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Assessing Japan's self-perceived national identities and integration in Asia

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- Abstract/Sintesi Introduttiva -

Il ruolo dell'identità nazionale giapponese è stato determinante nel condizionare le relazioni internazionali del paese nella regione. Costruita sotto le spinte di modernizzazione di fine '800, quando il paese ha dovuto re-inventare se stesso all'interno della dicotomia Occidente-Oriente, durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale è stata soggetta alle percezioni Orientaliste degli Stati Uniti, che hanno guidato la costruzione dell'immagine di "Altro". Nel dopoguerra queste percezioni sono state autoassimilate dal governo giapponese e proiettate verso la società nella sua volontà di ricostruire l'identità giapponese all'interno di coordinate pacifiste. Parallelamente, il sempre maggior ruolo del Giappone nei processi d'integrazione in Asia nelle forme di regionalismo e regionalizzazione, è contrastato dalla rinascita del sentimento nazionalista, soprattutto dagli anni 90, visto come reazione all' "identità pacifista" e recupero di elementi propri dell'esperienza militarista e fascista giapponese.

La tesi vuole dimostrare come le costruzioni d'identità, da una parte con il vittimismo e dall'altra con l'autoresponsabilizzazione sono sia ostacoli per la politica estera giapponese sia negazione della complessità dell'ibridismo culturale, politico, sociale giapponese per giustificare determinate politiche sociali e l'"unicità" giapponese. E' per questo che ho parlato di identità giapponesi (plurale), essendo questo un concetto multiforme e non statico, che si evolve nel tempo.

Fino a che punto la costruzione dell'identità ha influenzato, negativamente o positivamente, lo sviluppo di politiche regionali da parte del governo giapponese? Come è stata creata, assimilata e proiettata verso l'esterno? Qual è stata la posizione e il ruolo degli altri paesi dell'Asia Orientale all'interno dell'evoluzione storica di questa identità?

Come si è evoluto il rapporto tra identità giapponese e regionalismo asiatico? L'identità giapponese è stata di ostacolo anche allo sviluppo di una identità regionale?

La mia tesi è volta a rispondere a queste domande, che oggi più che mai ricoprono un'importanza notevole sia per lo studio della regione, sia in una prospettiva più ampia, in cui l'Asia diventa specchio di altri tentativi di integrazione regionale.

Attraverso una iniziale analisi storica, che ha voluto concentrarsi sulla prima metà del ventesimo secolo, e attraverso l'applicazione delle teorie della scuole post-coloniale e socio-costruttivista, ho identificato le cause e i modi di attuazione del processo di "Orientalizzazione" del Giappone, già iniziato dal periodo Meiji, e portato avanti dagli Stati Uniti. Paradossalmente, il Giappone usò armi di propaganda che corrispondevano a l'immagine che l'esterno voleva attribuire alla nazione e, allo

stesso modo, la propaganda Americana si è focalizzata sull'uso di stereotipi sia per descrivere se stessi (come emblema di un sistema libero e democratico), sia per il Giappone, in termini negativi. E' in questo preciso momento che l'idea di "Altro", ha posto i due paesi in due direzioni opposte, che hanno autopercepito e autoassimilato dei tratti reputati da loro stessi e confermati dall'"Altro" come distintivi. Ciò è dovuto dalla necessità, per il Giappone come per gli Stati Uniti, di costruire un'identità in modo da giustificare la mobilitazione in tempo di guerra e donare stabilità al paese. Identificando il "nemico" entrambe le nazioni hanno potuto perseguire le loro politiche con il supporto popolare.

Tuttavia, dopo la fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, il cambio di posizionalità del Giappone, da potenza a "oggetto" nelle relazioni internazionali, e i caratteri dell'egemonia statunitense hanno favorito l'auto-colpevolizzazione del Giappone per le azioni commesse durante la guerra attraverso l'accettazione della posizione di inferiorità della nazione.

In questo senso l'imposizione delle politiche americane in campo costituzionale, sociale, economico così come la posizione del paese nella sua prospettiva internazionale hanno visto l'assimilazione giapponese di norme estranee all'identità precedentemente costruita, reputata dagli statunitensi come feudale e anti-democratica.

La maggiore conseguenza di questa politica è stata la creazione, da parte del governo giapponese, di un'identità pacifista giapponese, aiutata da una grande insistenza nelle politiche di aiuto allo sviluppo, dalla rinuncia alla partecipazione nei conflitti e dalla stabilità politica ed economica della nazione, in cambio di una ridotta leadership a livello internazionale e soprattutto regionale.

Frammenti dell'identità precedentemente costruita sono rimasti tuttavia in reazione a questa trasformazione nella costruzione dell'identità nazionale. Questi si sono sviluppate attorno al nazionalismo economico, che riprende caratteri del nazionalismo giapponese e li riadatta alle logiche del profitto, ed etnico, con l'idea dell'unicità del Giappone e dell'esperienza giapponese durante la guerra, l'unico paese ad aver subito l'esperienza del bombardamento atomico.

L'idea centrale di questa identità, che riprende le logiche, gli elementi, i valori costruiti dal Giappone dalla fine dell'800 e che trovò la sua incarnazione nel militarismo giapponese, è il presupposto che i Giapponesi siano "vittime" per motivi collegati alla loro esperienza durante la guerra, per le accuse che sono state loro poste, per l'occidentalizzazione e infine per la crisi economica a partire dagli anni '90.

E' lo stesso tipo di identità che si è affermata dopo l'incidente di Fukushima del Marzo 2011 e la stessa che influenza sia l'opinione pubblica nei confronti della politica, sia lo stesso governo della nazione. E' un'identità che vuole un Giappone più attento a se stesso e più chiuso internazionalmente.

E' in questa ottica che si inserisce la necessità per il Giappone di aprirsi regionalmente. Se da una parte la creazione dell'identità non ha spesso tenuto conto dei cambiamenti sociali, economici, tecnologici che hanno investito la nazione, il Giappone ha subito una trasformazione molto spesso scollegata dalle logiche della politica domestica.

L'aumento del tasso di mortalità e l'invecchiamento demografico, la progressiva perdita di valori di stampo confuciano (come il familismo), l'immigrazione, l'urbanizzazione e la globalizzazione del paese si sono scontrati contro i tentativi sia di ricostruire un'identità "tradizionale", sia di percorrere una strada verso la partecipazione all'idea immaginata d' "identità globale".

Invece, un "identità regionale" era già stata immaginata e costruita ai fini delle politiche egemoniche giapponesi prima e durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale, nella "Sfera di co-prosperità della Grande Asia Orientale" e nella teoria del Panasiatismo. L'Asia Orientale, che nella prima metà del '900 divenne l'incarnazione delle ambizioni espansionistiche giapponesi, continuò dopo la guerra a costituire una regione mantenente lo stampo dell'etica confuciana e delle produzioni artistiche e letterarie buddhiste. Inoltre, l'aumento di interazioni commerciali e culturali, di flussi migratori e d'investimenti dimostra quanto questo processo d'integrazione è già avvenuto. Ho voluto definirlo *regionalizzazione*, in quanto è basato sull'iniziativa dei privati e sui processi involontari, slegati dalle decisioni politiche degli stati. E' diverso quindi dal processo di *regionalismo*, focalizzato invece nel ruolo libero-istituzionalista degli stati nel creare accordi, pannelli, strutture, forum e summits per facilitare e permettere l'attuarsi di una integrazione regionale anche a livello politico. Se entrambi i processi sono avvenuti, con relativo successo, con la nascita dell'Unione Europea, in Asia la trasformazione verso regionalismo e regionalizzazione ha incontrato vari ostacoli. Se le difficoltà del regionalismo dimostrano la rilevanza dell'Identità giapponese nella politica estera del paese in Asia, la regionalizzazione, invece, descrive, attraverso iniziative private e flussi culturali e sociali, come la società giapponese e le sue aspirazioni internazionali non rispecchiano i tentativi di costruzione dell'identità nazionale, ma il volto mutevole di una società globalizzata.

Per analizzare il ruolo del Giappone nel processo ho preso in esame due case studies.

Il primo riguarda il ritorno dell'identità giapponese di vittimismo e il suo impatto nella rivalutazione e recupero di memorie identitarie. I musei dedicati alle forze armate giapponesi e ai bombardamenti atomici di Hiroshima e Nagasaki sono luoghi della memoria che raffigurano il passato identitario giapponese e lo confermano. Questo recupero dell'identità storica mette in pericolo i tentativi di regionalizzazione e regionalismo in Asia.

Simboli di questi conflitti irrisolti sono il neo-nazionalismo crescente nella società e vita politica del paese, l'insistenza sulla sovranità delle isole Senkaku e Takeshima, il senso di unità dato da

incidenti naturali, quali la catastrofe di Fukushima nel Marzo 2011, le visite al tempio Yasukuni da parte di numerosi premier giapponesi. Ad esse si legano le questioni, a lungo affrontate in questa tesi, legate alle atrocità giapponesi durante la guerra, come la questione delle comfort women, il massacro di Nanchino e il problema dei libri di testo destinati all'educazione nelle scuole.

Il secondo case study analizza invece l'impatto del settore agricolo giapponese come ostacolo per i processi d'integrazione economica della nazione e per l'attivazione di accordi bilaterali di libero scambio con altri stati dell'area. Il desiderio dei gruppi industriali di una crescita economica permessa attraverso zone di libero scambio e l'eliminazione delle tariffe commerciali è bloccata e negata attraverso la strumentalizzazione di interessi identitari, legati a un'idea di un'alimentazione "tradizionale" giapponese e al mantenimento dell'autosufficienza agricola del paese. Il settore agricolo si trova infatti in grande difficoltà per la mancanza di manodopera, per la disorganizzazione del terreno coltivabile, per gli enormi costi dovuti alle coltivazioni e per il generale disinteresse verso le politiche agricole. Responsabili di questa disorganizzazione sono sia le riforme americane di privatizzazione della terra durante l'occupazione, sia l'applicazione di un protezionismo radicale che si basa sulla paura di perdere la propria identità e che è volta al mantenimento di ingenti tariffe d'importazione sui prodotti agricoli provenienti dall'estero, specialmente sul riso.

Questi ostacoli per l'integrazione regionale del Giappone in Asia dimostrano il marcato ruolo dell'identità giapponese e la difficoltà nel separarsi da determinate logiche dettate dall'eredità storica, politica e culturale del paese: tentativi di apertura verso la regione da parte giapponese sono stati spesso bloccati da interessi nazionali, slegati dalle sue vere necessità per rilanciare l'economia e dal suo ruolo politico nella regione. Sarà il Giappone capace di distaccarsi dalle sue autopercezioni sulla sua presunta "unicità" e partecipare a una politica più attiva per lo sviluppo della regione?

Introduction

0.1. Objectives

This thesis is aimed at assessing the impact of Japan's national identities on the processes of integration in East Asia. The evolution of Japan's national identity since the post-war period is relevant to understand the different trends in its international relations in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Most of the literature regarding Japan has proved limited answers to the implication of the concept of national identity in the international relations between the different states. Traditional views on Japan's foreign policy have focused instead on security concerns, economic relations, comparative domestic politics and international law. While all these topics are present in my dissertation, I want to analyse them as consequences more than causes of the identity construction process.

Japan is now in a precarious balance between the external and domestic pressure toward its regional integration, the resurging nationalistic sentiment among the population and within the political, economic and social environments, that is leading Japan toward the revival of its wartime national identity through a reaction to the construction of its postwar guiltiness in the victimization of the "Other".

National identity is a set of constructed traditions functional to political intents. However, the creation process has not always started from scratch by the governments, but it also depends on the position of the country as a subject or object of international relations.

European colonization exported its values as symbols of modernity, civilization and prosperity in order to politically justify the control, conquest and exploitation of resources of the conquered countries.

The "Other" is seen automatically as different, and it need to be seen also as inferior, showing the power of the hegemon (a subject in International relations) and the colonized (an object).

After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the fate of Japan was similar to that of the colonized countries. The US forced the creation of a new identity around "Western" values and ideas. Japan, even during the war, was seen as unique in its diversity and after the war the Americans pushed for Japan's recognition of its inferiority and of the victimization of the "Other" inflicted during the war.

These values and stereotypes were assimilated by the country population and by the political elites. Thus, constitutional, economic and political organizations after the WW2 were based on the identification and characterization of values of uniqueness of the Japanese experience, already described by the work of influential social scientists and anthropologists.

While these values and sociological concepts were truly part of the Japanese culture, as linked to the Confucian tradition, they were far from representing the only national identity of Japan. I want to consider this term as plural ("National identities") in order to highlight its manifold nature and depart from traditional views that see National Identity as one and immutable. In the case of Japan, national identity is a "multidimensional construct"¹. If we can accept the multiplicity of identities coming from the society, the individual, religious beliefs, ethnicity etc. we have to transcend the organisational nature of the state and think about the origins of these identity-making processes. Similarly, aimed by political consideration and by the contact with the "Other", Japan's path toward modernization in the Meiji Period was in the persecution of two trends towards the construction of its national identity: one aimed at the modernization and the other at the evaluation and the creation of a tradition; both aimed at projecting outside the image of a strong, modern country. Similarly, the post-war period, that is the starting point of this dissertation, saw from one side the creation by the Japanese government of a national identity based on guiltiness and defeat, which could prepare the ground for the constitutional, sociological and economical reforms accomplished by the Americans and, from the other, the increased interest in the construction of an identity based on the sense of *victimhood*, where the Japanese self-portrayed themselves as victims, as the influential book by James Orr *The Victim as a Hero* explains.² With these two identity trends Japan justified its political aims and its stance toward integration in Asia.

But why did I link the concept national identity to integration?

The different cultural influences coming from East Asia determined the hybrid character of the Japanese culture, society, economics and politics. Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, together with Buddhist literature and art (since the 6th century A.D.) and the development of a writing system (since the 1st century A.D.) came from East Asia, mainly China and South Korea. The list of cultural elements imported by Japan and re-adapted is infinite.

Nowadays, Japan and China are the two economic powers of the Asia Pacific region and Japan's economic as well as cultural, political relations with other countries in the area remained strong for centuries. Early attempts of regional integration with the 1940s desire to create a bloc of Asian nations were realised with the idea of the Greater Asian-Co-Prosperty Sphere, with strong militaristic and nationalistic emphasis on the predominance of Japan over the others. After the war, East Asia became a market for new Japanese products and the target of the development aid policies of the Japanese government. FDI and other forms of economic interdependence increased as well.

However real patterns of regional integration as experienced in Europe failed as consequence of the

¹ Smith, Anthony D. (1991) *National identity*, University of Nevada Press p. vii

² Orr, James (2001) *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity*, Hawaii University Press pp.14 - 35

lack of support for economic liberalization.

The aim of this thesis is thus to present how national identities influenced the push for the opening of the country or determined its closure and the loss of the one-time occasion to be the leader and the guide of the integration process. The assumptions around the idea of Japanese "uniqueness" are undermining Japan's foreign policy as much as the construction of identities presents a paradox of a country put in-between its hybrid nature and its continuous attempts to identify its distinctive characteristics.

0.2. International Relations Theories

Theories of International Relations have always been necessary tools to explain most of the issues and topics of global politics. Indeed, viewing International politics and their implications through the lens of abstract theories would prove itself useful in giving an archetypal view of very pragmatic cases, as I will prove in this dissertation. Excluding in this circumstance the different subcategories of every theory I will devote this part only to a general description of the theories and I will assess later their impact and relevance during the analysis of determinate issues.

Realism is the most dominant and the most used I.R. theory since the inter-war period³, and among its key authors and theorists we find Thucydides, Macchiavelli, Hobbes as well as other 20th centuries intellectuals such as Morgenthau, with its influential *Politics Among Nations*, Carr, Niebhur and Bull, who has been exponent of the English School and author of *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in International Politics*.

Realism and neo-realism emphasize the role of the states at the center of the international system (statism). States are the actors, dominated by selfishness and interest, which are in competition with each others for the international predominance in a fragile and precarious balance of powers. The international system is in a condition of absolute anarchy and the realists are distrustful of the perspectives of collaboration between the countries and their organization in forms of transnational or supranational power.

On the other hand, *Liberalism* highlights the role of international and transnational organization in shaping global and domestic politics. The focus here is on the role of the cooperation between states and the perspectives of integration. Thus, the states in this case don't

³ Baylis John, Smith Steve and Owens Patricia (2011) *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, Oxford University Press, p. 86

follow their personal interest, but the ideal prospects of integration, pluralism, interdependence, demonstrated by the expansion of capitalism and the emergence of a global culture and growing interconnectedness that slowly eroded the concepts of state autonomy (authority) and of sovereignty⁴.

As David Mitrany argued: "transnational cooperation was required in order to resolve common problems".⁵ An example is the integrationist model of UE and its creation process, in which states gave up a portion of their state sovereignty for the common good, to resolve common problems.

Marxism has given a substantial contribution to the world of I.R., with the aim of revealing the hidden logics of global capitalism. In Marxism, the "man" gain its role in I.R., in the acting form of the proletariat and in its fight against the exploitation of international capitalism. According to Marxists scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein, history has been defined by the rise and the demise of a series of world systems⁶ with its driving force being the capitalism and the world geographically divided in "Core" states (characterized by democracy, high wages, imports of raw material and consequential export of manufactures, investments) "semi-peripheric" states (dominated by authoritarian governments, low wages and transitional economics) and peripheric states (with absence of democracy and welfare, massive exportations of raw materials and poverty). Marxism thus analyses International politics in the optic of the relations of dependence and exploitation of the periphery and semi-periphery by the core. It was the first theory to focus on the causes and aftermath of globalization as a political and economic movement.

If "man" has been central to the analysis of the Marxist authors, *Social constructivism* focuses instead on the flow of ideas and their influence on global politics. Identities, observations of reality and its social construction, norms, social facts, symbols, rules, concepts, categories⁷ are products of the cultural environment of the states. A prominent figure of the socio-constructivism is Alexander Wendt, who affirms that social construction denaturalizes what is taken for granted and power become the production of identities and interests.

Social constructivism has been applied in the following chapter dealing with the historical legacy of Japan after its occupation and some of the key aspect of its foreign policy afterwards. As Wendt affirms:

⁴ Baylis John, Smith Steve and Owens Patricia (2011) *Ibid.* pg. 106

⁵ Baylis John, Smith Steve and Owens Patricia (2011) *Ibid.* pg. 106

⁶ Wallerstein M. Immanuel (2004) *World-system analysis*, Duke University Press pp. IX - 21

⁷ Baylis John, Smith Steve and Owens Patricia (2011) *Op. Cit.* pg. 106

"[...] As Weber put it, 'one of the important aspects of the 'existence' of a modern state . . . consists in the fact that the action of various individuals is oriented to the belief that it exists or should exist.' Elements of this belief will include a representation of the state's members as a "we" or "plural subject," a discourse about the principles of political legitimacy upon which their collective identity is based, perhaps written down in a Constitution or "Mission Statement," and collective memories that connect them to the state's members in the past."⁸

These Socio-constructivist approaches toward identity creation and assimilation of perceptions match with my personal view in assessing the topic of this dissertation. However, I consider necessary not to forget to apply the other theories of I.R., including the postcolonial school (not very often taken in consideration compared to the great traditional schools of realism and idealism) that I considered essential for my first chapter on the historical analysis of the evolution of self-perceptions on Japan.

Post-colonial school and especially the writings of Edward Said have given its contribution in re-evaluating the influence of western poetry, novels, diaries as sources of information on the nature of colonialism, where non-western culture is transformed by ideas or stereotypes.

In fact, Edward Said's *Orientalism*, in analysing, as we will see, the concepts of "other" and "hegemony" provides an exhaustive way to explain perceptions on Japan's fixed paradigms: identity, homogeneity, closure, hierarchy, honor, family and so on. Sociological approaches like these gave an enormous contribution to my research and to the tone of this thesis.

0.3. Chapter outline

In the first chapter I would like to assess the impact and the evolution of the relationship between Japanese self-perceptions and American Orientalism to demonstrate how values, ideas and elements of the Japanese culture were perceived by the US and, after the end of the Second World War, assimilated by the Japanese political, social and economical environments. To accomplish this, I have extensively analysed texts made out of the Japanese representations of the Other (Chinese and American) and the propaganda literature (Japanese and American) of the war period, in order to give an exhaustive picture of the outstanding work made by the two enemies of that time and in order to understand how they self-perceived their national identity in relationship with the "Other".

The second chapter is focused instead on how the process of assimilation of the American stereotypes changed Japan's politics, economics and society. I will delve from one side into the

⁸ Wendt, Alexander (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press pp. 218-219

theoretical explanation of the concept of nationalism, and its contested characters of "uniqueness", then I will explain the American's role in drafting the Constitution and which effect it had to the construction of a national identity based on the idea of victimhood and on the paradigm of "Japan as a peaceful country". From the other, I will analyse how, beyond a re-orientalised identity, another identity was gradually created by parts of the civil society and of the government to change Japan's political life, economics and society in order to rebuild of Japan's identity and react to the position of inferiority where it was put after the WWII defeat. However, this process of "normalization" of the Japanese role in the international arena is paradoxically sustained by a resurging nationalist sentiment.

The third chapter explains the various implications of national identities in the regional integration of Japan. It assesses the benefits and the limits of the regionalization and regionalism processes in relation with the evolution of key elements of Japan's foreign policy. I will then analyse two case studies where national identity played and still plays a prominent role. The first concerns the issue of Japan's past reconstruction through the use of the country's war memories and its emergence in new nationalistic movements since the early '90. The second case study is instead focused on the impact of national identity concern in the organization and management of the Japanese agriculture sector, a sensitive economic area that has prevented so far a decisive push for trade liberalisation. Both American reforms of the post war period and Japanese agricultural lobbies are responsible for a though protectionist stance toward this sector.

CHAPTER 1

– AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: FROM ORIENTALISM TO RE-ORIENTALISM –

Most of the literature regarding the period of Japan's Nationalism and participation in the Second World War does not take into consideration the impact of the western perceptions and does not deal with the problem of social, political and cultural assimilation of stereotypes, but gives exclusive importance to domestic theories, movements and events, excluding any intrusion of Western countries in Japan's political affairs between the pre-war and post-war periods.

The fact of recognizing different shifts in the Japanese consciousness during these years is important to the process of creation of the national identity, which brought many social issues and paradoxes, nourishing the contemporary idea of Japan as unique. The present chapter aims at giving a comprehensive explanation of the reasons and aftermaths of this process, re-interpreting the historical events in the light of the orientalist ideology. My objective is to demonstrate how elements considered parts of the Japanese culture, society and politics had originated from western stereotypes and with this purpose I will analyse three types of texts that involve different perspectives of the same issue: the influence and effects that different images of Japan had in the Japanese society and how the Japanese reacted to them.

The first type of texts includes the propaganda text of the pre-war and war periods, written both by Japanese in and outside Japan. Most of the sources were efficiently organized and discussed by Peter O' Connor in the ten volumes of *Japanese Propaganda: Selected Readings*, carrying out a work of priceless academic value. Other sources arose from articles, essays of that period like *Far Eastern Survey*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Western Historical Quarterly*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, movies and propaganda articles from newspaper and magazines.

These texts were very useful to compare Japanese and American propaganda from the pre-war and the end of the war and to understand the relation between American Orientalism and Japanese self-perceptions.

The second group taken into consideration includes the books written by western authors that did not reside in Japan but collected sources and elaborated their theories from western studies about the country and comprises the works of Ruth Benedict, John M. Maki and Edwin O. Reischauer.

Their publications had a strong impact on the study of the Japanese society and of the general cultural aspects in the post-war period, continuing the trend of images of the precedent years.

The last group includes the critical studies by Western and Japanese scholarship of the last years (from 1980 to the present days) and illustrates a critical analysis of the issues arisen from the precedent sources, describing, with psychological and sociological theories, different mechanisms within the historical process.

Richard Storry has divided the history of the perceptions of Japan's image in three main phases: Exotic, Menace and Phoenix⁹, starting from the Meiji Period and arriving to the present days.

The first stage is referring to the idea of Japan intended as “exotic”, coming from the classical Greek word *exotikòs*, “outside”, also translated as “unknown”. Two hundred and fifty years of Tokugawa's isolation (*sakoku*) ended in 1853 with the arrival of the black ships and the following Meiji Restoration in 1868¹⁰. Suddenly, the West met the Japanese society and, as other Asian countries in the centuries of Western colonisation, Japan itself was seen as outside, exotic.

Due to the western superiority in the technology, army and economy and the attestation of the daunting facts of the Opium Wars (1839 - 1842 and 1856 -1860) that weakened the Qing dynasty in China, Japan, conscious of the possibility of losing a great part of its political and economic power, had to do nothing but to follow the western path of modernization.

Modernization in Japan is a process that has determined a great debate among many scholars of Japanese studies, contending from one side the idea that cultural elements imported from the West created a superficial pattern and did not change the “basic cultural structure”, and from the other the idea that Japan has always been modern¹¹.

In contrast with these assumptions there is the prejudice that the Japanese are interested in the “new”, only when it is synonymous of “advanced”, with a positive connotation, and that they don't pay attention to the “old” of other countries, as it is explained in Kurt Singer's book *Mirror, Sword and Jewel* (written in the 1930s) that compared the process of assimilation to the “mimicry of animals or the submission of women to new fashion”.¹²

⁹ Storry, Richard (1979) ‘The English-language presentation of Japan’s case during the China Emergency of the late nineteen-thirties’ in Ian Nish and Charles Dunn (eds.), *European Studies on Japan*, Tenterden, Kent, Paul Norbury Publications, Pp. 42-43

¹⁰ Beasley W. G. (1989) ‘The foreign threat and the opening of the ports’ in Jansen B. Marius (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Japan* Pp. 268 -270

¹¹ Storry, Richard (1997) ‘Introduction’ in Kurt Singer (eds.) *Mirror Sword and Jewel* p.13

¹² Singer, Kurt (1973) *Ibid.* p. 98

These prejudices are linked to the idea of modernity as substantially Western, this is an essential factor of Orientalism in the Exotic phase and an important element that will continue to influence the next two phases.

The phase of menace began with the victory of Japan over Russia (1905), the first case in which an Asian country defeated a Western one. It is in this period that the western stereotypes about Japan were supported by the awareness of Japan as a new powerful country and they became a counter measure to prevent the Japanese growing power in the world scenario. In this phase Japan has already the characteristics of both Orient/Occident, but on the one hand it affirms the idea of modernization and industrialization, that, as seen above, is an element of the Western culture¹³, while on the other hand it insists in the idea of Asia with a common cultural background and in the role of Japan as spokesman of its independence and differentiated from the West, as we will see in the first part of this chapter, where I will describe the double shift from a pro-western view to a pan-Asian view in the propaganda writings. This is one of the most evident features of the process of assimilation of Orientalism, which will be illustrated mostly in the second part, where I will investigate the mechanisms of assimilation of the stereotypes through propaganda.

In the third part, where I will explain the final effects and resolutions of this process, it will be taken into consideration the relation between political changes in the post-war period and the cultural analysis of few influential anthropologists and scholars.

Ultimately, in the conclusive part, I will illustrate the effects that the assimilation of the precedent periods had in shaping the Japanese identity and in the idea of “Japan as unique”.

Japan and Modernization

As Samuel Huntington affirmed in his influential book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, modernization is a multiform process that lead to changes in the social, economic, intellectual levels of human society, with its two different factors, the political rationalization and the creation of a national political authority through the national integration and politics of centralization of a country (such as the diffusion of alphabetization), in which the new government created is unlinked to natural or trascendental factors, and the differentiation and development of new specialised public functions (in the legal, military, administrative areas).¹⁴ Following

¹³ Nishihara, Daisuke (2005) ‘Said, Orientalism, and Japan’ in *Alif, Journal of Comparative Poetics* N. 25, Edward Said and Critical Decolonization, January 1, 2005, American University in Cairo Press p.242

¹⁴ Huntington, Samuel (2012) *Ordine politico e cambiamento sociale*, Rubettino Editore, pp.42-47, Translated by Federica Tavernelli, 1st edition 1968, Yale University

Huntington's discourse, modernization comes with great costs for the society and it implies the psychological disintegration of the former institutions and the need of their reconstruction with the identification in new loyalties and new group consciousness(es), or the creation of a base of legitimacy and re-identification with the recovery of old, already existing norms, values, ideas.¹⁵

While Japan refused a political rationalization on Huntington's lines, when the Meiji leaders linked the idea of the state building, from western models, to the godly authority of the Emperor, the disintegration of society that Japan experienced since the arrival of the black ships is accompanied by the necessity of creating a national identity that will eventually recover, after the Meiji Restoration, the values that the government self-identified as "Japanese" in order to politically justify the reforms that were already in force or were about to be made. Some examples were the Imperial family as symbol of national unification, the Confucian ethics of the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyoiku Chokugō*) and the Edo's nativists scholars attempts to retrieve elements of the *Kiki myths* (in the *Kojiki*, 712 , and *Nihon Shoki*, 720) to insist on the divine nature of the emperor ("God Incarnate") and consequentially of the state.¹⁶

With the industrial revolution, the development of capitalism, of science and technology, modernization interested not only active actors, but also passive subjects. If before the industrialization the process of knowledge of the "Other" since the 15th century was, with commerciale routes, the discovery of the American continents and the arrival of the European ships in Calicut in 1498, not essentially in negative terms, but influenced by Rosseau's "Noble savage myth" and the idea of the uncorrupted "Other" compared to the intollerant and selfish European and North American man, the modernization coming from the 18th and 19th centuries revolutions pushed for the myth of the racial superiority of the white man and of his industrial, economic and social system over the others.¹⁷ This process of hegemonic identification of the Other as inferior led to the Japanese interpretation of the West as a model of comparison in the process of the development of the modernization and of the construction of a national identity with the double necessity to seek industrialization and modernization, in the models dictated by the West, and, at the same time, the imposition of a national identity that would permit the self-identification in the supposed "uniqueness" of determinate values retrieved from the past.¹⁸

As Eiji Oguma skillfully admitted, Japanese nationalism thus emerged as a "marriage between the

¹⁵ Huntington, Samuel (2012) *Op. Cit.* pp 49-50

¹⁶ Oguma, Eiji (2002) *A Genealogy of "Japanese" Self-Images*, Trans. by David Askew, Melbourne, Trans Pacific Press pp. XX-XI

¹⁷ Caroli, Rosa and Gatti, Francesco (2004) *Storia del Giappone*, Introduzione pp. 8-11, Editori Laterza

¹⁸ Pyle, Kenneth (1969) *The new generation in Meiji Japan*, Stanford University Press, pp.144-156

ancient Imperial Court and modern western technology"¹⁹

1.1 Propaganda and Orientalism in the Pre-war Period

"The light of Chivalry still illuminates our moral path"

Bushidō, p.1

The pre-war period covers the years of the Sino-Japanese War until the start of the conflict in the World War II. In this period the new bureaucrats and politicians of the post-Meiji Japan felt not only the importance of obtaining support from below to their new policies and arrangements, but they also understood that it was necessary to justify the role and the position of Japan in Asia with the use of the propaganda. This political and cultural medium was not rooted in a single and static vision, but it renewed itself in relation to changing face of the political attitudes of the period. While a strategy of the government and of its sponsored newspaper (mostly Tokyo Times, Japan Mail and Japan Times) during the Meiji period was to hire foreigners in order to champion the new idea of Japan worldwide, at the end of the Taishō period (1930s) the Gaimusho Johobu (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Information Bureau) insisted in Japan-based authors as the spokesman of the nationalism. This measure was eventually changed again in front of the evidence of the natural attitude of the Western audience not to give credit to texts written by “outsiders” and, in a very stereotyped way, incapable to deal with their own political and cultural issues.²⁰

The shifts in the propaganda were also prominently linked to the position of Japan in Asia and to its relation with the Western Powers. For instance, the propaganda against other Asian countries reflected the interest matured by the Japanese elite in the justification of the chauvinism of the Japanese Army during the Sino-Japanese War. Therefore, in this period, China was depicted as an “oriental” country and Japan as an industrialized western country, interpreting the dichotomy Western = advanced and Oriental = inferior²¹. An important evidence of this shift can be found in the confront between two major war writings of the Sino – Japanese War, that showed different attitudes in respective different periods: "Human Bullets: A soldier's Story of Port Arthur" by Sakurai Tadayoshi (1907) and "Barley Soldiers" by Hino Ashihei (1939).

¹⁹ Oguma, Eiji (2002) *Ibid*, p. XI

²⁰ O'Connor, Peter (eds.) (2004) *Japanese Propaganda Selected Readings. Series 1872-1943* Vol. I Pp. 6-7, Musashino University Tokyo

²¹ Nishihara, Daisuke, (2005) *op.cit.* p.249

1.1.1 The Creation of the “Other”

In *Human Bullets: A soldier's Story of Port Arthur* (original title *Niku-dan*) Sakurai Tadayoshi gives an accurate portrait of the Japanese campaign in China and, after its publication; the book became soon a bestseller and was also esteemed by the American President Roosevelt, which praised “the heroism so graphically told”²².

The text is relevant for two important elements: the projection of the ideal of Bushidō in the war for the first time in Japan's history and the discriminatory considerations about the Chinese, in which we can find the shift of the focus of Orientalism mentioned above.

Bushidō (1900) was written by Nitobe Inazō, one of the most famous Meiji intellectual and prominent diplomats, with the purpose of explaining the Japanese ethical system of values (“moral education”) to an “indifferent” Occident.²³

Two are the main contradictions in the book. The first consists in the explanation of supposed traditional Japanese ethics affirming that *Bushidō* (“the military-knight-ways”²⁴) was a well defined system of the 12th century, while has been demonstrated by many scholars that it was a modern invention, or better: “a tradition reinvented by Meiji regime”²⁵, since there are still few evidences of its existence in the writings of the period and the term appeared only from the Sengoku era. However, the first find to articulate its behavioural pattern was the text of the *Kōyō gunkan*, which was compiled only in the seventeenth century²⁶ and never presented a real “way” of the knighthood. The second contradiction is when the author wants to convey the sense of patriotism, expressed as loyalty to the emperor: the revaluation of the traditional qualities of the *bushi* (rectitude, courage, benevolence, politeness, sincerity, honour) are realized in the loyalty intended as sacrifice of one’s own interests, affections and life. This last quality of the bushi is represented by the image of the sword, symbol of the honour, but that could also be a temptation when it is abused.²⁷

The images used are re-invented in a Japanese fashion, but besides them the logical and theoretical meaning comes from the western romanticism, against the utilitarianism and especially related to the influence of chivalry and the figure of the gentleman. In Nitobe’s view there is also an evident symmetry between the code of the samurai, rose from the fusion of Buddhism (harmony with the

²² O' Connor, Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* Vol. IV p.6

²³ O' Connor, Peter (2004) *Ibid.* Vol. II p.2

²⁴ Nitobe, Inazō (1900) ‘Bushidō’ in O’Connor (eds.) *Ibid.* Vol.II p. 76

²⁵ O'Connor, Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* II p.3

²⁶ Hurst, Cameron (1990) 'Death, Honour, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal' in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 40, No. 4, Understanding Japanese Values p.514

²⁷ Nitobe, Inazō (1900) *Op. Cit.* p.129

absolute itself), Shintō (introspection in the nature) and Confucianism (control over interpersonal relations), and the Christian faith with its refuse of materialism: “Christian missionaries are doing great things for Japan”²⁸. But Christian and western ideas in general are considered inferior by the author and the attachment to traditional cultural values is stronger when Nitobe deals with the suicide (intended as a liberation of the soul with the sacrifice) and the woman condition (“pre-eminently domestic”²⁹). The suicide can be interpreted here as the resolution in the classical conflict between giri (social obligation) and ninjo (the personal feelings)³⁰, but is also linked to western schools of romanticism, like the Weimarer Klassizismus, in the aesthetic élan of sacrifice of owns emotions.

Nitobe, who lived a great part of his life in Occident (the U.S. and Germany) was highly influenced by this simultaneous use of western ideas and re-invented traditional values, exalted in the new patriotism of the Meiji elite “Is there any nation more loyal and patriotic” is a question asked by many and for the proud answer, “There is not,” we must thank the Precepts of Knighthood.”³¹

If we go back to *Human Bullets* we can understand how the values and the spirit of Bushidō have been associated to the Japanese patriotism and the ideal of individualistic sacrifice has been exploited as a patriotic action for the nation and the Emperor³²:

"I could not help being ashamed of myself and thought I was unworthy of my friends' great expectation. This idea made me miserable. So therefore I made up my mind to fight desperately and sacrifice my life at this battle of Taku Shan."³³

The ideal of sacrifice here is coherently expressed with a great emphasis on the responsibilities of the soldier and on the sense of attachment to the nation, as a dominating entity. It is in this phase that the Meiji elites gave great importance to the national identity and the war against China could be interpreted also as an attempt to give cohesion and self consciousness to a unique country. In this sense, the discrimination of the Chinese is a substantial part of the policy of seeing China as exotic, a primitive Asian country. The shift is clear: from the Tokugawa period Japan was the target of the western Orientalism, but with the modernization of the country during

²⁸ Nitobe, Inazō (1900) *Ibid.* p.142

²⁹ Nitobe Inazō (1900) *Ibid.* p.131

³⁰ Jansen, Marius B. (eds.) (2002) *The making of modern Japan* Harvard University Press p. 183

³¹ Nitobe, Inazō (1900) *Op. Cit.* p.144

³² O'Connor Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* Vol. IV p.3

³³ Sakurai Tadayoshi, (1907) ‘Human bullets (niku-dan) A Soldier’s Story of Port Arthur’ in O’Connor Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* Vol. IV Pp.172-173

the Meiji period and the necessity of a country at the same level of the western ones (in order not to succumb to them) Japan transferred the Asian = undeveloped equivalence to China. This transition is present in many passages of *Human Bullets* and especially when Sakurai Tadayoshi talks about the intrinsic qualities of the Chinese:

"They are ignorant and greedy survivors of a fallen dynasty; they know only the value of gold and silver and do not think of national or international interests. [...] Of course we had to punish these offenders very severely, though they deserved our pity rather than our hatred. Money is the only god they worship."³⁴

This stress on the ignorance and materialism of the Chinese is in opposition with the romanticism expressed by Nitobe and reflects the tendency toward a revaluation of “spiritual” aspects of the Japanese life instead of material interests in the precedent phase of modernization. Spiritual aspects will play a major role during the war, especially through the revaluation of social and cultural traditions of the Shintō.

1.1.2 The political and cultural shift to Pan-Asianism: “Asia as One”

Hino Ashihei's *Barley and Soldiers* came to light in a period of enormous social and political change. With the proclamation of the Peace Preservation Law (*Chian Iji Hō*, 1925), and the condemnation of “new” ideas such as communism and anarchism, the short period of Taishō democracy came to an end and all the following writings had to pass through a severe policy of censorship and control. This is also the period of the Pan-Asian Theory, highly expressed by the influential *Ideals of the East* (1903) and *The Awakening of Japan* (1904) by Okakura Kakuzō, that found in the catchphrase of *Wakon-yōsai* (Japanese spirit and western techniques) the necessity for Japan to learn from western countries, but conserving its own traditions³⁵. While in *The Awakening of Japan* he deals with the making of the modern Japan from the Tokugawa period and its cultural and political problems, especially in relation to the different religious and philosophical schools, in order to demonstrate “a voice from within”, a transformation already happening before the arrive of Commodore Perry³⁶, in *Ideals of the East* the principal focus is on the concept of “Asia as one”, with the idea of a common cultural, religious, artistic background.

³⁴ Sakurai Tadayoshi, (1907) *Ibid.* in O'Connor Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* Vol. IV Pp.104-105

³⁵ O'Connor, Peter (2004) *Op.Cit.* Vol. II p.5

³⁶ Okakura, Kakuzō (1904) 'The awakening of Japan' in O' Connor, Peter *Op.Cit.* Vol. II p.70

In Okakura's view there were two great civilizations: Chinese and Indian, the first with the Confucian idea of Communism, the latter with the Individualism of the Vedas³⁷. They are in opposition with the Western Civilization, wherein the culture had its focus on the "particular". In this analysis Japan is seen as "the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture"³⁸, in the sense that the country is said to have achieved the complexity of all the Asian cultures. With this statement Okakura declared the common cultural root of the Asian countries but he wanted also to stress the preeminence of Japan's role as guide and leader of Asia against the Western slavery. This is particularly illustrated when he talks about a "victory from within" and that "in our history lies the secret of our future"³⁹, expressing the relevance of the shared history and destiny of the Asian people.

In *Barley and Soldiers*, the concepts of Panasiatism are reflected in the perception and interpretation of the Chinese people, which differ largely from the discriminating attitudes of Human Bullet. While Sakurai Tadayoshi defined the Chinese with disparaging terms (like "stupid-looking", "ignorant" or "dirty-faced") and considered their life-style and living habits as dirty and undeveloped⁴⁰, Hino Ashihei placed the Chinese at the same cultural level of the Japanese:

"Any Chinese always affected me because it would always be so clearly brought home how much they are like our own people and I could nearly always find in them some resemblance to certain of my friends."⁴¹

This sense of "Asian brotherhood" is common in many passages and had great success in homeland, where the sense of humanity of the ordinary soldier⁴² was highly praised and the book, differently from Human bullets, became a classic popular until the present day.

As we have seen, the shifts from "exotic Japan"(Meiji period) to "exotic China" (Taishō-period) to the Asian Identity expressed by the new Japanese theorists not only reflect cultural and social attitudes with themselves and the "other" but are also indicative for understanding the transformation of Japan's policies in those years. One example is the book *An Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan (Nihon Kaizō Hōan Taikō)*, by Kita Ikki, in which the Panasiatism, already

³⁷ Okakura, Kakuzō (1903) 'The ideals of the East' in O' Connor *Op.Cit.* Vol. II p.24

³⁸ Okakura, Kakuzo (1903) *Ibid.* p.27

³⁹ Okakura, Kakuzo (1903) *Ibid.* p.45

⁴⁰ Okakura, Kakuzo (1903) *Ibid.* p.35

⁴¹ Ashihei, Hino (1939) 'Barley and Soldiers' in O'Connor, Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* Vol.4 Pp.90-91

⁴² O'Connor, Peter (2004) *Op. Cit.* Vol.4 p.10

explained by Okakura, met the theory of the Kokutai and of the Japanese nationalism.⁴³

The term Kokutai, which means “national body”, was born in the attempt to re-evaluate the historical myths and traditions by the work of the kokugakusha, among which Motoori Norinaga played a major role with his considerations of the ancient texts of *Kojiki* and *Nihon-Shoki*⁴⁴. The figure of the Emperor was the hierarchical translation of the needs of the country, mostly the expansion for new resources in the so-called Greater East - Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitōa Kyōeiken*), in which the ideal figure of Japan as “Guide” of Asia expressed by Okakura is attained formally with the beginning of the Pacific War.

1.2 The Yellow Peril and the War

Discrimination of the Japanese with the use of stereotypes and prejudices did not come out only with the burst of the war, but it is the result of many decades of Japan – U.S. relations and of the evolution of the respective American and Japanese attitudes. When Japan became a “menace” in the first years of the 19th century most of the stereotypes of the “exotic phase” begun to adopt a more negative and discriminatory connotation, mirroring the changes in the domestic and international politics of the two countries.

1.2.1 The Yellow Peril in the popular culture

The feeling of a strong menace coming from Asia was particularly felt in California, which in the 1920s was the destination of many Japanese immigrants. Figures shows that the population increased of 65% in ten years with the Japanese birth rate (46.44) of more than twice as much of the American one (16.59)⁴⁵. The discontent for the “yellow menace” and the conviction that great part of the Japanese employed in agricultural activities were depriving the Americans of cultivable lands walked into the discourse and the theory of the “Yellow Peril”. This term, often appeared in U.S. newspapers of the period and is explained in the book *The Yellow Peril, or The Orient vs. The Occident* (1911) preceded Huntington’s theory of clash of civilizations as cultural blocks and warned of the yellow menace originated from the Russo-Japanese war, in which Japan

⁴³ Kitagawa, Joseph M. ‘The Japanese "Kokutai" (National Community) History and Myth’ in *History of Religions*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Feb. 1974), The University of Chicago Press, Pp. 209-226

⁴⁴ Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (eds.) (1998) *Re-inventing Japan: time, space, nation* Pp.48-49

⁴⁵ Kanzaki, Kiichi (1921) ‘Is the Japanese Menace in America a Reality?’ in *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.93 Present-Day Immigration with Special Reference to the Japanese, p.90

demonstrated the “bravery, skill and endurance in war possessed by the Eastern races”⁴⁶. The author of the book, Rupert Greenberry, conveyed the idea of a Western World, characterized by Christianity, with its moral values, and an Eastern world, that in the last centuries has been the target of the Western exploitation and now seeks revenge with the affirmation of an Asian Identity. To my mind, the projection of Orientalism here is also particularly strong in Okakura’s volume *The awakening of Japan*, where the author examined the “white disaster” problem against the Yellow Peril. As explained in the first chapter, the logic of Bushidō was essentially a combination of re-elaborated western romantic ideals and re-invented traditional aspects of the Japanese culture. As Bushidō and the ethics of Samurai, the idea of Yellow Peril and of two contrasting worlds has been paradoxically assimilated by the Japanese criticism^{47 48}.

This happens in a common psychological process: when we criticize some assumptions or statement on negative aspects of our assumed diversity attacking the other part with same negative connotations, we do nothing but to confirm our diversity.

This is one of the reasons why the myth of “yellow peril” had great impact both in the U.S. and Japan and the economic and political contrast took the semblance of a cultural one, within a perfect clash of civilizations.

⁴⁶ Greenberry, G. Rupert (eds.) (1911) *The Yellow Peril; or, Orient vs. Occident* Pp.33-34

⁴⁷ Goto, Shimpei (1921) ‘The Anti-Japanese Question in California’ in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 93, Present-Day Immigration with Special Reference to the Japanese (Jan., 1921), pp. 104-110

⁴⁸ Kawakami, K. Karl (1921) ‘The Japanese Question’ in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 93, Present-Day Immigration with Special Reference to the Japanese pp. 81-88

JAPANESE POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

*A—Figures obtained October, 1920, by the Japanese Association of
America*

Men	34,797
Women	15,714
Boys under 16 years.....	10,693
Girls under 16 years.....	9,829
Total	71,033

B—Federal Census of 1920

Male	44,364
Female	25,832
Total	70,196

In a statement issued November 15, 1920, Director of the Federal Census gives the following facts:

The population of California for 1920 is 3,426,861, of which 70,196 are Japanese. The figures for 1910 were total population 2,377,549, Japanese 41,356.

*1.1. Statistics relative to Japanese immigration and the Japanese in California. Source: Japanese Association of
America, San Francisco 1920*

The “Gentlemen Agreement” (*Nichibei Shinshi Kyōyaku*), in which the Japanese government stopped to issue passports to emigrants going to the U.S. in exchange for the entrance of Japanese children to public school, and the Immigration Act of 1924, that banned the immigrants coming from Asian countries were two important marks of the racial segregation of the Japanese and Asian in the U.S.. These measure were highly criticized by Japanese and American intellectuals, like Sidney L. Gulick, that in *American-Japanese Relations, the Logic of the Exclusionists* (1925), expressed his solidarity for the Japanese, “deeply wounded by the Gentlemen Agreement” and his dissent for the Immigration Act and its idea of United States as a “white-man’s land”⁴⁹.

However, the popular opinion was highly influenced by the anti-Japanese propaganda and the Yellow peril became soon a favourite subject in the American popular culture, especially in the new sci-fi literature. In his book *The Unparalleled Invasion* (1910), Jack London, recalling the experience of war correspondence in the Russo-Japanese War, depicted the Japanese as drones, with inhuman qualities⁵⁰, while in the essay "Yellow Peril" (1904) he tried to put the Japanese under the old exotic categories by which they should be considered different and “Other”:

⁴⁹ Gulick L. Sidney (1925) ‘American-Japanese Relations The Logic of the Exclusionists’, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* p.183

⁵⁰ Sharp B. Patrick (2000) ‘From Yellow Peril to Japanese Wasteland: John Hersey's "Hiroshima"’ in *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 46, No. 4, Literature and Apocalypse, pp. 436-437

The Japanese is not an individualist. He has developed national consciousness instead of moral consciousness [...]. He relates himself to the State as, amongst bees, the worker is related to the hive.⁵¹

This image of Japanese as “drone” is also present in Philp Nowalan’s *Armageddon 2419* (1928), where the enemies are the technological advanced “Hans” coming from Asia, and in the strip comics of "Buck Rogers" (from 1929) and "Flash Gordon" (1933), the first presenting the invasion of United States by “Mongols” and the latter illustrating the forces commanded by the evil Ming the Merciless, whose methods have numerous analogies with the concentration camps and the Axis.⁵²

This anti-Asian/anti-Japanese propaganda in the popular culture is also a response to a new aspect of the growing menace: the so-called “economic yellow peril”.

With the competitiveness of Japanese goods and the prices of cotton much lower than the American ones, the flood of imports was invading the American markets during the 30s with the response of a “Buy American” campaign⁵³.

The boycott of Japanese goods in the years preceding the attack to Pearl Harbour caused a big slump of the Japanese exports and a general shortage of foreign values, essential to buy war arsenal.

1.2.2 Anti-Japanese Propaganda

The beginning of the Pacific War and the attack to Pearl Harbour in 1941 led to the period of the anti-Japanese, anti-American propaganda and of the so-called “race war”, with the incarceration of over 110.000 Japanese-American⁵⁴.

The fear of the “yellow menace” surpassed the cultural difficulties of integration and was embodied in the war of the East against the West, foretold in apocalyptic terms by Rupert Greenberry. While in Japan the Pan-Asian theory was useful to attract the sympathy and the support of the other Asian nations, in the U.S., and in most of the Allied powers, it became the symbol of the Yellow Peril. “Japan leader of Asia”, “Japan Protector of Asia”, “Japan the light of Asia” were the famous catchphrases used by the advocates of Japan, that demonstrated the emphasis in the cohesion between Asian countries with the idea of the Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, but above all insisted on the supremacy of the Yamato race, in a hierarchical classification of the Asian races in “master”,

⁵¹ London, Jack (2003) *Revolution and Other Essays*, Kessinger Publishing Co., pp. 108-117

⁵² Sharp B. Patrick (2000), *Op.Cit.* p. 437

⁵³ H. C. (1936), *Anti-Japanese Campaigns as a boomerang* in *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 5, No. 3 p. 29

⁵⁴ Dower, W. John, (eds.) (1986), *War without mercy.* p. 5, Pantheon Books

“friendly” and “guest”⁵⁵, thus showing the chauvinistic features of the Japanese militarism.

The American propaganda covered many aspects of the popular culture and was easily spread with the use of a wide range of media, like newspapers, magazines, movies, songs and comics. The main images of the Japanese that the government wanted to convey continued the idea of the Japanese without any human quality present in the pre-war production and, within a racial discrimination, adopted the negative connotations of inferiority for “primitiveness, childishness, collective mental and emotional deficiency”⁵⁶.

The most effective medium of the American propaganda was, without any doubt, the cinema industry of Hollywood. While the Japanese and the Asian culture were almost ignored in the pre-war period, with a production of only 25 movies between 1931-1940, with the beginning of the war, were produced in 1942 alone 25 anti-Japanese movies⁵⁷. In the famous representations of Frank Capra’s “Prelude to War” and “Know Your Enemy: Japan” (1945) or in Edward Dmytryk’s “Behind the Rising Sun” (1943) there are two main considerations of the Japanese.

The first is the emphasis on the fanaticism of the Japanese in their exaltation of the traditional culture and background, in opposition with the individualistic character of Western societies, referring negatively to Bushidō and to the idea by which sacrificing themselves to serve the nation demonstrates the lack of personality and of personal freedom. A famous example is the popularity that “Banzai”, the “battle cry of the Japanese army”, had in western culture, represented in “Know your Enemy” after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

The second aspect is the tendency to represent the Japanese as inferior and different with the symbolic combination of visual and musical images, which came from exotic stereotypes, like the reinterpretation of the stylistic features of Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly” in many films.⁵⁸ Another example is the link between the enemy and the music theme in “Prelude to War”, where there is a “Jap Theme”, that we hear when a Japanese character come on the stage, and the “Nibelungen March”, derived from Wagner, that identifies the German enemy.⁵⁹

Famous songs like “We’re gonna have to slap the dirty little Jap” “Goodbye Mama” and “Taps for the Japs” present different racist features and jingoistic tendencies that depict them as “vermin, back-stabbing monkey” or “sneaky little yellow rats”.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Ibid.* pp. 6-7.

⁵⁶ Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Ibid.* p.9

⁵⁷ Sheppard, W. Anthony (2001) An exotic enemy: ‘Anti-Japanese Musical Propaganda in World War II Hollywood’ in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 54, No. 2 p.307

⁵⁸ Nishihara, Daisuke (2005) *Op.Cit.* p. 246

⁵⁹ Sheppard, W. Anthony (2001) *Op.Cit.* pp.314-317

⁶⁰ Sheppard, W. Anthony (2001) *Ibid.* p.306

Many clichés appeared also in famous magazines such as Time Magazine, where an article called “How to tell your friends from the Japs” described the innate physical characteristics of the Japanese and distinguished them from those of the Chinese: “virtually all Japanese are short”, “Japanese eyes are usually set closer together” “Japanese are hesitant, nervous in conversation, laugh loudly at the wrong time”⁶¹ The term “Jap” soon acquired a lot of popularity among the U.S. population and phrases like “a Jap’s a Jap”, “a Good Jap is a Dead Jap” appeared in several newspapers and often came with metaphors, like the invented image that compare the Japanese to vipers appeared in the Los Angeles Times.⁶²

Another article, with the title “Portrait of a Japanese”, created the profile of the Japanese soldier: “[The Japanese man] is as tangled as the wires behind a telephone switchboard. From birth he has been taught the glory of dying for the Emperor.”⁶³

Here the enemy is depicted as a victim of the ultra nationalistic theories of the Kokutai and cult of the Japanese race and considered a bare object without any will or personality.

Describing the nature of the Japanese through these terms, the Americans identified the “Other” as unique for its lack of humanity and a process of mirroring the Self-perception of the Japanese developed in the pre-war period, with the re-evaluation of traditional values and religious faith, directed to the Nationalism. In this optic, Orientalism is the set of values that were filtered through American eyes during the war and returned to the Japanese after the victory

Which was the Japanese response? How did the Japanese assimilate these stereotypes?

1.2.3 Anti- American propaganda

John W. Dower, in his influential book “War without Mercy” (1986) explains the patterns of stereotypes between the two countries, with the paradox of the affirming common values with the identification and discrimination of the different. Japan and the U.S., in a situation of conflict, seeing themselves with positive values, condemned the opposite with the transformation of the other’s past ideas/self-perceptions in negative aspects. For instance, the Confucian idea of group harmony and collaboration became the “herd” under American eyes, while the western liberal values of self-determination became “egoism” under Japanese eyes. Paradoxically, in seeing

⁶¹ ‘Home Affairs: How To Tell your Friends From the Japs’ in *Times*, Monday, December 22, 1941

⁶² Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Op. Cit.* p.80

⁶³ Bodnar John (eds.) (1996) *Bonds of Affection, American Define their Patriotism*, Princeton University Press p.219

ourselves as “the good ones” and excluding the Other in racist terms, we are similar to the opposite.⁶⁴ Therefore we can affirm that the Japanese response was the reflection of the American Orientalistic propaganda and the way it was expressed shows two different approaches.

The first, concerning the political sphere of the Japanese elite and of its intellectuals, consisted in the reaction with the propaganda, that, following the writings of the pre-war period, assumed a more militaristic and chauvinistic character. As explained above the features of Bushidō and Yellow Peril in the Pan-Asian theory were not a product of the Japanese nationalism, but rather the result of the assimilation of the Western perceptions on Japan, that from “exotic” became a “menace”.

In fact, from 1940 the political power shifted in the hands of prince Konoe Fumimaro, who in few years built a new political system based on the exaltation of the spirit of the Kokutai and on “National Defence”, as expressed in *Kokubo kokka riron* (Theory of the state for the national defence), and used as euphemism to describe the imperialist aggression to Asia and the area of interest for Japan⁶⁵. During this period, the writings of Kita Ikki became an important benchmark not only within the nationalistic movements but also for important groups of the Army, highly influenced by his theory of the necessity for Japan to fight against the Western Imperialism, that would permit the country to become a *Kakumeiteki Daiteikoku* (Great Revolutionary Empire) and liberate the other Asian Nations.⁶⁶

Kita was accused to be one of the organizers of the coup d'état of 26 February 1936 and was sentenced to death the year after, but most of his theories have influenced one of the most prominent texts of the Japanese Nationalism: *Kokutai no Hongi* (Cardinal principles of the national entity of Japan), published in 1937.

This was also the period of the censorship and control of the mass media, with the idea of creating a single and totalitarian mean of control of the country's politics: in 1940 most of the moderate parties such as the Shakai taishutō (Socialist Masses Party) and the Kokumin domei (National Alliance) dismissed.⁶⁷

Thereby, the stereotype of the Yellow Peril became the bulwark of the Japanese nationalism and the clash between the two opposite “blocks” (East and West) was strongly expressed in many texts, like

⁶⁴ Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Op. Cit.* p.28

⁶⁵ Gatti, Francesco (eds.) (1997), *Il Fascismo giapponese*, pp.221-222 Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, Venice

⁶⁶ Gatti, Francesco (eds.) (1997), *Ibid.* p. 182

⁶⁷ Kisaka Junichirō, ‘Taisei yokusankai no seiritsu’, in Iwanami Kōza (eds.), *Nihon rekishi*, 20, Kindai, VII, Tōkyō 1977, p.297

the booklet "Read This and War is Won", which explained to the troops why they had to fight. It is conveyed here the idea of releasing "East Asia from the white invasion and oppression"⁶⁸ with a strong focus on the Pan-Asian theory and on the assumption of the divine nature and superiority of the Japanese race.

Other books, like the "Way of the Subject" or "A history of the changing theories about the Japanese race" by Kiyono Kenji explained the reasons of the superiority of the Asian Race over the others and the idea that Japan's "proper place" is the leadership in East Asia, while Adachi Buntarō, in "Studies in the Physical Constitution of the Japanese People" justified this theory describing his experiments conducted on the blood of Asian and of the apes to find the races that have more evolved physical characteristic⁶⁹.

In drawing the profile of the enemy through the propaganda, the Japanese tried to de-humanize the enemy that, in this case, he took the form of "monsters, demons, or devils"⁷⁰ and, like their enemies, to decry other's civilization philosophical and political theories, like Liberalism, Democracy, Anarchism, and Communism.

This was particularly evident in the cartoons, often refiguring Americans as beasts, reptiles, worms or with the semblance of the evil creature called *kappa* (water imp) with "Democracy" written on its back, while from 1943 (as happened with "Japs") were adopted the first deformation of the name of the enemies: the kanji for American were transformed in "mei-ri-ken", "misguided dog", while the British were rendered with the name "an-gu-ro", that means "dark-stupid-foolish".⁷¹

In many posters, cartoons and movies appeared the folk-tale of Momotarō (the Peach Boy), that became the patriotic hero of the Japanese propaganda, as in many movies that narrate his story.

The story tells about a boy who became a hero defeating the devils of Oni-ga-shima (Island of the Devils) and was re-adapted in a series of film such as "Momotarō and the Eagles of the Ocean" where Hawaii is "the Island of the Devils" and in posters, where he is represented as young and powerful, while westerners have the look of weak and old demons.⁷²

The second approach, that covers the social group of the population not involved directly in the country's politics, represented the pure assimilation of the stereotypes and was realised with the victory of U.S over Japan, the Occupation in the Post-War Period and the affirmation of Orientalism

⁶⁸ 'Read this and the war is won' (1942) in Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Op.Cit.* pp.24-25

⁶⁹ Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Op. Cit.* p.218

⁷⁰ Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Ibid.* p. 242

⁷¹ Dower, W. John (eds.) (1986) *Op. Cit.* p. 241

⁷² Antoni, Klaus (1991) 'Momotarō (The Peach Boy) and the Spirit of Japan: Concerning the Function of a Fairy Tale in Japanese Nationalism of the Early Shōwa Age' in *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1 Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture pp.163-166

with the analysis of cultural patterns and typical characteristic of Japanese culture.



1.2. Japanese Anti-American Propaganda, The National WWII Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana. (<http://www.ddaymuseum.org/>)

1.3 Occupation and Assimilation

Japan represents a political, economic and social system which is a direct challenge to our own ways of life though Japan is not simply an enemy Nation, it represents an enemy ideology which is threatening to drive the ideas of democracy, equality, and individual freedom from the Far East.

Edwin O. Reischauer, June 1942

According to every history schoolbook, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th, 1945 and the radio broadcast of the emperor Hirohito on August 15th ratified the surrender of Japan, the end of the Pacific War and the start of the American Occupation. But the space dedicated to the description of the social impact of the events and to the shift in the self-

perception of the Japanese in an Orientalistic view is always limited.

It is clear that, during the war, Japan was intended to fight until the last man, with infinite anger and hate against the “white colonizer”, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, but how did it happen that after five years the complete control of the Japanese politics, societies and modes were in the hands of the Americans ? What happened to the hate against the West, to the war propaganda, to the myth of the emperor and to the Kokutai ? How could these feelings that have been considered for years the real essence of Japan change in such a sudden way ?

1.3.1. The problem of positionality

Edward Said considers the “hegemony” at the base of the process of Orientalism and the creation of the “Other”: “Orientalism depends for its strategy on the flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand”⁷³. The positional superiority of America and its hegemonic power after the Second World War have subordinated Japan to a condition of inferiority and harmlessness. In this status, within the mechanism of Orientalism, from object of the western flow of stereotypes and images, became the subject. If in the war period the propaganda and nationalism of Japan mirrored the stereotypes of the western propaganda, after the end of the conflict the Japanese continued to follow the western perceptions of Japan as their own distinctive identity.

It was particularly possible in Japan for the former Japanese tradition of the creativity of copying and re-elaborating elements of other cultures. This tendency, that often see erroneously the Japanese as mere “copycats”, is part of the history of transcultural and intercultural exchanges of Asia, that from the diffusion of Buddhism to the thought of Confucius presents patterns of an homogeneous cultural background, though conserving their differences.⁷⁴

A great part of western critics refers to the rapid modernization and industrialization of Japan during the Meiji Period, with the preoccupation that a lower and primitive nation could deprive and use western inventions and technologies. However, Japan has always used the mechanisms of copying and re-adapting the other cultures as self-defence and demonstration of cultural openness, as with its relation to China during the Tang dynasty.

Identifying the “distinctive elements” of Japan in the last years and after the end of the conflict was the task of many social and cultural anthropologists like Ruth Benedict, Edwin Reischauer, John M.

⁷³ Said, Edward (eds.) (1995), *Orientalism*, Penguin Classics, 25th Anniversary Ed, 2003 p. 7

⁷⁴ Cox, Rupert (eds.) (2008) *The Culture of Copying in Japan, Critical and Historical perspectives*, p.7, Routledge

Maki, achieving the results of framing both American and Japanese perceptions.

All these scholars had had an idealistic vision of American Democracy and its values of personal freedom and liberalist economy, thus interpreting the “Other” with a series of Orientalist dichotomies, like those identified by Said and that see the Oriental as “irrational, depraved, childlike different” and the European as “rational, virtuous, mature, normal”⁷⁵.

1.3.2. Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*

A partisan view in the relations between different cultures is evident in the influential book by Ruth Benedict *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, a very important text not only in order to understand the images and the perceptions of Japan constructed by the famous anthropologist, but also to see the impact that these perceptions had in Japanese society in the post-war period. In fact, the book influenced a big part of the sociological studies on Japan by Japanese and Americans and sold over 1.4 millions of copies in Japan. The approach used by Benedict diverged from the typical modern anthropology, because the author did not take any field trip nor could speak a word of Japanese, but gather the information about the country through second-hand sources, like Japanese prisoners, American Japanese and movies ⁷⁶.

After an overview of the modern history of Japan, Benedict put the emphasis on the analysis of Japanese phrases and terms, that are, in the author's view, key concepts to understand Japan as “total”.

First of all, Benedict analysed the theory of the “proper place” and confronted the ideas of equality and self-determination of the French philosopher Alexis the Tocqueville, the father of the modern liberalism, with the Japan's hierarchic society. Japan, through Benedict's eyes, is still an “aristocratic society”⁷⁷, with a justification of the supposed formalism of the honorific forms of the Japanese language as distinctive elements of the human relations in Japan, where there is a marked difference between the older / superior and the younger / inferior. Even if compared to the Indian and Chinese systems, this historical analysis excludes similarities between Japan and other Western Countries, like Italy or France, where the formality in the language and in the habits has for

⁷⁵ Minear, H. Richard (1980) ‘Cross-Cultural Perception and World War II: American Japanists of the 1940s and Their Images of Japan’ in *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 556

⁷⁶ Lie, John (2001) ‘Ruth Benedict's Legacy of Shame: Orientalism and Occidentalism in the Study of Japan’ in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Volume 29 No. 2 p. 251

⁷⁷ Benedict, Ruth (eds.) (1946) *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, Patterns of Japanese culture* p.47, Meridian Books

centuries characterized the society and still persists in the everyday life⁷⁸. But Benedict places the Japanese within an immutable vertical system, in which the pillars of the so-called “culture of shame”, in opposition to the western “culture of guilt”, are identified with “*on*” “*giri*” and “*gimu*”, terms that include all the range of “Japanese obligations”. The culture of shame supposes the idea of one’s merit in life and doesn’t take into consideration moral values and post-death “reward or punishment”, putting in contrast the Christian transcendental values with Buddhism. But if we look at the history of religions in Japan, Buddhism has been characterized by a strong transcendental emphasis, like in the case of the school of Pure Land and in its emphasis on the reborn after death in the “Pure Land” of the Amithaba Buddha. Moreover, numerous works of Japanese religious literature like the famous Japanese Buddhist text, the *Ōjōyōshū*, (Essentials of Birth in the Pure Land) deal with the punishment in the Buddhist hell realms (in Sanskrit: *naraka*).

With the example of the tale of the Forty-seven *rōnin* Benedict explained how in Japan the concern with the moral values, the sins and the punishment after death is substituted with a unique conflict between two social obligations (the master or the authorities), resolved with the suicide:

"Their *giri* was paid. They had still to pay their *chu*. Only in their death could the two coincide. [...]In killing themselves with their own hands the ronin paid the supreme debt both to *giri* and to *gimu*.⁷⁹

This conflict, which can be of “*giri* against human feelings (*ninjō*)”, “*chu* against *ko*”, “*giri* against *gimu*”, is considered unique by the author, but has many counterparts in Western literature and culture, as we have seen in the first chapter with Romanticism. Moreover, in the Greek tragedy of Sophocles’ *Antigone*, there is the conflict between public law and personal loyalty⁸⁰ and this proves the non-peculiarity of the conflict in the Japanese culture alone.

1.3.3 John M. Maki and Edwin O. Reischauer’s visions of post-war Japan

Like Benedict, John M. Maki, in *Japanese militarism, its cause and cure* (1945), showed how Japan had to be “re-educated” from a “political medievalism”, in which the author illustrated the immobility of the ideologies in the Japanese culture. Japan should be “re-educated” in order to create a fertile ground to introduce western political ideas, like democracy. In these passages it is

⁷⁸ Bates, Elisabeth and Benigni, Laura (1975) Rules of Address in Italy: A Sociological Survey' in *Language in Society*, Vol.4 No3 pp. 271-288

⁷⁹ Benedict, Ruth (eds.) (1946) *Op. Cit.* p. 205

⁸⁰ Lie, John (2001) *Op. Cit.* p. 254

clear that the emphasis is on the inferiority of the former Japanese system for the benefit of a democratic system like the one of the U.S.⁸¹

A third view, by the influential scholar of Japanese Studies Edwin O. Reischauer, poses the problem of how to establish the U.S. democratic system in Japan. For Reischauer the difficulties lie in the “obvious difference of the Japanese from us and the rest of the Western world”⁸² in opposition to the will of the Americans to “prove that democracy is an article for export that it can work and will work beyond the borders of the few really democratic states of today.”⁸³

Democracy represented the soft-power of the American policies from the post-war (with the Marshall Plan in Europe), in the Cold War (in opposition with the Soviet bloc) until the present day, with the democracy realised through the globalisation of the American products and modes.

The difference between Americans and Japanese are explained in every part of his book *The United States and Japan* and took up most of Benedict’s considerations: the idea of hierarchical society and the obedience through obligations⁸⁴ the shame in interpersonal relations⁸⁵ and the national identity originated from isolation from the outside world.⁸⁶

These perceptions are verified in a parallel Orientalist analysis, which wants to project to Japan elements antithetical to the Western culture and society: the West is linked to equality, transcendental moralism and openness, while Japan to obedience within a vertical society, shame in the immanent reality, cultural and political *sakoku* (closure). However, these dichotomies are also evident in the analysis of the Japanese “saving virtues” after the war, that depicted them as ingenuous and apathetic victims, and are exclusively related to the American’s interests: “cooperativeness of the Japanese since the surrender” and “their appreciation for favours” that permitted a “strange fraternization between American battle veterans [...] and Japanese civilians who had lost loved ones and all their possessions in American air raids”. Here the American democracy is seen as the saviour of the Japanese with “the fundamentally just and humanitarian objectives of the occupation” with an implicit condemn of the former ultra nationalism and cult of the Emperor⁸⁷. There is no doubt that Nationalism represented one of the worst catastrophes of the last century in Japan as in other countries, but also the exportation of Democracy as “an article” had sociological and psychological effects that are of not less impact.

⁸¹ Minear, H. Richard (1980) *Op. Cit.* p. 562

⁸² Reischauer O., (eds.) (1960) *The United States and Japan*, Third Edition, Oxford University Press p.52

⁸³ Reischauer O., (eds.) (1960) *Ibid.* p. 4

⁸⁴ Reischauer O., (eds.) (1960) *Ibid.* pp. 165-170

⁸⁵ Reischauer O., (eds.) (1960) *Ibid.* pp. 142-149

⁸⁶ Reischauer O., (eds.) (1960) *Ibid.* pp. 108-115

⁸⁷ Reischauer O., (eds.) (1960) *Ibid.* pp. 220-222

1.3.4. Concretization of the western ideas in post-war Japan

The assimilation process, besides the changed positionality and the natural tendency to copy, was particularly possible if we consider the positions that these scholars had in the American Government during and after the war we can understand the political influence that they had in shaping the new Japan.

Ruth Benedict worked for the Office of War Information between 1943 and 1945, John Maki was regional specialist in psychological warfare for the same office, while Reischauer became in 1945 special assistant to the director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs of the State Department⁸⁸. It is quite obvious that this new power they were invested with was in the first place related to the intention of the U.S. to “know the enemy” and, consequentially, to understand the post-war problem of how to dismantle the old Japanese system. Exploiting the Orientalist images of these scholars, who were reflecting and supporting the stereotypes on Japan of the former U.S. propaganda, the task of the SCAP was much easier and could interest every part of the Japanese society, starting with the condemn of war commemoration and the drafting fo the Constitution as we will see from the following chapter.

John Maki’s view of re-educating Japan and Reischauer’s assumption of Democracy “as an article to export” were realized with the elimination of the old structure, from the renounce of the Emperor Hirohito to his divine claims, to the demolition of the system of political elites, parties, groups and zaibatsu⁸⁹, while Ruth Benedict’s condemn of the “vertical society” opposed to a western “equality” created the perfect ground to the importation of “democracy” from the U.S., started with the draft of the Japanese constitution in 1947, in which are enunciated the mere symbolic value of the Emperor and, in the controversial article nine, the renounce to war.

However, the event that above all changed the collective consciousness of the Japanese was the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

After Hersley’s *Hiroshima* (1946), the censorship of the SCAP regarding the atomic bomb and its victims dissolved in the sense of guilt for the catastrophe and the Atomic Bomb was regarded in the U.S. as a great mistake of the politics of the Government, though in 1985 a poll of the New York Times/CBS News showed that 55 percent disagreed with the statement that the nuclear attacks were morally wrong⁹⁰. Paradoxically, after the end of the censorship of the bombing, the American

⁸⁸ Minear, H. Richard (1980) *Op. Cit.* p. 558.

⁸⁹ Schonberg Howard B. (eds.) (1989) *Aftermath of War* The Kent State University Press Ohio pp. 64-65, 105

⁹⁰ Johnson K. Sheila (eds.) (1988) *The Japanese Through American Eyes*, Stanford University Press p. 53

feeling of guilt was projected to the Japanese, that from victims were transformed in accusers, in a typical psychological mechanism⁹¹. In this position of further inferiority, the Japanese, though maintaining in their heart the same ideologies and feelings of the war period, had nothing left to do but to involuntarily accept the assimilation of Western stereotypes.

This process happened together with the “Americanization” of Japan, at first with the condemn of re-orientalized images of Japanese society in the words of the post-war Japanese sociology, then with the accurate use of the “soft power”, which nowadays is called “democracy” in the context of the Cold War, and the neo-liberalism trends since the early 1970s.

1.4 From Orientalism to Re-Orientalism

In this chapter I have investigated the evolution of the reactions and response of the Japanese to the Orientalist ideology. If in the pre-war period, with the modernization and industrialization, Japan understood the necessity of identifying the typical characteristics of the Japanese culture, elaborated (like in the case of Bushidō), from western perceptions and supposed traditions, defining the other Asian countries as “other” in order to put itself at the same level of the other technological advanced Western countries, with the political changes at the end of the Taishō period the focus shifted on the Pan-Asianism and the *Kokutai* theory. However, the utilitarian purposes gained with the support from other Asian countries were evident with the beginning of the Pacific War, when the manifestation of the ultra-nationalism was demonstrated with the assumption of superiority of the Yamato race.

The American propaganda of the war period, originated from the former discrimination for the “menace” of the Yellow Peril, was the real modus operandi of the western Orientalism and saw the response in the re-elaboration of western stereotypes in a chauvinistic way: while America was too concerned in defaming Japan, Japan put its effort in exalting itself.

Therefore, from one side the Yellow Peril and from the other the Pan-Asian theory, both originated from the western conviction of the two opposite “blocks” of West and East and with the attempts to defining themselves as different from the “other”, became the essence of the Japanese propaganda.

With the end of the war and the change of Japan’s positionality, the dominance of the American Hegemony and Imperialism permitted the U.S. to eliminate the old political system and substitute the authority of the Emperor to that of the Constitution. This was possible with the censorship of inconvenient truths (especially about what really happened to the victims of the atomic bomb) by

⁹¹ Johnson K. Sheila (1988) *Ibid* p.40

the SCAP in the early phases of the occupation⁹² and the work of describing Japan's society and culture by eminent American anthropologists and scholars. With their position of high responsibility during and after the war, they influenced the perception that the Japanese have of themselves.

“Re-Orientalism” or, in other words, “Auto-Orientalism” consists then in this process of assimilation and, from the Yellow Peril to the famous considerations of Ruth Benedict, John M. Maki and Reischauer, had the effect of creating the idea of “Japan as unique”.

The *Nihonjinron*, the “discussion of the Japanese”, is characterized by three main assumptions: the racial, cultural and social homogeneity, the intrinsic difference between the Japanese and the other people and a nationalistic protectionism from any analysis by non-Japanese resources or theories⁹³.

While the racial and cultural homogeneity has been criticized by many scholar at the light of the presence of distinct ethnic groups (like the Ainu in Hokkaidō)⁹⁴ and cultural differences between different geographical areas (like the distinction between Tokyo and the Kansai area)⁹⁵ the “typical” psychological and sociological aspects of the Japanese still remain a matter of discussion, where many sociologist have assimilated some of the post-war analysis in their research, like in the case of *Japanese society* by Chie Nakane and *The Anatomy of Dependence*, by Doi Takeo, the first reflecting the notion of vertical society, and the second proposing the concept of *amae*, the mutual dependence of the Japanese, continuing to carry on the Benedict's discourse on the importance of the social obligation in the “culture of shame” and not considering the similarity between the Japanese and other Asian cultures⁹⁶.

The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate that Orientalism is not a static theory that interprets the West as a subject and the East as an object, but, as in the case of Japan, representations of the “Other” can be assimilated and revolted to the same object, that became the subject. The problem regarding the relation between Japan and Orientalism is also in the interpretation of Japan as modern: Noriko Imazawa, the translator of "Orientalism", expressed in her Afterword:

⁹² Brawn, Monica (1991) *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed* M. E. Sharp p.40

⁹³ Dale, N. Peter (eds.) (1986) *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* St. Martin's Press, New York p.1

⁹⁴ Siddle, Richard M. ‘The Ainu, indigenous people of Japan’ in Weiner Micheal (eds.) (1997) *Japan's minorities, the illusion of homogeneity* pp. 21-40

⁹⁵ Yoshio Sugimoto (eds.) (2003) *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, Secon Edition, La Trobe University pp.67-68

⁹⁶ Lie, John (2001) *Op. Cit.* pp. 254-255

"Japan, being a part of the non-Western world, no doubt belongs to the object or the inspected [...] Modern Japan, however, tried to be one of the imperialistic powers and thus the nation was eager to learn the Western thought in order to establish its own colonies"⁹⁷

The colonies, expression of the imperialism of Japan and embodiment of its tendency to the leadership in the Asia-Co-Prosperity Sphere, are the manifestation of the hegemonic power of the country. Thanks to this position, Japan could apply Orientalism to other countries, such as China Korea and Taiwan, and re-invent itself as different and unique, during and after the war.

In the self-perception of "Uniqueness" the Japanese often doesn't take into consideration their cultural indebtedness from other Asian countries and how their "typical" characteristic have been shaped during the war by western perceptions.

But History has always been written by the winners and rarely has been given space to its re-interpretation.

⁹⁷ Nishihara, Daisuke (2005) *Op. Cit.* pp. 245

CHAPTER TWO

- POLITICS OF IDENTITY: ASSIMILATING RE-ORIENTALISM -

As re-orientalism shaped Japanese society after World War II through the study of social scientists influenced by western perceptions on Japan, it also shaped the changing face of Japanese politics since the post-war period. In this chapter I will analyze how assimilation was carried out from one hand by ideas and models on Japan's society and politics, in a socio-costructivist optic, and from the other by the voluntary and involuntary pushes for economic and political change. To achieve this goal, firstly, I believe that a deeper analysis of the link between self-perceived identity and nationalism is necessary in order to prepare the ground for the second part, in which I will describe models of political behavior influenced by self-perceived ideas on Japanese society, the changed role of politics, bureaucracy and the emerging actors in Japan's political life.

2.1 The building of the Japanese nation: linking identity to nationalism

Nationalisms in Japan re-emerged in different forms after the war and the occupation of the country, but with linkages to Japan's past and its fascist experience. The left-wing parties became the embodiment of anti-US nationalism, while the Establishment had nationalism linked to economy, in the form of protectionism and neo-mercantilism,⁹⁸ especially during and after the 1960s. However, orientalist coordinates did not change and even after the end of the war, the public as well as the government kept self-identifying themselves in them. This process led mainly to two directions: the first was the economic nationalism in modern Japan, carried out by the conjunct forces of the political parties, government bureaucracy and companies, while the second is represented by the relationship between commemoration and identity.

2.1.1 *The origins of Nationalism in Japan: Tenno, Minzoku and Kokka*

Here I will distinguish two main interpretations of Nationalism, already explained by Antony D. Smith in his books *National identity* and *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: a Cultural approach: classical and modernist*.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Wilson, Sandra (2002) *Nation and Nationalism in Japan* RoutledgeCurzon, p.15

⁹⁹ Smith, D. Anthony (2009) *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: a Cultural approach* pp 3 - 41Routledge

The classical one emphasizes the ethnic and cultural foundation of a society, re-evaluating elements of the historical development, heritage and traditions, sense of belonging (or will to belong) to determinate intrinsic values and the sub-sequential exclusion of elements considered evil or extraneous to the society. Anthony D. Smith describes this type of Nationalism, called "primordialism" in two different forms: the first as "sociobiological", where biological is the natural tendency to "genetic reproductive drives" of the nations in order to preserve their structure, while the second is cultural, made up of cultural elements (race, territory, language, civilization, religion etc.) that provide the sense of unity of a society and assure order and peace.¹⁰⁰

The modernist interpretation is linked to the idea of modernity and to the modern structure of society, thus focusing on nation-building with the idea of modern economy based on education, up-to-date technologies and capitals and on new models of development, creating a "new tradition" with the modernity.¹⁰¹ Marx was a pioneer of the modernism theory, through the explanation of stages of development, of the necessity of the transition from feudalism to a bourgeois society and eventually to socialism. Modernization was then a decisive factor in taking societies from a situation of colonization and economic exploitation and leading them to self-determination and nation-building. Even colonization in some cases (like in the case of British India) in Marx's view has given the chance to underdeveloped countries to progress toward modernity.¹⁰²

The two interpretations are not at all antithetic but they find their complementarity in the historical phenomena of Italian and Japanese fascisms and German Nazism during WWII.

As we have seen in chapter one the Japanese attempts to dominate East Asia with the form of Pan-Asianism were expressions of the necessity to retrieve an Asian Identity (forged around the Japanese one), but with the means of production provided by modernization:

“Japanese national identity comes to itself from out of the hegemonic process in which Japan's true particularity is denied by virtue of Japan's incorporation into the universalist representation schema as the other of the West.”¹⁰³

Paradoxically, the weapons of modernizations were born in the perspective of the universalist

¹⁰⁰ Smith, D. Anthony (2009) *Ibid.* pp. 3-23

¹⁰¹ Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terence (2002) *L'invenzione della tradizione*, pp 4-5, Trans. by Enrico Basaglia, Giulio Einaudi Editore

¹⁰² Marx, Karl in *New York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1853

¹⁰³ Yumiko, Iida (ed.) (2002) *Rethinking identity in Modern Japan, Nationalism as aesthetics*, Routledge p.15

western hegemonic action, they displaced the original values and the importation of exogenous models in order to organize and structure society. In Japan's Meiji Revolution it was the embodiment of this necessity for renovation and it led to dramatic events of alienation and depersonalization such as the replacement of their hierarchy and heritage.

In the Edo period hierarchy in Japan was represented by a class system: *shinōkōshō* with the upper part occupied by the imperial family, followed by the military class, peasants, artisans and merchants and finally the *eta*, segregated from the society. This non-original system is linked to the Confucian tradition in China and it was widespread in East Asia (such as in Korea, with the name *Sa Nong Gong Sang*) and the ranks were far from having fixed economic power, with the wealthy merchant class gaining power and the samurai losing their prominence due to their low stipends.

This collapsing system of fixed social classes, which was among the causes of the burst of the Meiji revolution, and of the dynamism of the last century of the Edo period, brought about by the economic activity of the merchant class, was an embryonic phase of modernity and similar to the social transformations happened in Europe after the industrial and French revolution.¹⁰⁴

This system of heritage, already collapsed by the burst of Meiji revolution, was destroyed by reforming laws between 1869 and 1871¹⁰⁵ and consequently dismantled the hierarchical system that enforced social status and gave the final blow in 1876, when the government stopped paying stipends to the samurai, causing several rebellions, all crushed by the new, technological advanced army of Japan¹⁰⁶. The system, after the abolition of feudalism in 1871 and the increase of social and geographical mobility that derived, was eventually substituted by the enforcement of a modern system of taxation of the land in 1873 (by which the landowners had to pay annually 3% of its value) and the liberation of the people from feudal restrictions, that led to the employment of a new-born working class in the industrial sector.

This shift from a Confucian hierarchical system to a dynamic, centralized and overly controlled model of modernity gave the Japanese people the power to self-identify themselves even more in their Japanese origins and “uniqueness”. Without hierarchy and feudalism, the Japanese were not divided by social roles and functions, or by restricted socio-cultural groups that deprived them to join the set of self-images of "Japaneseness", but were now theoretically equals inside their nation.

¹⁰⁴ Yamamura, Kozo (1980) 'L'industrializzazione del Giappone. Impresa, proprietà, gestione' in *Storia Economica Cambridge* Vol.VII, Einaudi, Torino

¹⁰⁵ The Emancipation Edict of 1871 (*kaihourei*, 解放例) incorporated the *eta-hinin* into the Japanese society

¹⁰⁶ Ikegami, Eiko (1995) *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, Harvard University Press p.360

The schizophrenic identity that arose from the re-evaluation of the presumed traditions and the necessary modernization lead Asia to ambivalent attitudes and often modernization was a symbol of departure from images of a backward-oriented Asia:

“Japan as a country and the whole nation decided to accept technologies and modern civilization born in the west. This was the first amongst the all Asian countries and this also meant leaving Asia for Japan.”¹⁰⁷

Heritage and social costumes as practices inherited from the past tend to change in every nation being subject of colonialism. If this specifically was not the case of Japan, accepting change as a voluntary step toward modernity, breaking from cultural rules and habits became one of the priorities of the Meiji Elites. In a way, the *modus operandi* was not radical, but was instead based on a compromising approach between a presumed Japanese spirit, lines and the new western technology. It essentially held on catch phrases such as *fukoku kyōhei* and *bunmei kaika*. Moreover, the necessity to progress toward modernization and maintain values of the Japanese identity was conveyed in the words *Wakon-yōsai* ("Japanese spirit and Western techniques") appearing in Yoshikawa Tadayasu's *Kaika sakuron* ("Questions and Themes on Progress", 1867). A similar slogan was used by the renowned Sugawara no Michizane during the Heian period: *wakon kansai*, that embodied the ideas of Japanese spirit and Chinese scholarship¹⁰⁸, marking the end of the Imperial mission to China and of the process of nativism of cultural elements derived from the latter (Esoteric Buddhism, Confucian learning and influence in art, sculpture, calligraphy). Experiencing periods of cultural closure to external influence as well as opening to international exchanges, the *wakon yōsai* slogan is different in its proclaiming an intermediate approach to renewal. This was the intention and the results were important. This notion, which was not in any way unique to the Japanese, actually mixed the heritage discourse with western economic and political models for the sake of progress and improvement in the quality of life and state security.

For instance, at first Meiji leaders had looked at the United States' national banking system as a model for their own banks, but, after inflation was generated from the great amount of pensions bonds granted to the former samurai, they decided for a Belgian banking model to re-organize and rationalize the country's finance with a strong role for the central bank, adopting it as it was:

“[...] Matsukata and his reformers followed the regulations (*jōrei*) and statutes (*teikan*) of its Belgian peer,

¹⁰⁷ Fukuzawa Yukichi 'Datsu a ron (On leaving Asia)' in *Jiji shinpo*, 16 March 1885

¹⁰⁸ Little, Frederick Alan (2012) 'The Anglo-Japanese Productions of Minakata Kumagusu', Phd thesis, Graduate School - Newark Electronic Theses and Dissertations p.10

literally word-by-word and article-for-article. The Bank of Japan thus naturally inherited the state-interventionist character of the BNB.”¹⁰⁹

Moreover, considering technological improvements in Japan, Richard Samuels states that:

"Japan's technological ideology revolved around three constants: *kokusanka*, or the struggle for technological autonomy through indigenisation; *hakyū*, or the coordinated effort to diffuse knowledge and technological practice throughout the economy; and *kusei*, or the commitment to nurture and further develop the acquired knowledge on the national, regional, local, and corporate levels."¹¹⁰

On the other hand, *fukoku kyōhei* conveyed a more radical approach, insisting on substituting the traditional political and economical models. *Fukoku kyōhei*, literally: wealthy nation and strong military, was directly intended to catch up to the west.

At first success of the *fukoku kyōhei* (“enrich the country, strengthen the military”) was the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, which took place because Japan was the first non-western country to defeat a western one, arising a number of questions on the models of development. Moreover, economic policy was focused on developmental capitalism as a distinctive trait of Japanisness¹¹¹, but to my opinion it is paralleled to other subjects that I will present and analyze hereafter and relevant as an intermediate link between identity, nationalism and foreign policy. In brief, the adoption of western technologies to increase production, focuses on export and limits to foreign imports (mercantilism), promotion of industrial policies on key products, protection of sensitive ones (agriculture-related) and have an active role of the state to regulate, develop and sustain key national companies.

How did it work?

Fokoku kyōhei was the result of a realist analysis of the I.R. of the time. When the Iwakura mission arrived in Europe (after America) in 1872 with the double intention to negotiate the unfair treaties imposed by the European countries to study the social and technological advances of the West, “There was a desire, amongst the Meiji leadership to gain some kind of meaningful appreciation of what was meant by 'enlightenment', both in the sense of what it meant to their Western

¹⁰⁹ Schiltz, Michael (2006) 'An ideal bank of issue. 'The Banque Nationale de Belgique As a Model for the Bank of Japan' in *Financial History Review*, Vol 13 Issue 2 Oct.2006, pp 179-196, Cambridge University Press

¹¹⁰ Simon James Bytheway and Michael Schiltz (2009) 'The dynamics of wakon yōsai (Japanese spirit, Western technology): The paradoxes and challenges of financial policy in an industrializing Japan, 1854-1939' in D. Bennett, J. Earnest and M. Tanji (eds.) *People, Place and Power: Australia and the Asia Pacific* pp 57 -79 Black Swan Press, Perth

¹¹¹ Johnson Chalmers (1982) *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* pp. 7-10, Stanford University Press

counterparts and what it should mean for them.”¹¹²

Beyond this desire, there was also the fear of remaining isolated by stronger actors in the world stage, and sub-sequentially from economical and trade profits, political and geographical influence and participation in international summits that would have penalized Japan's future, such as the Convention of Kanagawa on March 31st, 1854 and the Harris Treaty of 1858, which were the unequal treaties that put Japan in the position to choose between changing itself or following China in becoming a subject to European commercial and territorial interests.

To identify and describe Japanese classical Nationalism, first of all I would like to take into consideration the main concepts that are its constituting elements.

2.1.2 *Tennō*

Paradoxically, if we consider Nationalism as opposed to the idea of monarchy, Japanese nationalism has interpreted its connection with monarchy, in the form of the emperor "tennō", the soul of its nationalism and national uniqueness (with the unbroken 2600 year lineage).¹¹³ The reasons of this tendency rely on the political role of the emperor in Japan. Substantially excluded by a dominant role in politics and considered only a symbolic figure for most of the Japanese history (until the advent of Japanese fascism), the Japanese tennō is not comparable to European monarchs and despots, like those responsible of the French revolution. This aspect, far from being a character of uniqueness for Japan, it is the expression of the necessity to assure the *kokutai* (in Japanese: form – tai - that pulls the country – koku – together) with the continuity of the monarchic dynasty.¹¹⁴

Moreover, the *tennō* was the medium to the legitimization of the government authority during the Meiji revolution and after the 1881 political crisis (between Okuma Shigenobu, supporter of a political system dominated by parties, and Ito Hirobumi, advocate of a sovereign monarch) which eventually resulted in the exclusion of Okuma from the government and the political power seized by the cliques of the former domains of Satsuma and Choshu.¹¹⁵

On the one hand there was rising criticism that the monarchy was a puppet in the hands of a "monopoly government" and on the other that some of the most powerful political actors were trying to attribute to the emperor the moral and political features of guide of the nation, especially

¹¹² Ian Nish (2005) *The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe: A new assessment* p.8, Taylor & Francis e-library

¹¹³ Doak, Kevin (2007) *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan, placigin the people* HDO, Brill p. 83

¹¹⁴ Doak, Kevin (2007) *Ibid.* p. 84

¹¹⁵ Doak, Kevin (2007) *Ibid.* p. 90

in relation with the aftermath of the 1889 Imperial Rescript on the Promulgation of the Constitution and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education ¹¹⁶. The first emphasized the ancestral lineage of the emperor, his "sacred" nature (*shinsei naru*) and the Japanese people as descendents and subject of this lineage. The 1890 Rescript on Education was instrumental to the same purposes and it defined the tennō as the moral head of Japan,. As Maruyama Masao affirmed in his famous *Theory and psychology of Ultra-nationalism* (1946) :

"this was an open declaration of the fact that the Japanese State, being a moral entity, monopolized the right to determine values".¹¹⁷

The fact of considering the state a moral entity raises a number of theoretical questions on the concepts of statism and state-building. If the international political theory of realism refuses to identify morals both in the domestic politics and within the dynamics of I.R. between nations, it also rejects the possibility of the existence of a moral state, affirming instead the tendency of the states to satisfy their interests in a situation of structural anarchy ¹¹⁸ and as Hobbes affirmed:

The opinions of men differ concerning meum and tuum, just and unjust, profitable and unprofitable, good and evil, honest and dishonest, and the like; which every man esteems according to his own judgment: it belongs to the same chief power to make some common rules for all men, and to declare them publicly, by which every man may know what may be called his, what another's, what just, what unjust, what honest, what dishonest, what good, what evil [sic]; that is summarily, what is to be done, what to be avoided in our common course of life'.¹¹⁹

Similar assumption are present in old realists thinkers, like Machiavelli, who, In chapter XV of *The Prince*, announces the concept of "effectual truth", that represents the sum of the practical conditions that he believes are required to make both the individual and the country prosperous and strong. Machiavelli replaces the ancient virtue (a moral quality of the individual, such as justice or self-restraint) with *virtù*, ability or vigor.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶Doak, Kevin (2007) *Ibid.* p.93

¹¹⁷ Maruyama, Masao 'Theory and psychology of Ultra-nationalism' in Morris Ivan (eds.) (1963) *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, Oxford University Press p.5

¹¹⁸ Waltz, Kenneth (1979) *Theory of International Politics* p. 81-87 Mc Graw-Hill

¹¹⁹ Hobbes, Thomas (1642) 'De Cive' in Williams, Michael (eds.) (2005) *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, Cambridge University Press p.31

¹²⁰ Korab-Karpowicz, W. Julian, 'Political Realism in International Relations' in Edward N. Zalta (eds) (2011) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Online version:

Paradoxically, in Japan a "moral state" is represented by the figure of the *tennō*, which is used in an utilitarian view previously by the Japanese political elites and, during WWII, by the military clique. After the promulgation of the Japanese Constitution a growing controversy appeared in 1891 when, Uchimura Kanzo, a Christian teacher of Imperial First Higher School, refused to show reverence to an imperial portrait. Following several condemnations in Japanese newspapers as "blasphemous" and "disloyal", the debate (and the protests) continued between those who celebrated freedom of religion and the opinions of philosophers like Inoue Tetsujirō, an opponent of Christianity and affirming the "unique character of Japan's morals" against the popular celebration of "Christianity, which does not take into consideration distinctions of race or state"¹²¹ and that is "harmful for the state, because against the message of the Imperial Rescript".

Here, self-images of national uniqueness as well as "cultural *sakoku*" and sense of national attachment are used in the contest of the political and religious practice to organize Japanese society and separate it from the geographies of the "West", in this case symbolized by Christianity and freedom of religion. Moral uniqueness is given *a posteriori*, not ensued from true distinctive features.

2.1.3 *Minzoku*

In Japanese the most popular term to express the idea of "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" is *minzoku*, which emerged in the Meiji period together with other concepts of modernity. The concept has been subject of difficult interpretations: it may indicate notions of biology as well as shared cultural elements.¹²² If we want to define it in a generic way, we can say that an ethnic group is one that self-identifies itself through the recognition of a common heritage, descent, religion, language, habits and racial traits. In order to clarify its meaning, I'll link the origin of the concept according to the 1875 translation of Guizot's "A history of Civilization in Europe" by Murota Mitsuyoshi, with the term *minzoku* translated as "society", in order to emphasize a more direct inclusion of national customs, folk and singular "ethnos".¹²³

It is beyond any doubt that the Japanese people are the result of the mixture of different ethnic groups and there is no proof that the Japanese were a mono-ethnic group from the very beginning, recognizing the presence of at least four different groups: the Ainu, deriving from the old Mongols,

<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/realism-intl-relations/>

¹²¹ Oguma, Eiji (1995) *Op. Cit.* p. 56

¹²² Shimazu Naoko (2006) *Nationalisms in Japan* pp. 27-28 , Routledge, 1st Edition

¹²³ Doak, Kevin (2007) *Op.Cit.* pp.70-71

the Wajin, rice cultivators whose origins are believed to be in southern China, the southern sea people from Indochina and Indonesia, the Koreans from the kingdoms of Kudara, Shiragi and Koukuri.¹²⁴

The issue of ethnic origin, always at the center of the debate on Japan's own culture, became increasingly important at the end of the 19th century, after the 1879 incorporation of the Ryūkyū and the 1869 annexation of Ezo region.¹²⁵ The 1897 article by Kimura Takataro appeared in *Nipponshugi* n.3 and its title, *The Japanese Are a Superior Minzoku*, demonstrated the different ethnic position of the Japanese people during the Sino-Japanese War (see Chapter one) and insisted on the ethnic superiority of the Japanese army¹²⁶, thus insisting on ethnocentrism and ethnic nationalism.

With an orientalist concept of hegemony, ethnocentrism implies a marked positionality of one ethnic group in relation to the “others”: individuals will consider other ethnic groups (real or imagined) and their elements or values vis-a-vis the “distinctive” values of their own.

However, we need to separate this early conceptualization of the term *minzoku* from the successive *minzokushugi*, which indicates ethnic nationalism instead. Initially appeared during the First World War, it was used to justify Japan's foreign policy, insisting on *minzoku* as one of pillars of the nation.¹²⁷ It was functional, in this sense, to the overcoming of the heterogeneous features of the country and to the establishment of a constructed national identity through the imposition of an education system, the adoption of official languages, the use of national anthems and national flags and the identification of common traditions.¹²⁸ In the case of Japanese fascism, this task was not accomplished by the systematic destruction of the minorities or of the internal groups, but by the implementation of assimilation (*dōka*), accommodation or harmonization (*yūwa*) and coercion/consent-building with the emphasis on *fukoku kyōhei*. Practices such as those of the re-conversion (*tenkō*) to the national ideology were not different in meaning and purposes from the forms of repression carried out by German Nazism or Italian Fascism.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Nakano, Hideichiro (1995) 'The sociology of ethnocentrism in Japan' in John C. Maher and Gaynor Macdonald (eds.) (1995) *Diversity in Japanese culture and language*, Kegan Paul International p.50

¹²⁵ Doak Kevin (2007) *Op. Cit.* p.221

¹²⁶ Kimura Takataro (1897) 'The Japanese are a superior Minzoku' in *Nipponshugi* n°3, 1897

¹²⁷ Doak Kevin (2007) *Op. Cit.* pp. 217-218

¹²⁸ Caroli, Rosa (1995) 'Razza, etnia, nazione', in AISTUGIA, Atti del XIX convegno di Studi Giapponesi, Urbino, pp.47-49

¹²⁹ Caroli, Rosa (1995) *Op.cit.*, pp.52-55

2.1.4 *Kokumin and Kokka in 20th century Japan*

The word *kokumin* means "nation", with a civic and political connotation and it was the final result carried out by the Meiji leaders to infuse political and civic awareness in the reconstructed country. It is not a neologism, but it was commonly used in the Edo period to indicate the different samurai groups belonging to each *daimyō*: different *kokumin* were linked to different forms of political life. Two theories have been considered on the formation and use of the term. The first, supported by Arano Yasunori, insists on the assumption by which the term had originated mainly from the influence of anti-christian movements in the Edo period.¹³⁰

On the other hand, prominent scholar Notto Thelle is confident that the concept, in its connotation *kokuminshugi*, which bring back nationalism to the political sphere, relied on the action of the christian missionaries in Japan during the Meiji period (1870s and 1880s)¹³¹, considering the role of prominent figures like Kozaki Hiromichi, who opposed the *kokuminshugi* nationalism as substantially innate in the political action of the community, and the "state Buddhism" (*kokka-bukkyō*) as the incarnation of the state nationalism.¹³²

However, the scholars, agreed on the fact that religious ties are unavoidable when speaking of nationalism in Japan, and it will be not surprising, at this point of my thesis, to link the concept to imported western values as well. As Christianity played a decisive role for the growing Japanese interest in civil nationalism, the contribution of western ideals coming from the French revolution was even more peculiar.

Political nationalism in the ideals of *liberté – égalité - fraternité* was born as reaction to the French despotic monarchy and was achieved with political participation, civil and human rights and shift from the idea of citizen as a subject to citizen as part of the nation.

Meiji leaders were skilled in implementing these reforms in the first decades of the period: the 1869 abolition of the *Shinōkōshō* and of the strict (at least theoretically) hierarchical system; the 1871 establishment of prefectures; the February 1872 actuation of the household registration law are all examples of the attempts to incorporate the citizens in an hybrid democratic system of political participation.¹³³ But it did not last longer than a few years, when the political crisis of 1881 (when Ōkuma Shigenobu was banished from the government after several disagreements with the Satsuma

¹³⁰Arano Yasunori (1987) 'Nihongata kai chitsujo no keisei' in Amino Yoshihiko (eds.) (1987) *Nihon no shakaishi vol.1: Retto naigai no kotsu to kokka*, Iwanami Shoten

¹³¹Notto Thelle (1987) *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From conflict to dialogue, 1854, 1899*, University of Hawaii Press pp. 164-165

¹³²Kozaki, Hiromichi (1886), *Seikyō Shinron*, Keiseisha

¹³³Jansen, Marius (2002) *Op. Cit.* pp. 365-370

and Chōshū clique) demonstrated the incapacity of the political parties to address social problems, focusing instead on personal interests and relative gains, as in the case of the Hokkaidō Colonization Office scandal of the same year, when prime minister Kuroda Kiyotaka facilitated the acquisition of the office's assets by a consortium led by his former Satsuma's colleagues.¹³⁴

A first consequence of the crisis was the 1889 Meiji Constitution, providing two striking standardizations: Japan was defined as a *teikoku*, an absolute empire devoid of democratic traits, and the Japanese people were mentioned as *shinmin*, the emperor's subjects and not citizens of the nation.

Some of the works by famous writer Yukio Mishima, written in a period of re-discovery of Japanese nationalism with a militaristic emphasis, successfully depict the strong feeling of *kokuminshugi* in the recollection of a trasfigured lapse of the Russo-Japanese war:

“The figures of these soldiers, in both foreground and rear, were bathed in a strange half-light that outlined leggings and boots and picked out the curves of bent shoulders and the napes of neck. This light charged the entire picture with an indescribable sense of grief.

From these men, there emanated a tangible emotion that broke in wave against the small white altar, the flowers, the cenotaph in their midst. From this enormous mass stretching to the edge of the plain, a single thought, beyond all power of human expression, bore down like a great, heavy ring of iron on the center.”

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The protagonist of the later Mishima's novel *Runaway Horses* (1969) presents the paradigm of the shift from *kokuminshugi* to *kokkashugi* in the early 19th century Japanese society, self-identifying itself in the ideals of the *kokka shinto*, used then by the Japanese government to encourage patriotism and efforts toward militarism. The sentimentalization of pseudo-authentic features of the Japanese culture, such as the material culture of death, martial arts, poetry and artistic heritage is the essence of the *kokkashugi*.

As historian Thomas Havens affirmed in *Frontiers of Japanese Social History During World War II* (1973), the constant dialectic conflict between these two forms of nationalism led to the emergence of Japanese fascism. Authority and political legitimacy of Nationalism arrived with the 1938 State

¹³⁴ Lebra, Joyce Chapman (1959) 'Okuma Shigenobu and the 1881 Political Crisis' in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Aug., 1959), pp. 475-487

¹³⁵ Mishima, Yukio (1969) *Spring snow* Trans. by Michael Gallagher Tuttle Publishing, 2010, p. 4

mobilization law (*Kokka Sōdōin Hō*), legislated by Prime minister Konoe Fumimaro and seen by some historian as a moment of reconciliation between nation (*kokumin*) and government (*kokka*) using *kokumin* rhetoric to justify the state's purposes in domestic politics¹³⁶. The law gave to the government exclusive control over civilian organization, unions, media, prices of goods and nationalization of key industrial sectors. However, the *kokka*-side of nationalism was already prevalent in the substantial unconstitutionality of the law with its in fact deprivation of rights of expression and organization. This way, the ideas of nation and political participation were swept away by the militarist and fascist ideologies.

Democracy in the form of *kokumin* as envisaged by Maruyama Masao in "Nihon no shisō" ("Japanese political thought"), or, as he calls it "*kenzenna kokuminshugi*", remains one valuable proposal of the prominent post-war intellectual¹³⁷. In Maruyama's view, the only way to prepare the ground for democracy in Japan is to return to the attempts of the early Meiji period leaders toward the establishment of a civil society and especially to Fukuzawa's insistence on the necessity to overcome the gap between the individual and the state.¹³⁸ But this idea evaporated after the crisis of the political scene, following the US-Japan Security Treaty of 1960, returning only in a mild way during the 1980s, with Prime minister Nakasone's own interpretations of *kokuminshugi*, or rather the normalization of the political participation in Japan to shorten the gap between the government and the society. But these attempts to reconcile the two spheres appeared clumsily only few decades later, in some of Nakasone's declarations on the ethnic homogeneity of Japan, thus demonstrating his confusion and inability to deal with this historical issue.

2.1.5 Economic Nationalism and war commemoration

Having explained the origins and the key coordinates of Nationalism in Japan, we have now to deal with its two main expressions since the post-war period. Economic nationalism, on the basis of interpretations by the German Historical School (and mostly Gustav von Schmoller) put emphasis on the ethic implications of economy as a moral science: economy has the responsibility toward its citizens and vice versa.¹³⁹ The works of Gustav von Schmoller influenced the Association for the study of social policy (*shakai seisaku gakkai*), which determined, in the early 20th century, the trend

¹³⁶ Havens, Thomas (1973) 'Frontiers of Japanese social history during world war 2' cit. in Doak, Kevin *Op. Cit* p.202

¹³⁷ Doak Kevin (2007) *Op. Cit.* p.106

¹³⁸ Kersten, Rikki (1996) *Democracy in Postwar Japan: Maruyama Masao and the Search for autonomy*, Routledge p.66

¹³⁹ McWeigh, Brian J. (1998) *The Nature of the Japanese State: Rationality and Rituality*, Routledge, p. 118

toward economic nationalism in Japan through goal setting organs, strategic instructions (administrative guidance), and the tactical activities of the companies.¹⁴⁰

Although Japan turned more prosperous in the late 1950s, only since the 1960s Japan started to enjoy an important trade surplus, after the government campaign, which incited to "promote exports and conserve foreign exchange". The 1960s campaigns to "economize" and cut "overconsumption" which resulted in the excess of imports and led to the creation of various material as of that of propaganda type.

Pamphlets like "The economy is linked to the kitchen" (1962) encouraged to amass a great amount of savings in order to maintain a strong trade surplus against the menace of a western tycoon, personifying the speculative interests of foreign countries.¹⁴¹

Economic nationalism has, as its precondition, wartime nationalism, in its asserting models of organization based on the idea of a *kazoku-kokka*, of cohesion of every substrata of the society. In the pamphlet, society is represented as a family, as the protector of Japanese goods and Japanese spirit, against the menace coming from the "Outside", the "Other", the foreigner.

The economic nationalism and mercantilist policies lasted until the 1970s, when the inevitable end of the economic miracle, the oil and Nixon Shocks, the entry in the OECD, (which constricted Japan to comply with the OECD's Code of Liberalization of Capital Movements), and the obligation to deregulate foreign exchange controls in order to observe Article 8 of the IMF Charter marked the end of the era.¹⁴²

More significant was and still is the impact of the link between war commemoration and national identity. This relationship is symbolized by the Yasukuni Shrine, conceived as the resting-place of the martyrs for the nation and, as Tessa Morris-Suzuki has argued, "it defined not only Japan's national boundaries, but also is national character."¹⁴³ The shrine became also the place of celebrations of the victories and for the dissemination of information during the 20th century wars, thus linking memory/war commemoration with former nationalism and re-orientalised national identity¹⁴⁴:

Under the concept of *kokutai*, the civil and military bureaucracy had to be responsible directly to the

¹⁴⁰ Mc Weigh (1998) *Ibid.* pp.120-121

¹⁴¹ Garon, Sheldon 'Saving for My Own Good and the Good of the Nation:Economic Nationalism in Modern Japan' in Sandra Wilson (ed) (2002) *Nation and Nationalism in Japan* RoutledgeCurzon pp. 113-4

¹⁴² Sugihara Masako, 'The Politics of Economic Nationalism in Japan: Backlash against Inward Foreign Direct Investment' in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 5 (September/October 2008) p. 842

¹⁴³ Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (1998) *Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation*, M.E. Sharp, New York p. 10

¹⁴⁴ Sandra Wilson (2002) *Nation and nationalism in Japan*, RoutledgeCurzon pp. 117 -118

emperor. A system of universal conscription and compulsory education, coupled with State Shintō, cemented ideologically the entire structure.¹⁴⁵

The connection between national identity and war commemoration was disrupted by the severe policies of the Occupation forces in banning any form of nationalistic cult which could have reminded the population of the war years and of the former figure of the Emperor. In this sense the Shinto Law Directive of 15 December 1945 prohibited the state funding of religion and privatized most of the commemorative shrines. It practically obliged the Japanese not to commemorate their victims.

A fractured identity regarding Japan's past has emerged as a consequence. For the veterans, as Nitta Mitsuko has showed, "although their comrades died for the nation, the post-war nation does not acknowledge its debt to them"¹⁴⁶. Instead the youth, as controversial authour Kobayashi Yoshinori points out in the contentious manga *Sensōron*, have forgotten the sacrifices of their grandfathers and live in a decadent society¹⁴⁷.

In a survey it has been demonstrated that the Yasukuni shrine has been visited by the Japanese Prime Ministers because most of the LDP (53%) voters and many (23%) of the voters of the opposition were supporting the visit, mainly for "paying homage to the dead" (53%)¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, the debate on Japanese school textbooks is a crucial point to understand the assimilation of views on national identities since the end of the WW2. School textbooks often re-enforce pre-existing ideologies (in this case the war image of Japan militarism and its Confucian-oriented social organization) and a re-orientalized national identity (following the stereotyped coordinates identified by Benedict) to lead to holistic conclusions such as "Japan as different" and "Japan as unique".¹⁴⁹

The issue came to light in the context of the changing international landscape, where a shift happened from the US and Japan early leadership's attempts toward democratic transformation to the necessity to push for anti-communism in the Cold War context and in this sense the role of the conservative clique in shaping and dominating the policies of Monbushō (the Ministry of the Education) with re-orientalized memories of the past. Therefore the March 1947 Fundamental Law

¹⁴⁵ Yongwook Ryu, 'The Yasukuni Controversy: Divergent Perspectives from the Japanese Political Elite' in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (September/October 2007), p. 708

¹⁴⁶ Nitta Mitsuko 'Eirei to senyūkai' in Takahashi Saburō (eds.) *Kyodō kenkyū: senyūkai*, Tokyo Tabata shoten, 1983

¹⁴⁷ Wilson Sandra *Ibid.* p. 125

¹⁴⁸ Yongwook Ryu, *Op. Cit.* pp. 717-720

¹⁴⁹ Yoshiko Nozaki (2008) *War memory, nationalism and education in postwar Japan, 1945-2007 : the Japanese history textbook controversy and Ienaga Saburo's court challenges* London, Routledge, pp 1-2

on Education supported equal opportunities in the education and refused an imposition of control from above ¹⁵⁰. But the School Education Law, which introduced the need for the textbooks to comply with norms dictated from above, and the 1953 Ikeda-Robertson talks (that resulted in the establishment of the Self-Defence Forces), accused independent teachers unions (such as JTU – Japan Teachers Union) to spread communism in the schools.¹⁵¹ Thus, a new power went to the hands of the Minister of Education, that, since 1953, could screen textbooks and since 1954 limited the political activities of the teachers:

“Do not write bad things about Japan in the Pacific war. Even though they are facts, represent them in romantic language. [...] It is inadequate to say that Japan ruled China and made it miserable.” ¹⁵²

The romantic language to which the Ministry itself refers here is the same empathized by Bushidō, which shared the same ideal descriptions of the "real Japanese spirit", put the emphasis on constructing a "good image" of Japan, especially toward its Asian neighbors, and had the intention to erase negative connotations such as "aggression" or other expressions "which describe Japan as unilaterally negative".

However, since the early 70s various international and domestic factors triggered a shift toward a re-consideration of identifiable memories of the war: the Vietnam war, the pacifist movements, the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with China in 1972 and the visit of Hiroito to US and Europe in 1971.¹⁵³

It is in during these years that the Japanese people truly developed a tendency toward oscillation between *victimhood* (focus on the sufferance of the Japanese people during the war) and recognition of *victimization* (the atrocities inflicted on other populations and nations) ¹⁵⁴. As Orr affirms in the outstanding *The Victim as a Hero* (2001), the victimhood was seen by the US as instrumental to the setting-up of a future pacific society in Japan, while responsibility of Japan toward other Asian countries was ignored.¹⁵⁵

The school textbooks debate deals with three main issues:

¹⁵⁰ Yoshiko Nozaki (2008), *Ibid.* p.10

¹⁵¹ Noshiko Nozaki (2008) *Ibid.* p.18

¹⁵² Noshiko Nozaki (2008) *Ibid.* pp.18-20

¹⁵³ Nozaki Yoshiko (2008) *Ibid.* p.51

¹⁵⁴ Bukh, Alexander (2007) 'Japan's History Textbooks Debate: National Identity in Narratives of Victimhood and Victimization' in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (September/October 2007) University of California Press p. 683

¹⁵⁵ Bukh, Alexander (2007) *Op. Cit.* p. 681

- the Nanjing massacre, whose coverage at the time of the events was prohibited to the media and to the soldiers and only few people had the opportunity to know it through the accounts of the Tokyo court. However, Edgar Snow's *Battle for Asia* (1941) and Bradford Smith *History of the Pacific war* soon informed of the massacre and only in 1967 we have the first book on the topic: Hara Tomio's *Nankin Jiken*¹⁵⁶. This book was followed by the serial publication "Chugoku no tabi", which reached a nationwide success. In both texts the massacre is not justified by "heroism" or "romanticism" and 95% of the responses demonstrated feelings of surprisingness, shock and condemn toward the massacre.

We have to point out, however, that textbooks such as *Chūgaku*¹⁵⁷ when dealing with the Pacific War focused on the "suffering of the *kokumin*" (victimhood), with a central idea of social cohesion (of the Confucian type) against the western individualism, and limited attention to the Nanjing massacre. Nonetheless, as Yoshida Takashi affirms, most of the textbooks pay attention to Japanese responsibility (victimization) and we cannot affirm that in the textbooks there are only attempts to auto-absolve from the war responsibilities. Since the 1990s all of the history books in Junior high school delve enough space to the atrocities of Nanjing.¹⁵⁸

- The Battle of Okinawa has been seen for several decades after the war as the application of the wartime doctrine of *gyokusai* ("to die like gem stones") on the civilian population, who was forced by the Japanese troops to fight to death and to commit "mass suicides".¹⁵⁹ Later evidence showed that the Japanese Imperial army forced the Okinawan natives to commit suicide instead of letting them fall in the hands of the enemy.¹⁶⁰ The first accounts of the war to denounce the events were *Okinaga no Higeiki* (1951) and *Okinawa Kenjitai* (1953), which condemned openly the war. The debate continued up to nowadays, even if now the battle is included in many sub-chapters of the Japanese textbooks and the responsibility of the Japanese imperial army is often condemned.¹⁶¹ Yet, in 2007, MEXT (the Ministry of Education) "advised" the textbooks publishers to re-write parts in which Japan's responsibility in forcing the Okinawans to commit suicide is openly stated. The protests that

¹⁵⁶ Nozaki Yoshiko *Op. Cit.* pg. 52

¹⁵⁷ Bukh, Alexander (2007) *Op. Cit.* pp. 692-693

¹⁵⁸ Yoshida Takashi 'For the Nation or for the People? History and Memory of the Nanjing Massacre in Japan' in Sven Saaler and Wolfgang Schwentker (2008) *The power of Memory in Modern Japan* pg. 21 Global Oriental Ltd, Kent.

¹⁵⁹ Nozaki Yoshiko *Op. Cit.* p. 55

¹⁶⁰ Onishi, Norimitsu. "Japan's Textbooks Reflect Revised History." *New York Times*, 1 April, 2007

¹⁶¹ Bukh, Alexander (2007) *Op. Cit.* p.697

followed against Mext in September 2007 and supported by famous personalities such as Ōe Kenzaburo demonstrated that the issue is still unsolved.

Even nowadays, neo-nationalist groups still don't want to accept the infamy of the Japanese army, focusing instead on the value of the *gyokusai* as the re-orientalized romantic, heroic act of "public" sacrifice within a familistic connotation of hierarchy between the people and the government – as in the Confucian idea of a son who cannot disobey his father.

- Comfort women was a topic of debate that like Okinawa emerged in the confrontation with "healthy nationalism", in this case born by the 90s tendency of *rekishi shuuseishugi* (revisionism) to replace "left-wing" vision emerged in the 70s.¹⁶²

The neo-nationalist groups interpreted re-orientalized elements of Japan, such as the military culture, patriotism, the denial of the individualism and saw the "comfort women" as prostitutes, whose daily life was conducted inside facilities that resembles brothels. The focus on chauvinism and power of the military over the life of the individuals, justified by the theory of the *kokutai*, is the essential element of the critics against this atrocious historical fact. Yuki Tanaka provided a significant account of the atrocities committed by the Japanese army in the influential book "Japan's comfort women". Since 1938 the comfort women system was already integrated in the Japanese army and the idea of the "comfort stations" was meant to be a measure against mass rape, experienced by Chinese civilians before and during the Nanking massacre, as stated by the instructions Lieutenant-General Okabe Naozaburō (Chief of Staff of the North China Area Army):

“It is said that such rape is fermenting unexpectedly serious anti-Japanese sentiment. [...] Therefore it is of vital importance that individual acts by our military personnel be strictly controlled, and that, at the same time, facilities for sexual pleasure be established promptly, in order to prevent our men from inadvertently breaking the law due to the lack of such facilities”.¹⁶³

Moreover, there were three different types of comfort stations: permanent, attached to the biggest military bases in Shanghai, Nanjing, Tianjing and Beijing; semi-permanent, following the most important military units and temporary, created for the needs of small

¹⁶² Yonson Ahn 'Japan's Comfort Women and Historical Memory: The Neo-nationalist Counter-attack' in Sven Saaler and Wolfgang Schwentker (2008) Op. Cit. pp. 32-34

¹⁶³ Tanaka, Yuki (2002) *Japan's Comfort Women*, Routledge p. 16

battalions.¹⁶⁴ However, the women that arrived in the comfort station were not Chinese for the fear of anti-Japanese sentiment, so the Japanese Imperial Army decided to rely on Korean women, “culturally and ideologically” closer to the Japanese and employed with a system of “recruiting agents”, that often swindled the women with promises of employment.¹⁶⁵ The same system was applied for the recruitment of Taiwanese women and, while the Chinese were not used for the comfort system, the sexual violence continued with the so-called “*shōdo sakusen*” (scorched-earth strategy) that encouraged the destruction, the plundering and the mass rape of villages considered “hostile”.¹⁶⁶

2.2 Patterns of Dependence: the Constitution of Japan

*My heart was heavier than ever, and filled with gloom,
because I thought I was unable to preserve the imperial
system that Minister Matsumoto worked so hard to save,
and, in every other way.
I had failed to satisfactorily fulfill this grave responsibility.
(Sato Tatsuo (1955), "Nihonkoku Kempo Tanjo-ki")*

Does a country have the right to decide its own political system and Constitution? What is the impact of previous undemocratic forms of government? Can violation of state constitutional authorities be justified by lack of democracy? What is the relation between perceived national identity and Constitutionalism?

The debate around the Whos and Hows of the drafting process of the Japanese Constitution is at the same time a research on the imported cultural and political values appearing in the Constitution.

American intervention, or, more correctly, desire to be the centre of attention in deciding the articles of the Constitution has marked a decisive shift in Japan's political life. Here I would like to retrace the key steps of the drafting process and analyze as well the elements of similarity (in its language and concepts) with the American Constitution, demonstrating the impact of the theory of re-orientalism on identity at the constitutional level and the short-term limited impact of the Constitution in the post-war Japanese society, while its enormous impact is providing the

¹⁶⁴ Tanaka, Yuki (2002) *Ibid.* p. 18

¹⁶⁵ Tanaka, Yuki (2002) *Ibid.* pp. 38- 46

¹⁶⁶ Tanaka, Yuki (2002) *Ibid.* pp.45 -48

justification and the rationale between Japanese social transformations under American democratic soft power and the changing economic landscape of the 1970s

2.2.1 The American occupation and the process of drafting the Constitution

After the end of World War II lack of democracy in post-fascist countries such as Italy, Germany and Japan posed different problems. Japanese society could not change overnight, this is what the Japanese Government realized and what Commander Mc Arthur of the SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), who maintained power in Japan from 1945 to 1949, could not understand.

There were impending problems as well as general issues. High priority problems were the need to reconstruct the country and repatriate the soldiers from the territories formerly occupied by Japan.

A general issue was the permanence more than interruption of the work of the Japanese leaders, mostly bureaucrats already standing as government official before WWII.

On the 13th of December 1945 George Atcheson, political adviser of the SCAP, received by the US State Department a preliminary version of "Reform of the Japanese Government", known as SWNCC-28, a basic instrument for any following political and constitutional reform carried out by the SCAP.¹⁶⁷

Similarly, on October 13th, 1945 Matsumoto Joji (Minister of State of the Sidehara Cabinet) was charged of the authority of conducting a study on the Japanese Constitution and on the 25th he created the Constitutional Committee, notwithstanding the skepticism of the Japanese Government.

¹⁶⁸

The early result of the Committee was a draft published by Mainichi Shinbun in February 1946, which was considered as the alleged result of the research group and substantially identical to the Meiji Constitution, at least in its essential parts: Japan was considered a monarchy and 39 articles of the Meiji Constitution were reformulated in the form, but not in the content.

The Matsumoto Constitution was sent to the GHQ on February 8th, but Mc Arthur was already at work for another version.

The SCAP's knowledge about Japan and its politics was limited. In a declaration, Charles L. Kades, one of the drafters of the Constitution declared:

¹⁶⁷ Inoue, Kyoko (1991) *MacArthur's Japanese Constitution, A linguistic and cultural study of its making*, The University of Chicago Press, p.10

¹⁶⁸ Inoue Kyoko (1991) *Ibid.* pp. 9-13

"I am not prepared to answer [to the demand for a Constitution] since we have not studied the Japanese Constitution from the standpoint of making such revision"¹⁶⁹

According to Kades' opinion the GHQ did not have the intention to revise the Meiji Constitution, but could not accept the Matsumoto Constitution: Courtney Whitney, Chief of the Government Section, and one of the members of the research group on the Japanese Constitution, considered McArthur as the possessor of "*Unrestricted authority to take any action*"¹⁷⁰ and on February 3rd he received the task of preparing a Constitution draft based on three main principles: limited monarchy, renunciation to war and elimination of "feudalism".

The Commission was composed other than by Whitney himself, by three lawyers: Col. Charles Kades, E. Rowell and R. Hussey. After one week only the draft was completed, which was made of 92 articles. When the four official met the Japanese counterparts (Yoshida Shigeru, Matsumoto Joji and Shirasu Jiro) of the Japanese Foreign Minister Whitney, they declared:

"the draft of the constitutional revision, which you submitted to us the other day, is wholly unacceptable to the Supreme Commander as a document of freedom and democracy"¹⁷¹

The Japanese officials, who were before convinced that the meeting was supposed to be a discussion on different points of view, were totally shocked, while the four lawyers were busy justifying their assertions with the excuse of protecting the Emperor, accused of war crimes, and with some vague promises of maintaining the power in the hands of the conservatives.

A stressed Matsumoto told what happened on the 13th to an emotionless Cabinet during the Cabinet meeting of February 19th, 1946. The undismayed Ministers Mitsuchi Chuzoo and Iwata Chuzoo refused the American draft and its offensive content, while Prime minister Sidehara was worried for Japan's position in Asian, of a potential inducted *sakoku*, and of the potential harm to the figure of the Emperor.^{172 173}

On the 22nd of February US and Japanese officials met again to continue the negotiation on the Constitution: while the US wanted to finish off the question as soon as possible, the Japanese officials were obviously more cautious in every article, concept and especially in the language used,

¹⁶⁹ Inoue Kyoko (1991) *Ibid.* p.14

¹⁷⁰ Inoue Kyoko (1991) *Ibid.* p. 15

¹⁷¹ Inoue Kyoko (1991) *Ibid.* p. 17

¹⁷² Inoue Kyoko (1991) *Ibid.* p.18-9

¹⁷³ Interview made on May 23, 1989, by Prof. John O. Haley (Washington University) to Col. Charles L. Kades, about the drafting the Japanese Constitution. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnzOU4sf3Ms>

that often presented problems of interpretation in the different etymological meanings in the English and Japanese languages.¹⁷⁴ The American officials were also concerned by the rapidity of the drafting process and implementation of the Constitution since they were pressured by the first parliamentary elections after the end of the war and by the prospect that the Emperor could resign, as allegedly indicated by the press of the time.

When the Constitution was approved and came into effect on May 3rd, 1947 the press did not know that it was not a Japanese creation, but the result of the American efforts to implement a form of apparent democracy in Japan.¹⁷⁵

2.2 *Analyzing the constitution: Japanese self-perceptions and American Orientalism*

The first Constitution of Japan was the Meiji Constitution of 1889. It was the result of the Constitutional Study Mission guided by Ito Hirobumi with the purpose of identifying a Western model adaptable to the "Japanese" culture and political system.

As an adopted son of a low-rank samurai in Chōshū, he was sent by the leaders of the region to study naval science in England in 1863 and collaborated with the Iwakura mission to Europe in the early 1870s.

After the assassination of Ōkubo in 1878, Itō succeeded him at the guide of the minister of the Home affairs. When in 1881 Itō Hirobumi was charged of the responsibility and gained unchallenged control after the resign of its opponent Ōkuma Shigenobu, he started traveling around Europe to find a suitable western model for the Constitution. The American Constitution was soon considered too liberal for the Japanese political environment¹⁷⁶, while the British Constitution favored the Parliament over the other government bodies. The Prussian Constitution, in its formalizing and perpetuating the same sort of regime,¹⁷⁷ seemed more flexible and so it was adopted. Thus the Meiji Constitution provided an Imperial Diet (*Teikoku Gikai*), composed by the House of the Representatives (*Shūgiin*) and the House of Peers (*Kizokuin*). While the *Shūgiin* was elected by a portion of the Japanese population (only those who could pay 15 yen in taxes – only 1% of the Japanese population), the latter was composed of the members of the imperial family and nobility.

¹⁷⁴ Ashida Hitoshi (1952) 'kenpō wa nishūkan de dekita' in *Kaizo*, supplement of the 1952 issue pp.13-25

¹⁷⁵ Inoue Kyoko (1991) *Op. Cit.* pp. 26-8

¹⁷⁶ Kazuhiro Taki (2000) *The Meiji Constitution*, International House of Japan pp. 2-40

¹⁷⁷ Stockwin (2008) *Op. Cit.* p.20



2.1 "Emperor, Empress and dignitaries at the ceremony for the promulgation of the Constitution" Yoshu Chikanobu, 1889, Source: Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Claremont Colleges Digital Library

The provision for the creation of the Cabinet substituted the original Council of State as a body composed by ministers of State.

Nonetheless, the powers was still in the hands of the Emperor, sovereignty did not experience a shift and the Meiji Constitution was only a gift of basic civic rights and liberties to the Japanese people. There was no reference of a Cabinet on the Prussian model, consisting of independent Ministers of State but answering directly to the Emperor, and even the Constitution did not provide any reference to the term "Cabinet" ¹⁷⁸ and it was specifically rejected by Ito Hirobumi because it conveyed an idea of "collective responsibility".

Japanese officials and ministers had no intention to create a liberal Constitution at the time as well as they did not want to implement one after the war. They were forced to do so.

As we have already seen when dealing with the historical evolution of the theory of orientalism, different positionality in power relations shows that when a country is defeated and it has lost the upper hand in growing economically or militarily it tends to lose its status and to be an object more than a subject in International Relations.

If sovereignty was clearly in the hands of the Emperor in the Meiji Constitution¹⁷⁹, the 1946 Constitution clearly stated the sovereignty of the Japanese population and their civil rights:

¹⁷⁸ Stockwin (2008) *Ibid.* p.20

¹⁷⁹ Hook, D. Glenn and McCormack Gavan (2001) *Japan's Contested Constitution*, Routledge 1st Edition pp.20-22

(art.12) The freedoms and the rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be maintained by the constant endeavor of the people, who shall refrain from any abuse of these freedoms and rights and shall always be responsible for utilizing them for the public welfare.

(art.13) All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.¹⁸⁰

Problems of conceptual, linguistic and political nature should be analysed.

First of all is the concept of "individuals". If it is true that the Japanese people have the self-perception of being part of the collective, rooted in the Confucian tradition of social harmony, opposed to the western idea of individual (see chapter one) why do we have "individuals" in the Japanese Constitution? Exporting democracy meant also exporting other values correcting the values that the winners have reputed wrong and distinctive of the enemy during the war. Presumed "collective" Japanese identity was reputed wrong and undemocratic. Collective as an adjective was opposed to social and economic concepts: "individual, "freedom" "private", "free-market". These are paradigms of the US civilization. They refused to accept the already hybrid character of the Japanese culture, as being neither collective nor individualistic.

Moreover, as Stockwin pointed out in his masterpiece "Governing Japan", the word *kōkyō* and *oyake* present language ambiguities between public and official, where there is little difference between public welfare (*kōkyō no fukushi*) and public good (*kōeki*), whereby public welfare is the welfare of the people, whereas the public good and public order suggest a situation obtained by the state or the official bodies.¹⁸¹

Several incongruities are present in the traditional areas of domestic public policies. However, few have significant importance for the question of identity:

1 – Religious freedom (Art.20) was considered by the American forces an essential element to lead Japan toward a western-style democracy (good) and breaking up with the former model of totalitarian state (bad). In the Meiji Constitution freedom of religion was granted in a subtle way in a clause, with which the Government marked the separation between "sectarian Shintoism", overseen by the Bureau of Religion, and "shrine Shintoism".¹⁸² However, considering the western

¹⁸⁰ Art.12 and 13 of the Constitution of Japan

¹⁸¹ Inoue, (1991) *Op. Cit.* pp. 216-17

¹⁸² Inoue (1991) *Ibid.* p. 112

framework of the Meiji Constitution, shaped around European examples, the difference between a Christian background and a Japanese one is striking. As Inoue has pointed out, the Christian god tends to "rule" the earth while the Shintō gods are basically protectors.¹⁸³ The Emperor, being the link between Gods and the Japanese people, is not their representative, only their intermediary, not belonging to any kind of organized religious hierarchy behind him. Only with the creation of the *Shūkyō-kyōko* (as successor of the *Shaji-kyōku*, the Bureau of Shirines and Temples) in the spring of 1900, Shintō was eventually justified: private shrines were put under the jurisdiction of the government and shrines supported by the government were placed in the new *Jinja-kyōku*, the Bureau of Shrines. The early outcome was the incorporation of worship activities in the educational programs and the possibility to sponsor various activities such as traditional festivals and official functions.

Considering that this way Nationalism was supported by an official state religion it is not surprising to observe the negative view of the GHQ towards Japan's position on religion: the priority was the democratic principle of "returning religious freedom to the Japanese people"¹⁸⁴. This was started by a 12 point directive (Dec. 15th, 1945), stating the necessity to release the Japanese from compulsory financial and ideological support to a religion they were obliged to conform.

It followed a second directive, which suspended the *shūshin* (moral training) and the courses of history and geography. The process concluded with the "bringing about" of the Emperor's renunciation of his divinity, in 1946.

Therefore the Americans instilled in the new Constitution freedom of religion ("guaranteed to all") and the separation of religion and state ("no religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State nor exercise any political authority"), in the western idea of "freedom of conscience", in other words the right of the people to believe and worship at will.¹⁸⁵

Japanese "diversity" in this issue was reflected on the historical attitudes of the Japanese toward freedom of religion: if the American considered this western idea as a necessity for the new democratized Japan, Japanese people never truly experienced something like that and were never concerned with new clauses in the Constitution. Religious identity was not endangered by the possibility of religious freedom because, while the first was identified only at the end of the 19th century (unlike Christianity) and transferred in the optic of the "State Shintō", the second has never been a major problem, since an idea that contrasts with religious freedom never really existed. It is not even a problem of positionality. If western colonizers in the 17th and 18th centuries were eager to

¹⁸³ Inoue (1991) *Ibid.* p.132-159

¹⁸⁴ Inoue (1991) *Ibid.* p 122

¹⁸⁵ Art.20 Constitution of Japan

demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over tribal cults to engage in mass exploitation, in post-war Japan, Americans wanted religion freedom as a simulacrum of democracy, not superiority. At the dawn of the Cold-war era democratic values were already the soft power of the American ideology.

2 – Gender equality (Art.23) is perhaps one of the most controversial articles of the Constitution, born from the efforts of the American to change structural elements of the Japanese society, focusing on individual dignity and equality. Individual dignity in the American culture is synonym of individual freedom and ethical respect of the individual. Individualism is opposed, as we have seen above, to the US interpretation of Japan's society as communitarian since the first half of the 20th century.

The root for this distinctive character of the American society, appreciated by French philosopher Alexis the Tocqueville, which contemplated it as a system that linked equality to individual freedom (“Aristocracy had mad a chain of all the members of the community, from the peasant to the king; democracy breaks that chain and severs every link of it”¹⁸⁶), is in the substantial absence of a feudal society in the former history of the United States of America. The Americans, unlike the European and the Japanese, did not experience a transition from feudalism to aristocracy and eventually to democracy. It is true that Japan has a different historical background and that it would be questionable to compare western and Japanese feudalism. But it is also true that the American ideas of equality and individual freedom remained limited to the intentions of the funding fathers and they experienced a slow, complicated evolution. Japan's cultural background is without any doubt different considering the enormous influences of Asian religions such as Buddhism and social and ethic doctrines such as Confucianism. However, since Japan's industrialization in the Meiji period, ideas of *ie*, obligation and social hierarchy begun to dissolve in the new growing urban centers. Nakane Chie explained how the social system and the concept of *ie* remained though the promulgation of the *koshu-ten* (right of the household) and I agree with this position.¹⁸⁷

Social unity and hierarchy were seen by many Americans as elements, which were antithetical to individualism and equality. The GHQ could not understand that Japanese sense of equality, what Nakane calls *byodo shugi*, was similar to the American democratic equality, but it was more focused on personal responsibilities than rights and it interpreted the situation in Japan as basically feudal

¹⁸⁶ Tocqueville (1835) 'Of individualism in democratic countries' in Francis Bowen (eds.) (1840) *Democracy in America* 3rd edition, J&H.G. Langley

¹⁸⁷ Nakane Chie (1967) *Personal Relations in a Vertical Society: A theory of Homogeneous Society*, Tokyo, Kodansha cit. in Inoue (1991) *Op. Cit.*, p 229

and unable to carry out social change: “changes in the form of Government initiated by the Japanese people or government in the direction of modifying its feudal and authoritarian tendencies are to be permitted and favored”.¹⁸⁸

Japan was not ready in the post-war period for the "liberal revolution", especially for its unpreparedness for radical change:

“Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis (...). Laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of sexes”.¹⁸⁹

The article was the product of a subcommittee responsible for the formulation of the civil part of the Constitution, and Beate Sirota Gordon, interpreter at the GHQ and fluent in Japanese, was the assignee of the task. She insisted on fabricating the difference between Japanese women, “helpless victims” and “manipulated by the state ideology” and the “superior” and “democratic” traits of western postwar feminism.¹⁹⁰

Moreover, during an interview in 1999, Gordon stated that “Japanese women were historically treated like chattel; they were property to be bought and sold on a whim”.¹⁹¹

Here the assumptions of a retrograde Japan subsists in the idea of a country unable to govern itself and requiring western guidance to achieve an acceptable level of gender equality. The Americans were forgetting the strong social imprint of Confucianism, of the social construction of *ie* and implementing a Christian-based model of patriarchal family. This attitude echoed the views of the already mentioned book *Japanese Militarism: its Cause and Cure* by John M. Maki, in which the author described Japan, as we have seen in Chapter one, as a second-rate country, accentuating the need to "re-educate" it with US values and norms.

However, the decade following the promulgation of the Constitution saw the continuation of the Japanese equality in a traditional sense, and egalitarian relations between husband and wife based on an American model, did not occurred, not only for the reason that they did not exist in the Japanese society but also because they did not carry weight in the hybrid Japanese society. Only

¹⁸⁸ Takemae, Eiji (2002) *Allied Occupation of Japan*, Continuum International Publishing, London p. 231

¹⁸⁹ Art.24 of the Constitution of Japan

¹⁹⁰ Koikari Mike (2002) 'Exporting Democracy?: American Women, "Feminist Reforms," and Politics of Imperialism in the U.S. Occupaton of Japan, 1945-1952' in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol.23, n°1, 2002 pp. 23-45

¹⁹¹ Fox, Margalit 'Beate Gordon, Long-Unsung Heroine of Japanese Women's Rights, Dies at 89', in *The New York Times*, January 1, 2013. (Online article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/02/world/asia/beate-gordon-feminist-heroine-in-japan-dies-at-89.html?pagewanted=all>)

when the strong changing forces of capitalism and globalization at end of the '70s truly transformed Japanese society, as we will see in the following sub-chapter, we will witness the "normalization" of the Japanese society on western lines and the natural "re-education" of the society and political models.

The law had limited impact on the short period, but it served to justify new social changes at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, when centrifugal forces pushed by industrialization and economical prosperity led, from one side, to the creation of the first feminist and egalitarian movements, guided by personalities such as Mitsu Tanaka (founder of the *Garappu Tatakau Onnatachi*) and Misako Enoki (supporter of the birth control pill) and, on the other, to the transformation of the social habits. It was a situation mirroring the one in Europe, with the second wave of feminism¹⁹². Equality-driven protests were not the causes but the effects of a new society, wealthy, secure, dynamic, with decades of university education.

Tokyo became the metropolis of Asia providing house, services and jobs for a population that from 3.5 millions in 1945 peaked 11.4 millions in 1970. Moreover, The 2012 Statistical Handbook recorded that in 2011 the age of marriage peaked 30.7 years for the men and 19 for the women and, while the number of total marriages exceeded one million in the early 1970s, in 2011 only 662.000 Japanese couples got married, demonstrating the changing aspects of social equality in Japan and the changed role of women in the society.¹⁹³

3– ART.9: The idea of a pacifist Constitution has been one of the most popular subject of public political debate in Japan since the promulgation of the 1947 Constitution.

The article declares:

“Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat of use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”¹⁹⁴

Other Constitutions prohibited aggressive wars¹⁹⁵, but this has forbidden the idea itself of war and

¹⁹² Muto, Ichiyo 'The birth of the women liberation movement' p. 167 in Moore Joe (ed.) (1997) *The other Japan: Conflict, Compromise and Resistance since 1945*, East Gate

¹⁹³ Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau

¹⁹⁴ Art.9 of the Constitution of Japan

¹⁹⁵ Such as the 1791 Constitution of the French Republic

can only be paralleled to the 1948 Costa Rica Constitution. Virtual uniqueness of the Japanese Constitution among the other world Constitutions was strongly hoped by the Americans officials¹⁹⁶, even if General Douglas MacArthur himself declared that Art.9 was demanded by Prime Minister Sidehara, with the dread of a potential lack of support from the population to a belligerent Constitution. However several scholars are certain that the rationale for the article stem directly from the GHQ, and above all from official Charles Kades. Indeed, from the Japanese side, the Peace Issues Discussion Group of the 1940s and its support for an “unarmed identity” approach was coveted and perceived as an alternative to the later US-Japan security treaty of 1951. On the other hand, the US government wanted an "imperial democracy package" (to remould an "inferior" Japan), taking into account the necessity to preserve a monarchic system in the country that would have never challenged the interests of the US in the Asia-Pacific.¹⁹⁷ Yet, an article of the Asahi Shinbun in August 2005¹⁹⁸ provided some evidence that former diplomat and war criminal Shiratori Toshio wrote to prime minister Shidehara in order to advocate the preservation of the imperial system with the removal of potential threats in the area.¹⁹⁹ This was accomplished so far by both art.9 and the US-Japan alliance.

However, doubts from the American side sprung up from the years of the Korean war (1950-1953) and materialized in new pressure for a revision of Art.9 and the request of 300.000 men, including a secret coastguard. At the time, even newly elected senator Richard Nixon declared that "article 9 was a mistake"²⁰⁰.

The debate resulted in the creation of a National police reserve, named SDF in 1954, and in the US-Japan Security Treaty, that allowed the action of decisive American free-hand for the protection of Japan with the permanence of US forces, not liable for expulsion.

The pact was revised with the renewed security treaty of 1960 (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and security between the United States and Japan) conveying the notion of American consultation with Japan before initiating any action ("prior consultation clause") and a new, participative role for the SDF.²⁰¹

After the Japanese economic boom and the implementation of the Yoshida Doctrine of exclusive interest in economic development, the security issue was entirely devised to the American and only

¹⁹⁶Hook Glen (2001) *Op Cit.* p 8

¹⁹⁷ Hook, Glenn (2001) *Op. Cit.* p.17

¹⁹⁸ Seigel, T. Michael *Japan's Peace Constitution and the Security Dilemma*, Nanzan University

¹⁹⁹ Kenpou ni Sensou houki wo, 'Motogaikoukan, Shuusen Chokugo ni Shushou he Shokan ("Include Relinquishing War in the Constitution": Letter of a Former Diplomat to the Prime Minister). Asahi.com, 14 August 2005. <http://www.asahi.com/national/update/0814/OSK200508130084.html>)

²⁰⁰ Hook, Glenn, *Op. Cit.* pp.14-15

²⁰¹ Togo Kazuhiko (2005) *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945 – 2003* pp. 55-60, Brill, Leiden

few voices stood up to contest this exclusive responsibility. One of these lonely voices was Nakasone Yasuhiro, critical of the Constitution forasmuch as it did not reflect, in Nakasone's view,²⁰² the history, traditions and culture of the Japanese. He provided one of the three pretexts to modify the clause of the Constitution, considering the Japanese right to self-defense and the necessity to participate in peace-keeping activities (often wanted by the Japanese government for its interest to gain a seat in the UN Security Council): Article 9 collides with presumed images of Japanese identity because it was pushed by the GHQ. In an effort to sensitize the public opinion, in 1956 Nakasone organized a "Song Festival for Constitutional Revision" at the Takarazuka Theatre in Tokyo, which included its "Constitution Song", a superb example of reaction to the American measures:

“Ah, defeated in war and occupied by enemy soldiers
 Coerced by an Occupation constitution on the pretext of pacifist democracy,
 the plan was to enervate our native land,
 the war had been over for half a year.
 [...]
 We must make our own constitution to build the foundations of our country.
 If we fulfill our historic duty
 the decision will swell our hearts.”²⁰³

The chief conviction here is the critic toward the lack of centre of attention of Japan in administering and regulating its own security concerns, leaving the task to the Americans. The GHQ pushing toward the revision of Art.9 could be esteemed as the short-term necessity to let the US decide on the future of the international relations in Asia after the retire of Japan's nationalism during the WWII. As we have assessed in Chapter 1, Japan's "militaristic" identity had its grounds in the war against China and in the re-valuation of certain distinctive features as opposed before to the Chinese, then to the Americans.

The long term denial by the US of the pacifist message of Art.9 since the Korean War can be confirmed by the evolution of the US-Japan alliance in the Asia Pacific. Japan distanced itself from the Yoshida doctrine and accepted an increasing role for the SDF.

During the Gulf war and the following UN Peace Keeping Operation Japan sent minesweepers and 13\$ billions in aid of the operations. A parliamentary debate originated around the issue of creation

²⁰² Hook, Glenn, *Op. Cit.* p.15

²⁰³ Hook, Glenn *Op. Cit.* pp. 15 -16

of non-SDF forces ²⁰⁴ and resulted in the Law concerning cooperation for UN Peace keeping cooperation, by which the SDF now participate in UN humanitarian and peace-keeping operations according to five conditions (the parts have to agree on Japanese participation; ceasefire had already to be in existence; impartiality; withdrawal if the first three conditions are not respected; use of weapons intended only for self-defence).

In 1996 US-Japan reinvigorated their alliance on the basis of the new post-war context around three pillars: cooperation on sharing information, UN operations and policy consultation; Japan as responsible for its self-defense (but with US support), Japanese logistical support to US.

Moreover, with the North Korean missiles test in 1998, Japan and US agreed on starting cooperation on the research and development of a defense system in East Asia. Following the attacks to the World Trade Center in 9/11 2001 and George W. Bush's Declaration: "you're either with us or against us in fight against terror" explicit pressure from US to a Japanese involvement in Afghanistan was expressed and resulted in the deployment of 1000 troops in non-fighting areas with the 2003 "special law". ²⁰⁵

All this steps portrayed a growing interest in US-Japan relations, an increased military expenditure and a decaying importance of the Art.9 of the Constitution, moving far from the Yoshida Doctrine.

However, it is intriguing to highlight how and to what extent this process matches with the resurgence of nationalism and patriotic associations and groups in Japan, especially in the last decade. Retrieving an assumed identity became the priority of these formal and informal groups. Some of them are focused on the defense of a possible aggression of its neighbours (mainly North Korea and China), while others are linked to political parties and exploit assumed values and memories on Japanese identity to justify a resurgent nationalism.

Yet, neither Nationalism, nor the growing cooperation in security in Asia saw a parallel growing independent role for Japan in conflict prevention and in the security field in East Asia. The sense of guiltiness and assimilation of western stereotypes as inferior in hegemonic positionality to US would never give Japan the chance to have an autonomous role in the Asia Pacific, at least in the security field and also in its integration (socio-cultural, economical and political) in East Asia, as we will observe in Chapter three.

This is not the case of other issues, such as gender equality, religious freedom and individualism, that became progressively prominent in Japan since the early 70s, in the form of the feminist movements, mutated conditions for women, changed age of marriage, more political participation

²⁰⁴ Connors, Michael K. 'Japan in the Asia-Pacific' in Connors, Michael.K., Davidson Rémy, Dosch, Jorn *The new global politics of the Asia-Pacific* RoutledgeCurzon pp 43-47

²⁰⁵ Connors, Michael K. *Ibid.* pp.46-47

and consciousness, new political actors, changing familial relations.

All these domestic factors had a different impact on Japan's attempts toward economic integration in East Asia and on the relationship between an Identity constructed by the state and functional for political aims and other identities developed from different social groups that requested a self-identification in determinate values, ideas and conditions according or reacting to the logics of re-Orientalism. American war-time Orientalist image of the Japanese politics and society, which represented Japan as inferior and undemocratic, thus unable to integrate in the international environment, pushed the Japanese themselves to change their society, politics and economics.

2.3. Identity and domestic politics: changing models and actors

National identity is a constructed concept, a tradition invented by the governments to justify certain political policies and it is functional to the logics of power. An invented tradition is, rephrasing the words of Eric Hobsbawm, a set of procedures regulated by agreed norms and provided of a ritual or symbolic nature.²⁰⁶ Identity is not a static, monolithic notion, but the government re-forge, recreate readapt it in a utilitarian way, in order to deal with current domestic and international issues or promoted national policies aimed to achieve determinate targets.

In this section I will delve into the analysis of political forces linked to the concept of national identity within Japan's domestic politics. Changing models and frameworks for new Japanese identities arouse during and after the Japanese economic miracle and at the dawn of the “lost decade” in the early '90s. However, underlying factors for change are evident in the previous decades in the sociological and political field.

My aim here is to demonstrate how ideas on Japan's national identities are linked to the changing landscape of the domestic politics and in doing this I will prepare the ground for my later account of the interactions between Japan's identity and integration in the Asia-Pacific.

We can not delve into the topic of Japan's regional integration without having before specified the impact of ideas of Japanese identity on Japanese domestic politics and society.

As stated above, I truly consider essential to study Japanese politics (as any other area-focused political studies) in order to focus not only on the political field, but also to study the socio-cultural background and its effect on political system. Indeed, I want to analyze determinate factor both from bottom-up (from the sociocultural to the political) and top-down (effects of political decisions on society) perspectives. My main priority is thus the necessity to move away from a stereotyped

²⁰⁶ Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terence (2002) *L'invenzione della tradizione*, Einaudi, pp.3-6

idea of Japan's politics as unique as it was for the Japanese Constitution or Japan's political culture. At the same time, we need to consider the norms of socio-cultural behaviour not as static and immutable elements, but, on the contrary, as dynamic and in evolution vis-à-vis domestic and international aspects concerning society, economics and culture.

The outstanding work carried out by Stockwin in his “Governing Japan”²⁰⁷ has proved an useful tool wherefrom I started my analysis. De-constructing and criticizing “traditional norms of political behaviour” Stockwin has circumscribed the argument around few prepositions:

- the Japanese society is group-oriented, in the sense that there is lack of self-identification, but only identification in distinctive groups. At the center of this proposition there is the social anthropologists' assumption of the distinction between *uchi* (inside, clean, familiar, good etc.) and *soto* (unclean, unfamiliar, bad etc.) in a quasi-Manichean conception of society.
- Japanese social relations are based on hierarchy, demonstrated by the differences in language (the honorific, *keigo*, the polite form and the plain form) in disparate situations whenever interacting with people of different status or age; the relations are based on age, and gender, following a “traditional” patriarchal and Confucian society.
- Japanese society attached great importance to norms of mutual obligations, according to the idea of a “gift giving society” and to the *on-giri*, as affirmed by Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*.
- Decisions are made out of consensus without the need of exhausting debates and disputes. In the Parliament decisions are made behind the scene attracting consensus from the opposition.
- The population is politically apathetic and accepts the decisions that come from above without criticizing or judging. This idea favors the concept by which the Japanese are indifferent to political life and take no part in it. They are only subjects, not citizens, and they don't have the right/duty to criticize the government, unlike any other western democracy.

²⁰⁷ Stockwin (2008) *Op.cit* pp.33-35

These prepositions could sound familiar to the reader in the way that I have described their underlying contradictions in Chapter one when I dealt with an analysis of the work of early social anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict and political researchers and diplomats such as Edwin O. Reischauer. Not surprisingly, these assumptions were assimilated by the dominated/colonized Japanese population and were considered paradigms and models of their own socio-political behavior. These suppositions were considered “true” because the government had the necessity to consider them so, otherwise they would not be a justification for the economic miracle and the success of the Japanese model in the world.

2.3.1. Interpreting models of sociopolitical behaviour in Japan

The most famous model of sociopolitical behavior in Japan is provided by the work of famous Japanese sociologist Chie Nakane in the 1970s. Nakane, assimilating Ruth Benedict's assumptions and stereotypes on Japan and the Japanese, wanted to provide a "structural image of the Japanese society", by focusing her analysis on individual behavior, interpersonal relations and theory of social structure.²⁰⁸

- *Formal structure* of society is for Nakane determined by the two criteria of *attribute* and *frame*, the former having a "role" in the society, or the membership/belonging to a group only with the individual's birth or achievement. On the other hand, the frame is given by the place or the institution wherein we perform our activity. Nakane asserts the predominance of frame over attribute within the Japanese society, where the institutional environment, such as the university or the company, places the essentialist element on the Japanese individual.

The equivalence between *ie* (household) and *kaisha* (company) is exemplified by expressions such as "our company", "our group", "our family" like a “corporated residential group constructed on the basis of an established frame of residence and often of management organization”.²⁰⁹

The main aftermath for Nakane is the "weakening of kinship ties outside the household", in a sectarian, associative-oriented sense. An example is the lack of interest or help from a rich brother to a poor one after leaving the household, thus highlighting the symbolic passage from *uchi* to *soto* and changing the social group of self-identification.

²⁰⁸ Nakane Chie (1973) *Japanese society*, Harmondsworth, Penguin books, pp.4-6

²⁰⁹ Nakane Chie (1973) *Ibid.* pp. 3 -8

- *Informal structure* is given by the "emotional approach", used to overcome to the absence of attribute in the Japanese society and realized by continual human contacts and minimization of individual autonomy, with the subsequent lack of distinction between the Private and the Public.

The hierarchy is based on a collective group which is located under a "head" and does not follow an horizontal model of interaction between the individuals. In this sense, companies are seen by Nakane as social groups, whereas "the enterprise is the people" and, consequently, a system that functions like a family (familial) last for a life-time and provides the main needs and services to the employees.

There is also a strong push within the companies toward a sense of factionalism between individuals belonging to different companies, emphasized by the idea that "no man can serve two masters".

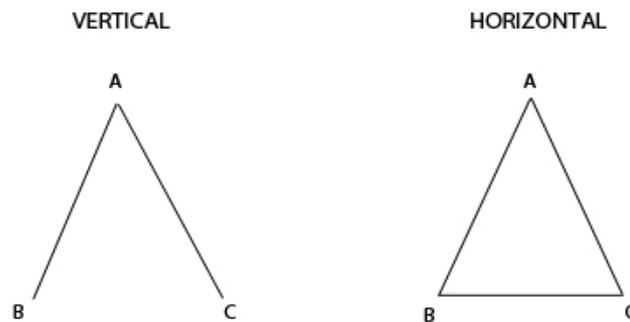
- *Internal structure*²¹⁰ is the internal organization of the group that links vertically its member. As Benedict before her, Nakane distinguishes human relations in vertical (such as those between parent-brother / superior – inferior) and horizontal (such as those between brothers, from the same equal position) and identifies those happening in Japan as specifically vertical and focused on hierarchy. The ranking of the vertical relations is given by age, length of continuous service (in a company or institution), status, popularity and sex. Nakane considers the Japanese society similar to the traditional Japanese house, where hierarchy is proportional to the closeness to the highest seat (always at the center) and inversely proportional to the distance from it and to the closeness to the entrance of the house. This system never permits two or more individuals to be treated as equal.

Status is the most important factor in deciding the hierarchical order and it reflects the organization of the Japanese Army during WWII.

In the traditional vertical organization there is not contact between one or more subjects under the dominance of a superior, the only focal point, whereas in the horizontal model there is a mutual-exchange relationship between equals. In Nakane's view this model leads to difficulties in cooperation among groups, which are concentrated in their own different hierarchical system and

²¹⁰ Nakane Chie (1973) *Ibid.* p. 26

are divided by factionalism.



THE NAKANE MODEL

2.2 “The Nakane model” Source: Chie, Nakane (1981) *Japanese Society* p.43, Penguin Books

Stockwin criticized Chie Nakane's model as one emphasizing an old system that is not similar anymore to the present social situation in Japan. The Nakane model emphasizes vertical relations and links and de-emphasizes horizontal ties, with an acute consciousness of belonging to a group more than to a profession or occupation in society. To this regard social scientist Kenneth G.Henshall uses the term *shakaijin* (social person) with emphasis on the idea of social responsibility and belonging to a group²¹¹ after the attainment of the maturity and this vision is linked to the concept of *ie* as extended family, which progressively lost ground with the urbanization and internal migration to metropolis.

In Stockwin's view emphasis on belonging to a group is demonstrated nowadays by trade unions organized on a company base and not on the base of the type of industry and production. Similarly, political parties have their loyalty fragmented in factions, which reflects the hierarchical organization of the society.

However, various elements are against Nakane's thesis and I agree with Stockwin in his partial criticism toward Nakane's model of Japanese society because²¹²:

- Industrial agreements, contrarily to what Nakane affirmed on the lack of decision from the bottom, entered, since 1954, in a mechanism between the social parts, that coordinated the salaries and the conditions of employment, contradicting the idea of agreements decided

²¹¹ Nakane Chie (1973) *Ibid.* p. 122

²¹² Stockwin (2008) *Ibid.* pp 41 -45

only within the company.

- Factionalism is not synonym of dis-functionalism, as Nakane asserted. This is because the factions within LPD, as we will observe in the next part, have eased the functioning of the party. Moreover, with the electoral reform of the House of the Representatives in 1994 the motivations for division and factionalism has been removed.
- Civil society has become a protagonist, rather than a subject of the government politics and after the Kobe earthquake of 1995 groups of volunteers filled the vacuum of slow and inadequate official responses. NPOs emerged as a result.
- Relations based on *giri*, *ninjo* and conflicts between mutual obligation have led many to think that the dominant force in the Japanese society is represented by "situational ethics", where the behaviour between members of the same group is different than that between a member and a non-member. I agree with Stockwin when he considers this issue as a generalization. As soon as we come in touch with different and specific cases we realize that we cannot use such fixed ideas as tools to study Japanese society.

Moreover, during and after the lost decade of the 1990s relations based on new rates of wealth, unemployment, inflation and political instability have emerged as well as *giri* and *ninjō* proved to disappear in the despair of the economic crisis.

While the main assumption of Nakane was that Japanese society and domestic politics were unique and totally different from those of any other country, Stockwin maintains from one hand some Japanese "uniqueness", and from the other he tends to consider Japanese politics as normal, through a list of five elements that characterize political life in Japan:

- 1 – Confucian ideas of seniority and preference on the frame (*ba*) - the place and the situation – over personal interests or background obscure the idea of individualism in Japan and are linked to Nakane's idea of *tate shakai* (vertical society). However, both the horizontal relations, in the form of "old school boy" networks or attribute-based groups as "*rojinkai*" and "*fujinkai*" exist at the macroscopic level as well as new individual autonomy and role of the individual. Moreover, emergence of individualism in the modern Japanese society is explained by the new neo-liberalist reality in which Japan found itself since end of

the 20th century, that pushed for individual interests, monetary gains, role in the society and meritocracy.

Society changed with the fall of the birth rate and the growth of the divorces rates, the increasing number of immigrants and the emergence of small and medium-sized enterprises focused on services and tourism.

2 - Values of equality and fairness (against the idea of a hierarchical society) remained high compared to other countries. On the other hand, values of safety and stability are demonstrated by great support for the status quo, and relative support for SDF and Security Treaty with US.

3 – Japanese political inclination for stability, as they do not want to destabilize the government though they do not like most of the politicians

4 – Combination of patriotism and new international values. In the last two decades Japan has been more open to the internationalization in its own cultural products (such as manga, cartoons, sports, religions), academic exchanges, scientific researches and scholarships.

My model is based on the assumption that we can study contemporary Japanese society in the same way we can study others, in other words studying the recent determinant factor of sociopolitical organization and behavior. While Nakane emphasized the role of hierarchy in Japanese society, I would like to affirm the predominance of neo-liberal capitalism in Japanese society and politics as the result of the slow Americanization of Japan after the post-war period and assuming social status and personal wealth as determinant factor to determinate one person's position in society, within a broad model, where the interactions between the individuals are based on the degree of wealth and status. Several Japanese sociologists such as Yoneyama²¹³ and Befu²¹⁴ support this idea. The former identifies a fluid characteristic of the group consciousness (*nakama ishiki*), focusing on the idea that individuals belong to different groups at the same time, while the latter empathizes the role of "self-interest" (linked then to status and wealth) as the predominant factor in social relations and social change in Japan.²¹⁵ As Yoshimoto asserts, "the notion of Japanese as cohesive and tightly knit

²¹³ Yoneyama, Toshinao (1976) *Nihonjin no nakama ishiki*, Kodansha pp. 1 - 80

²¹⁴ Befu Harumi (1977) *Nihon: bunka jinruigakuteki nyūmon* Tōkyō, Shakai Shisōsha pp. 120-210

²¹⁵ Mauer Ross and Sugimoto Yoshio (1986) *Images of Japanese society: A study in the Social Construction of Reality*, KPI p.101

society based on a single value system requires reassessment" and he believes, as I believe, in the evidence that shows that Japan recorded experiences and incidents of unrest more than some European nations, thus breaking with the stereotype linked to the Confucian organizational model of social harmony.²¹⁶

If Nakane and the majority of Japanese social scientists viewed up to the '80s hierarchy and familial values as an obstacle for social interactions, I want to demonstrate that today in Japan the links between individual "a" and "b" are closer only because of factors concerning personal wealth and social status. For instance, nowadays a Japanese graduate students who wants to find employment in a company, would make his choice on the basis of its future status inside the company, the company reputation and of the level of the salary. This is mirroring the intentions of an European or American student in the same situation.

This is due to different changes that interested Japanese economy and political participation since the 70s, with the end of the Yoshida system and the arrival of a civil society dominated by mass media and new technologies. However, if society change vis-à-vis the international environment, the construction of a Japanese identity remodelled on values and ideas of its re-orientalist perceptions remained. In the lost decade period Japanese electors started to behave more independently than before, while the LDP, the dominant party, who built its consent in the economy miracle and with the rural communities,²¹⁷ was less attractive to a more open and less organized society. However, at the same time, as we will see in the following chapter, revival of the country's militaristic past and the emergence of neo-nationalist groups that wanted to revise and reassess Japan's responsibilities in the WWII, came into existence as a challenge to the variety of constructed identities deriving from a more open, international and globalised society (with a "global identity").

National identity construction evolved strictly from the Japanese government's political decisions. And it is necessary to distinguish between the difference between assimilated norms of social behaviour on the society and government's attempt to construct a national identity. Here, again, narratives and cultural products are useful tools in a socio-constructivist optic to reassess the difference between government and citizens behaviors.

After Nakane's Japanese society, the Foreign Ministry produced "Human Relations in Japan"

²¹⁶ Sugimoto Yoshio (1986) *Ibid.* p 109

²¹⁷ Kabashima Ikou and Steel Gill (2010) *Changing politics in Japan*, Cornell University Press pp.28-60

(1972), which was the attempt to promote assimilated images of Japan that present a continuum with the stereotypes designed by Benedict, Reischauer and Maki. Thousands of copies were distributed abroad, in the attempt to have a confirmation "from the outside" of already stereotyped images. Another effort was the investment of the Japanese Government in the English translation of *nihonjiron* classics, in order to internationally project determinate visions on the Japanese society.²¹⁸

Similarly, the Foreign Ministry promotes "in the name of cultural understanding" *koto*, *kabuki* and *kyogen* troupes, tea masters, martial arts instructors, which present images of the Japanese culture and society complementary to those thought and imagined by the western audience.²¹⁹

However, "impositions" by the elites of images of the Japanese society to the domestic and international audience are counterbalanced by Japanese people's interpretation of their own society.

Ming Cheng M. Lo and Christopher Bettinger in their outstanding paper "The historical emergence of a familial society in Japan" provided excellent insights on the issue, separating cultural artifacts coming from "elites narratives" (or construction of identity by the government) to local and popular narratives (construction of identity by the individuals, social groups).

While "elites narratives"²²⁰ of the Meiji period, such as the Meiji civil code, already presented an idea of familial obligation and homogenization of different families "forged in a common tradition", popular novel *Ukigumo* (1887) by Futabatei Shimei²²¹ described the interactions in a Japanese company as based on interest and individualist behaviors. The distance between the two cultural products is stunning and it demonstrates that from the "institutional" or "elite" sides of politics the Meiji leaders priority in order to compete with the West was to construct an identity.

It pictures a society, that, as any other modernized and capitalistic society, is based on the ideas of profit, personal interests and individualism. Social construction and assimilation of orientalized ideas started to change dramatically after Japan's economic decline and "natural" aspects of a capitalist society forced the re-construction of the Japanese identity from above. This process is due, in addition to the changing society, to the changing role of political actors at the guide of Japan.

²¹⁸ Sugimoto Yoshio (1987) *Op. Cit.* p. 177

²¹⁹ Sugimoto Yoshio (1987) *Ibid.* p.178

²²⁰ Ming Cheng M. Lo and Bettinger Christopher 'The historical emergence of a familial society' in *Theory and Society*, Vol.30 no.2 (April 2001) p.247

²²¹ Shimei Futabatei (1990) *Japan's First Modern Novel: Ukigumo of Futabatei Shimei*, Trans. by Marleigh Grayer Ryan, Michigan Classics in Japanese Studies. 1st edition, Shimei Futabatei (1887) *Ukigumo*

2.3.2 Actors of domestic policies and the breakdown of the static national identity paradigm

When political scientists want to describe political and economic life in Japan, the model they employ is still anchored to the post-war idea of LDP dominance, a static political system without democratic participation, lack of interest of the population toward politics in general, a developmental and mercantilism state-model concerning economy and industrial policy. While these assumptions could be valid coordinates to understand politics in Japan until the 1970s, the dramatic evolution that the nation has experienced demonstrates us the contrary and the model analyzed refers only to a part of the country' political history.

The political parties

In 1945 a multi-party system flourished with democratic competition inside the government. The Yoshida-led Liberal Party (*Jiyutō*) was in direct competition with the Japan Democratic Party (*Nihon Minshutō*), born from the coalition of Nobosuke Kishi (ex-minister of commerce and already mentioned for its strong opposition to the peace clause in the Constitution) and Ichirō Hatoyama (pushing for more political independence from the US). The merge of the two into the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1955 and its new political monopoly is evident: it attracts both the support of the US (that provided the party with a large amount of funds) and of the population, sustaining the principles of the Yoshida doctrine of focus on domestic policies and on the economic growth and lack of interest in international relations. This was carried out scrupulously by Hayato Ikeda (1960-1964), who set an example in his low profile toward international relations. The LDP soon became the bulwark for the protection of the US-JP security alliance, while the opposition, which was organised in the Japan Socialist Party, was a strong defender of the Art.9 - peace clause. The traditional mono-party system of LDP was indeed build around re-orientalised identitarian principles of hierarchy, familiarization and factionalism:

- 1 - The electoral system was closed from the outside, limiting the contact with the voters ²²²
- 2 - Consent was built around the *kōenkai*, "personal support networks", expensive and private clubs or "families", which assessed local and not national issues.
- 3 – There was a general lack of focus on democratic reforms and policy and instead more interest in charging the bureaucracy (METI over all) to manage the Japanese economy, which gave in return

²²² Kabashima Ikuo (2010) *Op. Cit.* p.15

loyalty and support to the dominant party.

This system succeeds in channeling the nation's resources toward the accomplishment of the Japanese economic achievement of the postwar period. The secluding of the population from political decisions and the alliance between politicians and bureaucrats led the government to managed industrial policies, tight fiscal policies, rapid technological advances and it transformed Japan in an export-led, mercantilist country.²²³

Factors of change came from above as well as from the bottom parts of society.

The Nakasone, Hashimoto and Koizumi administrative reforms were based on the ideological assumption that the combination of liberalization, small government, privatization in the neo-conservative form on the example of those reforms carried out by Reagan and Thatcher would have reformed radically Japanese political and economic life. However, it was not a package of reform oriented to radical change, but only focused on secondary projects and on few areas.

The 1972 restitution of Okinawa to Japan and oil and energy crisis of the '90s triggered a period of decline for LDP, bringing about an economic drop and consequently a lesser amount of tax revenues, which in turn led the government to decide for deficitarian spending more than taking the risk of rising taxes and lose the consent of the population. Nakasone's reforms for liberalization and privatization of the public companies which had the support of the public opinion and of the great industrial groups. Among these, we can remember the privatization of the Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT) and of the Japanese Railways, the deregulation of the market of telecommunication, the reduction of the public spending.²²⁴

However, these already limited reforms, were negatively influenced by internal factionalism within the LDP itself and by the interests of the bureaucrats, whose power in the Japanese industry was threatened.

Real challenges appeared from the changing society itself.

First of all the role of the civil society expanded with the push of Hashimoto Ryutaro and the LDP proposal of a "10 year strategy to promote health and welfare for the aged", also called the Gold plan, which was implemented in 1989 and was followed by a great success. Moreover, the NPO law permitted the creation of a number of organizations linked to the local and national context, expanding the political role of the population. As Jeff Kingston reported in its influential *Japan's quiet transformation* the law "reflected the struggle of ordinary Japanese to contribute to society,

²²³ Kabashima Ikuo (2010) *Ibid.* pp 20-21

²²⁴ Kabashima Ikuo (2010) *Ibid.* pp. 23-25

fight injustice and promote change throughout the postwar era".²²⁵

The failures of the government and the potential role of the citizens as active part of the society were exposed to the judgement of the public opinion after the Kobe earthquake (1995) and the critical situation within the LDP. The law could permit a simplification of the paperwork and bureaucratic processes involved in the legal recognition of NPOs and won the support of Keidanren, Japan's business association (through its Social Contribution Group) and of the media, especially the Nikkei, which saw the NPOs as new actors for areas where the government would have progressively decided to diminish its role.

Similarly, the Judicial Reform proposal, submitted in 2001 to Prime Minister Koizumi marked a significant departure from a self-assumed Japanese traditional legal culture made of "informal and personalistic modes of arbitration, compromise and dispute settlement"²²⁶, mirroring the aspects of Nakane's social analysis. The reform promoted a normalization of the law practices, encouraging the increase in the number of lawyers and the end of old practices, such as the *gyōsei shido* (administrative guidance), or the informal and absolute exercise of power exercised by bureaucrats over Japanese firms and to restore popular participation in trials, that only lasted from 1928 to 1943.

²²⁷

Second, while the support for the LDP flourished from the votes of the farming population, with the growing phenomenon of urbanization and internal migration to big cities which could offer better jobs and services, the farming population from 34 millions in 1946 decreased to 10 millions in 2002²²⁸, narrowing the traditional ground for support to the LDP. Urbanization is one of the main factors of change within the Japanese society, where farmers lost their sense of "familial community" and entered in contact with new ideas and with the increasing diffusion of Western trends, habits and models of social interaction.

Third, the links between bureaucrats and interest groups are weakening. Nōkyō, the biggest interest group in Japan with more than 8 million members and strong support groups, has always mobilized the agricultural population to vote for the LDP, but it is now losing its power as we will see in the next chapter.

Fourth, there are long-term factors that are undermining Japanese political life.

Among these are the social transformations like the aging society, an increased number of divorces and rising unemployment levels, which are undermining a constructed idea of social security and

²²⁵ Kingston Jeff (2004) *Japan's quiet transformation* RoutledgeCurzon, p 72

²²⁶ Kingston Jeff (2004) *Ibid.*, p 85

²²⁷ Kingston Jeff (2004) *Ibid.* pp 85 -87

²²⁸ Kingston Jeff (2004) *Ibid.* pp 85 -87

the future perspectives of economic growth for Japan.²²⁹ In 1999 there were 21 million of Japanese over the age of 65 out of a population of 126 million, with an average life expectancy that increased from 50 years in 1947 to 77 years in 1995. This phenomenon would cause a progressive damage of the domestic economic system. The scarcity of facilities and welfare services for the elders is strongly influenced by the hesitation for Government and interest group to give up with “standard” social organizational models, involving familial features within the Japanese society and recalling Confucian aspects of filial piety, reverence and respects to the elders, which presumes a elderly care primarily (if not exclusively) carried out by the patriarchal family in virtue of strong patriarchal ties.

²²⁹ Kingston Jeff (2004) *Ibid.* pp 257-305

Table 2.2
Trends in Population (As of October 1)

Year	Population (1,000)		Age composition (%)			Average annual rate of increase (%)	Population density (per km ²)
		Males	0-14 years	15-64	65 and over		
1872 ¹⁾	34,806	17,666	91
1900 ¹⁾	43,847	22,051	33.9	60.7	5.4	0.83	115
1910 ¹⁾	49,184	24,650	36.0	58.8	5.2	1.16	129
1920	55,963	28,044	36.5	58.3	5.3	1.30	147
1930	64,450	32,390	36.6	58.7	4.8	1.42	169
1940	71,933	35,387	36.7	58.5	4.8	1.10	188
1950	84,115	41,241	35.4	59.6	4.9	1.58	226
1955	90,077	44,243	33.4	61.2	5.3	1.38	242
1960	94,302	46,300	30.2	64.1	5.7	0.92	253
1965	99,209	48,692	25.7	68.0	6.3	1.02	267
1970	104,665	51,369	24.0	68.9	7.1	1.08	281
1975	111,940	55,091	24.3	67.7	7.9	1.35	300
1980	117,060	57,594	23.5	67.3	9.1	0.90	314
1985	121,049	59,497	21.5	68.2	10.3	0.67	325
1990	123,611	60,697	18.2	69.5	12.0	0.42	332
1995	125,570	61,574	15.9	69.4	14.5	0.31	337
2000	126,926	62,111	14.6	67.9	17.3	0.21	340
2005	127,768	62,349	13.7	65.8	20.1	0.13	343
2010	128,057	62,328	13.2	63.8	23.0	0.05	343
2011	127,799	62,184	13.1	63.7	23.3	-0.20	343
(Projection, January 2011)							
2020	124,100	60,146	11.7	59.2	29.1	-0.33	333
2030	116,618	56,253	10.3	58.1	31.6	-0.62	313
2040	107,276	51,583	10.0	53.9	36.1	-0.83	288
2050	97,076	46,657	9.7	51.5	38.8	-0.99	260

1) As of January 1.

Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

2.3. Trends in Population. (Source: <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c02cont.htm>)

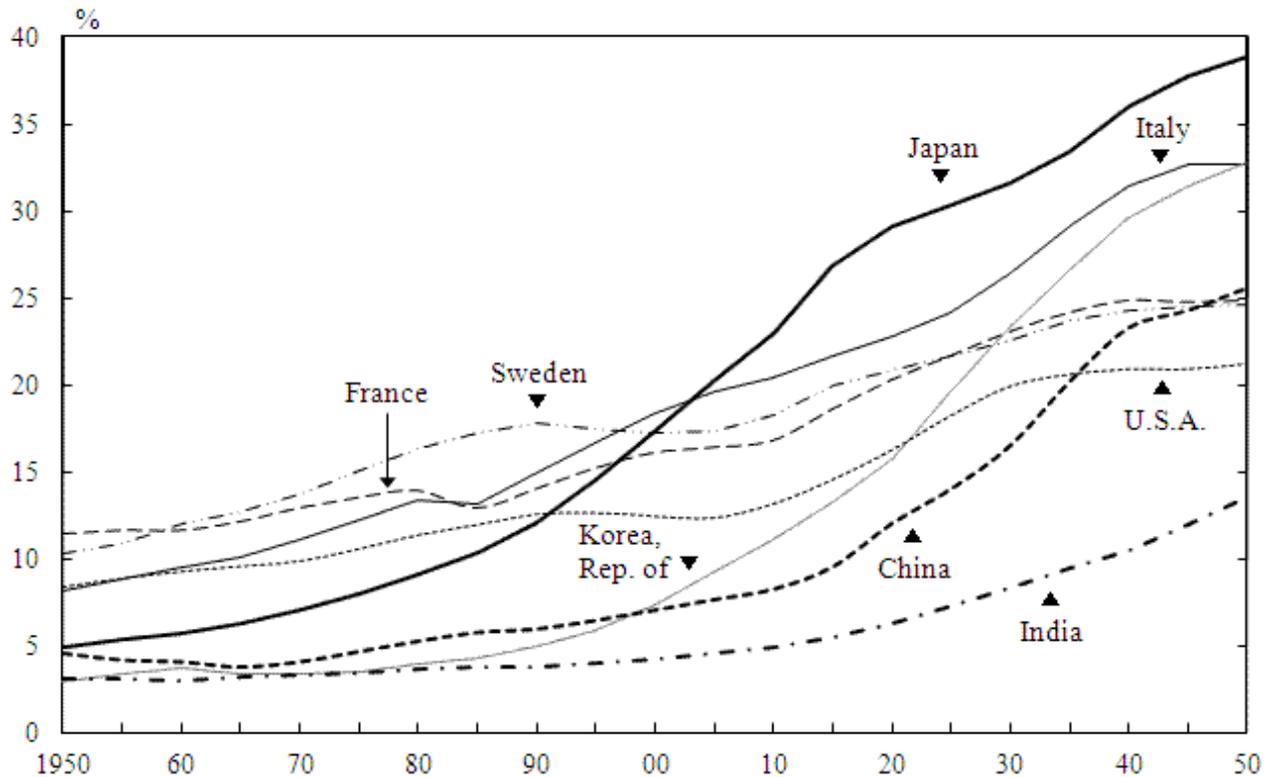
Ariyoshi Sawako's novel *The Twilight years*²³⁰ highlights this social issue with critics to a family-centered approach toward elderly people, which put the burden of the elderly care on women's responsibility, amounting to 85% of the total care received by elders.²³¹ Considering the fact that the number of old people will increase dramatically during the next decades, the issue will be a threat to

²³⁰ Ariyoshi Sawako (1984) *The Twilight Years*, Kodansha International, Tokyo

²³¹ Kingston, Jeff (2004) *Japan's quiet transformation* pp. 292 -293

the foundations of Japanese society, steering the pensions system, labor and employment, threatening the "social harmony" model. While in 1997 the pension contribute rate was 17.5 percent, it would be necessary to take it to 34 percent by 2025 to maintain the current (limited) welfare system. We can only imagine the burden on the already struggling national economy.

Figure 2.4
Proportion of Elderly Population by Country (Aged 65 years and over)



Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; United Nations.

2.4 Proportion of Elderly Population by Country (Source: <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c02cont.htm>)

Observing the graph above (2011), only Italy, South Korea and future China will experience a similar problem, interesting every aspect of the society and undermining the political economy reform of Japan.

From the 1970s the structural premises that had supported the LDP started to fade with an increasingly large deficit spending, less farmers and necessity to liberalize.

An example is the anger of the population after the 3% consumption tax of Takeshita Noboru in 1989, which led to fractures inside the LDP and the formation of the new *Sakigake*, led by Masayoshi, and of the *Shinseito*, by Hata. In 1993 LDP lost its majority, winning only 223 seats out

of 511, while the new parties got 103 seats.²³² This marked the end of the LDP 38 years dominance and of the self-assumed principle of static Japanese politics.

The Bureaucracy

"Japan is a system of bureaucratic rule
and is the best example of a state-guide market system"

Chalmers Johnson

Johnson's influential analysis of Japan's industrial policy in his *Miti and the Japanese Miracle, the growth of the industrial policy 1925-1975* has affirmed the institutional model of Japan's "miracle" as based on the idea of a developmental state, of a state dominated by the bureaucracy.²³³ While the book remains a useful reference for the study of the evolution of the industrial policy in the period, since the end of the 1970s centrifugal forces and reforms have pushed for dramatic institutional change.

To explain Japan's miracle Johnson uses the model of developmental state, a derivative of the neo-mercantilist German Historical School²³⁴ of the "Handelspolitik": Japan is based on a planned-rational model of industrial policy, aimed at determining socio-economic goals and thus distinct from a market-rational model, which is concerned with "forms and procedures" for economic competition.

The main assumption here is the goal-oriented character of the Japanese bureaucracy, that has the power to influence and guide the country's political economy and legislation, in a way that reminds of the years of the "military-industry complex", which were based on cohesion and consent.

According to Johnson, following the plan-rational model, policy change is accomplished "behind the curtains" in internal bureaucratic disputes and it reflects *ura* and *omote* aspects of the Japanese society, where a difference in Japan persists between the Constitutional (*omote*) and the real position of power in the bureaucrat hands (*ura*)²³⁵

Moreover, the developmental-oriented structure is organized around the idea of explicit collaboration of the government bureaucracy with the world of industry and finance, both with the

²³² Kabashima Ikuo (2010) *Op. Cit.* pp. 49-50

²³³ Johnson Chalmers (1982) *Miti and the Japanese Miracle, the growth of the industrial policy 1925-1975*, Stanford University Press

²³⁴ Johnson Chalmers (1982) *Ibid.* p 17

²³⁵ Johnson Chalmers (1982) *Ibid.* p. 1 cap.2

pre-war period *zaibatsu* and even with their post-war democratic versions, the *keiretsu*. However, Johnson disassociates himself from Amaya's²³⁶ assumption that Japan's miracle is based on the "three treasures" as reflected organizational models of the Japanese society (family-*ie*, village-*mura* and province-*kuni*) incarnated in the industry and in the employment system. He brings back the origins of the developmental state to the situational nationalism of the pre-war period, following the protectionist reasons of a developing state that refuses a free-market approach and in the late attainment of tariff autonomy in 1911, which pressured Japan to re-assess its industrial policy in the optic of protectionism. Johnson agrees with the 1970 declaration of MITI's official Ojini Yoshina's of "three treasures as a typically Japanese phenomena" and he adds to them the role of the preferential links between *keiretsu* and the government, the personal saving and distribution systems, the *amakudari* and the government extensive control over the economy, tax system and finance.

All these elements help to describe the essence of the developmental model. However, although Johnson admits the non-uniqueness of this system, as it was applied successfully in other Asian countries such as South Korea or Taiwan, he does affirm the presence of unique features at the base of the industrial construction, as many other scholars:

- For James Fulcher,²³⁷ the origins of the model of bureaucratic dominance can be re-conducted to the idea by which the Meiji Restoration was pushed by the samurai class and not by the traditional bourgeoisie, differently then from western societies. In Europe and America, popular or middle-class forces pushed for revolution and reform from below, while the bureaucratic sphere could re-organize Japanese political economy from a superior position, thus confirming the hierarchical society and the confucian social coordination paradigms.
- the Johnson's *omote-ura* dichotomy reflects Ruth Benedict's and Chie Nakane analysis of the society. Most of the decisions took by the bureaucrats until the 1990s remained intentionally obscure both to the public opinion and the Constitutional government. While politicians maintained a role of "advisers" in broad political debates and linked to the bureaucracy only for personal interests and electoral gain, the public opinion remained excluded by a real participation to Japanese politics.

²³⁶ Johnson, Chalmers (1982) *Ibid.* p.13

²³⁷ Fulcher, James (1988) The beaurocratization of the Japanese state and the rise of Japan in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.39 no 2, Jun 1988, p 232

- The *amakudari*, the descent from heaven, is the retire of a former bureaucrat and its "landing " in an industry position, usually in virtue of favors given to top-managers of the company or personal connection. Special and personal obligations find their basis in Nakane's "group-oriented society" and were already described by Benedict in first chapter of this thesis are at the base of this process.
- Familial bureaucracy is confirmed by the idea of a closed group, where since the 1940s US pressured for the constitution of advisory councils (*shingikai*) in every field of interest of the ministries. Anyway as in a hierarchical model, the advisory councils maintained a passive authority inside the bureaucracy ministries, that controlled them and only served to legitimize decisions already made by the "inner circle" of the top ministries.
- *Gyōsei shido*, the administrative guidance, by which the MITI uses its influence to control production or focus it in determinate areas²³⁸, has been shattered by the opening up of the Japanese market in the 1970s, when METI found itself unable to control inflows and outflows of capital of public and private companies outside and toward Japan. *Gyōsei shido* reflected the patriarchal and vertical aspect of Japanese politics, in its creating connections between elements close by rank, status, place of employment etc.

McVeigh considers it a *kanmin yuchaku* (growing together of the public and private sectors), a term that emphasizes cooperative relationship between bureaucracy and the world of business²³⁹.

Moral persuasions (*dotokuteki settoku*), informal and verbal orders regarding a bank landing policy demonstrate how this habit is extended also to banks and financial organization and entities²⁴⁰

- The idea by which as they move up ranks they automatically are socialized to be loyal and obedient to the organization reflects the familial idea of *uchi/soto* inside the Japanese bureaucracy.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Neary, Ian (2002) *The state and Politics in Japan* p.116, Cambridge Polity Press

²³⁹ McWeigh (1998) *Op. Cit* p.91

²⁴⁰ Katayama Seiichi (1999) 'Japanese political culture and government regulation' in *European Journal of Political Economy* vol.16, 2000 p. 284

²⁴¹ McWeigh (1998) *Ibid.* p.79

- Advisory councils (*shingikai*), established by article 8 of the National Administrative Organization are meant to be a semi-official organization and their power and their funding is basically in the hands of the ministry officials, which use them to justify policy decisions.²⁴² They are expression of hierarchy and subjugation inside the tate-shakai.

In my opinion, more than an "authentic" developmental model, Japan has experienced its economic growth due to the mix of a western Taylorist economic model and of the technology-oriented industrial policy.

Taylorism is based on the idea of efficiency and authoritarian coordination from above, with an economy based on low wages and low-skilled labor while Fordism, favoured a better salary in order to improve motivation and productivity on the workplace, emphasizing production inside an assembly-line and consent from below.²⁴³

In Japan the Taylorist model met the period of US occupation and assimilation of stereotypes regarding organization of labor, employment and economic models. From 1945 to 1946 the industrial production is 10% of the 1930s and Japanese economy is devastated by a huge inflation, and unemployment (more than 13 million of people). The protests, strikes, occupation of companies warned the government against a possible end of the old authoritarian power over Japanese politics, impersonated by Yoshida Shigeru and supported by the US elites.

It was the Cold war that provided the reason for the US to explicitly support the Yoshida government and promote assumed stereotypes based on Confucian values to transform Japan as a bastion against the Communism in Asia after the Revolution in China (1949) and the destabilized situation in Vietnam. An excess of democracy had caused instability in Japan²⁴⁴, so the labor movement is accused explicitly for the slow recovery of the nation, with a return to power of Yoshida and the start of the purge against the red elements in the world of politics, public companies and civil society was followed by the rationalization of public and private enterprises, destroying the "Japan Congress of Industrial Unions" and the Sodomei, the "the Japan Federation of Labor". It applied explicitly the Taylorist model and with the authoritarian reform carried by Yoshida the application of a Confucian model of social harmony.

Second, the high-tech industry has always lead the industrial policy of Japan and it has always been

²⁴² Abe, Hitoshi (eds.) (1994) *The government and politics of Japan* p. 40, University of Tokyo Press

²⁴³ Moore, Joe (eds.) (1997) *The Other Japan*, East Gate pp.357-358

²⁴⁴ Moore, Joe (1997) *Ibid.* p.362

the focus of MITI, sponsoring high tech industrial consortia, such as Fifth Generation, VSLI (semiconductors manufacturer) and Supercomputers.²⁴⁵

However, since Japan became an industrial giant it became difficult to formulate an industrial policy and cooperation between government and the industrial sector.

In the 80s, when Japan became the leader in high technologies in the 80s it can not move again following already known paths of technological development, importing from the US.

The structural challenge to the original system came in the form of weakening of the "traditional" idea of MITI on infrastructures and heavy industry following the OPEC oil shocks of the 1970s (with an inflation surpassing 18% and the falling GDP), the end of the Bretton Woods system orchestrated by Richard Nixon and the return of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 in return of the acceptance of the re-evaluation of the Yen. Indeed, thanks to the "economic miracle" Japan was at the time the biggest creditor in the world and US the biggest debtor, causing an increase in size and competitiveness of the companies, a renewed emphasis on R&D founding and an aggressive trend towards other markets (as in the case of NEC, which in '77 gained shares of the US market for 16kb DRAMs and was supported by MITI).²⁴⁶

However, a dysfunctional investment in already existing technologies more than in brand-new ones lead to a decrease in gains from R&D and consortia had a too long lifespan to still be dynamic and innovative in the competitive market.²⁴⁷ Soon the technologies in which they were conducting research and were promoting in the domestic and international market became obsolete.

Moreover, Japanese companies became more independent from MITI and confident of their competitive power, resisting intrusions of the bureaucracy. The present result is an industrial politics regarding high-tech dominated by competition and internal conflicts between MES-bureaucracy/METI-Japanese companies/between the companies themselves.²⁴⁸

METI lost its competitive power in the neoliberalist economy and in the mist of the globalization, which brought about the information revolution and the personal computers, destroying miniframes and minicomputers.

Similarly, the new industrial system destabilized also old conceptions of a consensus-based industrial policy and the familial system. It removed the idea of "close family" as well as a "close factory" and "close bureaucracy". The patriarchal system at the center of the analysis of Nakane and

²⁴⁵ Callon, Scott (1995) *Divided Sun*, pp. 1-7, Stanford University Press

²⁴⁶ Callon, Scott (1995) *Ibid.* p.165

²⁴⁷ Callon, Scott (1995) *Ibid.* Pp 151-181

²⁴⁸ Callon, Scott (1995) *Ibid.* p.2

Benedict was disintegrated by the distance between the members of the family, where the father is outside of the family for its job duties and outside of the company familial system because in an economic crisis environment the factory doesn't provide anymore the justification for its "family function" in the form of the "three treasures" and the bureaucrats are not isolated from the constitutional and civil society areas as before.

Public opinion distrusts in the bureaucracy grew in the '80s with the HIV infected blood accident, when Green Cross Japanese pharmaceutical company, which had strong links to the government (great part of its top managers were former bureaucrats of the MHW) provided to 1800 hemophiliacs HIV-infected blood, imported from the US and already knowing the risks, and causing so far the death of more than 400 people.²⁴⁹

Moreover distrust was augmented by the fact that during the '90s "lost decade", great part of the local administrations were spending millions of yen for the entertainment of the central government official, to assure their quota of subsidy from the government. In 1993 the Nagasaki prefecture spent more than 117 millions in "entertainment" for the officials, attracting distrust and disgust among the public opinion.²⁵⁰

There was the need for reform, as there wasn't anymore a consensus basis for the Japanese bureaucracy. The reform was carried out in three phases: the first, with the 1964 law, which prohibited the institution of new offices and commanded the abolition of an office for every ministry. The second phase coincides with Reagan and Thatcher's push for neoliberalism and in limiting the role of the government in the economic sector. Minister Nakasone was the author of the plan of cutting the government spending, privatization of public enterprise and deregulation.²⁵¹ Finally, 1993-1994 were the years when the reform took consistency, with a report focused in reforming the cabinet, increasing the role of the Prime Minister, reduction of the ministry from 15 to 13, re-organizing the government in 9 ministries and reducing the involvement of the government in the private sector.

After that in 1999 bureaucrats had been prohibited from answering questions in the parliament and in January 2001 the new structure was activated.

²⁴⁹ Kingston, Jeff (2004) *Op. Cit.* pp. 119-120

²⁵⁰ Kingston, Jeff (2004) *Ibid.* p.119

²⁵¹ Neary, Ian (2002) *The state and politics in Japan*, Polity Press pp.74-75

Media

As bureaucracy is seen as a component of the traditional view on Japanese politics, media is the new actor whose role became increasingly prominent since the 1980s, when evidence showed that half of the media items and three-fifth of the time involved stories relative to politics and government.²⁵² Their function can be seen as a mediator between people and the politicians and especially television became a source of information about the nation's political life. While traditional views on Japanese politics tend to assert the "familistic", almost sectarian aspect, in which the people are kept at moderate distance between the intricate world of politicians, bureaucrats and interest groups, the media became, together with the new civil society movements that emerged in the last decades, the principal way to know and get in touch with the politics.

TV programs like "News Station" of TV Asahi since 1985, which involved the audience in critics and humorist comment to the most famous politicians, or daily soft-news program with a general coverage of political issues and regular guests represented a shift from substantial closure of the political agenda to the Japanese citizens or plain support to the government to an observation and analysis (even if superficial) of the political landscape.²⁵³

As the public sphere became more consciouss of the behavior of the government, the politicians themselves realized the necessity to use the media as vectors of their political agenda and opinion, as showed by a survey by Kabashina e Broadent in 1986: the politicians considered the media as the most influential group.²⁵⁴

Interestingly, in our analysis, we can place the media as another perpendicular factor which undermined the re-orientalized view of hierarchical structure of the society. Media are an element of the information society, in the way their success lies on their reception, reliability and audience. Profit for the media, as in any other capitalistic venture, is the aim and is the rationale to which the reliability of the news and their reception is linked. While sensationalism can be the key for profit, it is counterbalanced by the need of the audience to get reliable information on a particular topic and they depart from a familiaristic and special obligation-focused attitude as in order to be successful they need to be reliable.

That's why in Japan the media are divided by a mix of criticism and support for the Establishment,

²⁵² Pharr J. Susan and Kraus Ellis (1996) *Media and Politics in Japan*, University of Hawaii Press p. 98

²⁵³ Pharr J. Susan and Kraus Ellis (1996) *Ibid.* pp 253 -262

²⁵⁴ Ikuo Kabashima (2010) *Op.cit.* pp.61 -65

in a way they can be considered a true democratic force in Japan.

However, this power the media maintain has a number of effects, both positive and negative: they can "set the agenda", focusing only on determinate issues they consider important in an subtle audience strategy. Moreover, they can exploit the popularity of a political personality and have thus the upper hand in the political process because they can control the popularity (and the voters support) vis-à-vis the audience. The more they support a personality the more they can exploit it for profit, nourishing the idea of the "media as tricksters".²⁵⁵

An example is the relationship of the media, especially televisions, with former Prime Minister Koizumi, at first identified as a "lone wolf" within the conflict of 90s LDP, then used to increase audience and profits. On the other hand, Koizumi decided to bypass the political network and directly "talk to the people" through the media. To achieve this goal, he took distance from the unpopular LDP and gained the nickname of "reformer". As a consequence, he's acclaimed by Jiji Press as the winner of the upcoming election several weeks before the vote and he's mentioned more than 10 times a day in the Asahi Newspaper²⁵⁶. He also tried to talk to the people using ordinary language, not the pompous, pretentious tone of the politicians, full of difficult to understand terms and concepts and not accessible to the audience.²⁵⁷

After the election he soon became an "idol" in the Japanese politics, and the media had strong interests in increasing his popularity portraying him with elements of the everyday life (karaoke, guitar) and gained the permission to have the *burasagari* twice a day and entering the official residence of a PM for the first time and broadcasting his image to the Japanese public.

In this sense, media destroyed the sectarian division of a hierarchical society model and placed politicians at the same level of the people, giving new sense to the organization of society: Koizumi didn't want to put himself above the level of the population, but spoke common language and represented himself as the "normal Japanese" (breaking with the hierarchy structure), he didn't want to maintain the network of political ties but he wanted to "smash the LDP"²⁵⁸ (breaking with personal obligations) and he distanced himself from the "traditional" image of boring, sectarian politician with the help of the media (breaking with the old familist organization of LDP). The members of the Diet soon understood the popularity of Koizumi and move the support away from Hashimoto into Koizumi's personality. As John Creighton Campbell states:

²⁵⁵ Susan J. Pharr and Ellis S. Krauss (1996) *Op. Cit.* pp 26-27,

²⁵⁶ Ikuo Kabashima (2010) *Op. Cit* p.9

²⁵⁷ Ikuo Kabashima (2010) *Ibid* p.74

²⁵⁸ Ikuo Kabashima (2010) *Ibid* p.83

“From the viewpoint of policy actors, then, the media threaten to bring random, unpredictable, even irrational factor into what might otherwise be an orderly process of decision making. Understanding and controlling the decision-making process [...] is often the key to successful policy sponsorship.”²⁵⁹

Conclusions

This chapter analysed the impact of the construction of national identity on domestic politics and its relations with social elements and policy actors. National identity imposed from the government saw the reprisal and the continuation of Self-assimilated Orientalistic elements, in attempts to re-adapt and have an impact in the new Americanized and neo-liberal environment. Political power in the hands of the LDP justified familialistic assumption in every sector of the society, and used the hierarchical organization model in order to push for economic growth and maintain stability.

However society changed, and the former model of constructed National Identity did not reflect the social, political and economic evolution of the nation.

As we will see in the following chapter, new challenges to the constructed national identity idea came both from the economic crisis and with the increased awareness and awakening of the civil society since the late 1960s and especially during the 1990s, reflecting a new rise of nationalist feeling in the country after the Kobe earthquake in 1995 and a progressive weakening of Government's role in re-creating National identity. The Japanese government is now in precarious balance between the continuity of the promotion of the idea of closure, wanted by the nationalists, and attempts to re-trace its integration road, started with the Japanese domination in East Asia started before the WWII, in more positive terms.

²⁵⁹John Creighton Campbell (1996) 'Media and policy change in Japan' in Pharr, Susan J. And Ellis S. Krauss (eds.) *Media and politics in Japan*, University of Hawaii Press p.191

CHAPTER THREE

- NATIONAL IDENTITY AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION -

As we have seen in Chapters one and two, transformations in the creation of National identities had a prominent role in pulling Japan toward dramatic change in the economic and political sectors. The struggles between perceived re-orientalised identity and the process of "opening" in international politics is reflected in the international arena, where Japan directly projects its identity values.

A key engine of the post-war recovery has been the Yoshida Doctrine that in the domestic sphere urged for economic growth and reduced military spending and in the International arena this was the rationale for the US-Japan Alliance.²⁶⁰

However, if from one hand the alliance has provided the stability necessary for the "economic miracle", on the other it has limited for more than 50 years the range of action of Japan's foreign policy in Asia. The re-orientalised identity changed Japan's role in Asia from independent to isolated. Japan could have been the proponent for regional integration, as it has been for other terrible reasons before and during the WWII. Instead, hegemonic orientalism and self-assumptions on society and politics made Japan's foreign policy sterile and insignificant.

After the end of the Cold War and the end of the ideological clashes, a new plurality of values emerged as consequence, with new ideas and new debates. Japan had finally the opportunity to impersonate a new and active role in East Asia. Prominent politicians such as Ozawa Ichirō, pushed for a more participative "normal" Japan, that eventually would have an active role in the security field and for integration in Asia.

However, the mistake of the checkbook diplomacy in 1990 (the 13 billion dollars package for the Gulf War), demonstrated the enduring importance of Constitutional constraints. The collapse of the bubble economy²⁶¹ was followed by re-newed concerns on economy. The rising power of China as competitor to Japan for regional dominance, prevented a rapid change of policy towards interests in Asia, normalization of the security agenda and integration at the macro-economic and micro-economic levels.

In 1995 Asia already was accounting for 25% of the world GDP²⁶², while its share in the world

²⁶⁰ Green, Michael J. (2003) *Japan's reluctant realism*, Council of Foreign Relations, Palgrave pp. 11-12

²⁶¹ Green, Michael J. *Ibid.* pp. 17-18

²⁶² Dent M. Christopher (2008) *East Asian Regionalism*, Routledge p.2

economy has tripled in the last two decades, from 6% in 1991 to 18% nowadays.²⁶³ On the other hand, East Asia is not only a market for Japan for its products or a place where to delocalize its multinational companies with low-cost labour. It has represented for centuries the link of its Asian Identity and in this sense we can explain the importance of Japan's integration in the region. An example is the ODA (Official Development Assistance) spending of Japan during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, when Japan spent billions of dollars in financial assistance to some of the countries which were most interested by the crisis. However, various constraints are still preventing regional integration and all the factors are linked to the idea of Japan's national identity. If the forces of regionalism and regionalisation push for more integration in East Asia, the underlying contradiction coming from Japan's national identities, the legacy of history and its memories and an agricultural sector still linked to identity concerns oppose and slow down regional integration.

In the first part of this chapter I will explain the importance for Japan of integrating in East Asia, in the forms of regionalism and regionalization and their various expressions in the last decades, both bilateral and multilateral in nature.

In the second part I will then link the discourse of the previous chapters to the analysis two case studies, there are real constraints for trade liberalization, and explain how re-orientalised elements, reflected in the political and economic environment of the country, have affected Japan's quest for integration in East Asia.

3.1 Regionalism and Regionalization

Regionalism is a generic and contested term which, during the last decades has been the subject of many debates and interpretations. However, it can be defined as “the structures, the processes and arrangements that are working toward greater coherence within an international region in terms of economic, political, socio-cultural and other kind of linkages”.²⁶⁴ Its carries two main connotations:

Regionalism as '*regionalisation*', can be described as the push of the private sector, of the civil society and of the individuals toward coherence and integration. It is the autonomous process that excludes governments from direct participation, but it maintains strong links with them.

On the other hand, regionalism as '*regional policy initiatives*', can be bilateral or multilateral in

²⁶³ World Bank East Asia and Pacific Data Monitor, October 2012 (Online report at: <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/EAP-Data-Monitor-October-2012.pdf>)

²⁶⁴ Dent, Christopher (2008) *East Asian Regionalism*, Routledge pp 7-8

nature. Bilateral regionalism is realized by the execution, in broad terms, of Free Trade Agreements, cultural exchanges, bilateral framework initiatives and bilateral talks. Multilateral agreements, instead, see the participation between more than two countries for cooperation and dialogue on economic, socio cultural, political or organisational levels.

Both regionalism and regionalisation, defined as a processes toward coherence and regionalisation in East Asia are responsible for regional identity formation. In the way they have shared elements of heritage in culture, geography (same region, natural elements, disasters etc), models of productions and products and shared policies.

While we can identify different forms of regional integration (economic, political, organizational) the socio-cultural regionalisation, or “how a region society may develop a sense of common identity”²⁶⁵ and its impact in the political and economic fields is the focus of this chapter.

This does not imply that classical international relations' interpretations of foreign policies (in a realistic or liberal optic) are not relevant: they occupy the broad dimension of power relations between the countries of East Asia vis-à-vis the struggle between national identity (and nationalism) and the sense of common identity given by regionalization (the private initiatives) and regionalization (the policies and projects of the governments). An example of deep regional integration as a common identity is given by David Knight in his paper entitled “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism” : As much as East Asia and the Pacific can constitute a 'region' for common political, cultural, economic and identity elements, Britain even if it is known as a nation state, can be interpreted as a region, being composed of at least four different cultural groups that have different nationalist identities and that have pressured for centuries for independence. However during the 19th century, as Britain became the leading colonialist power in the world, "a larger, more abstract sense of British national consciousness developed, to which many Scots and Welsh and perhaps some Irish, became attached, but not at the total loss of their lower level attachments."²⁶⁶

This process is parallel in a broader scale, to East Asia and partially to the Pacific. My aim here is to analyse in dept the dual dimension of the struggle between Japan's national identity and the formation of a common East Asian identity and how this is reflected on Japan's quest for trade liberalization.

²⁶⁵ Dent M. Christopher (2008) *Ibid.* p.8

²⁶⁶ Knight, David B. (1982) 'Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Vol. 72, No. 4 (Dec., 1982) p. 518

3.1.1 I.R. Theories, Regionalism and Regionalisation in East Asia

As mentioned in the Introduction, International Relations Theories are useful tools to interpretate the link between identity and integration in Asia.

Classical Realism would interpret this relationship in the optic of the *hegemonic stability theory* from the English School of International Relations, which asserts the stabilizing function of the hegemonies in a world dominated by anarchy.²⁶⁷ This view has inspired politicians from hegemonic countries over different periods of time towards presumptions of superiority of power over the inferior and the defeated. As shown by the British Colonial rule of the 19th century, this has provided the rationale for most of the Orientalistic discourse on Asia and Middle East, which later was followed by US predominance during and after the Second World War. Hegemonic stability was maintained in East Asia after the Korean War (1950-53), by the US and its ideals of democracy and free-market capitalism against the Soviets ideals of centralized, controlled economy and communism. The instrument of US power was Japan, since it bartered a potential political dominance in East Asia for economic growth and stability.

However, we can discern a shift in hegemonic stability, maintained by the US until the '90s, to multipolarity, the formation of various frameworks for cooperation and an increased number of FTAs after the end of the Cold War.²⁶⁸

Multipolarity has been demonstrated by the power of a rising China and the enduring relevance of Japan as an economic actor. While the US became more and more an "external" hegemon in the economic sphere, it has maintained a relative upper-hand in the security field.

Although stability is the main contention of the hegemonic theory, China's rise as a regional power, more than having a stabilizing role, has represented a challenge and threat for US security concerns. Asian states became more favourable to multilateral panels, such as in the example of the Kodak – Fuji dispute, which resulted in 1997 in a WTO decision, which favoured Japan's MITI and Fuji. This demonstrated the importance of multilateral institutions against classical "balance of power".²⁶⁹ Instead, neo-liberal theory substitutes the role of the state and their interest-driven policies of the

²⁶⁷ Krasner, S.D. (1976) 'State power and the structure of international trade' in *World politics* 28, 3 pp.317-348

²⁶⁸ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Ibid.* p. 29

²⁶⁹ Phan, Min Van (2008) *Neo-realism, Neo-liberalism and East Asia Regionalism: the case of Vietnam* pp.46-48, Graduate School of the University of Oregon

realist states with the role of private organizations (companies) and the primacy of the market over the state. Private entities, international organizations and transnational enterprises are cooperating with each other and are leading to an increase of liberalization and the growth of the market itself.²⁷⁰ Here the key concepts are *interdependent* and *interconnected*. The first is provided by the lack of hierarchy in a *laissez-faire* environment²⁷¹ and the second is given by the technological advance and the globalization of communication and information. The first is demonstrated by the competitiveness, the flow of FDI (Foreign Direct Investments), the relative de-regulation of the international market in East Asia and the need to cope with collective issues (such as the 1997-1998 Asian Financial crisis), while the second is realized by the increasing cooperation with communication and contacts through multilateral forums, panels or in bilateral FTAs to attain mutual benefits.

If realism/neo-realism and liberal institutionalism provide explanations based on state and non-state subjects' behaviour, a social constructivist approach, instead, is needed to understand the relationship between the ideas, the values and credences that build up the already explained concept of national identity in Japan and its integration in East Asia.

3.1.2 Socio-cultural regionalism in East Asia

Social constructivism analyses the impacts of ideas.

Ideas and their perceptions, "shaped by historical as well as material factors" form national and regional identities.²⁷² As it has been explained in Chapter one, the historical factors that pushed for the creation of an assimilated and re-orientalized identity in Japan and in Chapter two, where the material factors (social, political and economical) that determined its evolution are examined, here I would like to describe in brief the origins of socio-cultural regionalism and of an Asian identity through an analysis of its elements, in its main historical cultural products – Confucian ethics, Buddhist arts and literature, shared pop-culture products, shared economic and security policies, shared models of productions, natural elements and catastrophes (tsunami, earthquakes, etc.). I disagree with the position of some scholars about the lack of effective non-economic interconnection between the countries of the Asia-Pacific. Among these, Edward J. Lincoln, in his *East Asian Economic Regionalism* (2004) emphasised, from one hand, the "dimensions of diversity"

²⁷⁰ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Op. Cit.* p.30

²⁷¹ Keohana and Nye (1989) *Power and Interdependence*, Cambridge, HarperCollins Publishers pp. 24-25

²⁷² Littlefield, Alexis (2011) 'East Asian Identity, Interests, and Regionalism', Panel: *The Politics of Identity Past and Present*, Southeastern Conference/Association of Asian Studies (SEC/AAS) 50th Annual Meeting, p.7

in the religious sphere, with the historical presence of different cults in East Asia, considering their history and the assumed limited contacts between the Asian nations and Japan isolationism from the 17th to the 19th century. From the other he explained the "high degree of variation in social behaviour", taking into consideration their socio-economic behaviour ²⁷³. All these assumptions are half-true, in the way that they represent expressions of diversity that can be found in other regions as well.

In my opinion we can find patterns of similarity between Asian countries that are similar to others in several regions of the world, but the differences persist in how this integrative process (regionalization) has been accomplished. Here, geographic and geopolitical considerations can provide us with a considerable number of answers on the issue and all the elements come together in a final consideration: geographical proximity and a smaller size of the region permitted in Europe the creation and the continuation of cultural and trade exchanges and the flow of ideas, religious beliefs and habits. On the other hand, if it is true that interaction in Asia was constrained by the long-distances, by a larger size of the region and political isolation of Japan (similar, to me, to that kind of political isolation that the UK experienced after the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church in 1534) from other countries, the long-lasting imprints of the Chinese tributary system, of the Confucian ethics and of Buddhist cultural products in the North Eastern Asian sub-region remain considerable and they are at the very foundation of both regionalism and regionalization in East Asia. Moreover, even if Lincoln's book was written in 2004, it still excludes the impact of new trends and ideas in East Asia, such as the emergence of an "East Asian pop culture" and dismiss the new institutional developments that took places in the last three decades as failed initiatives.

Hereafter I will analyse these elements of revitalized regionalization, the impact of former beliefs and cultural products and the regionalism pushed by various attempts of institutional building.

Confucian ethics

Confucianism is the starting point of this analysis because it has been one the most influential factors for identity-building in East Asia both in its scope and in its range of action.

Here I would like to list a set of determinant elements coming from Confucianism ethics and present in nearly all of the countries of the area:

²⁷³ Lincoln, Edward (2004) *East Asian Economic Regionalism*, Council on foreign relations, New york, The Brooking Institution pp.36-38

- a system rooted on the *patriarchal authority*, with the concept of "filial piety", in which the father is in a position of superiority in relation with son/daughter/spouse and has attributes of wisdom and power.²⁷⁴
- *humanism*, expressed by the classical Chinese ethic of "*ren*", is the focus of Confucianism, with at the center the idea of teachable human beings in order to "fulfill social responsibility rather than self-actualization per se".²⁷⁵
- a *hierarchical system* and the distinction between a superior and an inferior, mirroring patriarchal relations
- the emphasis on *group harmony*, or social stability against personal conflict and interest (in opposition to western acceptations of a western individuality and self-improvement rooted in protestant ethics)²⁷⁶ and self-sacrifice in favor of communal good.
- reliance on individual *performance in academia* and meritocracy, demonstrated by Asian students outperforming western students in subjects like science and mathematics, as recent surveys demonstrated.²⁷⁷
- mixture of individual identity, in the acceptance of the role played by the individual, and *relational identity*, the identity "defined by a person's significant social relationship"²⁷⁸, that shows the social orientation of Confucian ethics.

Confucian ethics and values had a remarkable influence in countries that did not experience real social and political revolutions in the 20th century, such as Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Japan. Especially in Taiwan, the enduring presence of Confucianism has demonstrated the fallacy of the idea by which Confucian ethics are at the basis of undemocratic governments, based on the "social", more than in the "individual" aspects of political organization. Indeed, Taiwan has turned out to be one of the most vibrant multiparty democracies in East Asia, while the support for Confucian ethics and values is still strong. This has been demonstrated by current surveys, by which the concept of "filial piety", "group harmony" and "relation identity" are still objects of strong

²⁷⁴ Littlefield, Alexis (2011) *Ibid.* p. 9

²⁷⁵ Tong, Qiu Ren (2004) *Bioethics: Asian perspectives. A quest for moral diversity*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, p 34

²⁷⁶ Weber, Max (1st edition 1954) *The Protestant ethics and the spirit of Capitalism*, pp.47 -78, Dover Publications, 2003

²⁷⁷ Ceong, K.S. Frederik (2001) 'In search on an East Asian Identity in Mathematics education' in *Educational Studies in Mathematics* 47, p. 35

²⁷⁸ Ho, D. Y. F. (1995). 'Selfhood and identity in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism: Contrasts With the West' in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 25 (2), p. 118

support.²⁷⁹

On the other hand, in countries such as Korea and Japan, that experienced syncretism on social values, due to the influence of Shintō, Buddhism, "Americanization" and Christian ethics, the situation is more complex and a recent social evolution has demonstrated instead a departure from traditional Confucian ethics, as we have analysed in the case of Japan in Chapter 2. However, a strong imprint remains, from the organization of the instruction in these countries to some "familial" elements that have proved themselves difficult to be eradicated.

Instead, in the case of Singapore and South-east Asia, if from one side syncretism occurred, enduring Chinese immigration and the formation of social groups have permitted the continuity of the Confucian legacy born in China's mainland and its expressions at the levels of the enterprise, folklore and communitarianism.

Buddhist art and literature

While Confucianism is a belief that addresses society and its organization, Buddhism remains one of the biggest beliefs in Asia since its appearance in the Indian subcontinent in the century and has spread to most of the Asian regions. As its diffusion was accompanied by transformations of the original branch in different schools, sects and expressions of religious zeal, the original imprint remains linked to other East Asian countries in a common cultural background.

As in Europe Christianity proved to be a cultural bond for the regionalization of the area, where elements of art and literature provided the "geographical region" of a cultural meaning, this can also be observed in the cultural Buddhist products and crafts in East Asia which have a common root and meaning in the Buddhist texts as the various Sutras, the Buddhist imaginary, rites and festivals, forms and types of architecture and in the iconic representation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.²⁸⁰ While in China, after the Communist Revolution in 1949, Buddhism was condemned by the new government. In Japan, Korea and other parts of East Asia it remained strongly rooted in the socio-cultural background.

Pop-culture products

²⁷⁹ Fetzer, S. Joel and Soper, J. Christopher 'The effect of Confucian values on support for democracy and human rights in Taiwan' in *Taiwan Journal of democracy*, Volume 3 n°1, pp 143 -154

²⁸⁰ Tartakov, Gary Michael (1990) 'Art and Identity: the rise of a new buddhist imagery' in *Art Journal*, Vol. 49, N°4, Winter 1990 pp.409-416

Pop-culture products (cinema, literature, comics, cartoons and TV series) have become a valuable way to understand social-cultural regionalism since the early '80s. As Joseph Nye analysed in *Soft Power: the means to success in world politics* (2004), promotion and realization of cultural exchanges can be considered a "Soft Power" in International Relations, opposed to a traditional hard power (of the military and government). Attractiveness of a culture can counterbalance diplomatic incidents, security threats, dangerous alliances and contribute to the development of regional integration.²⁸¹

I would like to analyse the extent and the relevance of elements of pop-culture, which had considerable leverage in East and Southeast Asian societies with the presentation of few examples:

- TV shows, or "dramas" had proved that such cultural products can increase cultural tolerance, empathy and understanding between nations. Dramas such as the Japanese *Hana Yori Dango*, received so much success that they were adapted to make Taiwanese (2001), South Korean (2009) and Chinese versions (2009). Similarly, recent dramas such as *Winter Sonata* had a huge success in both South Korea and Japan, improving the relations of the two countries, thanks to a softening of the legislation regarding the diffusion of broadcasting.²⁸² This success can be seen as a demonstration of the Asian identity through the depiction of Confucian values and the attractiveness of the representation of everydaylife in the most-advanced nations in North-east Asia. Considering recent surveys and research the youth in Southeast Asia has become more and more interested in the Japanese and Korean societies it has been inspired by archetypes represented in TV shows and series and that promoted a prosperous society based on consumerism and capitalism.²⁸³
- In the same way, Japanese and Korean music culture had a strong influence and it contributes strongly to inter-cultural relations and the development of an East Asian identity. If, at first, in the 1970s, *Kayōkyoku* and J-pop were expressions of the Japanese cultural attractiveness, with a new music tied to the traditional legacy of popular music²⁸⁴, the new K-Wave (Korean music) and C-Wave (Chinese music) did not contest the idea of Japanese

²⁸¹Nye, JR. Joseph (2004) *Soft Power: the means to success in world politics*, New York, Public Affairs.

²⁸² Yasumoto, Seiko (2011) 'Impact of Soft power of cultural mobility: Japan to East Asia in *UCLA Journal of Cinema and Media studies*, Mediascape, Winter 2011 pp.1-3

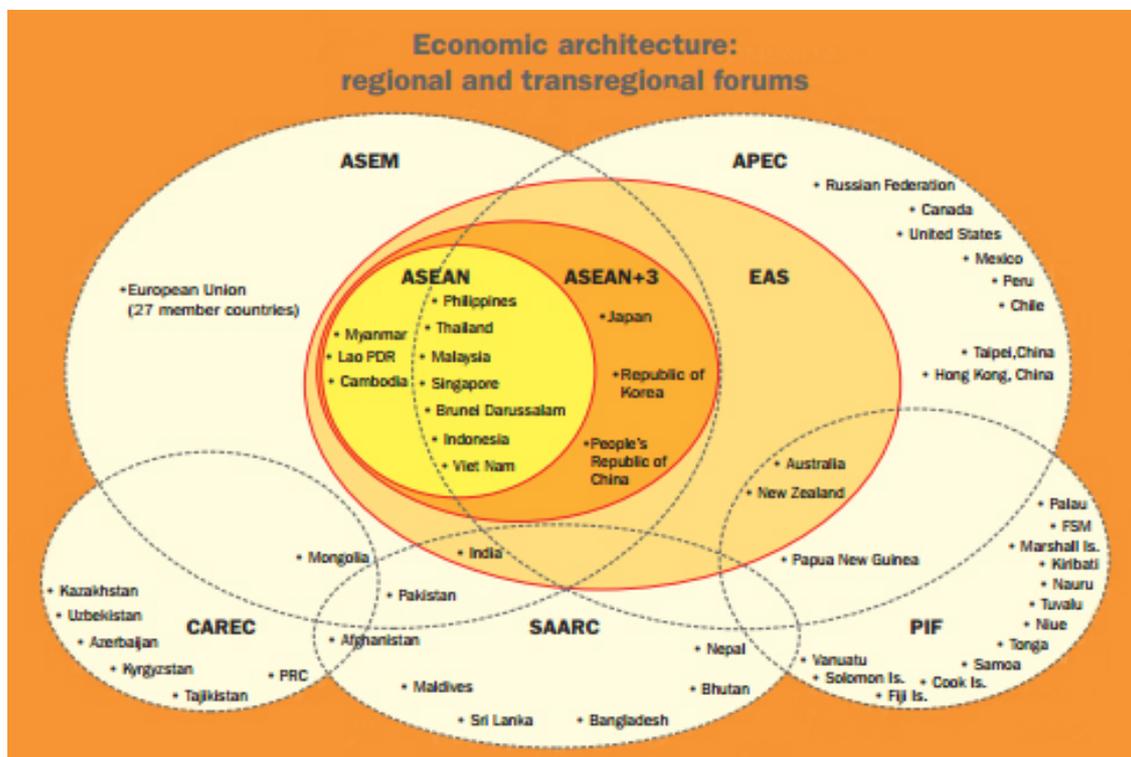
²⁸³ Huat, Beng Chua (2010) 'Korean pop culture' in *Malaysian Journal of Media Studies*, Volume 12 n°1 pp.15-24

²⁸⁴ De Ferranti, Hugh (2002) 'Japanese music can be popular' in *Popular music*, Vol. 21 n°2

cultural hegemony in Asia, but complemented the new cultural framework in the region.²⁸⁵

- Film industry also proved to be a popular instrument of cultural regionalization. An early example is provided by the Shaw Brothers entertainment company, born in the 1920s in Shanghai, then relocated in Singapore during the 1930's and 1940's and eventually settled in Hong Kong, where it launched its great productions, with the apex in the '70s and '80s.²⁸⁶ The transnational nature of the film company was also present in the subjects of the films, which represented rearranged Chinese stories linked to the Confucian tradition.

3.1.3 Economic regionalism and regionalisation



3.1 Source: Emerging Asian Regionalism, A Partnership for Shared Prosperity – A study by the Asian Development Bank, 2008(ADB), July 2008

As Social-cultural regionalisation in East Asia resulted from the increased interdependence and interconnection of cultural exchanges, initiatives coming from East -Asian countries have, during the last decades, circumscribed regionalism around bilateral and multilateral projects and frameworks concerning the region's political economy,

²⁸⁵ Aoyagi Hiroshi 'Prospects on the impact of cool Japan in South east Asia' , Workshop on Japanese culture in Southeast Asia, 14 October 2011, National Unviersity of Singapore

²⁸⁶ Haut, Beng Chua (2010) *Op. Cit.* Pp. 17 - 18

A multilateral framework came to light following attempts to regionalism started in Southeast Asia and realized through the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), while bilateral projects have found their expression in the actualization of FTAs as consequence of the unsatisfactoriness of resolutions took in panels such as the WTO.

Multilateral forums in Asia-Pacific

ASEAN emerged as one of the most successful examples of regionalism outside Europe, since its foundation in 1967, after the end of the Cold War it has become an effective framework with a non-institutional foundation²⁸⁷ and an organization based on a system of high-level meetings to assess regional cooperation in a broad range of topics (such as the discussion toward the implementation of an Asean Economic Community on energy and security, as the 1995 Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone) . However, it never led or attempted to create an original and integrated political body, mostly because of the asymmetry of the different levels of development and economic prosperity of its member countries, the discrepancies between different government types, the relative political instability in the region and the present position of inferiority of the nations vis-à-vis the two great powers of the region, China and Japan, that for decades have exploited Southeast Asian cheap labour and markets for economic gains.

Even an "ASEAN" identity proved difficult to emerge and it is still weak compared to the national identities of the singular states, as it is not shared equally between the nations: the retention of the national sovereignty of the states is the principle around which the organization has been build. Moreover, in the economic field, the trade of most of the ASEAN nations remained more oriented toward global markets than to initiatives aimed at regional integration.²⁸⁸

A different political and economic environment can be observed instead in North-East Asia. South Korea, China and Japan have reduced in the last few years their economic gap in terms of GDP with each other, with the rise of the Chinese economy and the recent development of strong South Korean industries, which are slowly replacing Japan as leaders of the electronics and consumer goods markets

However, constraints to regional integration, that I will later illustrate in the next sub-chapter, have prevented until the '90s the creation of a framework with the same aims, functions and organization of ASEAN. The breaking point toward initiatives in this sense was the construction of APEC (Asia-

²⁸⁷ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Op. Cit.* p.150

²⁸⁸ Narine, Shaun (2002) *Explaining ASEAN*, Lynne Rienner Publishers pp. 2-5

Pacific Economic Cooperation forum), established in 1989²⁸⁹ with the original 12 members from East Asia, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the U.S. China joined in 1991 and the current number of nations is 21.²⁹⁰ The main objectives included trade-liberalization (through the called Bogor Goals), which stalled by the late 1990s due to interest of the member countries in other forms of economic regionalism, as we shall see later. However, the US decision to drift the discussion towards security related issues (after 9/11), which eventually resulted in the failure of APEC to address issues inherently linked to the East Asian context.²⁹¹

The initial objectives of APEC were necessary to increase cooperation to sustain growth and development in the region, recognising at the same time the intrinsic political, cultural and economic diversity of the region and promoting informal exchanges to gain advantages in areas of common interest and mutual benefits.²⁹² The rationale behind these intentions were to refuse the formation of a trade bloc and the promotion of the idea of "open regionalism", to maintain a fair level of involvement for the region in global affairs and avoiding measures of discrimination and trade diversion.²⁹³

However a 2000 survey by Scollay and Gilbert showed that, in the eventuality of a complete liberalization within the APEC framework, the profits would be limited because of the subsequent reduced gains of preferential agreements leading to the detriment of less advanced economies.²⁹⁴ The struggle between FTA initiatives and APEC made the policy-makers disillusioned about the organization, especially after the failure in the resolution of launching a round of New Millennium round negotiations in Seattle in 1993.²⁹⁵

The reaction to the enduring failures of APEC, also caused by the large membership and by the continue disorganization, was a set of initiatives coming directly from the Asian countries.

One of these efforts originated from the intentions of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who was a critic towards the prominent role of the US in the APEC. In the early '90s, he pushed for the idea of EAEG (East Asian Economic Grouping), an alternative stage from which

²⁸⁹ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Op. Cit.* p. 118

²⁹⁰ At the moment of writing the Organism has also included Taiwan (1991), Hong Kong (1991), Mexico (1993), Papua New Guinea (1993), Chile (1994), Russia (1998), Peru (1998) Vietnam (1998)

²⁹¹ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Op. Cit.* Pp. 140-146

²⁹² Soesastro, Hadi (2003) 'APECs Overall Goals and objective, evolution and current status' in Feinberg, Richard E.(ed.) (2003) *APEC as an Institution, multilateral governance in the Asia-Pacific*, Institute of Southeast Asian studies, Singapore pp. 32 - 34

²⁹³ Soesastro, Hadi (2003) in *Ibid.* pp. 35-36

²⁹⁴ Yamazawa, Ippei (2003) 'Toward an assessment of APEC trade liberalization and facilitation' in *Ibid.* p.114

²⁹⁵ Yamazawa, Ippei (2004) 'APEC s achievement and tasks' in Miranti, Ryana and Hew, Denis (2004) *APEC in the 21st century*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

looking forward to economic integration in Asia. Nonetheless he was met by strong opposition of the US and by indifference of Japan and South Korea. The EAEG was followed in 1991 by another Malaysian initiative, the EAEC (East Asian Economic Caucus), that presented a dialogue panel with a more informal character in order to assess economic issues concerning Asian nations. But again, US opposition was demonstrated by the 1991 visit of Secretary of State James Baker to Japan and South Korea in order to lobby against the project.²⁹⁶

A final initiative was instead successful: when in the 5th ASEAN meeting in December 1995, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong proposed to "invite" three neighbours (Japan, China, South Korea) inside ASEAN, the other ASEAN members instead responded with a parallel framework, that would not have discriminated the interests of the Southeast Asian Countries: the ASEAN +3.²⁹⁷

ASEAN +3

APT (Asean Plus Three) was born as the result of ASEAN member countries to involve "great partners" in the linkage between regionalism in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia and to the more pragmatic aim to facilitate the creation of regional financial governance. This continued the collateral processes of financial assistance already started with the role of the Japanese JICA's (Japanese International Cooperation Agency) ODA and the function of the Asian Development Bank in Manila in 1966.²⁹⁸ ASEAN Plus 3 made a low-key start and only since March 1999, with the meetings of the finance ministers, the term "APT" started to be employed to indicate the process that was coming to life. Eventually, at the third meeting in November 1999, the 13 leaders adopted the Joint Statement on East Asian Cooperation, aimed at increasing financial and monetary cooperation, developing a human capital, cooperation on the field of technical and scientific development, and the promotion of discussion on information, cultural exchanges, transnational security and policies toward regional stability.²⁹⁹

These objectives were pursued through a set of initiatives taken within this new framework:

- *The Chiang Mai Initiative* (CMI) is the result of the May 2000 meeting of APT for

²⁹⁶ Dent, Chritsopher (2008) *Ibid.* p. 151-2

²⁹⁷ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Ibid.* p. 153

²⁹⁸ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Ibid.* pp. 154- 158

²⁹⁹ Sudo, Sueo (2005) *Evolution of ASEAN – Japan Relations* Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Pp. 53-54

the creation of "currency swap" agreements between the APT member states and it saw the implementation of 14 bilateral agreements by 2003, such as the Japan- South Korea agreement for 13 billions dollars to be swapped in Won by Japan and 8 billion dollars swapped in Yen by South Korea in case of financial crisis. Moreover, the initiative lead off to a system of information exchange on the flows of capitals, to a framework to build up a dialogue on re-shaping international finance and to regular meeting of the financial ministers of the memeber states. However, the impact of these swap agreements was limited for the small amount of funds devoted to the initiative, compared to the amount of foreign exchange reserves held by the central banks of the region, and to the necessary amount of funds needed to defend against a pegged exchange rate.³⁰⁰

- The *ABMI* (Asian Bond Markets Initiative), instead, is aimed at strengthening the development of the bond market at the domestic and regional level to construct the conditions for a stable financial environment in East Asia. It is based on the assumption by which a great quantity of foreign currencies and savings are held by Asian countries and great investments in bonds are made in the region. As the CMI process is meant to be used in times of crisis, the ABMI proposes, beyond the growth of the financial market in East Asia, several anti-crisis measures, such as the promotion of a better diversification of currencies and less dependence on the dollar.³⁰¹
- The ambitious AMU (Asian Monetary Unit) initiative is directed to the introduction of an integrate currency unit for the APT members based on the idea of a "basket of APT currencies that would be used to supervise movements in the currencies' values. This system would have the task of helping the APT governments to cooperate toward the obtainment of greater stability of the exchange rate and to create a level of predictability in their converging/diverging vis-à-vis the AMU rate.³⁰²

Considering this as starting step toward monetary union, disagreement followed as a consequence: China argued that the calculation of AMU weightings should have been calculated on each country's share of GDP while Japan and other states pushed for other criteria. Moreover, recent studies have shown the benefits as well as the enduring difficulties behind the potential

³⁰⁰ Lincoln J. Edward (2004) *Op. Cit.* pp. 220 - 224

³⁰¹ Dent, Christopher (2008) *Op.Cit.* pp.161-163

³⁰² Dent, Christopher (2008) *Ibid.* p. 165

implementation of an Asian Currency Unit, especially due to "diverse economic structures and institutions, coupled with strong differences in political systems and several unresolved bilateral issues"³⁰³

A spin-off of the APT framework that emerged in the 2000 summit in Singapore was the East Asia Summit (EAS). This focused on the attainment of a broader regional system based on a membership extended to India, Australia and New Zealand. However, the first EAS summit in 2005 in Kuala Lumpur saw the debate almost exclusively oriented to the membership issue. Japan's idea of an integrated free trade area was rejected by Malaysia and other ASEAN countries for concerns related to the membership of New Zealand and Australia.³⁰⁴

FTAs

After the end of the Cold War and the arrival of contemporary globalisation, a new political landscape of dominance of liberal and capitalistic theories ensued from the new unipolarity of the American power. Free-trade principles and *lassaiz-faire* pushed for trade deregulation and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) became the most straightforward instruments to achieve trade liberalisation. The deepening of the European Union integration first with the Maastricht treaty (1992), that led to the birth of the Euro, and then with the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) showed how regional integration was possible to some extent in a region formerly fractured in internal wars, trade competition and the disasters of WWII totalitarianisms.

With the urge to "catch up" and the "deepening regionalism and globalisation", FTA became a useful way to proceed toward trade liberalization and facilitate integration at the regional and global level.³⁰⁵ Moreover, the failure of the WTO framework since 1999, and its diplomatic difficulties, the 1997-8 financial crisis and concerns over strategic motivations (the need to get into FTAs before the others in order to have strategic-economic advantages, and the fear of a Baldwin's domino effect³⁰⁶ and of commercial isolation as result.) led to increased interest toward this type of agreements.

The FTA is a preferential agreement between nations for the mutual reduction of all the tariffs, quotas and commercial barriers, but FTAs can have a different nature (with a strong technical or ideational content), they can be limited, or extended to many areas of interest, or they can have a

³⁰³ Gupta, Abhjit Sen and Palit Amitendu 'Feasibility of an Asian Currency Unit' in *Working Papers* (March 2008), Indian Council for research on International Economic Relations, p. 39

³⁰⁴ Dent, Christopher. *Op. Cit.* p. 171

³⁰⁵ Dent, Christopher *Ibid.* pp. 184-190

³⁰⁶ Baldwin, Richard (1993) 'A domino theory of Regionalism' in *NBER Working Paper Series*, n° 4465, National Bureau of Economic Research

developmental or market liberal approach.

Reasons for entering an FTA can be general, or linked to political economy and security concerns. General reasons include the push of the domestic exporters in order to expand their trade, a way to take a stand on terms of trade and to assure commercial stability on determined products. On the other hand, if we consider the economic and security considerations, the reasons will be the necessity to contribute to policy goals, to change the focus on determinate sectors, to create a link for the region's security and to encourage the fight against terrorism.³⁰⁷

However, if these motivations can be a valuable push for entering into an FTA, risks should also be taken into consideration in the analysis of the possible pros and cons of an FTA. Among these, general risks are the retaliation by the other nations (that are discriminated from the preferential terms of an FTA), the slowing down of the process toward trade liberalization in multilateral frameworks, panels and forum (such as the WTO, the APEC and APT) and the verification of the "spaghetti bowl" effect, when a confused mass of preferential trade agreement emerges and, having every FTA a link to domestic politics in the "rules of origin regime" (eligibility of products for free trade), complexity in the FTA architecture leads to discriminatory trade policies and different tariffs/tariff reduction practices towards a same commodity.³⁰⁸³⁰⁹

3.1.4 Japanese government role in improving regional integration

Japan's defeat in the WWII marked the end of the nation's ambitions to create a Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity sphere. As Japan entered the post-war period, its foreign policy became more and more trapped between the need for Asian markets in order to expand its economy and promote the vertical division of labour in a "flying geese model"³¹⁰ and the strong ties of the alliance with the US, that determined Japan's foreign policy until the end of the Cold War. As Michael J. Green pointed out, this relationship with the US reflects the typical dilemma of "entrapment and abandonment" experienced by minor nations that get in contact with powerful nations: in order to escape from this dilemma the state can build up its own military force (go against the Constitution), improve the relations with other nations (risking to loose the great nation security umbrella) or

³⁰⁷ Findlay, Christopher, Piei Haflah and Pangestu Mari (2003) 'Trading with Favourites: Free Trade Agreements in the Asia Pacific' in *Pacific Economic Papers*, n°335, January 2003, Australia-Japan Research Centre

³⁰⁸ Dent, Christopher *Op. Cit.* pp. 196-197

³⁰⁹ Findlay, Christopher, Piei Haflah and Pangestu Mari (2003) *Op. Cit.* pp. 95-96

³¹⁰ The flying geese model saw the promotion of Japanese commodities at high level of sophistication, while other parts of East Asia used old technologies and developed exploiting the comparative advantage and exporting products.

focus on the economic field (letting the hegemonic country dictate on its foreign policy).³¹¹ Even if the first Diplomatic Bluebook of 1957 expressed the hope for a foreign policy based on three pillars (the alliance with the US, the UN diplomacy and the relations with other Asian countries) we already know how the Yoshida doctrine and the focus on economic growth was the only response of the Japanese government until the end of the Cold war, with some exceptions.

Re-orientalised perception of threats, alliance and Japan's role in Asia had a strong impact in the period following Japan's defeat and retreat from Asia. I partially agree with Samuel Kim when he asserts that National identity is not defined by the state considering how a nation is, but what it does in the international arena.³¹² Japan could have been the natural leader of the region in the post-war period, having the position, economic capabilities, influence and good governance to rule in East Asia. However identity concerns emerged by the assimilation of the orientalised discourse in the post-war period which represented the biggest constrain for Japan's foreign policy.

I will assess these constraints for regionalism in the next subchapters, while here I will describe how, despite the pressure, Japan could achieve a modest success in integrating Asia under its leadership, following different stages.

First of all, the conditions posed by Japan's defeat after WW2 were tragic for the nation, as the change of positionality from hegemon to subject in East Asia also changed the perception of its role as international actor. However, historical legacy conditioned Japan's policy in the way that it could not be treated as equal by other formerly colonized Asian countries (such as China or Korea) and at the same time to be a subject of the American hegemony in the Asia Pacific.

In this sense, the transformation from victims to feelings of guilt, as explained in Chapter one, with the help of American anthropologist and political scientists such as Ruth Benedict and Reischauer, were realized through the payment of the war reparations to the Asian countries under the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty, the demilitarization of the country, the domestic reform at the constitutional and political level (Chapter two). Furthering this, the signing of the treaty with Taiwan (in a Cold War optic), resulted in the isolation from Asia, insomuch as "Japan was treated as a virtual pariah state in the region".³¹³

President Nixon's foreign policy of "normalization" of the US role in the world and disengagement in the region (after the catastrophic Vietnam War) represented the first big challenge to the post-war

³¹¹ Green, J. Michael (2003) *Japan's reluctant realism*, Palgrave pp. 11 -13

³¹² Kim, Samuel (2006) Inter Korean Relation in Northeast Asian Geopolitics in Armstrong Charles et al. (eds) *Korea at the Center*, M.E. Sharpe p. 171

³¹³ Hook, Glenn D. et al. (2012) *Japan's International Relations*, Routledge pp. 164-166

status-quo. The restitution of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 and the withdrawal of 2000 troops from South Korea were signs of cold war detente in East Asia and while Japan was worried about losing its security umbrella, it pursued the already started policy of ODA, and assistance towards the East and Southeast Asian countries and the strengthening of the foundations in the ADB (Asian Development Bank), constructed in 1966³¹⁴.

On the other hand, the Nixon shocks, when President Nixon visited China, without prior consultation with Japan, and the end of the Bretton Woods system, gave the opportunity for the country to start to consider an independent foreign policy.³¹⁵ However, in the 1969 meetings with the US, Japan wanted the continuation of the status-quo and its strong relationship with the US, even if its national identity, since the first war period, experienced a shift from "*datsu a ron*", or western-oriented foreign policy, to "*nyua*", or coming back in Asia. Thus, the Nixon shocks were an opportunity to kick-start Japan's policy toward Asia.

I will hereafter list the most significant patterns of improvement carried out by Japan to improve regional integration since the early 60s:

- *Normalization of relations with China* in 1972 was the first effect of the Nixon shocks and not only shook Sato's administration's idleness in the international relations and led to Tanaka's arrival to the Japanese government in 1972, but provoked a gradual abandonment of the traditional policy of recognition of Taiwan and the acceptance of the three principles of normalization.³¹⁶ Moreover, the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's republic of China on the 12th of August, 1978 demonstrated Japanese repentance toward its past aggressions, while PRC General Secretary Jiang Zemin gave up Japan's war reparations.
- *The improvement of relations with South Korea* after the withdrawal of the US troops and the collapse of Vietnam in 1975. The fear for a domino effect of communism led Japan to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea after the 1965 Treaty. This provided public loans and pushed US president Jimmy Carter not to proceed toward a

³¹⁴ Inoguchi Takashi (2002) 'Japan goes regional' in Komori, Yasumasa *Economic Cooperation in East Asia: Japanese and Chinese Approaches to ASEAN*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, California, 2006 pp.5-6

³¹⁵ Chung-in Moon and Seung won Suh (2006) 'Japan's Asian regionalism and South Korea' in *Korea at the center* p. 129

³¹⁶ Hook, Glenn (2012) *Op. Cit.* p.169

complete withdrawal from Japan's new regional partner.³¹⁷ Relations were then boosted in the '90s thanks to the North-Korean crisis of 1993-1994, with Japanese strong leadership in financial assistance after the Asian financial crisis of 1997-8 and the role of President Kim Dae Jung, who pushed for the recognition of the positive role played by Japan since the post-war period.³¹⁸

- *Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance)*, initiated in 1954, provided aid to East and Southeast Asian countries. The International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was founded in 2002 to manage the aid toward other countries. Japan has been so far the second largest aid provider in the world and China has been its biggest recipient, followed by ASEAN countries. However, after the 2008 financial crisis, the “aid weapon” was weakened, especially regarding the loan aid. ODA was used since the early 60s to counterbalance the impact of the legacy of history, but China can be considered a valid example for this policy and at the same time it can be an example of the decaying trend in assistance policy:

1. Japan's ODA Disbursements to China

Year	Loan Aid	Grant Aid	Technical Cooperation	Total
2006	231.51	19.05	310.52	561.08
2007	156.56	15.48	263.62	435.66
2008	-5.18	18.21	265.22	278.25
2009	-155.09	14.02	283.03	141.96
2010	-552.87	13.00	347.21	-192.66
Total	13,451.73	1,190.02	6,133.92	20,775.69

3.2. Japan's ODA Disbursements to China Source: MOFA Statistics and Reference Materials³¹⁹

(Net disbursement basis, unit: US\$ million)

Country or Region	Japan's ODA (2009)							
	Grants				Loan aid			Total
	Grant aid	Grants provided through multilateral institutions	Technical cooperation	Total	Amount disbursed	Amount received	Total	
Asia	596.90	119.56	961.54	1,558.44	6,240.46	5,580.86	659.60	2,218.05
East Asia	279.18	36.56	780.43	1,059.60	4,458.78	4,384.55	74.23	1,133.83
Northeast Asia	48.59	6.36	365.42	414.01	940.80	1,122.69	-181.89	232.12
Republic of Korea (ROK) *			64.19	64.19		48.99	-48.99	15.21
China	14.02	0.35	283.03	297.05	902.91	1,058.00	-155.09	141.96
[Hong Kong] *			0.28	0.28				0.28
[Macao] *								
Mongolia	34.57	6.01	17.92	52.49	37.89	15.70	22.19	74.68
Southeast Asia	230.39	30.00	406.97	637.36	3,517.97	3,261.85	256.12	893.48

3.3. Japan's ODA (2009) Source: MOFA Statistics and Reference Materials³²⁰

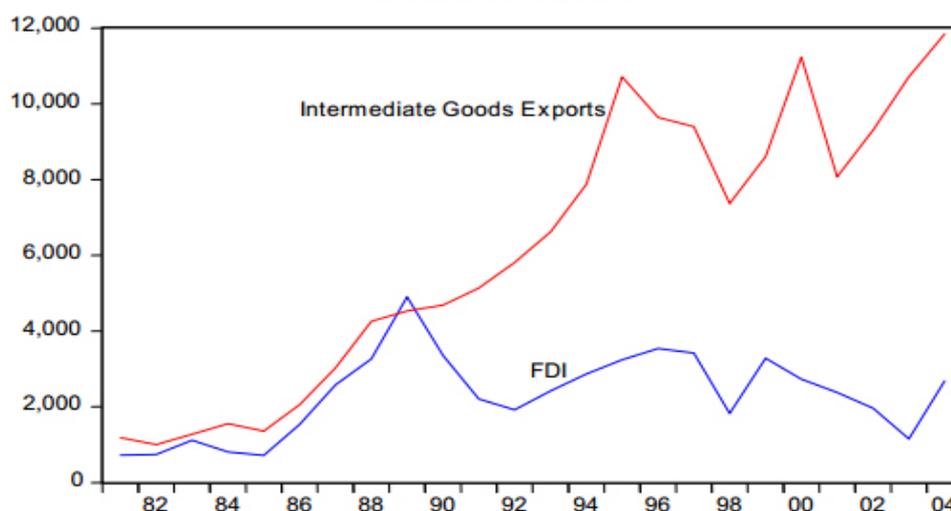
³¹⁷ Chung-in Moon and Seung won Suh (2006) Op. Cit. in Armstrong Charles et al. (eds) *Korea at the Center*, M.E. Sharp, p.130

³¹⁸ Inoguchi Takashi (2002) *Japan's asian policy*, Palgrave Macmillian pp.18-19

³¹⁹ Source: MOFA (http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/data/01ap_ea01.html)

- *Nakasone's "dual strategy"* in the '80s, ensued from Ronald Reagan's new containment policy saw the support for the US President, strengthening of the US-Japan alliance, and the departure from the traditional Yoshida doctrine in order to let Japan become a global power. The priority was East Asia, with the implementation of new loans to China in March 1984 and the first official visit to South Korea together with a "gift" of four billions dollars of loans.³²¹
- *Increase of the volume of trade and FDI.* Considering the 66 billion dollars of the Chinese-Japanese trade already in 1999, Japan's is now China's third largest trade partner after the US and the EU. In 2000 Sino-Japanese trade was 83 billion dollars, while in 2008 it peaked to 266 billions.³²² Trade conditioned Sino-Japanese as well South Korea-Japan relations, when it could be used as a substitute in lack of an appropriate foreign policy. Moreover, FDI from Japan to China grew in the long term, with the only decline experienced in the '90s due to the burst of the bubble economy and the following 60% appreciation of the Yen after the Plaza accords, while consequences of the entrance of China in the WTO in 2001 saw China becoming one of the major recipient of Japanese FDI.³²³

Figure 3a: Japanese FDI and Intermediate Goods Exports to Taipei, China and Republic of Korea



3.4 Source: Asian Development Bank Institute, 2011³²⁴

³²⁰ Source: MOFA (http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2010/pdfs/10_part4-2.pdf)

³²¹ Chung-in Moon and Seung won Suh (2006) Op. Cit. in Armstrong Charles et al. (eds) *Korea at the Center*, M.E. Sharpe pp. 131-132

³²² 'Japan Trade boost bilateral ties' in *China daily*, 28 August 2010

³²³ Thorbecke Willem and Salike Nimesh (2011) *Understanding Foreign Direct Investment in East Asia*, ADBI Working Paper Series

³²⁴ Source: ADBI (<http://www.adbi.org/working->

- *The rise of regional forums and the proliferations of FTAs*, saw Japan as an active partner at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. On one hand, after its first free trade agreements with Singapore in 2000 and the finalization of the discussion with Mexico in 2004, success was achieved, after several years of discussions, at first with the sign of an FTA with ASEAN in the form 2008, then with India in February 2011³²⁵, for the scheduled elimination of tariffs regarding 90% of the commodities between the two countries. This new trend toward the conclusion of FTA has, however, demonstrated a shift on economic policy interests from North-East Asia to South and South East Asia: FTA's bilateral negotiations between Japan and South Korea already stalled in 2004, for Japan's concern over agricultural production and farmers lobbies opposition.

On the other hand, consistent multilateral efforts by the Japanese Government were realized through various emerging framework and forums in the Asia-Pacific. For instance, the Miyazawa Initiative and the start of swap agreements and medium-long term support to Asian countries, were renewed after the Asian financial crisis, in the New Miyazawa Initiative in 1998, with a special loan of 5 billion dollars yen and another 20 billions for the creation of the Japan-ASEAN Solidarity Fund, developing a sense of solidarity in the Asian Region.³²⁶ The continuous participation and guidance in the institutionalization process of forums such as APT and APEC and EAS strengthened Japan's position in Asia vis-à-vis its partners.

- *Cultural exchanges and cultural promotion* were pushed by the Japanese government in a variety of initiatives. Attractiveness of Japanese universities and the promotion of an image of "Cool Japan" through investments in cultural activities (in 2008 amounted to more than 101 billion dollars³²⁷) served to destroy and counterweight the historical legacy coming from Japanese imperialism during WWII. Moreover, exchange programs (such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) and scholarship from the Ministry of the Education or the ADB-Japan scholarship program enhanced the prestige of Japanese academic research and enhanced the cooperation between universities, governments and individuals in the

paper/2011/06/23/4616.foreign.direct.investment.east.asia/fdi.in.east.asia.from.19852011/)

³²⁵ Jijo, Jacob 'India-Japan free trade agreement: a win-win deal' in *International Business Times*, February 16, 2011

³²⁶ Yoshiro Takahida (2004) *East Asian Regionalism and Japan*, Apec Study Center, Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO pp. 11 -12

³²⁷ Figures: Agency of Cultural affairs. (Online report at: https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/market/pdf/2005_27_r.pdf)

Asia-Pacific.

All these initiatives have been in fact attempts of the Japanese Government to push regionalism and integrate Japan in Asia, departing from an image of “Japan as a pariah in Asia” and from stereotyped views coming from the legacy of history. However, Japan could only achieve modest results and most of the regionalization processes were undermined by conflicts with other Asian nations such as China and South Korea and by the reprisal and the push of the nationalistic discourse and of the re-orientalized identity of the post-war period that wanted to represent Japan as “unique”.

3.2 Japan's historical legacy and the re-construction of memory

Here I will assess the impact of ideas, representations and perception of war memory and their manifestations in the recent international affairs in East Asia.

In this sense, two trends seem to be predominant: one represents Japan as a "victim" through the practice of semiotic symbolism, which shows patterns of *victimhood* in the Japanese society and it is instrumental to the recent revival of nationalism which excludes Japan's responsibility in 19th century East Asia.³²⁸ These anachronistic forces of revival of the legacy of the Japanese militaristic past collide with the regional-oriented and integrationist forces of regionalism and regionalization explained above, balancing Japan's role in the Asian I.R. as in-between integration and isolationism. On the other hand, the second trend is the admittance of guiltiness and recognition of Japan's war responsibilities (*victimization* toward the "Other") of the Japanese people. We have dealt with this issue when assessing the evolution of the debate concerning the Constitution, the school textbooks and the Yasukuni Shrine, while the first trend remains useful to understand new movements and processes in Japan's political attitudes.

3.2.1 Symbols and narratives

Historical museums can be truly considered "storages" of memories and identities perceptions and Self-Defense Forces have often used them to promote a positive image of Japan's militarism and of themselves. Examples are the GSDF PR centre in Wakō City in Tokyo prefecture, where, in a "History and Chronology Room", are displayed the relics of the war period, such as flags, medals and badges and the Air Self-Defense force PR Centre in Hamamatsu, where, beyond the

³²⁸ Orr, James (2001) *Op.cit.* pp.32-35

technological equipment, there are photos of the Japanese aviation and a reconstructed Zero fighter.

³²⁹ As André Hertrich affirms:

"Collective memory is produced by contextualizing the exhibits in culture and history of the surrounding area or depicting Imperial Army soldiers not only as friendly and caring, but also willing to lay down their lives for the Tennō and the nation".³³⁰

Moreover, every museum has its "national hero", such as Admiral Togo or Lieutenant Kato, protagonist of the constructed national identity of Japan at war, or exemplar soldiers who represented stereotyped images of self-sacrifice.³³¹

The most popular museum is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, that is both a constructed and genuine *lieu de mémoire*. It was constructed in 1949 after the National Diet decision of rebuilding Hiroshima as a "peace memory city" with the architect Tange Kenzō being entrusted with the designing of the new Memorial Park.³³² Interestingly, an old project of the site wanted a memorial monument for the Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, and Tange used these projects with an architectural style that imitated "traditional" Japanese elements of the *haniwa* and *azekurazukuri*³³³ It was an inherent contradiction for a "Peace" museum to have an old project modelled on the traditional Shintō architecture used for Japan's militaristic past. When the Memorial Museum opened in 1955 it did not show the suffering of the atomic bombings or their victims, but the past of the city of Hiroshima and soon the Museum became a place where the people went to celebrate their dead³³⁴ more than reflecting on the atomic bombings and on Japanese war atrocities

While the first collection had roof tiles, bricks and symbols of everyday life prior to the bombing, successive exhibition had wax mannequines and dummies with a more and more realistic appearance in order to explain the atomic disaster through the emotions.

Only in 1987, with a more prominent role of the civil societies, 14 NGOs called for an inclusion of the Japanese atrocities connected to the Hiroshima disaster in order "not only to condemn the bomb

³²⁹ Hertrich, André (2008) 'A Usable Past? Historical Museums of the Self-Defence Forces and the Construction of Continuities' in Saaler Sven et al. (eds) *The Power of Memory in Modern Japan*, Global Oriental p. 177

³³⁰ Hertrich, André (2008) *Ibid.* p.180

³³¹ Hertrich, André (2008) *Ibid.* p.182

³³² Hertrich, André (2008) *Ibid.* pp 156-157

³³³ Shoiichi Inoue, (1987) *Aato, kicchu, japanesku*, pp.286 -290, Tokyo: Seidosha

³³⁴ Schafer, Stefanie (2008) 'The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and its Exhibition' in Saaler, Sven and Schwentker Wolfgang (eds.) (2008) *The Power of Memory in Modern Japan*, Global Oriental p. 158

but also to think about the reasons why it was dropped"³³⁵ However, conservative criticism and opposition to the misconceived justification of the event from the public expressed their need to maintain a predominant identity of victimhood in the Japanese people.

The same victimhood is found in the Anti-Nuclear Peace Movement that uses the Hiroshima discourse to justify essentialist features. Atomic victimhood was expressed since its beginning from the political world, with the Cabinet declaration that considered Japan as the "only country in the world to have suffered an atomic bombing" On the other hand from the intellectual and international perspectives, the critical success of Ibuse Masuji's *Kuroi Ame* (1965), the Peace Prize to Prime Minister Eisaku Satō and the activism of Yasui Kaoru in his antinuclear peace movement in the 1950s are expressions of external recognition.³³⁶ Yasui Kaoru, professor of International law at Tokyo University and purged from his position in March 1948, influenced the ban-the-bomb movement in post-war Japan and promoted the role of the civil society for the establishment of democratic values in the country.³³⁷ However, his purposes were to identify the Japanese experience of the atomic bomb as unique to Japan and the emphasis on a "spiritual revolution" of the Japanese towards the creation of a pacifist society, negating Japanese responsibilities. He influenced the resurgence of neo-nationalism in his insistence in terms such as *kokumin*, that have been previously analysed, that were used by him in the sense of "ethnic nationalism". As Orr affirms, it was accompanied by the post-war influence of the Stalinist theories of ethnic nation as a "force for liberation from the capitalist imperialism".³³⁸ At the same time, ethnic nationalism can be considered at the very base of ultra-nationalism, as we have seen, in its militaristic attitude and the insistence on superiority of the Japanese race and on their leadership in Asia.³³⁹ Similarly, we can see the evolution of this Japanese movement and the change of positionality of the Japanese identity as a further assimilation of Orientalist theories expressed above: the atomic bombings became symbols of the Japanese uniqueness and pacifism and instead of being linked to historical responsibilities became more and more instrumental to essential elements of Japanese Identity.

International Relations narratives in Japan have always presented elements of hybridity in their hate and at the same time fascination for "the Other". While writers such as Kojima Nobuo and Ōe Kenzaburo have looked for an ideological criticism of the East-West dichotomy through the representation of in-betweeners between the two paradigms, 1950s narratives presented the national

³³⁵ Asahi Shinbun, 11 May 1990

³³⁶ Orr, J. James (2001) *The Victim as Hero, Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan*, University of Hawaii Press pp.36-41

³³⁷ Orr, Ibid. (2001), University of Hawaii Press p. 49

³³⁸ Orr, Ibid. (2001), University of Hawaii Press pp. 51-53

³³⁹ Orr, Ibid. (2001), University of Hawaii Press p.53

identity in various expressions of victimhood. The film *Godzilla*, for instance, became soon the image of the devastation suffered during the WW2³⁴⁰. The monster is awakened by the nuclear test made by the US in the Bikini Atoll of the Pacific and the reference here is the Lucky Dragon incident of March 1954, when a nuclear test contaminated the Lucky Dragon ship, together with another one hundred fishing boats in the area³⁴¹. *Godzilla* perpetuated the image of an inferior positionality for Japan under the US hegemony: “[*Godzilla*] is like the souls of the Japanese soldiers, who died in the Pacific Ocean during the war”, it was affirmed by Ifukube Akira, music director of the film.³⁴²

The efforts of the Japanese government to substitute dark, decadent cities in the country with bright, new, modern metropolises reflected not only the attempts to react a posteriori to the self-perceived inferiority but also to confirm the idea of victimhood. Ueno Kōshi in “*Nikutai no Jidai*”³⁴³ (1989) described this transformation towards a new capitalist society with new bright spaces, that are in opposition to the ruins of a defeated Japan.³⁴⁴

In the 1960s narratives of victimhood ensued from two different events: the anti-security treaty movement and the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

When Prime Minister Nobosuke wanted to renew the security treaty with the US on the idea of an increased equality and mutual responsibilities between the two countries, the public opinion reacted to what they saw as an attempt to maintain ideas of guiltiness and responsibility, or, in other words, Japanese identity and its responsibilities during the war seen as *victimization* of the “other”. There was then a struggle between a new civil society demanding for an idea of “Japan as a peaceful country” together with Socialist and Communist parties using pacifism and the constitutional clause against the fear of the return of the Japanese militaristic past.³⁴⁵ Thus pacifism, paradoxically matched with ethno-nationalism, the idea of a unique suffering of the Japanese population during the war and of the atomic bomb. It also matched with the victimhood of the humiliation, the anger and the sadness of a population who had experienced the war and was defeated:

The anti-security treaty movement served as an opportunity for the protesters to express what they had long repressed under the foundational narrative: nationalistic feelings embedded in past

³⁴⁰ Yoshikuni Igarashi (2000) *Bodies of Memory*, Princeton University Press pp.114-15

³⁴¹ The Lucky Dragon ship is displayed at the Tokyo Metropolitan Daigo Fukuryuu Maru Exhibition Hall.

³⁴² Yoshikuni Igarashi (2000) *Ibid.* p. 116

³⁴³ Ueno Kōshi (1989) *Nikutai no Jidai*, Tokyo, Gendai Shokan

³⁴⁴ Yoshikuni Igarashi (2002) *Ibid.* pp. 131-164

³⁴⁵ Yoshikuni Igarashi (2002) *Ibid.* pp. 132-136

experiences and emotions.³⁴⁶

Similarly, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics continued the efforts regarding the renovation of Tokyo with new investments in the infrastructures, changing the city landscape in order to present a new image of Japan, in order to eventually change its positionality in the world and reacting to strong feelings of victimhood. The economic success was not enough and Japan still felt the need for international recognition because of its victimhood. However, the great structures of the Tokyo Olympics recalled the disasters of the war, with a juxtaposition between the 1964 prosperity and the 1945 devastation.

³⁴⁷ Even the 1965 documentary on the Olympics by famous director Ichikawa Kon depicted the event with initial images of the destroyed buildings of Tokyo and he contrasted them with the revival of the city with the new, modern, bright constructions. It is the drama, the fairy tale of a fallen country, which is supposed to instigate sympathetic feelings and sadness for a country that has suffered. In the logic of victimhood, suffering became a positive aspect, opposed to arrogance and bonanza. From victim Japan becomes a hero. And to be a hero it has to recover, unconsciously, Orientalistic values that had been already assimilated in a struggle between its visions of inferiority and orientalist views on its military past.

In Mishima's thoughts and its militaristic organization *Tatenokai*, the attempts to reject the post-war Japanese positionality were seen in the optic of a Japanese national identity as immutable, refusing the Orientalistic stereotypes imposed by the Americans and their assimilation by the population in the post-war period and, at the same time, re-constructing the Japanese identity around the militaristic ideologies of the Japanese fascism. However, he effortlessly tried to change Japan in a period where both public opinion and the government skillfully promoted the idea of "Japan as a peaceful country". With this, the clash between victimhood and Self-Orientalism resulted in the suicide of Mishima and the failure of his political project.

3.2.2. Neo-Nationalisms and international relations in East Asia

While current developments in Japanese domestic politics after the 2012 General Elections and the return of the LDP leadership guided by Shinzō Abe have further shown a shift toward a right-wing and reactionary orientations, the roots of a nationalistic feeling have to be found in the reconstruction of memory, as we have seen above, and in the nationalistic emphasis of political organization and movements since the 1990s.

³⁴⁶Yoshikuni Igarashi (2002) *Ibid.* pp. 139

³⁴⁷Yoshikuni Igarashi (2002) *Ibid.* pp. 143-146

The end of the Japanese miracle in the 1990s and the devastating social, economic and political effects led to feelings of a political vacuum among the population. The 1995 Great Hanshin earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyō attack of the same year nourished the idea of a nation in decline. However, while until the '90s nationalistic feelings remained almost isolated in the reactionary segment of the LDP, the anger originated from the national crisis forced the Government to strengthen "traditional ideas" of Japanese society as well as Japanese feelings. Attempts from the government to "reconstruct" identity around nationalistic feelings, was accompanied by the increasing prominence of Japanese historical revisionism during the '90. In this optic we can consider the 1999 designation of the *Hinomaru* and of the *Kimigayō* as national symbols and the 2002 distribution of Notebooks for Moral Education in schools recalling memories of the wartime National Moral Education textbooks, that had the function to mobilize the students.³⁴⁸

Moreover, The 1992 Diet approval of the "Law in International Cooperation" allowed SDF troops to be sent abroad and participate to UN peacekeeping operation in the form of humanitarian assistance was followed by patriotism and the desire of the population to play a more active role internationally.³⁴⁹ The 1992 Tokyo Declaration between George Bush and Miyazawa Kiichi and the 1997 New Guidelines of U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation saw an interest in the constitutional revision of Art. 9, which stated the declaration that permitted the SDF to be deployed for the "collective defense" and the persecution of the common interest of Japan and US. This resulted from the revisionist stance of Ozawa Ichirō's "active pacifism". In order words, "peace in the international society", departing from that passive pacifism that was the symbol of Japanese weakness in the world and seeking instead normalization, in the possibility to attack or defend itself from aggression.³⁵⁰

A more aggressive stance in the international stage, the reprisal of practices of national mobilization and the departure from the responsibility of the wartime atrocities towards a reprisal of the national identity discourse and the urgency for "unique" symbols of cohesion for the national identity was the reaction to the weak, clumsy and inappropriate response of the Japanese government to the Fukushima accident in March 2011. While Confucian ethics of social harmony and social, unitarian response to the catastrophe were encouraged for the active participation of the citizens to the reconstruction, the government decision to deny or remain silent on the most delicate aspect of the

³⁴⁸ Dickson, Jordan *Politics Shifts Right: the rise of nationalism in Millennial Japan*, BA Thesis, p.5

³⁴⁹ Tsunekawa, Keiichi (2006) *Dependent Nationalism in modern Japan and its implications for Regional Order in the Asia Pacific*, Working Paper 116, Murdoch University p.4

³⁵⁰ Ingyu Oh and Douglas Ishizawa-Grbic "Forgiving the Culprits: Japanese Historical revisionism in a post-cold war context" in *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, Autumn/Winter 2000 Volume 5 n°2

question provoked the anger of the population and were among the factors that led to the fall of Naoto Kan in the summer of 2011 as well as destabilizing Noda's attempts to gain the public opinion support. It is not the purpose of this thesis to assess the truth(s) regarding the accident and I want to avoid the tendency, sometimes found in the medias as well as in some academic scholarship, of encouraging criticism of singular events to support political views. However, we can analyse and demonstrate the impact that this event had in the Japanese population. The anger, the feeling of betrayal that followed in the public opinion was tremendous and was accompanied with a sense of risk and insecurity, that increased the nationalistic feeling among the population. The images that appeared on television represented the incident of Fukushima as close and accessible to everybody and transmitted a feeling that it could happen everywhere else within Japan. Soon, every nation's "machine" of solidarity and political hypocrisy competed with each other in political correctness toward Japan, using the stereotyped symbols, image and perceptions of the Japanese population and of their "calmness".

Strong nationalistic feelings emerged as consequence of the Fukushima Accident, that served as element of cohesion in the population. The critics that were revolted to the political system and the change in leadership eventually shifted the political balance once again in favour of Abe's LDP.

Another element of the shift to a more nationalistic stance in Japan's politics and public opinion can be observed in the nation's relations with its neighbours and its continuous diplomatic faults.

Examples of this behaviour can be seen in the geographic disputes with China and Korea over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and the Takeshima/Dokdo islands, respectively.

In the first case, the Archipelago belonged to China since its discovery and exploration in 1403 until its incorporation within the Taiwan prefecture in 1885. After the Shimonoseki treaty in 1895 the islands were incorporated under the Japanese sovereignty and they remained under Japanese control even after the World War 2. However, they were transferred under the civil administration of the US for the Ryukyu Islands, that lasted until 1972, when both the Ryūkyū and the Senkaku islands were reverted to the Japanese government. The 1969 identification of potential oil and gas reserves in the proximity of the Senkaku by the ECAFE (United Nations Economic Commission and the Far East) led to several rounds of bilateral talks for the joint exploitation of these resources and the development of common economic policies in the area, but the only success was the 2008 agreement on joint development of the resource. Apart from economic interest, geopolitical considerations play an outstanding role in the heating of the dispute. The islands have a strong strategic importance, in the way they are in the proximity to China's shores and near Taiwan and are

seen as strongholds of the Japanese influence in the Pacific. While most of the international communities, especially US refuses to take a position on the delicate question, recent developments in Japan have led former premier Noda to nationalize the islands in September 2012³⁵¹, with a policy of "no compromise" on the islands³⁵². It is clear here the necessity to strengthen Japan's position externally in order to encourage cohesion internally. This policy can not only be seen as a continuation of the process of constructing an identity with the circumscription of the nation territory and the "separation" from the "Other" but also as a reaction to the rise of a rhetorical nationalism on the subject from the Chinese side. The crisis deteriorated in summer 2012, with the arrival on the 15th of August of a Chinese ship with 14 activists, who were eventually arrested for illegal immigration by the Japanese authorities. This provoked the ingress on the 19th of August of a group of Japanese nationalist that in turn claimed the absolute sovereignty of Japan on the disputed islands: the reaction of the public opinion in China demonstrated an uprising nationalism, interesting all the spheres of the society. Chinese boycott of Japanese products, vandalism of Japanese cars and restaurants and long, violent demonstrations, anti-Japanese slogans and protests followed as consequence, with Qing Quang, the Chinese spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign affairs declaring that " the Japanese right wingers illegally violated China's territorial sovereignty".³⁵³

³⁵¹'Noda government to buy Senkaku islands for 2 billion yen', in *Asahi Shinbun*, Sept. 5, 2012 (Web article at http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201209050013)

³⁵²Arimitsu Hiroshi 'Noda vows no compromise' in *Yomiuri Shinbun* Sept. 28, 2012 (Web article at: <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T120927004054.htm>)

³⁵³ Sewell, Anne 'Chinese protest Japanese claim to Senkaku Islands' in *Digital Journal*, Aug.19, 2012 Web article at: <http://digitaljournal.com/article/331102>



3.5 The increase of the Chinese protest and their violence shows the deteriorating relations between Japan and China. Source: CBC News, 'Angry Chinese protesters ransack Japanese business', September 16, 2012

Anger came as well as from the Japanese side, and the fear of losing an already lost leadership in East Asia led to the return of conservative Abe as the guide of the nation. Abe, that promised a tough stance regarding the issues, proclaimed on December 17th, 2012 the undisputed belonging of the islands to the Japanese nation: "the Senkaku group is Japanese territory and, in the eyes of the international community, belongs to Japan and is effectively controlled by us. On this point, there is no room for negotiation".³⁵⁴ As Bill Emmott has shown in his influential article "Senkaku: Are Japan's political leaders insane?", this aggressive position of the Japanese government has the paradoxical effect of showing the weakness of a nation and the fear of being overtaken by China in the Asia Pacific, "succeeding brilliantly in making itself look weak, inferior and rather shifty, all at the same time".³⁵⁵

At the same time, in the case of the Japanese-Korean dispute over Takeshima/Dokdo Islands, the sovereignty of the islands has been long disputed between the two countries. While Japan incorporated the islands in 1905, following a Cabinet Decision, mainly in the optic of establishing

³⁵⁴ Kin, Kwang Weng (2012), 'Abe talks tough: Senakaku islands belong to Japan' in *Asia News Network* Dec.2012, (Web article at :<http://www.asianewsnet.net/news-40355.html>)

³⁵⁵ Emmott, Bill (2013) 'Senkaku: Are Japan's political leaders insane?' in *Number 1 Shinbun*. (Web article at: http://no1.fccj.ne.jp/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=738:senkaku-are-japans-political-leaders-insane&catid=86:2012-oct&Itemid=119)

a defensive stronghold in the context of the Russo-Japanese War, the islets have been historically part of the Kingdom of Korea and even the Tokugawa Shogunate affirmed in 1696 their belonging to the country. Even after the end of WWII Japan proclaimed its sovereignty over the islands, which encountered Korean opposition. If there is evidence that of natural gas resources in the Senkaku, the Takeshima islands are only good spots for fishing and strategic outposts between Korea and Japan. The Dokdo islands are at the moment under the administration of the Republic of Korea, but they are constantly linked to the memory problem. Dokdo stands as a political symbol of Japan's colonial past and war atrocities. When Japanese textbooks described Korea's Dokdo as Japan's Takeshima they started "a memory war between the two neighbours"³⁵⁶ in the same way it did with the exclusion of Nanjing massacre and of the comfort women issue from some of the Japanese textbooks. The real dispute around Dokdo/Takeshima emerged after the San Francisco Peace Treaty (September 8th, 1951), with its first five draft urging the return of the islets to Korea, but followed by a sixth draft (1949), that considered Dokdo as Japanese territory³⁵⁷, in the optic of strategical and political consideration of the US in Asia at the dawn of the Cold War confrontation.³⁵⁸ After failed attempts from the Korean side to obtain the islets through diplomatic means (the July 1951 letter of south Korean ambassador You Chan Yang to the US requesting the renunciation of Dokdo from Japan) in January 1952, a few months before the end of the Korean War, the South Korea President Syngman Rhee declared Korean jurisdiction over "waters ranging from 60 nautical miles up to 170 miles from the Korean coast", creating the so-called "Syngman Rhee Line".³⁵⁹ However, the dispute continued and the Japanese government still affirms that sovereignty over the Takeshima islands existed since the 17th century and in 2005 Shimane prefecture, in which the islands were incorporated, has established a "Takeshima Day" that provoked strong demonstrations from South Korea.³⁶⁰

Sporadic protest from both sides have not been significant so far and have not deteriorated the important relationship between the two neighbours, linked by mutual cultural, political and economic understandings, but Japan's position in East Asia can be damaged further by this issue, if accompanied by a renewed interest in the nationalistic ideology and revival of Japan's militaristic past and war atrocities. Instead, China's position in the area can be effectively detrimental to the

³⁵⁶ Mikyoung Kim, 'A War of Memories: dissecting the Dokdo/Takeshima dispute' in *globalasia*, September 2012

³⁵⁷ Sang Hyung, Na (2012) *The Korean-Japanese territorial dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima*, Calhoun, Naval Postgraduate school, Monterey. pp. 1-4

³⁵⁸ Hara, Kimie (2001) '50 Years from San Francisco: Re-examining the Peace Treaty and Japan's Territorial Problems', in *Pacific Affairs* Vol. 70 n°3, Autumn 2001 pp. 368-371

³⁵⁹ Sang Hyung, Na (2012) *Op. Cit.*, Calhoun, Naval Postgraduate school, Monterey p. 5

³⁶⁰ BBC news Asia: *Profile: Dokdo/Takeshima islands*, 10 august 2012

power balance in the region: if both countries would use the Senkaku/Diaoyu island as one of the pillars of their nationalistic discourse, chances of conflict for dominance in the Asia-Pacific would be more realistic.³⁶¹

3.3 National Identity and the Agriculture Sector Lobbies

Food, more than any other product on the market, is rooted to the traditions of a civilization and come to represent the everyday life of its population. Rice has been the predominant form of nourishment for the Asian people and around the cultivation of rice civilizations emerged and died. One of these was the Japanese civilization, where wet rice agriculture was introduced in 400 BC from other Asian countries, possibly Korea. It became the economic foundation of the Yamato state and imperial rituals were based on the harvesting of rice. As Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney states in its paper "Rice as self, Japanese identities through time":

"During the Edo period (1603–1868), the power of a feudal lord was expressed through the image of golden ears of rice stretching across the lord's domain. In rural Japan even today, the "ancestral land" is a spatial symbol of family. If rice is a symbol of "we" through the act of commensality, rice paddies are its spatial equivalent, symbolizing the social group, be it family, the local community, or the nation at large".³⁶²

In this sense, rice can represent, more than a simple good, the social representation of the Confucian values of community and social harmony, opposed to western ideas of individualism and social climbing. In fact, as famous Japanese agricultural economist Masayoshi Honma has pointed out, this is in contrast with elements of a free-market civilization based on individualism, private ownership and profit.³⁶³ That's why Japanese farmers in present day society are weak subjects of a highly developed free-market economy.

However, until the end of the WW2 agriculture was considered essential both to the Japanese identity as rooted to its civilization and to its economy, for the maintainment of the structure of the Japanese Empire. It was also one of the elements of common Asian heritage, that could reconstruct and build up a new "Asian Identity" within the failed aspiration of creating a Greater Asian Co-

³⁶¹ 'The drums of war – China and Japan square up', *The Economist*, January 19th, 2013

³⁶² Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (2004) *Rice as Self, Japanese Identity through time* in *Education about Asia*, Vol.9, n°3 p.5

³⁶³ Masayoshi, Honma (2010) *Gendai Nihon nōgyō no seisaku katei*, Keiō gijuku daigaku shuppankai pp.3-4

prosperity Area.

The defeat in the WW2 and the gradual imposition, as we have seen in Chapter 2, of American ideals in the social, political and economical areas led to the assimilation of stereotypes of inferiority of the agricultural sector compared to the industrial and third sector and led to the acceptance of American "guidance" in agricultural administration, especially regarding the paddy fields. The Agriculture Land Law destroyed the landlordism habit present in the Pre-War period and substituted it with small-scale agriculture in the name of privatization and democracy: the landlords (*jinushi*) owned half of the farmland and the fact that tenant cultivators (*kosaku*) had to pay half of the products to the landlord was one of the causes of poverty and of social unrest in the rural areas.³⁶⁴ During the war, however, the power of the landlords was undermined by imports from Korea to sustain the levels of foods and with the 1938 National Mobilization Law the government were able to mobilize their forces and labour toward agricultural production.³⁶⁵ After the devastation of the war, the SCAP could guide the agriculture land reform in Japan and its target were:

“to remove economic obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies, establish respect for the dignity of men, and destroy the economic bondage which has enslaved the Japanese farmer to centuries of feudal oppression, ...The purpose of this order is to exterminate those pernicious ills which have long blighted the agrarian structure of the land where almost half the population is engaged in husbandry.”³⁶⁶

Here, again, as in other areas (constitutional, political and economical) the SCAP imposed the orientalist discourse to the Japanese thanks to its position of hegemony and the perceptions by which Japan, as well as its economics, society and politics, were considered inferior.

For the SCAP, Japanese agriculture, feudal and in the hands of the landlords, were constrained against the development of the Japanese society toward free-market democracy. After discussion between the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and SCAP, the Land Reform Bill was passed through the Diet in 1946, imposing new, drastic measures of farmland reform such as the purchase from the government of lands belonging to absentee landlords and exceeding 3 hectares; a low purchase price and payment through National Bonds; the setting up of "land committees", responsible of purchasing plans. The main outcome was the increase in the number of land owners (31% in 1941

³⁶⁴ Kawagoe Toshiko (1999) 'Agricultural Land Reform in Postwar Japan: experiences and issues' in *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* p.11

³⁶⁵ Hayami Yujiro (2007) 'An Emerging Agricultural Problem in High-Performing Asian Countries' in *Policy research working Paper*, The World Bank Development Research Group pp. 12-14

³⁶⁶ SCAP, cit. In Kawagoe Toshiko (1999) *Ibid.* pp.27-28

and 70% in 1955)³⁶⁷ Of course the reform brought more equality in the Japanese society and labour organization, but SCAP did not see that an agriculture based on rice had to be based on large-scale farming and the diffusion of small-scale paddies disrupted both the dietary identity of the Japanese, both the agriculture sector in Japan and during the years this law evolved in the organization of small, scattered farming units.³⁶⁸

Already in the early 1960s Japan was experiencing for the first time the difficulty of maintaining and protecting its domestic production in an international environment where the U.S. was overproducing wheat and exporting it at lower price. At that time the government did not take any measure to protect its domestic production of grains and in few years Japan became increasingly dependent on agriculture imports. After half a century, Japan had to cope again with a similar challenge that now more than ever presented various issues, especially regarding the changed international situation of trade and the interests of institutions and of their non-governmental partners.

I have grouped them in different areas, but they represent many faces of the same topic.

First of all I will deal with the situation of farmers in Japan and more specifically with the impact of the declining population and the Gentan system. Then, I will analyze the economical and political role of Ja-Zenchu, one of the most powerful interest groups in the country.

In the third part, I will introduce the discourse of FTA and other forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation and the reasons that their completion faced many problems in the last years.

To conclude, I will describe the political situation and its actors involved in the development of the agriculture sector.

3.3.1 Declining population and the Gentan system

Since 1970s the population growth rate of Japan started to decline and reached the negative record of -0,22% in 2010. As in other industrialized countries the declining trend of the population is also related to the rate of the people employed in the agriculture sector (from 50% in the Post-War period to 5% in 2008).³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ Kawagoe Toshiko (1999) *Ibid.*, pp.29-32

³⁶⁸ Franks, Penelope (2006) *Rural economic development in Japan : from the nineteenth century to the Pacific War* pp. 283-289

³⁶⁹ Source: OECD Evaluation of Agricultural Policy Reform in Japan (<http://www.oecd.org/japan/42791674.pdf>)

The low birth-rate of the Japanese population had enormous implications in the society as well as in the country's economic situation and its effects are evident in the agriculture sector, where 40% of the employees have more than 70 years. Today, Japanese farmers represent only 5% of the Japanese population and 85% of them are employed in other activities than agriculture.^{370 371}

The lack of lands suitable for cultivation (only 12%) and the fragmentation of the fields in little and scattered lots have not only reduced the total productivity, but also discouraged future young people that could be interested to be employed in the sector.

The *Gentan* system has been one of the three pillars of the MAFF policy since 1970, together with budget subsidies and limited foreign access. At its creation it was successful for two reasons.

First of all, it sought to balance the demand of rice and thus reduce the fiscal burden of blowouts in the Food Control Special Account, caused by rice surpluses and Food Agency losses on rice purchases from farmers. Second, the *Gentan* doubled as an indirect price stabilization mechanism.

Although the *Gentan* system provided relative benefits to the Food Agency, it made the farmers' incomes dependent to the government control over production and farm scale.

Part-time farming is on the rise, farmers are abandoning their field with greater frequency and now the management scale for rice farmers has averaged around 1 hectare. However, farming households that manage 20 hectares or more of land the agriculture income has exceeded ¥11 million.

Expanding the scale, consolidating the organisation of the farmland and increasing the yield per unit area (unit crop) are some of the agricultural policies that could resolve the problem of the low productivity and inability to purchase the land by the farmers.³⁷²

³⁷⁰ Martini Roger and Shingo Kimura (2009) *Evaluation of Agricultural Policy Reforms in Japan* pp. 20-25
OECD

³⁷¹ Honma Masayoshi (2010) *Op. Cit.* p. 4

³⁷² Kazuhito Yamashita 'High rice prices feed Japan's farming woes ' in *Asia Times Online*, Feb 19, 2010



Source: Statistical Annex to the Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas FY2008

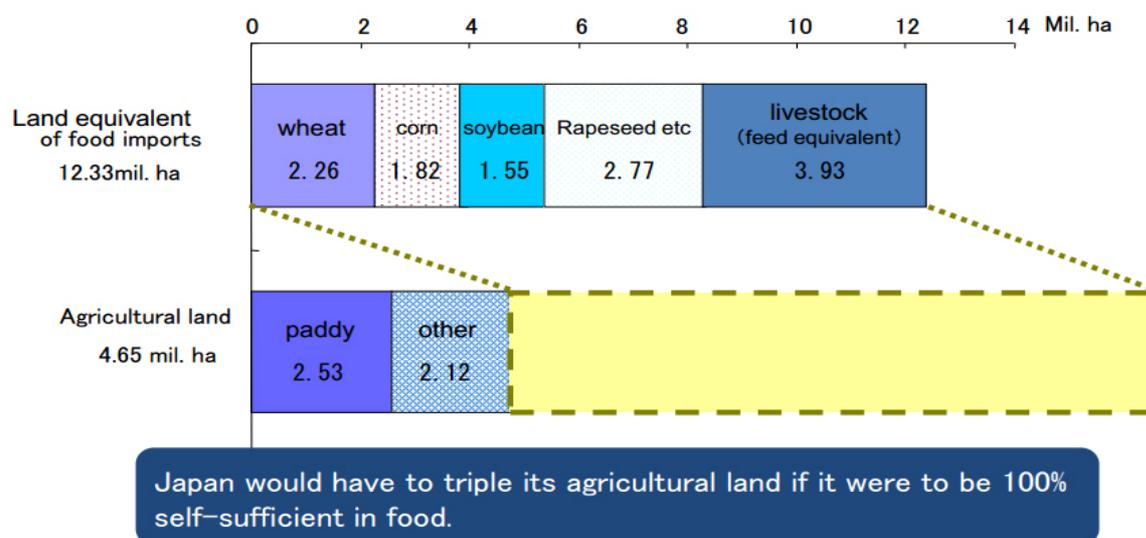
3.6. Size and age structure of the agricultural labour force, 1960-2005 Source: Statistical Annex to the Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and rural areas, 2008³⁷³

With a total agricultural workforce comprising 3 million people and an annual production reaching only ¥8.20 trillion (Panasonic in 2008 registered 9.07 trillion of sales with a workforce of 310.000 people), the major problem in the agricultural sector seems to be more in the organization of labour and inefficiency of the Gentan system, than in the manpower shortage.³⁷⁴

According to Kazuhito Yamashita without the rice acreage reduction policy there would be an increase of rice production and the opportunity of exporting the surplus at lesser price. Then the farmers would substitute their income, largely constituted by government subsidies, with exports of rice. Par-time farmers will lease their farmlands which can be accumulated for the use of the full time farmers with direct payments.

³⁷³ Source: OECD (2009) *Evaluation of Agricultural Policy Reforms* (<http://www.oecd.org/japan/42791674.pdf>)

³⁷⁴ Yamashita, Kazuhito (2010) 'Rice policy reforms in Japan: seek food security through free trade' pp.1-2, in N° 83 *The Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies*



3.7 Agricultural land necessary to sustain current food consumption Sources: calculation by MAFF based on data from MAFF, FAO and USDA, 2007³⁷⁵

The relationship between declining population and *Gentan* system is characterized by the inability of the MAFF to cope with the integration of Japan in a globalized international system. While the *Gentan* system is a sign of political and economic immobility, the declining population would slowly change the pattern of Japanese employment.

On the other hand, removing the *Gentan* system would provide new job opportunities for young people and could resolve the problem regarding the average age of farmers.

3.3.2 The role of JA – Zenchū and its political dynamics

On the JA – Zenchū (Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives – *Nokyo* in Japanese) website the organization describe itself as an "apex body of Japan's agricultural co-operative movement, representing the interests of Japanese farmers and their agricultural co-operative organizations (JA Group)."³⁷⁶

JA-Zenchu is the nation's most powerful farm lobby group because it gathers all the other organizations that protect the interests of the farmers and of the agriculture business.

³⁷⁵ Source: Ushikuso Tetsuo (2009) Food security division, MAFF (<http://www.oecd.org/tad/agriculturalpoliciesandsupport/43256593.pdf>)

³⁷⁶ JA-Zenchu Website: <http://www.zenchu-ja.or.jp/eng/objectives/index.html>

Among these we can find the National Welfare Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives, the National Federation of Agricultural Co-operative Association and the Norinchukin Bank, a cooperative bank with assets exceeding Y 32.5 trillion and strongly linked to the Bank of Japan and the Japanese Government.³⁷⁷

Organized in three levels, municipal (with the action of the JAs – multipurpose agricultural cooperatives), prefectural (unions) and national, the political objectives of Ja-Zenchu can be summarized in three points:

- Maintaining the prices of the agricultural products (especially rice)
- Protecting the farmer household incomes with government subsidies
- Maintaining the actual organization of the farmland in small and scattered plots³⁷⁸

JA's strength is the result of the votes by the farmers as well as its financial control over them. The JA controls the management funds of every farmer with its banking, farming supply and agricultural produce retail/wholesale business.³⁷⁹

In 2007 it had 247.000 employers for 380.000 households and a deposit of more than 84 trillion of Yen. But why is JA-Zenchu against trade liberalization?

According to the organization, trade liberalization in the form of FTA or EPA would lead to Japan unemployment, GDP loss, decline of agricultural production, drop of the self-sufficiency rate and lost of its own "food culture", or identity aspects of Japanese everyday life.

Looking at its opinions on trade liberalization, two of them draw particular attention:

- 1 – With the increase of the income of the farmer households young people will be more attracted to be employed in the agriculture sector and the problem of ageing population will be resolved.
- 2 - Clearance of tariffs will not make the price of Japanese rice competitive, but imports will be encouraged.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ 'JA at crossroad /TPP, agriculture can coexist /But reform of huge farming federation is unavoidable' in *Yomiuri Shinbun Online*, January 18, 2011 (<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/business/T110117003777.htm>)

³⁷⁸ Yamashita, Kazuhito (January 14, 2009) 'The Agricultural Cooperatives and Farming Reform in Japan', The Tokyo Foundation (<http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/2008/the-agricultural-cooperatives-and-farming-reform-in-japan-1>)

³⁷⁹ Yamashita, Kazuhito (January 14, 2009) *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ Yamashita, Kazuhito (2009) 'Now Is the Time for the Agricultural Big Bang', RIETI, translated from the original Japanese *Keizai Kyoshitsu* column published in the May 19, 2009 issue of the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*.

Considering the first point, the increase of the income of the farmer households will only freeze and "close" the agriculture sector and contribute to the GoJ deficit. A smarter way to increase the income of the farmers would be to decrease the number of the people employed in the agriculture sector, forcing the leasing of the land by part-time farmers to full-time farmers and encouraging production and exports with trade liberalization.

The issue about the non-competitive price of rice has been seen by JA as exclusively linked to the problems of imports and the replacement of the Japanese domestic agriculture: with flows of imports the self-sufficiency rate will decrease.

However, the price of Japanese rice can be competitive. Encouraging the enlargement of the scale of the paddies and the cooperation with joint-stock companies, that would eventually use skilled agricultural workers and it would be create a separation between ownership and management.³⁸¹ That would lead to fewer expenses for better results. Moreover, the rise of the price of rice in other countries like China could permit Japanese rice to be competitive in the international market.

Political dynamics

The vote of the farmers has always been conditioned by JA-Zenchu policies because part-time farmers overwhelmingly outnumber full-timers. JA's system of "one person, one vote" encourages the part-timers, giving them a very strong voice in the organization. Considering the interest of the organization, having 1,000 part-time farmers is more preferable to having 10 full-time farmers. Moreover, the organization's business benefits from other sources, such as the part-timers' deposits, with the earnings from non-farming sources and profits from sale of farmland converted to other uses.³⁸²

JA and part-time farmers share common political and economical interests that are tied up with rice cultivation, the price of rice and the abandonment of the paddies. With this support, the JA has maintained an important role inside the Japanese government, as a "quasi-familial" organisation with its constant position of opposing all reforms aimed at promoting a new model of farming and increasing the scale of farms.

Alliance and cooperation with various political parties has always been difficult for various problems. In fiscal 2007, when MAFF were presenting the system of direct-payment subsidies

³⁸¹ Yamashita, Kazuhito (2009) *Ibid.*

³⁸² Kazuhito Yamashita (January 14, 2009) *Op. Cit.*

under the farm income stabilization policy, JA - Zenchu went against the ministry's plan to restrict the subsidies to farms at least 4 hectares in scale, arguing that part-time farmers have a substantial role in community farming.

However, there is a paradox in the JA assumptions: if from one side it wants to protect its vote base (the part-time farmers) with the supposed intention to "protect Japanese farmers identity and Japanese agriculture", from the other it sustains the privatization and the fragmentation of the land wanted at first by the SCAP, then accepted by the MAFF. Re-orientalized identity is thus presenting at its facade the "traditional" ideals of Japanese identity and uses them to justify their nemesis in the orientalisised dichotomy contradiction.

Considering the policies of the two major parties of Japan, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Japan, there were differences in three main areas: the extent of assistance to farmers; the rice production and its adjustment and the relations with the agricultural cooperatives.

Regarding the first issue, the DPJ developed a policy of individual household income support in order to counter the LDP-led government's policies of providing assistance to full- and semi-full-time farmers with the strengthening of farm management organizations through "community-based farming", warmly supported by Ja-Zenchu.³⁸³ However since the DPJ victory at the elections, the conservative view has remained unchanged, without presenting structural reform.

With the second argument, at the end of 2007, after its defeat in the House of Councilors election, the Liberal Democratic Party dramatically relaxed the 4-hectare minimum by allowing each municipality to approve exceptions. With this decision the reform was very limited.

The new government led by DJP, has still not explained clearly the measures for the individual household income support.

Moreover, considering the third issue, as was suggested by Ichirō Ozawa, one of the main problems is the prominent role of Ja-Zenchu that it prevents to approach the farmers directly, as was suggested by However if the LDP was always compromising between the economic factors and JA-Zenchu, the DPJ would continue to negotiate with the organization without proposing a direct approach with the farmers.

Even if Ja-Zenchu has lost part of its political power, it still maintains the upper-hand on the decisions of the farmers and influences actively the policy of the Government.

The direct payment policy will be effective only after an accurate and studied structural reform of

³⁸³ Shinichi, Shoenji (2009) *The Policies Needed to Rebuild Japanese Agriculture*, The Tokyo Foundation

the farmland and paddies.

3.3.3. FTAs: obstacles and measures

Agricultural reform is a precondition and not a reason for FTAs. In other words, FTAs are not only the effect of the competition between Japan and other countries, but also an effort toward an interconnected framework of bilateral cooperation. The biggest agricultural obstacles for Japan to start negotiating free trade agreements can be summarized in the following points:

- 1 - The self-sufficiency ratio
- 2 - The tariffs on rice and other key agriculture products
- 3 - The pressure of Ja Zenchu and political parties
- 4 - The ageing population (and the assumed collapse of the agriculture sector)

While I have previously analysed the problems 3 and 4, now I will focus attention on the problems 1 and 2, more specifically relating to the economic and trade sectors.

1) Food security and self-sufficiency ratio

The new emerging economies, like China and India, now experiencing dramatic growth rates, could jeopardize the attempts of Japan to keep a relevant position in the Asia-Pacific and replace the country as the key economic actor in the area. In this situation, maintaining a high self-sufficiency ratio has been increasingly important for the nation. In a hypothetical situation of isolation from involvement in trade and international order, the lack of self-sufficiency would be a serious issue not easily negotiable with a strong economic factor.

Japan's self-sufficiency ratio has fallen from 79% in 1960 to 49% in 2005, the lowest among advanced nations. Other countries account for good level of self-sufficiency, with UK at 60%, USA at 119% and France at 130%.³⁸⁴ The problem has always been considered in the optic of protecting Japanese farmers and agricultural production and limit the imports of products such as meat (920 billion of Yen) cereals (600 billions of Yen), oilseeds (400 billions of Yen) and processed food (460 billions of Yen).³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴ OECD (2009) *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ Source: USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), Economic Research Service <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-trade/countries-regions/japan/policy.aspx>

For Toshiki Mashimo, from the Consumers Union of Japan, possible solutions would be, on one hand, the extension of the planting area, leading to a 30% growth of food production and increase the food self-sufficiency ratio to 57.60%, and, on the other, to make improvement in yields, that would lead to organic agriculture growth by 27% and to an increase in the the self-sufficiency ratio to 56%.³⁸⁶

2) Rice

One of the biggest obstacles to trade liberalization in Japan has always been rice and the pressure from many interest groups to keep its importing tariff high in order to protect the rates of domestic production. Rice remains still important for domestic consumption and self-sufficiency rate, with about 85% of the 2.3 million farms in Japan planting rice yearly.³⁸⁷

Under the formula of 2005 the domestic policies for rice have always been inclined by the control of production and the maintaining of the status quo with tariffs on rice imports (at 778% and unit-based tariff on rice at 341%).³⁸⁸

In 2003 Japan was spending more than 8000€ per hectare, compared to the 90 of the United States and 500 of the EU³⁸⁹, and 206 billion of Yen in total for subsidizing the rice production. Among the subsidiary programs, the Japanese Rice Farming Income Stabilization Program, implemented in 1998, is of particular significance. This program permits rice farmers to claim payments equal to the difference of domestic rice prices at a predetermined standard, in case there is a fall in the market price.³⁹⁰

But why is rice is so important for Japan?

The changing scenario of Japan economy and society has given many reasons to make the Japanese Government think that protection with high tariffs and subsideries is the remedy, and an excuse to conserve the authentic and traditional “Japanese” products.

I have summarized the features of this policy in the following points, in which we find the GoJ's

³⁸⁶ Toshiki, Mashimo (2008) 'To what level could Japan's food self-sufficiency recover?', Paper presented at the World Foodless Day in Tokyo, October 16, 2008, Consumers Union of Japan (<http://www.nishoren.org/en/?p=287>)

³⁸⁷Source: OECD *Op. Cit.*

³⁸⁸ Source: USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), Economic Research Service, (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-trade/countries-regions/japan/issues-analysis.aspx>)

³⁸⁹ Source: MAFF <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/index.html>

³⁹⁰ Takahashi Daisuke and Honma Masayoshi (2009) *Evaluation of the Japanese Rice Policy Reforms under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture*, Contributed Paper prepared for presentation at the International Association of Agricultural Economists Conference, Beijing, China, August 16-22, 2009 pp. 4 -8

conservative considerations about a changing domestic and international framework:

- Japanese diet is becoming increasingly westernized and the demand of rice is decreasing. The production of rice decreased of 50% compared to 40 years ago.³⁹¹
- The scale of the paddies and their production are reduced by the Acreage reduction policy
- The consumption at home dropped by 10% since 1960, while the takeout / out-of-home increased to 37% (from 17%)³⁹²
- The price of rice produced in Japan is 60 times higher than in Korea, because the production is still constrained by the scattered and abandoned fields and the control of the Government

Moreover, we can not consider the issues of the relationship between rice and liberalization without taking into account the implications with other products. In this sense, rice is not a separate obstacle, but, as an issue "across the board", it has a strong impact on other sectors of the Japanese economy, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, wheat and meat.

With the decrease of consumption in rice due to changes in the diet, low productivity and ageing population, the imports of other products will increase and would open the door to FTA and EPA, providing a favorable scenario to the countries that want to export food in Japan.

Another problem is related to the abandonment of the farmland and the small scale paddies.

If the cultivated farmland area cuts the space formerly occupied by paddies, it could be devolved to other activities, relating to the industrial and service sectors that would then be influenced by the shortage of domestic rice and lower self-sufficiency ratio.

Japanese rice, called Japonica, is now produced all over the world, although the Indica subspecies are the most consumed and produced. However, in China a shift has been registered in consumption from Indica to Japonica rice, now accounting for 26% of total production, while in the EU 42.348 tons of Japonica rice were imported in the 2004/2005 period compared to the 116.000 of 2007/2008.³⁹³ This new interest for the Japonica rice is still contained with a parallel growth of imports and domestic production. Other than in Japan, this variety is cultivated only in US and Australia and it is particularly famous for being adapt for sushi and other "traditional" Japanese food.

The basic plan for Agriculture and the MAFF basic policy

³⁹¹ Yamashita, Kazuhito (2009) *Op. Cit.* In The Association of Japanese Institutes of Strategic Studies n.83

³⁹² Source: MAFF, *Op. Cit.*

³⁹³ Hansen, James et al. (2002) 'China's Japonica Rice Market: Growth and Competitiveness' in *Rice Situation Outlook Yearbook* USDA/Economic Research Service, November 2002 pp. 32-37

The Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas, published in March 2010 outlines the efforts of MAFF toward agricultural reform and food safety but also indicates the measures to be launched in the following months.

The priority for MAFF is to "secure stability in the food supply for citizen" and to achieve this it proposes the following measures:³⁹⁴

- The collaboration of primary, secondary and tertiary industries to expand production of agriculture
- Fewer countermeasure against abandoned farmland
- The revival of rural districts
- The boost of the self-sufficiency rate to 50%
- A program of income support direct payment
- Secure safety assurances from imported foods by tightening scrutiny, strengthen monitoring system and indicating the origin of ingredients from processed food
- Citizen's dietary education in order to boost the consumption of domestic goods

While these reforms are only related to the domestic market, a small part of the plan deals with MAFF policy towards the multilateral and bilateral cooperation of Japan with other countries. Regarding the WTO Doha Round, the policy is to maintain "coexistence of various agriculture", while concerning the EPA/FTA the most important measure is "to avoid impairing encouragement of domestic agricultural and rural areas". The emphasis here remains on the priority of protectionist and nationalist attitudes. While the direct payment program and the reform of the organization of the farmland could increase production, when speaking of international cooperation, the MAFF keeps a conservative position of closure towards the FTAs that reflects the necessity to boost the self-sufficiency ratio and to comply with the requests of Ja-Zenchu and their supporters.

A different approach is offered by the new Basic Policy on Comprehensive Economic Partnership presented by the Ministerial Committee and dated November 6th, 2010.³⁹⁵

After recognising the changing role of Japan vis-à-vis the emerging economies in Asia and the declining power of the nation, it declares that Japan is "resolved to open up the country" and affirm the importance of the FTAAP (Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific), of bilateral EPAs (Economic

³⁹⁴ MAFF (2010), Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas

³⁹⁵ Ministerial Committee on Comprehensive Economic Partnerships (2010) *Basic Policy on Comprehensive Economic Partnerships* at <http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/kan/topics/20101106basicpolicyepa.pdf>

Partnership Agreement) and TTP (Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement).

To achieve this the GoJ declares its intention to establish a "Ministerial Meeting for Realization of Free Trade Area in the Asia Pacific", that will act in three main sectors: agricultural industry, movement of natural persons and regulatory reforms.

Concerning the Agriculture sector measures such as the promotion of EPAs, the improvement of Japan's food self-sufficiency ratio, a more transparent system and the review of the border measures are encouraged.

Comparing the plan of MAFF with the Basic Policy on Comprehensive Economic Partnership we can find elements of continuity and some differences.

First of all, the MAFF focuses more on domestic problems, not considering the positive elements of EPA or TTP programs, such as the possibility to export agricultural products after a re-organization of the production activities. On the other hand, the new Basic Policy, though ambitious, is still general at addressing the issues. When it considers Japan's farming population it does not take into account the oversupply of the agricultural sector, due to the acreage reduction policy and the small scale of the farmland, often scattered and abandoned.

However, in my opinion, the idea of "improving the competitiveness and exploring the new demand overseas" is a good starting point.

If Japan will participate in any framework, panels, or FTA without going through any structural reform, there would be enormous effects and implications in the economy of the country. Reducing the tariffs to zero, the price of the imported goods to Japan would drop and this would favour the consumers. In the case of rice, new options would be available for the consumers, with imports of Chinese and California rice. But the agricultural sector, unprotected, would lose ground and would be unable to subsist in a new competitive scenario.

The fusion of identity concerns, power of the lobbies, economic and geopolitical interests are still not answering both to the necessity of agricultural reform and to Japan's quest for integration in East Asia.

- Conclusions -

This thesis wanted to demonstrate the enduring importance of national identities in the processes of integration of Japan in Asia. Political power supported the construction and reconstruction of national identities since the post-war period and exploited its intents to the utilitarian view of an American alliance or to project characters of cultural attractiveness and political power. The first trend led to the dis-integration of the country in East Asia, while the second resulted in failed attempts, mostly since the '90s economic crisis and the rising prominence of China in the region.

Thereby, National identity led to the crisis of a liberal-institutional model. As Hedley Bull predicted in 1977, the role of the state in the optic of its national identity remains prominent in the international relations. The author also justified the impossibility of the creation of a World government based on general agreement³⁹⁶. I agree with this position and I believe that identity as well as nationalisms are resurging as reaction to periods of crisis, where we see also a dis-integration of the integrational approach. The crisis that is still affecting the European Union is at the same time a crisis of the integrational approach and shows how the interests of the singular states are still major players in preventing a coherent delineation of common plan for regionalism.

However, if we distinguish between regionalism and regionalisation, we can observe how the latter is already happening, in the diffusion of technologies, in the increased interdependence and interconnection and in the natural evolution toward the creation of a "global identity", that paradoxically can be achieved more easily, though neo-nationalistic elements are resisting against the pressure of globalisation.

In the last chapter of my thesis I have chosen two particular case studies to demonstrate from one hand, the impact of domestic reforms, dictated by the necessity to create a national identity and from the other, the influence of connections, of cultural, economic and social nature. As Nye affirmed in his masterpiece *Peace in parts* (1971), these processes serve to inhibit wars between states with the natural construction of relations based on the interest in the "Other"³⁹⁷. However, national identity, as we have seen in chapter one and two, is constructed when the state gets in

³⁹⁶ Bull Hedley (2011) *La società anarchica, l'ordine nella politica mondiale*, Trans. by Stefano Procacci, pp 302-314, Alta Scuola di Economia e Relazioni Internazionali, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano. 1st Edition: Bull Hedley (1977), *The Anarchical Society. A study of Order in the World*, Palgrave, New York

³⁹⁷ Nye, Joseph (1971) *Peace in Parts: Integration and Conflict in Regional Organisation*, Little, Brown e Co, Boston 1971, cap. I.

contact and defines its partner as the "Other". This is a mirror effect, which let Japan's being more interested in the Other in order to understand its national identity. Using Micheal Foucault's mirror metaphor, the construction of National identity is the mirror through which we see our image and our "traditional values" in the reflected space, even if they don't exist in reality. Looking at the mirror, "I come back over myself; I begin to reconstitute myself there where I am".³⁹⁸ It is the mirror itself that dictates how we are supposed to be or what we need to change. If utopias don't exist, the constructed national identity of a country comes to existenc ewhen we decide to look at the mirror or we are forced to do so, as in the case of Japan after the arrival of the Black Ships in 1853 and during and after the Second World War. Thus, Japan becomes an heteropian space of illusion, where the rationale of the illusion is the organisation of the country as homogeneous and unique. We cannot disregard the image that we find reflected in our thousands of mirrors, in our personal identities, but we can decide either to change it or to leave it as it is.

The nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki broke in thousands of pieces the mirror of the national identity that Japan had constructed since the Meiji period. The American reforms attempted to construct another mirror based on their values of democracy, prosperity and progress in order to support their geopolitical interests in the Asia Pacific, especially the fight against Communism in the region. However, if from one hand American domination (political and cultural) over Japan never ended, the Japanese started progressively to re-construct their old mirror, their old national identity, recollecting the fragments. These fragments were the memories, the values, the "spirit" of old Japan and its nostalgia toward the past became a key element for the process of construction of the identities. These two main mirrors of national identity that Japan has created persist in the contemporary society of the country and are conditioning Japan's behaviour in its international relations. In many parts of my dissertation I have called these two mirrors *victimization of the other* and *victimhood of the self*. The first is the acknowledgement of Japan's wartime responsibilities from a position of inferiority vis-à-vis the United States and the admission of guilt of the atrocities toward the Other Asian countries (mainly its two neighbours, Korea and China). The second is the reaction to these feelings and the necessity to represent Japan as powerful actor through the revival of the values condemned by the US.

This process is far from being unique to the Japanese historical experience, but is common both to countries that were objects of colonization(s) in the 18th and 19th century and nations who experienced totalitarianism and were defeated, such as Germany and Italy.

³⁹⁸ Foucault, Michel (1967) 'Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias' in *Architecture / Mouvement / Continuité*, October 1984. (Online version at: <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>)

Ironically enough, neo-nationalist groups in Japan as in other countries get started from reaction to the actual organisation and management of political, cultural and social life considering it not "Japanese" but doing so they negate the evolution of the National identity concept and they affirm its immobility. Instead, to me, National identities are dynamic, changing constructions started by subjects for political intents. As stated in the first chapter they are not necessarily negative or positive, but they have in any case impact on the society and linked to constructed values and traditions. Thereby, today's "statism" remains the main aspect of International Relations, as it was since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, who led to the creation of the modern nation-states.

What I think we need to understand, however, is how this system has proved to be detrimental to the International society. The realist idea by which a system of states is necessary to prevent conflicts and maintain the international order in a power-balance optic is false. Indeed, as Alexander Wendt affirmed: "a world in which identities and interests are learned and sustained by intersubjectively grounded practice, by what states think and do, is one in which anarchy is what the states make of it"³⁹⁹. States are responsible or not for anarchy as they are responsible for the construction of identity: "the culture of anarchy depends on how identity get defined".⁴⁰⁰

In a period where globalisation, shared ideas, values and soft-power substitute the realistic emphasis on states and the focus of liberals on international bodies to regulate the international system, constructed National identities are the main actor in the shift of a state toward anarchy or not in the international system, as they are created with the contact with the "Other".

National identities, regional identities, global identities, Japanese identity are all constructions, that are interacting with each other and are used to justify determinate policies.

In the case of Japan's national identities, the need was the closure or the opening of the country to the international relations in the region. Global identities are created by the necessity to welcome globalisation and its increase in interconnection and interdependence between the states. Regional identities are made out of the necessity to establish a regional policy, that, in the case of Japan, is aimed at economic gains, stability of the region or attractiveness of the Japanese culture.

There are hundreds of identities and the limit of this thesis is not to have analysed all their origins, relations and impacts. What I would have wanted to do here is to present an appropriate picture of the influence of National Identity for Japan's policies toward integration.

³⁹⁹ Wendt, Alexander (1992) 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics' in *International Organization*, Vol.46 n°2, Spring 1992 pp. 391 - 425

⁴⁰⁰ Zehfuss, Maja (2002) *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge University Press, pp.41-42

Academic works attempt to answer to this determinate issue, but I tried to propose an unconventional and multi-disciplinary approach , instead, in order to raise questions on the topic.

Is Japan the only responsible for its identity construction?

Would a nation be able to depart from the necessity of constructing a national identity?

Are national identities and nationalisms in Japan actual constraints to its integrational policies?

- Appendix -

Index of the Japanese terms

Amakudari (天下り) is the “descent from heaven”, the practice by which retired bureaucrats get employed in high-profile positions in many sectors.

Bunmei kaika (文明開化), translated as “civilization and enlightenment”, is the movement toward policies of westernization and the embracements of western models of progress.

Bushi (武士), often interpreted as a synonym of *samurai*, is the term that was employed since the 12th century to identify a middle or upper rank samurai.

Datsu-a-ron (脱亜論), translated as “Leaving Asia” is the title of an editorial by Japanese intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi, who expressed his desire to reform Japan on western lines of modernisation and leave Korea and China behind.

Daimyō (大名) was the term employed to define the feudal rulers of Japan since the 10th century. They were only subordinate to the shōgun.

Dōka (同化), translated as “assimilation”, usually referred to the Japanese behaviour toward its colonised or conquered. Minorities were assimilated in the Japanese culture, instead of being repressed.

Fukoku Kyōhei (富国強兵), literally: “Enrich the country, strengthen the military”, was the Japanese phrase created in the Meiji Period in order to catch up with the West.

Giri (義理) / **Ninjō** (人情). The concepts of *Giri*, “social obligation” and *Ninjō*, “human emotions” are opposed in Japanese culture. It is the conflict between rules imposed by society and personal feelings.

Gyokusai (玉碎) derives from the Chinese term *yusui*, which means “to die gallantly as a jewel shatters”. The practice of *gyokusai* was used during the Second World War and involved the self-sacrifice and mass suicide for the attainment of honor on front of the

Gyōsei shido (行政指導), translated as administrative guidance, is employed to accomplish policies, or focus on targets through control, in the form of “advice” from above. *tennō*.

Hinomaru (日の丸) is the flag of Japan and is still perceived by some Japanese as well as by Japan's former colonies, as the symbol of Japanese aggression, nationalism and of its militaristic

past.

Kappa (河童) is the “water imp” or “river child” of the Japanese folklore and is seen as a trickster and mischievous figure.

Keigo (警護) is the honorific Japanese language used in determinate situations (workplace) or when dealing with a superior or an older man.

Kiki shinwa (記紀神話), is the classical mythology on the Japanese gods as accounted in the two classical texts *Nihonshoki* and *Kojiki*.

Kimigayo (君が代) is the national anthem of Japan and, like Hinomaru, is a symbolic construction produced for the purpose of creation of National Identity

Koenkai (後援会) are the local support groups who collect funds and other forms of support for the politicians and in turn they are granted with favors

Kokka Shintō (国家神道) is the State religion of Japan. The term appeared in the 1945 Shintō Directive.

Kokkashugi (国家主義) is the term that encompasses all the manifestation of Nationalism in Japan and involves the group identification of the individuals in a nation.

Kokugaku (国学), also called *wagaku*, was the study and the use of “traditional” Japanese scholarship towards the research on the Japanese classics. Its scholars are called *kokugakusha*.

Kokuminshugi (国民主義) is the “civil nationalism”, in which the nation is given by a group of people who identifies its belonging to it. It is also called “liberal nationalism”.

Kokutai (国体), is the “national body”, a theory born in the attempt to re-evaluate the historical myths and traditions by the work of the *kokugakusha*.

Nakama ishiki (仲間意識) is literally “group consciousness”, or the sense of belonging of an individual to a determinate group.

Nihonjinron (日本人論) is the set of text published in Japan and focused on the essentialist explanation of distinctive characters of the society, culture, politics of Japan.

Nyua (入亜), literally “entering Asia” is the foreign policy that was aimed at the return of a prominent role of Japan in East Asia and a departure from its western-oriented policy.

Omote (表) / **Ura** (裏) is a sociological and symobolical distinction parallel to that of Soto/Uchi. While Omote means facade, or appearance, Uchi is the content, the truth, the real meaning of the

Japanese culture.

Sakoku(鎖国), literally: “locked country”, the policy of closure of Japan to foreigners. No foreigner could enter Japan on penalty of death. It was in effect from 1633 to 1853.

Shakaijin (社会人) means “social person”. It is when a Japanese individual finishes his studies and “enter the society” or, in other words, find an employment.

Shōdo sakusen (焦土作戦) is the “scorched-earth strategy” of destruction, plundering and mass rape of the villages of the enemy. It was used during the World War II, mostly against Chinese civilians.

Tate shakai (縦社会) literally “vertical society” is the model provided by Nakane to describe in absolute terms Japanese society.

Teikoku (帝国) is the term used to indicate the Japanese “Empire”.

Tenkō (転向) is the “change of direction”, the reconversion to the national ideology. It was used as a form of harassment toward Japanese socialists and communists since 1925 until the end of the war. The practice involved the use of violence to make the subject embrace the national ideology.

Uchi (内) / **Soto** (外) is the sociological and symbolical distinction between the inside, the “Japanese”, “good”, “safe”, “pure” and the outside, the “other”, “evil”, “unsafe” “unpure”. The inclusion in the two groups is given by the process of psychological self-identification.

Wakon kansai (和魂漢才), literally: “Japanese spirit, Chinese learning”, is the Heian period belief of the necessity of maintaining Japanese spirit, but learning from Chinese scholarship.

Wakon-yōsai (和魂洋才), translated as “Japanese spirit and Western techniques”, is the expression by which Japan called for modernisation but, at the same time, conservation of “traditional” values.

Yūwa (融和), literally: “accommodation”, “harmonization”, It was the policy used by the Japanese toward minorities and colonized or conquered populations.

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