 million US dollar) for TMD research. Moreover, the Japanese government finally announced the pursuit of the TMD with the United States that it had planned on for a few years. Japan would have joined the US programs in the end because of increasing threats from North Korea's ballistic missiles.[6] However, the government delayed its participation owing to financial, legal, and political constraints.

4.3 Remaining domestic constraints after 1999

Even after Japan agreed to participate in the US-led MD, economic constraints made its participation limited to research for several years (Samuels, 2007, p. 104). Japanese elites noted that bilateral cooperation on BMD should remain purely at the research stage and further discussions were needed before the government would launch an actual development and deployment. There remained a significant question over the cost and benefit of the US MD, and Japan's stagnant economy made it even more difficult for the government to convince Diet members and the general public (Funabashi, 2000, p. 140; Jimbo, 2002, p. 60).

After the Japanese government completed the joint BMD study with the United States in 2003, Japan moved on to build the MD systems. The government spent about 1–1.7 billion dollars annually from 2004 to 2009 in a technology build-up and programs for continuous research and development, constituting around 2.5% of Japan's defense budget (Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2008, p. 7). Japan is now cooperating with the United States to develop two-tier systems, including a Sea-Based Midcourse Defense (SMD) system, previously NTW, and

6 Author's interview with former military personnel in Tokyo, Japan, 28 June 2010.

land-based Patriot missiles. JMSDF has obtained Raytheon's sea-based Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) that constitutes sea-based upper-tier BMD systems, while JASDF has deployed Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) units in Iruma air base, completing low-tier systems to protect the Tokyo metropolitan area. Japanese Aegis-equipped destroyers *Myoko* and *Kirishima* successfully launched SM-3 and obliterated ballistic missile targets in Hawaii in 2009 and 2010, respectively (Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2011, p. 6). Japan has been cooperating with the United States to create next-generation interceptor missiles, SM-3, since 2006. It will have to bear 1.2 billion dollars to complete this project by 2014 and the United States will spend 1.5 billion dollars.

However, Japan has economic obstacles to overcome. Its defense budget has gradually decreased in the past several years which in the end can create a negative influence on the development of some MD programs. Since the Democratic Party came into office in 2009, Japan has considered the reduction of spending on MD. Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa told the US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that the technological development of BMD did not look optimistic because Tokyo did not have enough money.[7] In light of this, Japan has been tightening their defense budget for other defense projects, such as upgrading F-15 fighter jets and tanks.

Moreover, Japan still faces major legal and constitutional impediments. Although the Basic Space Law entered into force in August 2008 and Japan lifted a ban on the use of space for defensive purposes, Article 9 of the constitution has precluded Japan's seamless cooperation with the United States. Since collective defense operations are still problematic, whether or not Japan would intercept missiles targeting the United States creates constant debates among Japanese policy planners. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, an advocate of changing the peace constitution, created a council on a legal basis to offer recommendations on the right of collective defense in 2007. However, this task was not completed because of his party's political defeat in the upper house election and Abe's abrupt resignation. His successors were not able to follow-up on this attempt to amend the constitution and the public was reluctant to accept constitutional changes.

7 Toshimi Kitazawa, 21 October 2009.

5. The case of South Korea

5.1 South Korea's confusing position, 1998–2002

Although North Korea's conventional military forces and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) created constant external pressures for South Korea, Korean elites had dissimilar views about the nature of the North Korean threat (see Karsten, 1976; Walt, 1987; David, 1991; Herrmann and Fischerkeller, 1995; Weitsman, 2004). During the Kim Dae Jung administration (1998–2002), political dynamics in Korea were characterized as a division between progressive and conservative elites. The progressives, who were mostly in the Democratic Party and the Uri Party, understood the change of power dynamics in the Korean peninsula. The economic capability of South Korea is 20 times larger than that of North Korea and the former spends three times more in military than the latter whose weapons are mostly outdated. Although perceived threats from North Korea still exist, they are not as prominent as before since South Korea has already exceeded the North in its economic capacity, political stability, and military capability (Suh, 2007).

On the other hand, conservative elites, who were mostly in the Grand National Party, understood that even though South Korea achieved an overwhelming economic superiority over the North, it was still vulnerable to North Korea's aggressions, conventional forces, and WMD. North Korea still believes that the use of force will work to serve its political and ideological purposes. Between June 1998 and 2002, North Korean submarines and patrol ships crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea and engaged in short battles with South Korean navy. Moreover, North Korea detonated nuclear devices and conducted ballistic missile tests.

The two political factions suggested different policy options with respect to TMD. The progressives were opposed to the US MD, whereas the conservatives were supportive. Although recognizing potential threats from ballistic missiles in North Korea, progressive elites believed that the US MD systems would only exacerbate tensions in the Korean peninsula and undermine Seoul's relations with Pyongyang. They believed that TMD would make South Korea rely more on the United States and therefore the nation would not be able to wield political leverage over Pyongyang (Horowitz, 2004–2005). Such an option did not serve

progressive elites' interest in improving economic and political cooperation with North Korea. On the other hand, conservative elites believed that the MD was a feasible option for South Korea that did not possess enough capability to defend against North Korea's ballistic missiles. Kim Jong Pil, a leading conservative figure, stated that the US MD was purely defensive and there was no point of objecting to it.[8]

Progressive and conservative elites were debating whether or not North Korea should be identified as an enemy. The progressives argued that since bilateral relations between two Koreas improved drastically, North Korea should be considered as a political and economic partner. However, the conservatives claimed that since the Korean War was not technically over and North Korea did not give up its plan to overthrow the South Korean government, Pyongyang should be regarded as an adversary. Such debates were sensational because North Korea had undoubtedly been an enemy during the Cold War era and this revealed a drastic change in South Korean society.

Korean elites showed irreconcilable differences with respect to their views of North Korea, and the publication of defense white papers was halted for a few years.[9] The elite fragmentation prevented South Korea from joining the US MD, although the country was without an alternative option. Defense Minister Cho Seong Tae stated that the ROK government was not planning to participate in the US MD systems.[10] His successors delivered similar remarks and explained that MD programs were not beneficial because they would offend neighbors. Seoul expressed apprehension about the deployment of MD systems in Asia. The 1999 Defense White Paper noted that Japan's cooperation with the United States in the TMD project would cause conflicts between the United States and Japan, on the one hand, and China, on the other hand (ROK Ministry of National Defense, 1999, pp. 29–30).

The South Korean government's remarks on the US MD created confusion. During his trip to Russia in February 2001, President Kim Dae Jung agreed with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to make a joint announcement that the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty should be preserved to maintain the stability of Asia. Russia strongly opposed the US

8 Kim Jong Pil, 14 September 2001.

9 Author's interview in Seoul, South Korea, 17 June 2006.

10 Cho Seong Tae, 20 February 2001.

MD systems, arguing that the programs would violate the existing treaty. South Korea's behavior was seen as an attempt to support Russia and a challenge to the United States. A few days later, the ROK government explained that the joint announcement was a mistake caused by miscommunication and misunderstanding of government agencies. In March 2001 when President Kim went to Washington for a summit meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs who had accompanied the president revealed in the press conference that Seoul had expressed its rejection to the US MD. The South Korean government hastily corrected the Foreign Minister's remarks and noted that they did not represent the official view of the Republic. The Foreign Minister also retracted his comments and said that Seoul had not made a decision yet and was still carefully reviewing the possibility of joining the MD. However, this incident proved that South Korea was indifferent to the US programs. Later on, the Minister resigned, taking responsibility for causing a political blunder.

5.2 The development of indigenous programs, 2003–2007

The elite division in South Korea existed in the Roh Moo Hyun government (2003–2007). Progressive and conservative elites were still debating how to perceive North Korea and what policies should be employed. However, the influence of elite fragmentation was minimal in this time period because progressive elites consolidated their political foothold and dominated the process of making foreign policies.

South Korea finally decided to pursue its MD programs. Progressive policy elites were still opposed to the US regional MD, but they understood the necessity of deterrence and defense against ballistic missiles in North Korea. President Roh, who promoted a concept called 'self-reliant defense' and tried to improve an independent role of the Korean forces, decided to design an independent MD program. In 2003, the Roh government stated a plan to develop a Korean-style MD program, the Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD). The introduction of the Korean MD looked as if Korea would ultimately mesh with the US regional BMD structure since some anti-missile technologies were compatible with the US systems. However, the Roh government rejected this view and emphasized the 'independent role' of KAMD. A classified document circulated among officials revealed that the KAMD was

designed to improve the independent warfare capabilities of Korea instead of an attempt to collaborate with the US-led BMD (Korea Herald, 2006). The progressive government did not ignore the domestic atmosphere that was not in favor of the US MD. When the US Forces Korea (USFK) upgraded Patriot batteries in Kwangju in 2004, civic groups initiated protests in front of the US air force bases and clashed with the police. A public survey also demonstrated that the South Korean public was not sympathetic to the US BMD. More than half of the respondents were opposed to the US systems while only 32% approved them (Korea Herald, 2001). When USFK deployed patriot missiles and Aegis ships in the peninsula, the Seoul government clarified that it had nothing to do with the deployment.

The progressive leader had a problem to extract resources to develop indigenous MD projects at the outset, but was able to gradually increase a budget for KAMD. The government launched an SAM-X program to replace aging Nike Hercules, by spending 1.5 billion dollars in total on 48 advanced patriot missiles, launch modules, and relevant radar systems. However, with a limited budget, Seoul had to purchase the second-hand 20-year-old PAC-2 from Germany that were cheaper than PAC-3 from the United States. The entire KDX-III program is expected to cost 2.8 billion dollars or more, and the government has requested 210 SM-2 block interceptors and associated equipment, valued approximately at 372 million dollars. The command center and radars that provide data to interceptor systems are budgeted at 240 million dollars.

When asked whether South Korea would tap into the US MD, Korean officials responded that the government could not afford such exorbitant MD technologies. In particular, progressive elites claimed that they decided to forgo the US regional programs because of the cost. When South Korea increased a budget to develop MD capacities, the focus was placed merely on the independent programs. While South Korea has already maximized the spending on its own MD policy, the United States demands the upper-tier program, including Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) that would be worth more than 15 billion dollars. The considerable cost of upper-tier system steered Seoul away even more from the regional BMD.

As a result, South Korea continuously emphasized the importance of Korean anti-missile projects. If completed, the indigenous programs will allow South Korea to track and destroy SRBMs without the help of the

United States. In terms of radars, South Korea has developed networks that enable the nation to locate ballistic missiles. To satisfy radar equipment, the Republic is considering the purchase of Green pine by Israeli radar systems, X-band radars by American Raytheon, or M3R by French Thales. It is reported that agencies in the Ministry of National Defense prefer non-US companies because they could transfer more technology (Aviation Week and Space Technology, 2009). In terms of interceptors, South Korea has developed *Cheolmae II*, Russian-style medium-ranged surface to air missiles. The South Korean navy is equipped with the Korean Destroyer Experimental (KDX). The first Aegis destroyer KDX-III *King Sejong* has the combination of advanced Aegis radar and combat system with AN/SPY-1 radar and carries SM-2 surface-to-air-missiles. Two more KDX-III vessels will be launched by 2012.

5.3 Interest in cooperating with the United States, 2008–present

The fragmentation of elites existed during the Lee Myung Bak administration (2008–present), but its influence was only minimal because President Lee and conservative elites prevailed in the government. After Lee came into office, South Korea acknowledged mounting threats from North Korea and took a tough stance. The conservative Lee government believed that unconditional economic assistance had not prevented North Korea's provocations and demanded more concessions from North Korea in exchange for economic generosity. Critics in the Democratic Party, a major progressive faction, accused the incumbent government of destroying North–South cooperation. They argued that economic and humanitarian assistance should continue to flow into North Korea because there were no better options than cooperation. However, in 2010, the sinking of a South Korean corvette ship that was reportedly caused by a North Korean torpedo and North Korea's surprise attacks against the South Korean naval base in Yeonpyong bolstered the Lee government's tough position. A public survey also demonstrated that most of the South Koreans felt insecure after a series of North Korea's provocative actions (Lee and Jeong, 2010).

South Korea's MD policy revealed subtle changes as the Lee administration and conservative politicians emphasized the importance of

alliance with the United States. Because of Lee's political orientation, many people expected that Seoul would be supportive of the BMD. As expected, one of the Lee's policy advisors made a controversial remark that Seoul should be flexible enough to leave doors open for the US programs. The government also decided to spend more on military projects related to MD. The Republic planned to complete a center for command, control, and communication by 2012 and signed a contract with Raytheon to upgrade Patriot SAM-X programs. In October 2010, the Ministry of National Defense noted that South Korea was considering cooperation with the United States over regional MD systems. Defense Minister Kim Tae-young confirmed that the two countries were discussing ways to share information.[11] Although Defense Ministry has cautiously ruled out joining the US programs, the Lee government has implemented a more flexible approach to BMD than the previous Roh government. Korea under the conservative leader completed the purchase of Patriot missiles, which had been cancelled in the previous government, and publicly discussed coordination with the United States over BMD.

Extracting resources to cooperate with the United States was not easy for South Korea because of its limited budget packed with KAMD projects. However, the conservatives were less reluctant than the progressives to shoulder financial burdens in anti-missile projects. Unlike the progressive administration, the Lee government signed an agreement with the United States to improve cooperation in April 2011. South Korea is now seeking ways to provide sites for ballistic early-warning radars and even considers sharing the cost of US BMD systems deployed in the Korean peninsula (*Defense News*, 2008).

The US MD systems may still look unattractive to South Korean policy planners because main technologies are still questionable and not suitable for the terrain of the Korean peninsula. However, bilateral cooperation is not impossible in the future since the indigenous MD systems can be inter-operable with US facilities. Although the Korean infrastructure, focusing on low-tier anti-missile programs, offers a partial armament against short-ranged missile threats, the nation shows interest in moving toward multi-layered systems. General Walter Sharp, commander of the USFK, stated that South Korea should develop both upper and lower-tier MD systems that would improve the protection of

11 Kim Tae-young, 23 October 2010.

the peninsula in all levels and work with the US high-altitude BMD.[12] Hwang Jin-Ha, a lawmaker in the conservative Grand National Party, also stated that joining the high-altitude BMD network was essential to protect the nation's satellites and communication systems in space.[13]

6. Comparison of Japan and South Korea

This study has explored MD policies by Japan and South Korea over 20 years. The model of domestic hurdles that delineates two domestic elements has been tested to explain policy behaviors by the two Asian states (Table 2).

In Japan, there was a mixed influence from domestic hurdles. In 1993, after North Korea tested its Nodong missile, Japan started a working group on TMD. An elite fragmentation was not obvious, and social and economic constraints were minimal when Japan initiated the program. According to the framework of domestic hurdles, an effective balancing response is expected if there are no domestic obstacles. Japan's behavior in the first case was similar to the effective balancing. Japan was enthusiastic in having 12 meetings with the United States and seemed ready to work with the United States.

However, as Japan increased cooperation with the United States, it confronted increasing legal and economic obstacles. Between 1994 and 1998, an elite fragmentation existed because some government officials believed that external missile threats were exaggerated. However, the elite division did not exert a clear influence on the delay of TMD projects and cooperation with the United States. On the other hand, Japan faced serious economic constraints when it tried to increase a budget for TMD research. Legal impediments also hampered Japan's participation in the US MD. As a result, Japan was planning to join the US regional MD programs in 1997, but it had to defer the plan. Only after North Korea's missile test in 1998, did Japan finally agree to participate in the US MD systems. Social obstacles with a marginal influence of an elite division caused Japan's procrastination in cooperating with the United States. It is similar to a slow balancing response that is caused by the combination

12 Walter Sharp, 25 February 2009.

13 Hwang Jin-Ha's remarks (*Defense News*, 2008).

Table 2 A comparison of Japan and South Korea: domestic hurdles

	Japan			South Korea		
	1993	1994–1998	1999–present	1998–2002	2003–2007	2008–present
Elite division	Not obvious	Obvious marginal influence	Obvious marginal influence	Obvious Influential	Obvious not influential	Obvious not influential
Social obstacles	Not exist	Influential	Influential	Not exist	Influential	Marginal influence

of an elite cohesion and social obstacles in the domestic hurdle framework.

After 1999, the main debate among policy elites was not the existence of external threats but the technical feasibility of BMD. Elites were divided not because they had different views on the existence of external threats but because they disagreed on whether BMD could successfully provide defense against ballistic missiles. An elite division had only minimal or negligible effect on Japan's MD policy. On the other hand, social impediments prevented the Japanese government from moving beyond the research stage. Japan's stagnant economy made it even more difficult to increase the spending on the development of BMD. Legal and constitutional problems also worked as major impediments. Since the concept of MD challenged Japan's pacifist constitution, the procedure to legalize every step in the development was extremely cumbersome. Importantly, legal problems might occur if Japan shared information with the United States to detect ballistic missiles flying to the third country and Tokyo had to launch offensive measures to intercept an enemy's missiles. As a result, Japan's behavior in this time period bears a close similarity to slow balancing driven by social obstacles and an elite cohesion in the model of domestic hurdles.

In South Korea, policy elites were clearly divided in interpreting North Korea. Under the Kim administration between 1998 and 2002, an elite division was obvious and influential while social constraints did not exist. The policy community discussed whether or not North Korea was an enemy to South Korea and halted the publication of defense white papers for a few years. As a result, an elite division prevented South Korea from taking any positive actions with respect to BMD even though Seoul did not have any available alternative options. The second

and third cases revealed that an elite fragmentation was not influential because leaders in one political faction dominated the process of making policies. Therefore, in the second case under the Roh Moo Hyun government, progressive elites were dominant. They chose to develop independent MD systems in line with their political orientation. In the third case under the Lee Myung Bak administration, conservative elites prevailed and tried to improve alliance relationship with the United States. South Korea became flexible in cooperating with the United States and even considered introducing upper-tier systems that it had avoided during the Roh government. In the second and the third cases, leaders in South Korea could not extract resources with ease in developing US-guided MD because the government was occupied with KAMD. However, the conservative Lee administration showed a willingness to pay the cost of cooperating with the United States.

7. Conclusions

There are at least three avenues for future research that might help to improve the framework of domestic hurdles. First, the cases of Japan and South Korea have demonstrated that an elite division was not always influential on a state's final policy behavior. In terms of Japan, the majority of policy elites, particularly in LDP and government agencies, were dominant in the MD policies although some critical voice existed. However, when combined with social obstacles, the elite division can work as a useful variable. In Japan's case, policy-makers who were opposed to US MD systems used legal obstacles and the peace constitution to justify their opposition. In South Korea, dominant progressive elites during the Roh government used economic constraints to justify their opposition against the US regional programs. In other words, elites can manipulate social obstacles to serve their political interest and strengthen their positions. While economic and legal constraints can preclude policy elites from implementing their chosen policies, they can also work as a useful tool for politicians. For future research, it might be valuable to examine interactions between the elite fragmentation and social obstacles and identify under what conditions policy elites utilize social obstacles.

The second is related to the South Korean case where the influence of an elite fragmentation was minimal. Although an elite division existed in South Korea for 15 years, the effect of the elite division was obvious

only during the Kim Dae Jung administration (1998–2002). This article has explained why the elite fragmentation has marginal influences on each case, but it still requires more research to offer systematic analyses for why the elite division does not have a direct influence on state behavior. The scope and the definition of an elite division could go beyond examining how elites assess external threats and what policy options they employ toward threats. It might be useful to examine the degree of fragmentations, the number of factions, and the cultural legacies of political factions.

Third, future research would involve a comparison with other countries that consider US MD systems. Poland and the Czech Republic in Eastern Europe and Israel, Kuwait, and Turkey in the Middle East provide good case studies. One main purpose of deploying MD systems in these countries is to meet potential threats from Iran, while the degree of cooperation with the United States varies across states. Although the Czech Republic withdrew from the original plan to participate in BMD, it still constitutes a valuable case that can be compared with Poland that shares some similar external variables. Eventually, exploring a variety of countries would help to refine the framework of domestic hurdles and perhaps increase its empirical validity.

Domestic hurdles are certainly not the only elements that cause MD policies by Japan and South Korea. Major schools of thoughts including neorealism, liberalism, and constructivism can offer explanations. However, neorealism is insufficient to explain when systemic pressures override domestic politics and why states employ specific foreign policy options. North Korea's missile threats have required both Japan and South Korea to employ MD programs, but they have chosen dissimilar options. Liberalism is indeterminate because it focuses merely on domestic politics as main causes of a state's behavior and therefore it cannot explain why states even consider the necessity of MD programs. Constructivism turns to identities and military culture that cause disparate policy options by Tokyo and Seoul. However, it cannot explain why South Korea experienced subtle changes in MD policies despite constant identities and military culture and why Japanese anti-military culture is not always dominant in MD policy.

This article clarifies the causal effect of domestic politics on a state's policy behavior and explores when and how domestic politics matter. Scholars acknowledge that the international system in which states exist

makes an ongoing causal variable and that the international structure constrains and disposes behavior but does not determine it. As Jennifer Sterling-Folker states, 'domestic processes inhibit actors from ever objectively judging choices, behaviors, and outcomes, and could even serve as a barrier to their survival during times of major external crisis' (Sterling-Folker, 1997, pp. 19–20). This article demonstrates that there is room for domestic processes to influence state behavior in international politics.

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