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Desecuritization of Environmental Security in the Case of Japan's 3/11

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Preface

The idea for this thesis emerged from the combination of interest for environmental protection on the one side and Japan's heritage on the other. The ambition was to analyze Tokyo's response to a large-scale environmental crisis and to explore the motivation behind it by reviewing the circumstances amounting to the decision to willingly endanger the environment by releasing contaminated water into the ocean. The greater good in this case turned out to be maintaining the status quo in the Indo-Pacific in terms of political and economic stability, while the environmental security was sacrificed. This thesis should provide a solid ground for further research on securitization practices in the environmental sector, and on security vs. economic prosperity dilemma affecting not only citizens of one country, but of the vast region.

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Introduction

An unstable and interest-driven atmosphere in the Indo-Pacific witnessed the disaster that had taken place in Japan in 2011. Namely, on March 11 (hence the 3/11) northeastern Japan suffered an earthquake of such magnitude that it led to a series of extremely strong tsunami waves, causing the death of over 18.000 people. The sea water penetrated deep into the land and provoked acute damage to this region's infrastructure, but, more importantly, it caused malfunction at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant by damaging generators, thus preventing the reactors from cooling down. The situation escalated, causing major turbulence in all aspects of life in Japan, and, for a brief moment, became the world's largest concern. The impact of the subsequent release of significant levels of radiation on the environment and the population of the affected areas compelled the Japanese Government to securitize this severe environmental issue. Extensive measures were taken to sustain the damage; however, the analyses of the securitizing actor's reaction timeline and speed reveal a somewhat low and inadequate preparedness for a large-scale nuclear accident. For a country whose military and nuclear infrastructure lies surrounded by seas, vulnerable to natural disasters, its awareness and readiness for this climate climax were surprisingly low. The end state quickly turned into the status quo and remained that way for twelve years. It was in such a social context, complemented by complex geopolitical situation in the Indo-Pacific, that Japan's authorities decided that it was time to dispose of the accumulated wastewater by releasing it into the ocean. The announcement that this procedure was safe and soon to be implemented is treated as a desecuritization act in this research, and the ethics and drivers for such a decision by the Japanese Government and its consequences will be analyzed in this thesis.

In the world of having and keeping virtually every major issue securitized, the accent is put on the grave environmental impact of the Fukushima accident and Japan's plan to release radioactive water back into the global ecosystem, which started to materialize only twelve years later. The question this thesis will aim to find an answer to is why Japan decided to disregard ethics and return wastewater into the ocean, putting the environmental security out of the equation. The fact that the Japanese Government made this conscious decision led us to question the ethics of performing this act, as well as motives for such a decision. As this thesis will argue, the Japanese authorities desecuritized environmental security to preserve status quo in the crossfire between powerful domestic and regional actors in the Indo-Pacific, by taking advantage of the passive population and this country's hard earned geopolitical role

while disregarding international environmental policy. [1] The instability lurks from this region's powder kegs such as the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula, and the countries in East Asia are in a shared interest stage of relations, aware that any deterioration of the security environment would automatically hamper the economic well-being, according to Kawashima (2002). This Japanese diplomat widely respected in international policy circles hopes that the economic interdependence will serve as a most effective deterrence to military conflict in this region and that a "positive-sum game" rather than "zero-sum game" is in its essence. As the research will show, this interdependence has allowed Japan to benefit considerably from the existing international system, both in security and economic terms. A supporting argument to this claim is the Alliance with the United States of America, which did not suffer crucially despite the environmental impact of its ally's decision to pollute international waters and the reasons behind turning the blind eye to such a major issue will be examined as well.

Structure of the Thesis

In the chapter to follow, an overview will be given of literature concerning the evolution of securitization theory and broadening the concept of security to include environmental matters, after which scarce literature available on desecuritization theory will be introduced. Since this thesis assesses the moral justification of desecuritization of a specific environmental problem, further literature analysis will be performed of environmental policy in Japan and this country's security and geopolitical arrangements. In the third chapter, the theory employed to understand and analyze the concept of security will be introduced, while the methodology section presents the means to collect and analyze relevant literature on the topic. The fourth chapter brings an elaborate theoretical analysis of securitizing and desecuritizing moves, motives of securitizing actors and ethics of these processes on referent objects. It will be followed by a lengthy case study of Japan, with a meticulous review of history, politics and security arrangements leading to the circumstances that served as a catalyst for delayed securitization and subsequent prompt desecuritization. The event of March 11, 2011 will be analyzed in a separate chapter, together with the circumstances preceding and following the decision to release nuclear wastewater from the plant's premises into the ocean. The core of this research is laid out in the seventh chapter, since the empirical analysis focuses on the particular event and the effects of decisions of the Japanese

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[1] Such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (The United Nations, 2021)

Government on the people of Japan and the rest of the world, for that matter. These elements are scrutinized according to Rita Floyd's principles of ethical (de)securitization. Discourse and content analysis is used as a tool for exposing the economic motives behind every major decision made in Tokyo and potential consequences of non-alignment with its only ally. The concluding chapters put forward the results of this research, and offer recommendations for the similar challenges in the future. Among them the adoption of legislation is proposed, that would oblige the participating parties to ask for public approval before measures with such an environmental impact are taken.

2. Literature Review

There is no universal attitude towards environment-security nexus. When the Cold War ended, the concept of security became subject to debate. Only from the 1970s onwards, has there been any relevant mention of environmental degradation as a potential cause of conflict. Politicization of environmental issues gained momentum in the late 1980s, when states became concerned with matters other than warfare.

Since this thesis employs securitization theory, introduced by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, to make a comprehensive overview of this concept's evolution, several authors will be cited and their views used in this analysis. Scholars have had opposing views on perception of environmental problems as potential security issues. To this end, among those who called for the theorization of environmental problems, Norman Myers was one of the first academics to advocate putting environmental security within national security and to characterize environmental issues as likely to provoke conflicts (Myers 1986), later followed by scholars Jessica Tuchman Matthew (1989), Michael T. Klare (1993) and Robert Kaplan (1994). At about the same time, a valuable document contributing to this change in perception of security was published by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development under the name 'Our Common Future'. The report recognized the adverse effect of humankind on the environment. One of the lines states: "The deepening and widening environmental crisis presents a threat to national security – and even survival – that may be greater than well-armed, ill-disposed neighbors and unfriendly alliances". (United Nations 1987, Chapter 1" Para 22). Kaplan induced that the environment would become a burning issue for national security in decades to come. Jessica Matthew argued that the change in the environmental sphere, specifically regarding resource scarcity, overpopulation and environmental degradation, called for redefining the concept of security. In a similar note, in his "Resource Wars" Klare predicted ethnic and religious conflicts arising from environmental imbalance. His position was even more grounded further to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Giddens stated that although climate change could lead to international cooperation between states, there are more substantial interests that encourage division and that reducing emissions could lead to a struggle among states for resources, where political leaders could use climate change to gain or retain power (Giddens, 2009). Another author who took the environment-conflict link as a given is Robert Kaplan. His article "The Coming Anarchy" took the worst environmental case scenarios in the global

South and made predictions regarding their impact on national security, believing that the consequences in a form of disease, conflict and consequential migration would spill over to the global North. Buzan also took part in this wave of redefining security. After being associated only with traditional military threats, he strived to redefine the notion of security so that it incorporates non-traditional threats arising from political, societal, economic, and environmental problems (Buzan 1991).

While these authors suggest that environmental issues are a potentially strong trigger, some argue that the causal link is not that strong and that other, non-environmental factors may be the decisive cause of violence. Thomas Homer-Dixon (1991) admits that environmental issues may be in connection with violent conflict, but does not see them as crucial for violence outbreak. In his opinion, environmental issues can serve as indirect causes and the mix of environmental and non-environmental factors usually leads to violence. An author who opposes the environmental securitization tide is Daniel Daudney, who calls for desecuritization of environment. He believes that securitizing environmental issues has redirecting resources from military security issues as a goal. (1990). Jon Barnett is challenging the idea, too. He finds that many issues are wrongfully classified as environmental security issues (2001). In his view, environmental security refers to 'the process of minimizing environmental insecurity.' The work of Ken Booth will be mentioned here as well. His 'holistic' approach to the environment suggests that the security of individuals and the ecosystem is intricately intertwined rather than separate (Booth, 2007). A critical look at the relationship between environmental degradation and international relations is found in the work of Simon Dalby (2002; 2007), who provides us with a critical geopolitical perspective on environmental security. The thesis will explore these authors' views and juxtapose them with the approach of decision-makers to environmental security in the case of Fukushima accident to reveal their both strong and weak points.

After taking the traditional scholarship on securitization into account, since a considerable source for theorizing are the works of Buzan et. al and Weaver et al. (1998, 2003), the analysis will rely on authors who revised this concept. A valuable source is the work of Thierry Balzacq (2011, 2015), who took and expanded the theory proposed by the Copenhagen School. However, this research will focus on Rita Floyd's revised securitization theory and run the nuclear crisis problem through the steps this author suggests in order to reach a conclusion regarding the morality of this securitization act and ethics of consequent

desecuritization. This author provides a moral evaluation of both, with accent on existential threat as a just cause for their invocation (Floyd 2011, 2014).

Whereas a lot has been said about securitization, a lack of theorizing and discussion on desecuritization is evident. The authors which did contribute to the discourse and whose literature is used in the research shed light on the evolution of this concept. Taking Buzan's position on desecuritization as a preferred option, Rita Floyd argues against it by offering a theory of just (de)securitization. The interesting insights come from Juha Vuori regarding the sociopolitical capital in exercising desecuritization (2011, while Aras and Polat discuss the possibility of invisible speech act in certain desecuritizing cases (2008). While available discussions provide a valuable source for theorizing, as Lene Hansen suggests, further work on this theory is necessary since the existing examples, when compared, "seem unsystematic or even contradictory."

The literature that will expand the understanding of the concept of environmental policy in Japan, especially its post-Fukushima environmental policy approaches, is indispensable in this section. The works I intend to study for this purpose are Barrnett and Therivel's *Environmental Policy and Impact Assessment in Japan* (2019) and Kameyama's *Climate Change Policy in Japan: from the 1980s to 2015* (2016). Also, in addressing Japan's perception of climate security, such publications as '*The Japan – U. S. Alliance and Climate Security: Building on the Alliance's History for Future Preparedness and Response* (Fleishman, Fetzek, and Parthemore, 2020) and *The Development of Climate Security Discourse in Japan* (Kameyama, Ono, 2020) will be taken into consideration.

Since this thesis provides a case study of Japan, both its historical, political and economic segment, literature that offers a rich source of information is found in Reischauer (1977), Johnson (1987), Huntington (1991), Lipset (1993), Dower (1999), Sims (2000), Stockwin (2008), Rustow (1970), Dahl (1971, 2020) and many other. When it comes to discourse analysis, as well as data used for the empirical analysis, the research will rely on news articles from Financial Times, Reuters, NHK World Japan and many other from 2011 until 2024 to grasp real-time accounts of the unfolding events, public reactions, and governmental responses. To connect the theoretical and the empirical in understanding the securitization process in Japan the academic texts of Jasparro (2001), Maruyama (2014), Sekiyama (2020) and other authors will be used.

The works studied to present the evolution of environmental consciousness and the historical circumstances shaping moral values of people of Japan help put together the mold for the analysis of the events relevant for this thesis. The literature on desecuritization, which is of greatest value for this research, is scarce. It has evolved in these past three decades since it emerged as a concept within securitization theory, but it needs to be enriched with as many examples and explanations as possible to get a respectable body of literature on the subject and add to its relevance. Therefore, the concepts introduced by Rita Floyd need to be expanded. This thesis will try to fill this gap by offering an analysis of a case that should serve as an example when it comes to weighing morality and necessity in performing a desecuritizing act.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

When it comes to theoretical framework, a better understanding of the complexities of the (de)securitization of environmental security in the case of Fukushima accident will be achieved if several theories are employed in the analysis. Here the insights of authors and critics of securitization, normative and emancipatory theory will be integrated in analyzing this specific case.

When it comes to securitization theory within security studies, this framework will help analyze how and why environmental issues are framed as security threats, the implications for policy and governance, and the broader societal and global implications of such securitization processes. This will be achieved through analysis of the literature of relevant theorists of Copenhagen School and their critics.

After going through the evolution of securitization theory, normative theorizing will provide an ethical framework for critical assessment of the securitization of environmental security by questioning the values and norms that guide policy responses, and whether the decisions made prioritized environmental justice, public health, or economic interests. Rita Floyd has done extensive research, which will support the thesis that morally just desecuritization leaves no one existentially threatened.

Emancipatory theory critiques how dominant discourses and dynamics shape the securitization of environmental issues. It also examines whose interests are deemed more important in framing environmental threats as security concerns and seeks to shift the focus from narrow security concerns to broader societal well-being. This thesis aims to contribute to emancipatory research by providing new and synthesizing existing insights that could lead to change in the social dynamics of similar circumstances in the future. The State's justification for (de)securitization did not necessarily coincide with its populace's interests. Even though the Fukushima accident may not have produced an irrevocable domestic instability, the lives of local people continue to be scarred by these events. The analysis of specific circumstances could provide important insights regarding this discrepancy. Since a human-centered understanding of security sheds light on its frequently neglected aspects, the intention is to explore how citizens' understanding of a major but vague security threat shaped the overall security discourse in Japan and if any significant change was introduced as

a consequence by analyzing dominant discourse in more recent instances of strong earthquakes in the Fukushima Prefecture.

By examining government policies and other official discourse in the period ten years prior to and to this date, the debates of opposition and the media texts and academic articles (some of them analyze the environmental policies in Japan during the 35-year period) on the topic of the research, the (reactions to the securitizing) events in Japan following the 3/11 will be analyzed to get a comprehensive answer to the research question. As Williams argues (2015), securitization theory cannot be thoroughly explained by empirical science, since there are different ways to understand security and therefore it is hard to establish a clear and consistent approach. For this purpose, Wæver (2015) argues for pluralization of methods and methodology, since securitization is understood as a speech act event by some, but as an intersubjective process by others. Having this in mind, a discourse analysis of speech acts by securitizing agents will be performed, as well as context analysis of circumstances regarding consequent "speechless desecuritization". In this research, the primary sources will be government policy reports and documents, relevant publications dealing with national security[2], particularly its environmental policy, and international agreements related to environmental security in the post-Cold War period. Essentially, qualitative research will be performed on the firsthand information and data necessary for becoming acquainted with the technical aspects, immediate reactions and initial impacts of the Fukushima disaster and the decisions made by key stakeholders in its aftermath. A substantial portion of discourse analysis will deal with official statements by leading actors in the international community, but also the accounts of local and affected regional population regarding their subjective feelings of uncertainty in the securitized reality. In addressing the securitization/desecuritization process, my secondary sources will be the works of academia in this field.

The intersubjective processes that had taken place in these series of events will be better understood if circumstances that led this war-torn country toward becoming a considerable regional power and the most loyal American ally were more familiar. For that reason, a considerable part of this thesis is a case study of Japan, its historic circumstances and the imposed democratization process following the WWII defeat to trace the origin of unequal "marriage" roles with its patron – the US; the intricate interest-driven relationship between

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[2] Japan's three vital strategic documents – *the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the Defense Buildup Program*, as well as Japan's annual White Paper – *Defense of Japan*.

countries belonging to the Indo-Pacific and within international organizations and initiatives such as ASEAN and "the Quad"; as well as the arrangements of the US – Japan Alliance.

The series of events known as the 3/11 will be given most attention and the slips that occurred in the environmental aspect will be analyzed through supplementary questions. What is more important to such a large global actor – safety of its citizens (and citizens of the world, for that matter) or trade and economy, and what are the red lines when it comes to making this choice? Who gets to decide on the issues that affect millions of people? Did Japan do everything in its power to prevent even larger contamination or held back its securitization to preserve its position in the global market? How did release of contaminated water affect Japan's strategic partnerships – how does Japan's approach to environmental security affect the competition for leadership role in the multipolar Indo-Pacific region? These should make a good basis for providing an answer to the research question regarding the morality of desecuritization and consequential wastewater release.

Consequently, the most extensive research will be done concerning the influence of Fukushima nuclear wastewater discharge in 2021. Primary sources here are fact sheets and other relevant research, which warn that 10 years from this event the contaminated water, will have reached almost the entire Pacific Ocean (Jiagou Liu *et al,* 2021). A brief comparative analysis with the case of Chernobyl will be performed, taking into account publications such as an article by Sarah Phillips that incorporates an impression that response to the disaster has centered "primarily on short-term economic, not human, concerns" (Phillips, 2013), as well as other authors (e. g. Steinhauser 2014). Having in mind that discourse analysis will be used in this research, Lene Hansen's intertextual models (2006) will be employed to get the necessary perspective of the constructions of Japanese identity, both positive and negative.

4. Framing Environment as Security Issue

Since this thesis employs the securitization and desecuritization theory in addressing the question of morality of desecuritizing the environment, a review of this approach to security studies will follow in order to explore its capacity in dealing with the social construction of environmental problems as security issues.

4.1. Redefinition of National Security

To avoid potential ambiguity, it would be worthwhile to define key terms used in this volume. Since the thesis deals with a concept of non-traditional security threats, we will break down this concept and define terms one at a time. In Merriam-Webster Dictionary, security is defined as *freedom from danger, fear or anxiety*, while threat is regarded as *an expression of intention to inflict evil, injury, or damage*. While the traditional understandings of security heavily focused on military threats and security was viewed as an entity measured by threat or fear, when the WWII ended, the new tendency was to analyze non-military threats through the security prism. Non-traditional security threats, which Caballero-Anthony defines as "challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources, are climate change, resources scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime (2016). Among other characteristics of non-traditional security threats, apart from the state, the referent of security is also the survival of people, their well-being, and dignity at individual and societal levels.

Climate change emerged as a political issue in the 1970s, when activist and formal efforts sought to address environmental crises on a global scale (Haibach, 2013: 372). It was from the 1980s that national governments increased their consideration of environmental degradation and resource scarcity as security issues. During the Cold War, not much discourse had been there to contribute to the "environment-security nexus". In his article "The Fukushima disaster and human security in Japan: From 'atoms of peace' to people's peace" (2014) Maruyama considers the end of the Cold War as a critical event because it finally gave room to concerns other than military buildup. Mazo believes that "instability, conflict and humanitarian disasters, both chronic and acute, are not the inevitable result of climate change, nor are they dependent on it. But over the course of history, climate change has affected the stability of societies, nations and civilizations and the unprecedented change

that has already begun raises the specter of increasing and accelerating social, geopolitical and economic disruption." (Mazo, 2010: 142)

The critics of such worldview made their arguments against assigning the environmental degradation (among other non-military threats not of direct relevance for this thesis) with violent conflict potential. Among those who strongly oppose the environmental securitization tide, Daudney (1990, 1999) arguments against encouragement of environment-security nexus. In his view, the degree of environmental impact on human well-being is not sufficient to treat it as a threat to national security – what is more, he finds environmentalists guilty of diverting attention from the actual threats. In comparing environmental issues to military threats, he goes on to deny these issues the notion of 'national' as a default characteristic (usually they are global), they are most often unintentional in behavior as opposed to intentionality of inter-state violence and cannot be responded to without joint efforts of different institutions. He opts for green sensibility instead.

For Homer-Dixon, environmental issues are a possible, but not a crucial indirect cause of violence outbreak in combination with non-environmental factors (Homer-Dixon, 1991: 4). He finds that the causal link is not that straightforward and that there is no evidence that environmental scarcity served as a main cause of inter-state wars, and here Barnett is on the same page with Homer-Dixon. Barnett goes on to contest the concept of scarcity, since its understanding is relative and socially constructed. (Barnett 2001). A critical look at the relationship between environmental degradation and international relations is found in the work of Professor Simon Dalby (2002; 2007), who, along with Joe Barnett, provides us with a critical geopolitical perspective on environmental security. Contemplating on connotations of 'environmental issues', Barnett sees the problem in the perception of humans' needs as a priority and suggests a different perspective – a shift from national/state to human/individual level. His normative approach to studying environmental security echoes the ideas of the Welsh School. His notion that humankind and nature should not be perceived as the opposing sides corresponds to the "holistic approach" to individuals as a part of the ecosystem nurtured by Ken Booth (2007).

The contemporary approaches are often referred to as "critical approaches", because they criticize the deficiencies found in traditionalists' perception of security and state as its referent object. Namely, they find the states are too diverse and unreliable for this role. Apart from the Copenhagen School, whose postulates will be analyzed in detail, the Welsh School of Security Studies also has its place in the research due to its emancipatory aspect of

studying security. Scholars of this school of thought adopted a normative approach by putting the focus on basic needs of individuals instead of the security of state. They deem it necessary for the security studies to be acquainted with environmental issues, human rights, the economic development, thus deepening the security concept. (Booth, 1991: 324).

This thesis will predominantly analyze the application and aspects of desecuritization; hence, the focus will be on defining this process and exploring its effects. However, in order to speak about desecuritization one must first understand the process it attempts to reverse.

4.2.   Securitization Theory

The collaborative work of scholars Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver yielded a legacy that had become known as the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. The original framework devised by a group of scholars associated with Copenhagen Peace Research Institute evolved beyond this school of thought and was further developed and critiqued, as this concept of perceiving security became popular in recent decades. Initial theoretical work on securitization dates back to the late 1980s' and Ole Wæver's early writings, followed by a book chapter in 1995 titled "Securitization and Desecuritization." In 1998, Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, and Jaap de Wilde, published their work titled Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Ever since it was fully introduced in 1998 it has been one of the most prominent critical security approaches, its appeal being in providing a new lens through which to examine the construction of security issues and their insecuritizing consequences. While Buzan dealt with sector analysis and regional security complex, Wæver focused on securitization. He basically implies that saying that something imposes a threat makes it a part of security agenda. This viewpoint corresponds with John L. Austin's concept of 'performative utterances', which, according to this author, do not just describe but have the potential to create a new reality (Austin 1962). Wæver explains that a securitizing actor (someone with authority) successfully performs a speech act about a certain issue when the idea of an issue is perceived as an existential threat. In this way, issues, not normally associated with security, become socially constructed as threats.

In performing securitization, specific conditions must be met for a speech act to be successful. Namely, Buzan et al. (1998) define a successful speech act as "a combination of language and society, of both intrinsic features of speech and group that authorizes and recognizes that speech" (p. 32). For a successful accomplishment of a speech act, Speech Act

Theory prescribes the necessity of felicity conditions (2000: 252). Buzan *et al.* find that the main question is how to distinguish security issue from something that is not understood as a security threat. This analytical approach prevents overstretching the concept of security, which is why the proponents of securitization are generally skeptical when it comes to perception of environmental degradation (among some other issues) as a security threat.

Here is where Buzan made his contribution to this theory - by putting the notion of existential threat in focus. He argued that when survival of a referent object is put into question the extraordinary measures are taken as a response. In such circumstances, responses that exceed normal political practices are justified, he argues. An issue, normally not considered political, enters the public political debate in the "process of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat" (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 26). Reality is socially constructed by labelling an issue as security, thus placing it above and beyond the regular politics. The measures that are required for the security to be restored require acceptance by the audience (Mijalkovic, 2018: 40-41). In that regard, Buzan *et al.* argue, when it comes to successful securitization of environmental issues, it requires acceptance by the relevant audience (Buzan et al. 1998: 91). Upon restoration of normal politics, the process of desecuritization takes place, which implies that the issue no longer imposes a security threat.

Securitization theory has established itself as one of the most influential non-traditional security theories in existence. (Floyd, 2011: 437). Laid out by the founders and supported by followers of the Copenhagen School, it was further reviewed and expanded by numerous authors and has constantly been in the process of revision and perfecting. One of them, Thierry Balzacq, worked on testing the limits of the original framework, believing that the audience should have the central role, considering its causal relation with the issue that is being securitized. He makes another assumption on the securitization theory, stating that a speech act will always invoke the meaning previously assigned in the practice of social interaction. In line with this, he defined two securitization models – philosophical and sociological securitization. While the first one's focus is on the persuasiveness of a speech act, the latter gives precedence to the effect that a speech act creates, i.e. the context in which the securitization occurs (Balzacq 2011). According to him, "the success of securitization is highly contingent upon the securitizing actor's ability to identify the audience's feelings, needs, and interests…To persuade the audience, the speaker has to tune his/her language to the audience's experience." (Balzacq 2005: 184).

Among the scholars who further developed the securitization theory (and keeps scrutinizing and revising it ardently) is Rita Floyd. Her revised, just securitization theory allows normative assessment of securitization by providing criteria for judging the moral rightness of securitization and gauging sincerity of securitizing actors. She regards as desirable those instances of securitization that lead to progressive outcomes. In this way, by employing normative theory in framing a prototype of the securitization act she brings together two schools of thought – the Copenhagen and Welsh School. The Paris School also found interest in securitization, since its scholars are concerned with the insecuritizing consequences, i.e. they are interested in what security does, and not so much in what represents a security threat. Here their focus overlaps with the one of the Welsh School with its Emancipatory Security approach on the threats that ordinary people face (Bigo 2007).

Their intentions can be tested by examining if they are consistent and the response (security practice) matches the securitizing move (what they say about a particular threat). Floyd revised the securitization theory using the morality prism, and established three criteria that could answer the question of moral rightness of securitization. She argues that a threat needs to be objectively existential (not just perceived as such) in order to justify extraordinary measures and considers insincerity an indicator of a non-objective threat. Further, the referent object should be morally legitimate, which, in Floyd's opinion, means that it contributes to human well-being. When it comes to response, it should be measured to the threat and its intention should be sincere in addressing the threat and securing the referent object. (Floyd, 2011: 429-433). This research will follow Floyd's criteria and define the threat according to conditions laid out in her theory. The object and response will also be measured and categorized in line with this scholar's conclusions, which will ultimately lead to the answer to the research question.

4.3. The Concept of Desecuritization

Authors agree that not enough attention is directed towards the concept of desecuritization and that is not specified in such detail as securitization. There is even no consensus regarding how to achieve desecuritization or on the very meaning of this process. Lene Hansen finds the necessity of further work on desecuritization, arguing that the concept is applied "in ways that, when compared, seem unsystematic or even contradictory" (Hansen 2012: 527). This theory, advocated by the Copenhagen School, is defined as a "process whereby formerly securitized issues move back into the sphere of normal politics, where they are dealt with by ordinary measures once more" (Floyd, 2011: 436). Having in mind the urgency aura and

impulsive response to securitized issues, as well as a growing tendency to put the term security together with miscellaneous issues without shifting its meaning away from traditional military connotation, Wæver calls for desecuritization whenever justified and possible. (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 4) Some other scholars privileged desecuritization on grounds that securitization, in their opinion, leads to secretive and potentially undemocratic ways of addressing the crisis. On the other hand, Huysmans holds that desecuritization should not be stripped its normative status in critical approaches to security, and that it does not imply mere relocating of the problem from the security to the political sphere.[3] Floyd analyzed this preference and noticed that advocates of desecuritization failed to realize that even though objective security threats are gone, objective existential threats could still be present. Being cautious about premature desecuritization, she believes that "some objective existential threats are best addressed in security mode" (Floyd, 2011: 436). Originally, in this early phase of the theory of desecuritization, Buzan *et al.* treat it as the "optimal long-range option" (1998, p. 29) and always the better one than securitization. However, in his later work "Politics, security, theory" he adjusts his position and points out that the theory has a 'bias' for desecuritization and that in fact it is not always better than securitization (Wæver, 2011, p. 469). In order to solve this dilemma, Floyd (2015) developed 'the theory of just securitization,' arguing that there are circumstances when both securitization and desecuritization can be morally acceptable. She finds desecuritization and just termination of securitization to be synonymous in meaning. The morale behind this theory is that sometimes it is ethically permissible to use extraordinary measures for the greater good, and this theory is here to contest employing security measures. This scholar argues that the just securitization theory "seeks to enable scholars to morally evaluate securitizations both before and after they have occurred, and that aims to guide practitioners in relevant situations" (Floyd, 2015). However, she does not put the equal sign between just desecuritization and reverse securitization. She finds that just desecuritization requires for securitizing actors to implement "restorative" measures to annul the effects of securitization.

Desecuritization does not propose avoiding the issue, but dealing with it outside the security framework and security responses. It may even occur simultaneously with securitization, since actor's speech acts may provoke opposing reactions - while some groups will strive for securitization, others may be working for its desecuritization.

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[3] Huysmans, 1998a cited in Balzacq, 2014: 106

It may be challenging to fully desecuritize an issue. The speech act may be invisible in some cases, and Aras and Polat build upon this possibility, stating that: "we need to see (or hear) nothing to suggest that an issue has been desecuritized" (Aras and Polat, 2008: 498-99). In other words, they suggest that one way of achieving desecuritization is by avoiding the use of language of security. This corresponds well with the view of Wæver (2000), who has outlined three options for this process to take place successfully: "(1) simply not to talk about issues in terms of security, (2) to keep responses to securitized issues in forms that do not create security dilemmas or other vicious spirals, and (3) to move security issues back into normal politics" (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). Another point worth considering is that desecuritization should be observed as a sum of actions rather than an outcome (Floyd, 2015: 137).

Lene Hansen (2012) introduced four forms of desecuritization: stabilization, replacement, rearticulation and silencing. Stabilization is described as a gradual shift away from explicit security discourse (Hansen, 2012, p. 539). This concept involves moving from militaristic responses to political engagement and requires conflicting parties to acknowledge each other's legitimacy (Hansen, 2012, p. 539). The second form, replacement, involves redirecting the focus of security concerns to a different issue. This shift results in the new issue becoming the center of security attention, while the previous issue is no longer emphasized. For rearticulation, the goal is to move an issue out of the security domain through offering political solutions to the threats (Hansen, 2012, p. 543). Silencing happens when a security issue disappears from discourse and Hansen criticizes the Copenhagen School for not providing a theory or method to address or identify such silenced securitizations where no explicit speech acts are involved (Hansen, 2012, p. 545).

When the objective existential threat is neutralized, desecuritization should follow. However, not all instances of desecuritization are morally justifiable. If the securitization is unjust, which happens in practice, desecuritization should follow promptly. In that regard, it became clear that it is usually difficult to put the problem back into the regular politics once people perceive a threat as existential. Huysmans used an example of securitized migrations to the EU to devise potential strategies for desecuritizing this issue. He suggested finding and giving proof of objective state of affairs, as well as deeper understanding of the securitization process that resulted in constructing an issue as a threat for purpose of finding illogical or unsound assumptions. Another potential instrument for desecuritization purposes he finds in deconstructing the proclaimed threat itself. When addressing unjustified securitization, Floyd argues: "If there are no real threats, securitization can never be justified. And if the latter is

true, desecuritization is *de facto* the ethically right choice." (Sardoc, 2021: 142). Under certain circumstances, though, desecuritization can cause serious security problems. A good example of having desecuritization provoke security problems is found in the chapter 7 of the book "Contesting Security" (Balzacq, 2014: 104), when liberalization of the arms trade was enacted after securitizing proliferation of the arms trade by addressing it as an existential threat. What this case shows is how economic benefit can potentially outweigh the security considerations, which is an important point for this research.

Just desecuritization is accompanied by immediate refraining from security language and practice and the actors should build a stable state of affairs to avoid recursive securitization. Floyd deduces that desecuritization which turns out to be unjust does not automatically characterize preceding securitization as unethical. On the contrary, these two processes should be observed and analyzed separately. There are three principles suggested by this author in her volume The Morality of Security (2019). Namely, there is the question when at latest securitization must be unmade, what exactly should be unmade, and whether there were enough measures taken in the process of desecuritization to restore security (Floyd 179). Juha Vuori stresses that, similar to securitization, 'the success of desecuritization may depend on actors with sufficient formal or other sociopolitical capital to perform or promote desecuritization', adding that desecuritization moves can be articulated by anyone (Vuori, 2011: 119). Floyd finds that desecuritization is unjust when an issue is not fully desecuritized in a sense of criterion 10.[4]

To illustrate the theoretical arguments laid out in this chapter and put them to good use, the thesis will provide an overview of the securitization in the Fukushima case. The securitizing agent, the speech act and the public will be identified and it will be analyzed whether it was performed in full capacity and promptly upon the emergence of the existential threat, if it was ethical in Rita Floyd's terms, and how it unfolded.

However, since the main concern of this research is the desecuritization part, the principles Floyd suggested as indicators of morally just desecuritization will be invoked and juxtaposed with actual events. Through the empirical analysis, we hope to achieve a clear-cut conclusion that the decision to release filtered wastewater back into the Pacific Ocean was made with dubious rather than sincere intentions. Before the analysis itself, laying out the context should

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[4] Criterion 10 reads: "Desecuritization should ideally be publicly declared and corresponding security language and security measures should be terminated with immediate effect."

be worthwhile, if nothing else, for enriching the (de)securitizing agent's social capital to provide him with a level playfield for making a final verdict about his actions. (Färber, 2018).

5. Case Study of Japan

This chapter aims to portray the historical and political ambient which shaped our securitizing actor (the Government of Japan), the mentality of citizens of Japan, who represent the audience of this process, their well-being as a referent object, as well as the evolution of bilateral relations with the United States of America marked by post WWII occupation legacy. The main purpose of this overview is to facilitate the analysis of actions which contributed to the current undesired state of affairs in the Indo-Pacific.

5.1. Historical Background

The history of Japan is rich and turbulent. As such, it had a major impact on the sense of identity and tradition arising from the principles of the dominant religion and the isolation due to its geographical position. Namely, the location of Japanese islands made it difficult to reach and it was not before the mid-16th century that the Europeans first set foot on its imperial soil. The interaction was brief but significant (missionaries from Spain and Portugal introduced Christianity). To preserve the political order, the shogun decided to cut off Japan from the outside world, banning trade and tourism for two and a half centuries. The country failed to witness the crucial period of revolutions and development in Europe, which it eventually did catch up with, but what Stockwin refers to as "truly extraordinary" is that, despite the near-complete isolation, the social and economic development were not on hold – moreover, this period was regarded as the "early modern" period of Japanese history (Stockwin, 2008: 15). However, the society was still feudal and hierarchy had an important role – the inferiors were required loyalty and deference, and superiors were expected to protect and support. The discipline and sense of belonging got imprinted deeper yet into the Japanese mind frame – "in theory, the person does not exist as an individual, but only as a member of certain larger groups: family, school, community, company, nation" (Reischauer, 1977). To get more acquainted with the psychology that the Japanese people foster, one should note that their cultural and geographical isolation produced a sense of weakness and inferiority complex in foreign relations (ibid, 208).

Lipset writes about the 1860s, stating that a large societal transformation took place, conducted by the Japanese aristocratic elite "who took over the country determined to modernize it" (Lipset, 1993: 124). Namely, they believed that the one way to avoid being dependent or conquered, to maintain what was truly Japanese, was to industrialize (ibid, 151).

This period is marked by shogun Tokugawa's death, which coincided with the Perry Expedition, aimed at breaking the isolation and establishing diplomatic US relations with Japan. The result was signing a treaty, which provided an opening that would allow future American contact and trade with Japan. About that time, the Japanese revolution set off: Sims compares 1868 in Japan to 1789 in France or 1917 in Russia (Sims 2001, 1). They sought to learn from other countries' experiences in building a modern nation. Many changes in the economic and political sphere were necessary to reach this goal. The process of democratic modernization was built on the spirit of tradition and national identity, further strengthened by a new constitution, new political parties, and a new emperor, marking the beginning of the Taisho era. The democratic period was interrupted in 1929 by a financial crash, and consequently, in 1932, it collapsed.[5] The power in Japan went into the hands of military force, and, from 1894 to 1945, the country went from one war to another. By 1940, all parties merged into one - the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Stockwin, 2008:26).

Then the WWII happened. Japan ignored the ultimatum given by the Allies and on 6 and 9 August 1945, the United States detonated two atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was the only time nuclear weapons were used in an armed conflict. Japanese authorities surrendered, leaving the country devastated, defeated and occupied. Further to the Potsdam Agreement, signed with the Japan's new patron, enormous efforts were made to overcome challenges such as the repatriation of 6,5 million people to a country lacking practically everything. Notwithstanding, the dynamics of the economic growth of Japan in the post WWII period are regarded as remarkable. Early in the course of the occupation, there were signs of a fruitful onset of a democratization process. Democratization that resulted from American invasion was not the primary articulated goal – first and foremost, the aggressor had to be defeated and incapacitated to commit aggression in the future. The fact that democratization was a secondary goal to averting further terror and humanitarian crises Beetham sees as a reason for its success. He points out that the purpose of invasion is legitimized from the perspective of the conquered population by being higher than mere subjugation (Beetham, 2009: 450). Hutington addresses this phenomenon of wide-

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[5] It should be noted here that democracy in the early 20th century Japan was not much like today's democracies: the elections were not free, women were not given equal rights, the constitution protected free speech, but "dangerous thoughts" were prohibited. Herzog argues that these democratic traditions did not affect the nation's political life nor were introduced to local use because the Japanese state was heavily centralized and bureaucratic Herzog, Peter J. *Japan's Pseudo-Democracy* (1st ed.). Routledge, 1993 .p. 9.

ranging support of Japanese people for democracy, noting that an explanation lies in "generational change", which could, by the same analogy, change again in the short run (Hutington, 1991: 265). He further argues that even though Confucian societies did not overall respond well to democracy, in this case, those values were interwoven with the "autochthonous cultural tradition" of Japan, making it more prone to democratization (ibid, 301). The ordinary Japanese, a proud nation burdened with a heavy WWII legacy and a sense of betrayal after the circumstances of the emperor's surrender, surrounded with destruction, seemed to think unfavorably about the way things were dealt with in the past. A humiliating defeat made Japan crave change and, it was regarded that the Japanese innate awe for authority made the transition easier. It must be noted, though, as Dahl argues, that the preservation of monarchy helped to convey some of the traditional legitimacy to the new regime of competitive politics (Dahl, 1971: 38). The traditional in the case of Japan is its collective spirit – the national unity, achieved in prehistoric times, partly because its geographic position provided no serious alternatives (Rustow, 1970: 351).

Since 1947, Japan's hybrid system of government has been a constitutional liberal democracy. The Japanese constitution, written by American officials, has never been amended by a single word since its adoption.[6] Being devised in haste and pushed into adoption, the Constitution failed to be genuinely embraced by the Japanese as their own.

5.2. The US-Japan Relations from the occupation to modern times

The chronology of the US-Japan relations helps in understanding their behavior in the time of nuclear crisis with impact on their countrymen. This "love-affair" has had its ups and downs over the course of decades of these past two centuries. While it now seems stronger than ever, there are many indicators of its fragility. The relations are unpredictable due mostly to the fact that they are interest-driven, built on foundations hat at least one side would rather delete from its collective memory and the dependence on current politics.

5.2.1. A Rocky Start

To the Pacific basin has come the vista of a new emancipated world. Today, freedom is on the offensive, democracy is on the march.

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[6] Partly due to the fact that two-thirds' majorities in both houses of parliament as well as a referendum are required for an amendment to legislation.

The Potsdam Declaration agreed on by the Allied leaders in 1945 marked Japan's unconditional surrender. The US occupation team under the direction of Supreme Commander General Douglas MacArthur had a task to demilitarize the enemy, put war criminals on trial, and institute reforms in Japan's government. Having assessed the sentiment of the nation, and wanting to fulfill the task successfully, McArthur tactically decided to keep the existing government and emperor Hirohito as a symbolic leader of the nation. Whether the host population was genuinely comfortable with the foreign patronage is debatable. The argument that recovery took less time than expected owes much to the fact that the American-centered occupation decided to keep Japanese bureaucracy despite the direct US presence in the country. The occupation efforts gave impulse to burning issues such as labor legislation, gender equality, land reform, education and health.

The controversial and differently interpreted Article 9 of the Constitution was edited by the Diet's relevant subcommittee to divert the meaning of renouncing war as a sovereign right, as the American draft required, to commitment to international peace.[8] The ambiguity was close to irrelevant during most of the occupation, until 1950 when the US officials' interpretation conveniently accounted for Japan's demilitarization in the wake of the war in Korea. The US started pressuring the Japanese government to remilitarize (a direct violation not only of Japan's surrender terms but also its constitution). Namely, a shift of policy known as the "reverse course" started to take place. As the future actions would confirm, the American agenda has all along envisaged maintaining Japan's subordinate position – to help strengthen its economics just enough to serve the goals of the US and provide support for their expansionistic aspirations (war in Korea being around the corner both spatially and temporally). The hegemonistic US agenda was strengthened by the U.S.-Japan security treaty and a related "administrative agreement" that accompanied it, imposed on Japan just months

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[7] McArthur's quote taken from "Bringing Democracy to Japan - Constitutional Rights Foundation." Crf-Usa.org. 2019. https://www.crf-usa.org/election-central/bringing-democracy-to-japan.html

[8] Dower conveys the circumstances of including this article: "Yoshida was persuaded that the best way to hasten the end of the occupation and the country's reacceptance in the world community was to emphasize the thoroughgoing nature of its renunciation of militarism. At the same time, however, Article 9 also possessed a compelling psychological attraction to a shattered people sick of war and burdened by the knowledge that much of the world reviled them as inherently militaristic and untrustworthy. The renunciation of war—the prospect of becoming a pure embodiment of Kellogg-Briand ideals—offered a way of retaining a positive sense of uniqueness in defeat" (Dower, 1999: 193).

before the occupation ended. It provided the US with exceptional extraterritorial rights and numerous military installations on the Japanese soil. Dower accounts for the reaction of Conservatives to this new one-sided deal – they regarded it a high price to pay for "independence" and security "guarantees", but impossible to avoid. The difference between occupation and the "subordinate independence" appeared as practically non-existent. Officially, sovereignty was restored on April 28, 1952, leaving the nation uncertain about the future. (Dower,1999: 188).

What is clear from bilateral advances accounted for in this chapter is that, ever since the landing of the Perry Expedition to the reframing of the Japanese state and social reforms undertaken during the postwar occupation, the policy towards Japan, in Dr. Shimizu's words, had almost completely been shaped by America's national priorities (Guthrie-Shimizu, 2007: 215). As Buzan and Weaver argue in *Regions and Powers – The structure of International Security* (2003),"Japan chose to remain a subordinate partner of the United States" (144). The opinions are opposed regarding this alliance – while some regard that this partnership is a good instrument for deterrence, essential for Japan's security, there are those who do not believe in deterrence and would rather avoid being implicated in regional conflicts. Namely, after the Cold War, the perception was predominant among the Japanese decision-makers that the U.S. presence would continue to be the optimal preventive measure in case of potential emergence of hostile powers in the region. Therefore, this ally would be the only reliable instrument for preserving Japan's vital interest, which is to navigate freely and safely. Kawashima interprets the strong aversion to war among the Japanese as a desire to nurture long-lasting peace, with still fresh memory of devastating defeat in WWII. Most of wars the Japanese fought, he argues, were initiated by them in the first place (Kawashima 2002). A description of the U.S.-Japan relations at the time was given by the former President of the US (POTUS) Clinton during his state visit to Japan in 1996, which will serve instead a conclusion of this section: "In the US some people believe that our alliance serves only the interest of Japan. In Japan, some people believe that our alliance only serves the interest of the US. They are both wrong. Our alliance serves the interest of both countries." (ibid).

5.2.2.   It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…[9]

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[9] Reference to a famous line taken from *A tale of two cities* by Charles Dickens.

Relations with the US have gone from the crucial ally in the Indo-Pacific to a fierce competitor and back, depending on the focus of the POTUS, as well as the situation in the region. Severe stress is put on this relationship, vital for 'containing the rising threat from China'. The cooperation of these two countries stretches from economy to security, and not all of the arrangements are favorable for both sides. When it comes to environmental security, there are instances of challenged cooperation – environmental footprint of military bases all over Japan on the one side (120 active bases - the highest number of U.S. bases in the world followed by Germany with 119 and South Korea with 73), and the slow response to the Fukushima accident on the other side, jeopardizing as many as 53,700 American military personnel stationed in Japan (Nanda, 2024). However, the US presence on Japanese soil proves valuable in the time of need - auxiliary troops prepared to respond to non-military crises and subsequent relief (COVID-19 crisis, severe weather conditions, migration, and last, but not least, the nuclear accident in Fukushima).

During the current POTUS term, the measures taken to stifle the foreign competition have had a negative impact on Japanese industry, most notably the CHIPS and Inflation Reduction Act, by favoring US-made electric vehicles and semiconductors. Another blow was Biden's administration opposing to Nippon Steel's US Steel acquisition on economic and national security grounds. A major shift that had shaken Japan recently happened during Donald Tramp's presidency, when the US abandoned the TPP, originally initiated by the previous POTUS Obama to create the world's largest free-trade zone. The Japanese government made trade and diplomatic concessions to keep Trump onside because the alternative would be to face China alone.

The possibility of Trump's another term brings unrest to the Japanese, for sure. A former World Bank and International Monetary Fund official Anne O. Krueger argues that what happens in Japan trade wise has palpable implications both on Asia and global economy. To effectively balance its position with China, manage the threat from North Korea, and keep its regional influence, Japan relies on continued US engagement. This fine balance will directly shape the future of the region.

5.3.   Japan's Reclaimed Independence

The subject of debate and a most divisive issue in Japan ever since the WWII ended has been its national security and the focus on interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution. As for the

political climate these issues were debated in, the principles of democracy have been exercised rather unimpressively. The fact that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been in power since 1955 almost uninterruptedly calls for an analysis of the reasons for such dominance. First of all, an imperfect electoral system is in favor of the LDP. In addition, the ties with the civil service bureaucracy are very close. There have even been speculations regarding the interference of the US in domestic politics in the form of major support in the party's early days. In addition, the success of the LDP is partly achieved by the existence of its numerous factions and their cumulative principles. It is not far from the truth when the experts refer to the factions as parties within a party (Reed and Bolland, 1999: 212).

Internal differences accounted for brief terms of PMs in the previous period. The competition within the party is such that other faction members pose a bigger threat than opposition parties, causing the party to lack cohesion but altogether cover a broad spectrum of ideology (to which it owes its dominance and the title of the most successful political party in any advanced democracy in the world).

After a considerable period of aspiring to assimilate Western culture, the tide has turned. The interest in imported culture has vaned and the Japanese are reaching back to their heritage. And some heritage it is. Some of the circumstances surrounding Japan's history through the centuries were mentioned here to explain how the nation became adaptable, innovative, resourceful, and self-sufficient to such an extent. Rising external threats and somewhat impaired living standards tend to draw the young populace to more identity-based politics that in perspective could lead to yearning for past Empires. To support this prediction, Chatham House provided results of recent polls, which showed 54% support of Japanese people to the idea of strengthening Japan's defense. The sprout was already there, lurking all along.

The everyday life of the Japanese has been manipulated both by institutional and ideological systems to preserve the moral order of the society. A subtle dose of control pressures in Japanese daily life has yielded "friendly authoritarianism" unevenly in different sectors, which have conformity and order as a shrewd goal (Sugimoto, 2010: 303-304). Because however stable Japan's democracy has proven to be, the possibility of a populist movement cannot be ruled out, and hence this subtle psychological pressure. According to Totsuka Hideo, during the period 1955-70, "Japanese management developed a sophisticated labor management style which encouraged workers' loyalty to their supervisors and competition among the workers themselves" (Johnson, 1987: 150).

The aspects of the unique and intricate Japanese mentality addressed by Dower and Reischauer and presented briefly in this paper, substantiated by Sugimoto's insight about the everyday society's latent struggle and juxtaposed by past militaristic aspirations of Japanese rulers exercised through their subjects, and calculated salvation offered by the US, might have an unintended and undesired result. Namely, Johnson finds that "since 1947 Japan seems to have retained many 'soft authoritarian' features in its governmental institutions despite its adoption of a formally democratic constitution and the subsequent development of a genuinely open political culture: an extremely strong and comparatively unsupervised state administration, single-party rule for more than three decades, and a set of economic priorities that seems unattainable under true political pluralism during such a long period" (Johnson, 1987: 137). He further argues that the Japanese have found a perfect dose of political authoritarianism to achieve their goals by resorting to a wide range of political devices, among them being monarchical or democratic constitutions, indirect elections, party factionalism, and an implicit balance of power among political, bureaucratic, and economic elites (ibid, 143). Here we can reflect on Japan's deficiencies of democracy, and deduce that it has been riding two horses at the same time. It embraced democracy for the sake of economic growth, and excelled at it, all the while sticking to previous practices of authoritarianism in amounts low enough to keep them under the radar.

The Americans had set out to teach the proud aggressor a lesson and take advantage of a newly acquired partner in the process. With certain concessions, it could be characterized as a win-win situation. Japan has been a democracy ever since – full, flawed, or superficial, depending on the prism it is scrutinized through. In the broad sense, democracy in Japan is functioning fairly well, similar to other parliamentary democracies. Again, in a broad sense, civil rights are respected, elections are free and fair and there is media plurality. Institutions are much more democratic than they used to be before the war. Absurdly, the occupation has brought freedoms unimaginable to a closed and repressed society, the essential ones being the freedoms of assembly and association, which went well with the group-oriented Japanese (Beer, 1990: 78).

However, there are concerns regarding the dominance of an elite focused on one party, weak judicial review, flawed electoral apportionment, over powerful civil service, strong ties between elites and bureaucracy, and contested human rights and media freedoms, among others. There are many arguments to nurture democracy, among which the two (among ten listed by Dahl, 2020: 59-60) keep Japan particularly engaged: modern democracies do not

fight wars with one another and countries with democratic governments tend to be more prosperous than countries with nondemocratic governments.

5.4. Evolution of Environmental Awareness

Japan is a country of paradoxes. While on the one hand it is at the forefront when it comes to technology for curbing pollution, it is also one of the world's largest polluters. The people are known for their love of nature, but they are at the same time responsible for widespread environmental destruction. (Barrett&Therivel, 2019). Japan's foreign policy is often viewed as unconventional compared to other nations. (Hook et al. 2012: 68). Traditionally, it has been seen as reactive, in contrast to the more proactive stance of other industrialized nations (Calder 1988; Inoguchi 1991). It is reactive when it comes to climate change policies as well – the decision-making process lacks transparency, and it is not possible to know how major decisions are made and why some aspects of climate change are overlooked. Many Japanese view climate change primarily as an economic and energy issue rather than an environmental or diplomatic one, leading to a national consensus that might not align with global climate policy discussions (Kameyama 2-3).

Since the race for economic prosperity went hand in hand with heavy pollutants, in the 1960s the public protested against environmental pollution, which forced the government to act. The 1970s saw the development of environmental policies and enforcement of strict environmental standards, while the momentum declined in the 1980s as a result of rising economic concerns. Since the 1990s, Japan's environmental policy faces a dilemma: balancing the need for a strong economy with the need for environmental health. (ibid).

An ironic comparison was made between environmental diplomacy and a beauty contest, because of the strong urge of certain countries to be seen as "green" as possible. Without hard military power (Japan has, until recently, been limited in terms of military buildup in line with the Article 9 of the Constitution), they aim to increase their "soft power" by contributing to global environmental issues (Nye, 2004 in Kameyama 7). Generally, experts on Japanese politics describe the country's decision-making as a "tripartite power elite model" (Mills, 1956), because it consists of the Japan's bureaucracy, the ruling political party, and major business organizations. They collaborate in such a way that actors outside this "iron triangle" are excluded from political influence (Nester, 1990 in Kameyama 10).

Extreme weather has become more frequent all around the globe. Threats that result from extreme climate started to attract security experts' attention around half a century ago. However, examining Japanese Defense White Papers from 1970 to 2019, there is a noticeable lack of focus on environmental security. The military has not acknowledged this concept as a security threat in that period, and upon recently environmental documents similarly failed to address environmental security. Considering Japan's frequent and severe weather events that affect all sectors, Sekiyama finds such a minimal emphasis on environmental issues puzzling. (2020).

Notably, ever since Fukushima accident happened, Japan has been constantly working on improving its military's disaster-relief capabilities. (Mazo, 2010:128) Climate change is shifting the relative balance of priorities and it demands a place in an overall approach to national security and defense planning. (ibid 136, 141) According to data of the Strategy on Climate Change from 2022 of the Japanese Ministry of Defense, climate change is recognized as an existential threat to global security. In these and other official defense documents, Japan recognized climate change as a game-changer when it comes to security, and organized its Self-Defense Forces around expected events arising from climate change. One of the plans is to maintain close communication with ASEAN and Pacific Island countries towards a mutual goal – successful disaster relief.

While Japan's climate and location had made this country prone to natural disasters for centuries, these severe weather conditions became even more extreme due to consequences of global warming. Recognizing the challenges, in 1990, the Japanese Government adopted an action plan to stop global warming, became a signatory of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1993 and cooperated with the EU in tackling climate change. The guidelines of the Kyoto Protocol envisaged that Japan reduce its GHG emissions, and the Japanese Government was eager to comply (a beauty contest alert). Energy efficiency was to be achieved by concentrating on nuclear capacities – increasing the number and exploitation of nuclear power plants.[10] As it turned out, there were three nuclear incidents that had taken place in Japan before the 3/11 (rated '2' in 1981, '2' in 1999 and '4' in the same year, according to the International Nuclear Events Scale (INES) – for the sake of reference,

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[10] The energy policy was, naturally, changed after the 3/11, since all nuclear power stations in Japan were shut down after the accident (Donatialessandra. (2020, October 20). *The Paris Agreement and Japan by Yumiko Nakanishi*. Blogdroiteuropéen. https://blogdroiteuropeen.com/2020/10/21/the-paris-agreement-and-japan-by-yumiko-nakanishi

Chernobyl and Fukushima were rated '7' on the same Scale). They were far less severe, but served as a severe warning, nevertheless. The collective memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a huge benchmark for reflection as well on more than one level, when between 150,000 and 246,000 people were killed in the bombing, most of them civilians (*Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - justified?* (n.d.)[11].

The law governing nuclear disasters did not take into account the possibility that a nuclear disaster could be caused by, and therefore occur simultaneously with, an earthquake/tsunami disaster. [12] Barrett has a pessimist view on considerable advancements in Japan's environmental policy system in the near future. He believes that the dominance of interest groups that prioritize economic development, combined with the relative weakness of those advocating for environmental protection, will persist in hindering the integration of effective environmental policies into administrative planning. The long-term environmental impact of this situation is extensive since it has a global reach, not only affecting Japan (Barrett 2019: 234). Japan's MoD Strategy on Climate Change 2022 did foresee geopolitical impact of climate change and suggest measures for addressing them in a form of recommendations and raising awareness about potential natural disasters.

5.5. Surrounding Japan: Regional Dynamics in the 21st Century

The Indo-Pacific has become a playfield for the most powerful players in the game of geopolitics. The region, previously referred to as Asia-Pacific, is home to potential hotspots, overriding interests in terms of power, politics and economy. In the meantime, China went through a striving growth, becoming the world's second largest economy (the first being the US) which led to its impressive military build-up. China's Belt and Road Initiative added to the importance of the Indo-Pacific, which will keep growing in the coming years. The competition between the US and China is deepening with each positive economic indicator on the other part, which in turn deepens the geopolitical and geo-economic tensions.

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[11] *Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - justified?* (n.d.). https://www.usna.edu/Ethics/blog/2020/Atomic_Bombings_of_Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki_-_Justified.php

[12] National Diet of Japan Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission (NAIIC) 2012. *The Fukushima Nuclear Disaster and the Democratic Party of Japan*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270249805_The_Fukushima_Nuclear_Disaster_and_the_Democratic_Party_of_Japan [accessed Aug 23 2024].

While Southeast Asia has the role of the driver of global economy, Northeast Asia has been a potential warzone. Apart from the strategic competition between the US and China, fragile stability on the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait contribute to this region's proneness to escalation. Suzuki emphasizes the importance of the Indo-Pacific for global peace and economic prosperity, and the role of Japan in keeping this region stable (Suzuki, 2024). In this competitive, culturally and politically diverse setting, it is reasonable to have a few more actors to be reckoned with other than two major (conflicting) powers. Among countries with substantial power in the region, Japan is perceived to have good potential for assuming a leadership role. One of the arguments to support this view are versatile relationships with surrounding countries, which is a good way to work on regional stability. However, the alliance with the U.S., which has served a guarantee of stability to Japan since 1945, makes the position of its protégée unenviable in the light of the U.S.-China competition for strategic dominance. The author of Japan's three strategic documents (the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy and Defense Buildup Program) holds that in the event of a Taiwan contingency Japan would need to make a choice: either to support its ally and risk Chinese retaliation or to let the U.S. down and potentially suffer even more serious consequences alone (Watanabe 2023).

As the largest military power with clear pretentions to this region, the US have been present on Japanese soil for the past 80 years. Buzan and Weaver believe that the "inertia on the domestic level meant a de facto continuation of Japan's subordinate role to the United States in East Asia" (147). In addition to the presence of US troops on Japanese soil, Japan, as the US proxy, safeguards the interests of its ally, keeping a close eye on China's pretensions over Taiwan and North Korean activities in the nuclear sphere. Japanese pacifism, the result of the 1960 treaty with the US, brought decades of stability to the region. The arrangement between these two countries provided Japan with security assurances, which came at a cost – Japan had to renounce engaging in offensive military activities and confined its forces to self-defense only. However, the global security environment suffered a major change, and, due to fear of war, Japan introduced new strategy documents and started to increase its military budget, aiming at 2 percent of GDP by 2027. Considering that this plan would put Japan only behind the US and China, it is safe to say that pacifism it once nurtured is now off the table. Aside from promoting its ally's interests, Japan's concern for its security in case a conflict spills over from other crisis-stricken regions compelled the Kishida Government to become more proactive. The valuable deterrence role of this alliance accounts for its longevity,

having in mind that only recently has Japan started its military build-up and reinforcement of defense capabilities of the Self Defense Forces. The significance of the U.S. as their ally motivated the Japanese Government to develop new strategic documents, which emphasize boosting defense investments and reaffirming their alignment with U.S. foreign policy. In the annual publication Defense of Japan (2024), the Alliance with the U.S. has again been characterized as a cornerstone of Japan's national security policy. However, the bulletin does not fail to mention that its ally cannot address challenges alone and that partnerships and alliances are its national defense strategy's backbone.

The countries of Southeast Asia, gathered around ASEAN[13], strive for the U.S. leadership and economic commitment, recognizing the challenges in their backyard, in order to counterbalance the Chinese influence. Japan managed to keep a high level of confidence among these countries by providing economic support and deepening supply chain ties and investments through the decades. Several studies conducted in 2019 and 2020 show that ASEAN countries have high expectations of Japan, particularly in economic terms.

In this geopolitical hotspot, another multilateral initiative, "the Quad",[14] emerged in 2007, initiated by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to promote bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation among each other and with partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. It is not surprising that it was perceived as an Asian version of NATO by the Chinese. The intention behind this initiative is believed to target China by outbalancing it militarily and diplomatically in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in the South China Sea. The members of "the Quad" had a crucial role in redefining the region from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific with a goal to make the transregional ties stronger and make this "transregion" a sufficiently intimidating competitor.

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[13] The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN on 7 January 1984, followed by Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today the ten Member States of ASEAN (available at https://asean.org).

[14] The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue represents a diplomatic partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States committed to supporting an open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient. (https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad).

Yet another initiative in the Indo-Pacific excludes China. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)[15] was envisaged as a way for Washington to offer China strong incentives to integrate into and support a U.S.-led order. However, FPOTUS Trump decided to withdraw the US commitment to this initiative, which impelled the remaining members to question their international leadership and its role in Asia. The disillusioned partners turned to Japan wanting to strengthen ties, and, as a result, rivalry between China and Japan became more serious.

The economic dimension appears to be the most powerful stimulus for keeping the fragile status quo between the Indo-Pacific countries. To support this view, Kawashima claims that the predominant goal for countries in East Asia is to pursue economic well-being, and the use of force between them would harm the balance in the existing economic environment (Kawashima, 2002). Former PM Abe officially introduced the concept of Free and Open Indo-Pacific in 2016[16] with a goal of reshaping the region into an "international public good", thus promoting Japan's diplomatic initiative to create an inclusive framework for regional integration with unified ASEAN as a central entity. The US recognized the value of this concept and developed its own strategy under the same name. What's more, this trend became common for all regional actors.

The appetites are considerable, and the players resourceful. It is up to Japan to decide whether it will remain hesitant between two fires or exert its presence in the Indo-Pacific in a more obvious way, in cooperation with its partners, thus potentially jeopardizing economic ties in the region.

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[15] A regional trade agreement between 11 Indo-Pacific countries and, until 2017, the U.S. The TPP's economic objectives included liberalization of trade in Asia, market reforms, and strengthened trade rules to support America's competitive industries and accord with the modern realities of digital commerce (Heath, T. (2017, March 27). *Strategic Consequences of U.S. Withdrawal from TPP*. RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2017/03/strategic-consequences-of-us-withdrawal-from-tpp.html).

[16] Abe had this concept in mind in 2007 when he stated the following: "We are now at a point at which the Confluence of the Two Seas is coming into being. The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity."

6. The Event of 3/11

During the course of history, many earthquakes, typhoons, and tsunamis hit this disaster-prone island country, but never have three major environmental crises joined forces before.

6.1. "The Triple Disaster"

It was in this environmentally scarred society that the sun rose on 11 March 2011 in the land of the rising sun. The undersea, around 6 minutes long, earthquake that hit East Japan that afternoon turned out to be the seventh largest in recorded history, and the largest one to hit Japan in 140 years.[17] Its magnitude was measured 9 Mw[18] and, even for a country used to earthquakes, this one was indelible. Since its epicenter was located under water, it was followed by tsunami waves up to 40 m high. Thousands of people perished in coastal areas and the country was left with an immense destruction of infrastructure. Several hours after the earthquake, the tsunami induced flood damaged the generators of several plants, most severely the one at the Fukushima Daiichi (Japanese word for number 1). Explosions at three of the reactors as a result of hydrogen buildup caused the release of high levels of radiation in the following weeks. In the critical first two days, efforts to cool the reactors failed. Seawater and boric acid were pumped in to reduce the damage. However, that water leaked back into the ocean and contaminated more than 100,000 tons of water, about a tenth of which was released into the ocean by mid-2011 (IIC 2012). Increased levels of radiation were found in some local food and drinking water as well. Even years after the accident there were occurrences of leaks at the facility, which caused further contamination. Response to this extreme global-scale environmental damage was prompt in one way, but surprisingly slow in another. I will elaborate on this.

At first, the Japanese Government rated the Fukushima crisis as level 5 on the INES, but subsequently raised it to 7 ("Major Accident"), the level of the 1986 Chernobyl accident (the highest on the rating scale). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) describes such event as "a major release of radioactive material with widespread health and environmental effects requiring implementation of planned and extended countermeasures" (definition from

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[17] (Shrivastava, S. (2011b, March 11). *8.9 earthquake in Japan, tsunami warning to Russia, Taiwan and South East Asia*. https://www.theworldreporter.com/2011/03/89-earthquake-in-japan-tsunami-warning.html).

[18] Britannica defines the moment magnitude (Mw) scale as the only scale capable of reliably measuring the magnitudes of the largest, most destructive earthquakes (that is, greater than magnitude 8).

Nuclear Energy Institute Fact Sheet dated April 2011). Indeed, radionuclides were released into the atmosphere and were deposited on land and on the ocean, while there were also direct releases into the sea. Phillips compares the two major accidents and concludes that both suffered from inadequate safety controls and poor plant design or location. Additionally, the emergency responses exposed a disorganized chain of command, deliberate withholding of crucial radiological data and health information, and a focus on economic interests and preserving reputation at the expense of human and environmental safety (Phillips, 2013: 3). Another similarity is found in prompt raising of "acceptable" level of individual radiation exposure after both accidents. This decision prompted an expert on radiation safety at the University of Tokyo and a nuclear advisor to the Japanese PM to resign in April 2011. Writing about this disturbing decision in the middle of a nuclear crisis (Sposato, 2011), the Wall Street Journal reported that he could not bring himself to endorse this policy change "from the point of view of science, or from the point of view of human rights", given that the official "acceptable" level of radiation exposure in schools was raised from 1 to 20 mSv/year.[19] It appears that lessons learned from Japan's experience with nuclear issues has not been effectively applied to prevent future pollution.

Steinhauser notes that Chernobyl accident had had a much greater environmental impact than that in the Fukushima: "both the highly contaminated areas and the evacuated areas are smaller around Fukushima and the projected health effects in Japan are significantly lower than after the Chernobyl accident." He attributes these results to the efficiency and expediency of food safety campaigns and evacuations after the Fukushima accident. In contrast to Chernobyl, in Fukushima there were no fatalities as a consequence of acute radiation. (Steinhauser *et al*, 2014).

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[19] This decision allowed "children living near the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant to receive doses of radiation equal to the international standard for nuclear power plant workers…a level [that is] is far higher than international standards set for the public."(Martin Fackler, "Japan's Prime Minister Defends Handling of Crisis," New York Times, April 30, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/world/asia/01japan.html?_r=0).
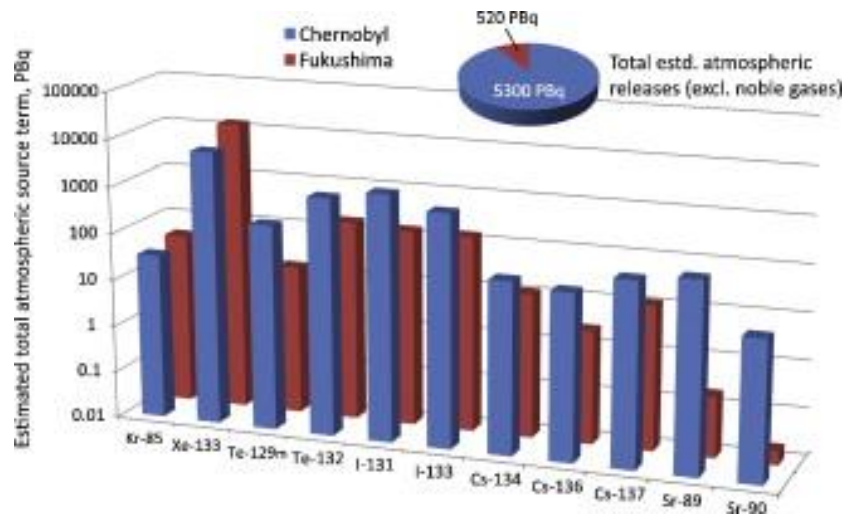
Figure 1 – Comparison of estimated atmospheric releases in Chernobyl and Fukushima[20]

The Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) General Manager's report in 2015 states: "A major factor that contributed to the accident was the widespread assumption in Japan that its nuclear power plants were so safe that an accident of this magnitude was simply unthinkable … and was not challenged by regulators or by the government. As a result, Japan was not sufficiently prepared for a severe nuclear accident in March 2011." The Report noted that there were certain weaknesses "in plant design, in emergency preparedness and response arrangement and in planning for the management of a severe accident".[21] Why was safety of everyone neglected to such an extent? The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been a strong supporter of nuclear power and has received significant donations from major nuclear plant manufacturers (Duffield and Woodall 2011 in Vivoda 498). This close relationship between nuclear regulators and utilities contributed to lax regulatory oversight. For instance, despite regulatory documents identifying the Fukushima Daiichi plant as one of Japan's most problematic reactors over the previous decade, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) allowed its continued operation and approved a ten-year extension for Unit 1 just a month before the earthquake and tsunami (Kaufmann 2011). The rest is history.

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[20] Figure from "Comparison of the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear accidents: a review of the environmental impacts." *Science of the total environment* 470 (2014) by Steinhauser, Georg, Alexander Brandl, and Thomas E. Johnson.

[21] *Fukushima Daiichi Accident - World Nuclear Association*. (n.d.-b). https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-daiichi-accident),

6.2. The Aftermath of the Fukushima Accident

Among other factors, the role of the US will be closely examined in the analysis of the domestic response to the nuclear crisis. The goal of this discourse analysis[22] is to shed light on the delayed reaction of the Japanese authorities and reveal the fragility of this relationship in challenging conditions.

Twelve years after the accident, the Chairman of Washington based Nuclear Regulatory Commission explained in an interview for NHK that the main motive for the US State Department to extend an offer to provide continual support to Japan in the immediate aftermath of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami was to provide all the available support to American citizens and also to provide help and expertise to the Japanese government. The initial communication between the heads of states was cooperative in nature, but it changed due to lack of information after the hydrogen explosion on site. The difference in assessments whether the reactor suffered a meltdown caused distrust and frustration due to different perceptions of the reaction promptness. The US felt compelled to gather information independently since not enough was coming from the Japanese side. After another hydrogen explosion in the reactor, there was a risk of explosion of reactors themselves. After receiving news that TEPCO might withdraw from the site, the US officials urged the Japanese authorities to get plant employees in closer proximity to the reactors in order to find a way to cool the nuclear fuel rods so as to prevent a catastrophe. It was not until the 17th that a Self-Defense Force helicopter was dispatched to dump water on the reactor, which was received as a sign of restored communication and gradual "clearing up feelings of mistrust" (Risa, 2023).

The initial disconnect between Japan and the US happened due to a discrepancy in preparedness and disaster management in dealing with nuclear energy (a myth among the Japanese that a nuclear accident would never occur) – as well as lack of transparency. The Japanese Ambassador to the US at the time of the accident characterized this episode as not a

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[22] An interview for the NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai) - Japan's public broadcaster in March 2023 held with John Roos, the former US ambassador to Japan; Gregory Jaczko, former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Fujisaki Ichiro, former Japanese ambassador to the US; and Fukuyama Tetsuro, who was Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary at the time of the disaster. They were witnesses of, challenges arising mainly from disagreements about the Japanese government's initial response to the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster.

crisis in US-Japan relations, but Japan's own. However, it did stretch the Japan-US alliance to a near-breaking point (ibid).

The country's leadership struggled to come out of the nuclear crisis without major political turbulences, but six months after the accident the Prime Minister resigned from this post and his Democratic Party of Japan lost the general election to LDP the following year. While the resigning PM took an antinuclear stance following the triple disaster believing that Japan needs to reduce its dependence on nuclear power, the new PM supported nuclear agenda. This decision has led to massive anti-nuclear protests of around 75.000 people in Tokyo. Tens of thousands protested again in the capital against the Government's plan to restart nuclear power plants, gathering more than 8 million signatures for their cause.[23] Sentiments regarding the nuclear program were driven by various motives – while around 70% of the population was in favor of a permanent shutdown of plants (Asahi Shimbun, December 4, 2013) and experienced renewal of nuclear energy production as existential threat. Business community saw the abandonment of nuclear program as a threat to the Japanese economy (The Conversation, February 5, 2013), and the nuclear power industry lobbied with the government officials to restore the production.

After the initial dust had settled (figuratively and literally), citizens who requested abandonment of nuclear power plants started to file lawsuits. Analyzing the cases of application of the precautionary measures in the field of the environment, Professor Drenovak-Ivanović found that two courts in Japan issued opposing decisions ruling on lawsuits of the citizens requesting banning the operation of nuclear power plants, rather than being restarted (as requested by the plants' operators[24]). Namely, a court in one prefecture issued a decision, banning the restart of two reactors of the Takahama nuclear power plant. In its decision, the court invoked the precautionary principle, stating that reopening the plant could not be permitted if there was even a slight risk of future earthquakes leading to another accident. The court also criticized local administrative bodies for failing to prepare a protection and evacuation plan for a potential new accident in their proposal to reopen the nuclear power plants. In a separate case concerning a citizen's lawsuit to prevent the

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[23] (*60,000 protest Japan's plan to restart nuclear power plants - UPI.com.* (2013, June 2). https://web.archive.org/web/20131029191631/http://www.upiasia.com/Top-News/2013/06/02/60000-protest-Japans-plan-to-restart-nuclear-power-plants/UPI-34961370197818/).

[24] Powerful interest groups pushed for the immediate restart of Japan's reactors, while others advocated for their permanent shutdown (Vivoda 494-495).

reopening of the Sendai nuclear power plant, the court assessed both the risks associated with reopening and the potential for implementing precautionary principle. The court concluded that the Nuclear Safety Agency had established new operational standards for nuclear power plants, considering relevant parameters. It also found that the operator had correctly evaluated the potential impact of the strongest possible earthquake on the plant's safety in accordance with these new regulations. The court held that the precautionary principle was not applicable because the potential impacts of natural phenomena are not areas where scientific consensus is lacking. Consequently, the court determined that if the reactor operates according to established standards, the risk of serious accidents could be minimized to a degree that warrants the resumption of the nuclear power plant's operations. (Drenovak-Ivanović, 2015).

IAEA Director stated that the Japanese nuclear disaster "caused deep public anxiety throughout the world and damaged confidence in nuclear power".[25] German engineering giant Siemens has announced its decision to withdraw completely from the nuclear industry, halting plans to build numerous nuclear plants in Russia over the next twenty years, and shifting its focus to the renewable energy sector instead. Germany has also fast-tracked its plans to shut down all of its aging nuclear reactors and phase out the remaining ones by 2022. This shift was largely driven by the socio-political debate triggered by the catastrophic nuclear accident in Japan in March 2011, which led the German government to implement a "nuclear moratorium" immediately following the disaster.[26] Many other countries also had a change of heart regarding nuclear power plants. Professor Katsuyuki Hidaka questions why Japan has not yet adopted a denuclearization policy, despite the country's frequent earthquakes and the fact that a large majority of the Japanese population supports such a move. (https://researchoutreach.org/articles/in-the-wake-of-catastrophe-japanese-media-after-the-fukushima-nuclear-disaster/).

6.3. Circumstances of the Release of Nuclear Wastewater

In July 2021 the Japanese Government made the information public that it has approved plant operator TEPCO's plan to start releasing the radioactive water from the Fukushima plants into the Pacific Ocean, explaining that the process will be carried out in a way that keeps the

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[25] IAEA sees slow nuclear growth post Japan - UPI.com. (2011, September 23). *UPI*. https://www.upi.com/Business_News/Energy-Industry/2011/09/23/IAEA-sees-slow-nuclear-growth-post-Japan/UPI-87041316777856/

[26] *The nuclear phase-out in Germany*. (n.d.). BASE. https://www.base.bund.de/EN/ns/nuclear-phase-out/nuclear-phase-out_node.html

environment and human population safe.[27] There is a need for clarification regarding the existence and quantity of mentioned wastewater.

When the three nuclear reactors malfunctioned as a result of devastating tsunami, seawater was used to prevent further disaster, becoming highly contaminated in the process. Some of it leaked into the Pacific Ocean almost immediately, causing high levels of radioactive particles for at least a month after the accident.[28] These reactors have not been in function since 2011, but after all these years they still need to be cooled. The water used for the cooling process gets contaminated each time and, over the course of years, its storage has become a huge technical issue for the Japanese Government. Namely, on the day the first phase of discharge started (August 24, 2023) there were around 350 million gallons of wastewater on site. According to the government, the tanks were nearly full and there was not enough room for more of them on site, hence the decision to start releasing.

Figure 2 - The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, Fukushima prefecture, Japan, August 24, 2023[29]

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[27] *Japan's role in the Indo-Pacific following the Fukushima nuclear disaster: Through the Pacific Islands' lens | The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)*. (n.d.). https://www.nbr.org/publication/japans-role-in-the-indo-pacific-following-the-fukushima-nuclear-disaster-through-the-pacific-islands-lens/

[28] *Fukushima Daiichi Accident - World Nuclear Association*. (n.d.-c). https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-daiichi-accident

[29] Figure from the Reuters' article "Japan utility starts release of second batch of treated radioactive water.

Figure 3 - Tanks used for storage of treated water[30]

Figure 4 – Multi-nuclide Removal Facility (ALPS)[31]

Before the water is disposed of, it goes through a complex process of decontamination.[32] The one remaining element that cannot be removed from the water is tritium, and the officials in TEPCO claim that at that point filtered water from the storage tanks contains about 190 Becquerel of tritium per liter, below the World Health Organization drinking water limit

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[30] From DW online article "Will Japan release Fukushima water into the Pacific?"

[31] Image taken from TEPCO website.

[32] The process is called Advanced Liquid Processing System (or ALPS) (Brumfiel, G. (2023, August 24). 5 things to know about Japan's Fukushima water release in the Pacific. *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/2023/08/24/1195419846/fukushima-radioactive-water-japan)

(10,000 Becquerel per liter). The Government and the IAEA approved the findings that this filtering process meets international standards and that the impact on people and the environment is "negligible". It will take decades to empty all these tanks, since one of precautionary measures was to release the water in phases, through a 1 km long tunnel under the seafloor away from Fukushima, diluted with seawater. The process is well underway, since there were five discharges already, from August 2023 to April this year.[33]

6.4. Perception of Japan Following the Wastewater Release

Without prior consultations with the countries of Pacific Islands, on July 2, 2021 the announcement was made by the Japanese Government that in about two years' time the process of discharging nuclear wastewater into the Pacific Ocean would begin. The country worked diligently on constructing the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS), and the PM decided that its technology reached a sufficient level of operation for the water to be considered safe for the ecosystem. The leaders of Pacific Island Countries were assured that "the release of the ALPS-treated water into the ocean will be done in a way that ensures there will be no harm inflicted on the environment or the human population…" (Shiozawa, 2022). Several officials of the Pacific Island Forum expressed concern and requested a joint conference, given that this decision was based on a one-sided discussion, calling the plan "another major nuclear contamination disaster" (*Fukushima: What are the concerns over waste water release?, 2023*). The main concerns were potential impact on citizens' health and fishing industry. If we looked back, we would learn that this regional forum protested Japan's risky nuclear plans on several occasions before: when in 1981 Japan envisaged to start disposing of nuclear waste into the ocean and in 1990s, when Japan had a plan to transport mixed oxide (nuclear) fuel from the Western countries. By not objecting to Japan's water dump, countries like Australia and the US raise the region's geopolitical stakes. There are virtually no news articles online with president of India's thoughts on this matter. In the sea of protests, Japan's Quad partners do not object. Analyzing the discourse of affected countries' officials brings us to the information that Japan had failed to provide full information on the radioactive water being discharged from the Fukushima plant, despite repeated requests from both Moscow and Beijing. Russia's spokesperson called for suspension of these activities (Japan to release Fukushima water into ocean). South Korean

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[33] IAEA. "Japan's ALPS Treated Water Release is Progressing as Planned, IAEA Task Force Says," n.d. https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/japans-alps-treated-water-release-is-progressing-as-planned-iaea-task-force-says.

officials have not expressed their concern about the water release, but the opposition as well as around 80% of the public did. Conversely, the American FDA deems that this action will have no effect on the safety of foods imported from Japan and domestically produced food (https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-response-fukushima-daiichi-nuclear-power-facility incident). There had been no opposition from Australian officials either, which the author of the article in Australia Institute found to be another proof of choosing sides in the ongoing strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific. The author's stance corresponds with conclusions of this thesis, "as a member of the Quad, alongside India and the United States, Japan is regarded as critical to 'stability' in the Indo-Pacific and to countering or containing China", which means that it can get away with such irresponsible decisions related to nuclear safety (*Eating the three-eyed fish: where is Australia on nuclear wastewater in the Pacific,* 2023).

7. (De)securitization of the 3/11 - Empirical Analysis

Having introduced the methodology and theories to be employed in the research, and laid out the data relevant for making an argumentation, the analysis of the Japanese authorities' sum of actions[34] will follow to find whether the securitizing and desecuritizing actor were sincere in their intention. Did they deliver a just (de)securitization of the state of the environment following the 3/11 upon the decision to release radioactive water into the ocean? In making an argument regarding these events, it will be inevitable to take into consideration the political and economic circumstances that, without any doubt, shaped the response of the Japanese Government. Considering the fragile balance between great powers in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the importance of "middle powers" in preserving this balance, and taking into account the severe environmental events that took place in Japan, this chapter analyzes the circumstances leading to and arising from the Fukushima accident, as well as the morality of desecuritization which came about as a consequence of several factors. The research results will be delivered by applying principles introduced in Rita Floyd's revised theory to understand how important it was for Japan to stay in the global arena without losing momentum in the international economic race.

The accident in Fukushima triggered a heavily polarized discourse, as it usually happens when an existential threat occurs. Whether to securitize, when to securitize without causing (unnecessary) panic, how to respond? Looking at the other countries' official statements, news articles and recorded firsthand experiences, it appears that the official warnings were scarce and low profile in the first hours and days following the accident, i.e. the securitizing speech act was withheld from the referent objects. We learn the citizens' side of the story from Fukushima evacuees, social workers, medical workers and activists, through interviews with an anthropologist Sarah Phillips in 2012. In her interlocutors' words, inconsistencies in reporting made it difficult for them to make choices about their actions to minimize their risk of exposure to radiation. Instead of immediately informing the population about radiation risks, the Japanese authorities kept the valuable data provided by the US Department of Defense as well as from the System for Prediction of Environmental Emergency Dose

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[34] In line with Rita Floyd's understanding of desecuritization not as an outcome, but a sum of actions, i.e., a process that has a desecuritized state of affairs as its outcome (in "Just and unjust desecuritization". *Contesting security*. Routledge, 2014. p. 128).

Information. Consequently, some families evacuated to even more contaminated locations.[35] A similar conclusion was made by the members of Sasakawa Peace Foundation regarding the disclosure of vital information, whose absence, in their opinion, spread the anxiety among the population. Paradoxically, the public overseas were provided with more information much sooner than the Japanese public (Akiyama 2012: 28). This delay in informing the public concerned was analyzed in the New York Times, and in this article, the author deduced that the Japanese government was "operating in a culture that sought to avoid responsibility and, above all, criticism."[36] (Akiyama 2012: 40). According to the 2013 World Press Freedom Index, Japan's ranking declined, partly due to censorship of reporting. Authorities imposed a ban on independent coverage related to the Fukushima accident, which aligned with the government's efforts to suppress anti-nuclear dissent amid growing public opposition to nuclear power (Vivoda, 501).

Nevertheless, a nuclear emergency was declared[37] and an evacuation order was issued for those who found themselves within 2 km from the nuclear power plant. This radius was extended several times by the Prime Minister.[38] The declaration of nuclear emergency was in fact the speech act and the environmental accident was securitized by the Prime Minister as the securitizing actor, as a holder of sociopolitical capital, who alarmed the public about the threat which had to employ extraordinary measures by the authorities in order to preserve security. Using Floyd's criteria

> *(1) there must be an objective existential threat, which is to say a threat that endangers the survival of an actor or an order regardless of whether anyone has realized this;*
>
> *(2) the referent object of security must be morally legitimate, which is the case only when the referent object is conducive to human well-being defined as the satisfaction of human needs; and*

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[35] *The Japan Times Online*, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120118a1.html

[36] "Japan Held Nuclear Data, Leaving Evacuees in Peril," New York Times, August 8, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/09/world/asia/09japan.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print

[37] Approximately four hours after the earthquake, the PM declared a state of nuclear emergency (Ishimori, 2017).

[38] *Fukushima Daiichi Accident - World Nuclear Association*. (n.d.). https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-daiichi-accident

(3) the security response must be appropriate to the threat in question, which is to say that (a) the security response must be measured in accordance with the capabilities of the aggressor and (b) the securitizing actor must be sincere in his or her intentions (Floyd, 2011: 428),

we deduce that:

1) the threat was objectively existential since the level of radiation in the moment of explosion was extremely high and kept being unsafe for at least a month, presenting a direct threat to human life and health,

2) the referent object (human well-being) was indeed morally legitimate, since citizens of Fukushima Prefecture and surrounding areas were unknowingly exposed to elevated levels of radiation which could have harmed their health; and

3) the response was to some extent measured to the threat, taking into consideration the aggravating circumstances - a delay in conveying the seriousness of the accident to residents due to the communication problems caused by power outages and the inadequate use of communication satellites. Consequently, without real-time data on the extent of nuclear fallout and unprepared for the simultaneous impact of natural and nuclear disasters, the evacuation orders were belated in some areas. The local authorities struggled to carry out an efficient large-scale evacuation. Unlike the IAEA's guidelines, which suggest immediate evacuation of areas within a 3-to-30 km radius from a nuclear power plant in emergencies, the Japanese government only gradually evacuated these areas, issuing evacuation orders on seven different occasions between March 11 and April 22, 2011 (Ishimori, 2017).

In addition, distribution of iodine pills whose function is to reduce the absorption of radioactive iodine-131 were delayed in many municipalities, while the government should have distributed the pills to residents living within a 30-km radius of the plant in advance (Nakajima, 2021). The sincerity of the intention of the Japanese Government in addressing the threat of exposure to contamination and securing the well-being of the Japanese people is debatable, to put it mildly. To support this position, let us go back to the fact that amidst the nuclear crisis the Government raised the "acceptable" level of radiation exposure by 20 times, and ignored the recommendation of the UN human rights monitoring mechanism (UPR) to undo this decision with potentially grave impact on the health and wellbeing of children. Since evacuation zones were established according to measured levels of radiation, the motive behind this decision could be a less extensive relocation of people – less hassle and

less dramatic impact on the economy – if everyone could just act as if nothing had happened. Hence, the securitization's ethics is debatable. The situation is justfully securitized, but the morality behind the measures strikes as faulty. The following table takes the key concepts of securitization, as proposed by Buzan *et al.*, and makes a conclusion regarding its success according to Rita Floyd's criteria:

Case	Security Issue	Securitizing Actor	Referent object	Audience	Speech act	Securitization Successful/ unsuccessful
Fukushima nuclear accident	Exposure to radiation	Japanese Government	Human well-being	Citizens of Japan	Declaration of nuclear emergency	Successful, not ethically performed

Table 1: The securitization process of the Fukushima nuclear accident

Historical trends in Japanese public opinion show that attitudes towards nuclear energy have swiftly shifted from opposition to general indifference after previous incidents. In the wake of the Fukushima disaster, the government's strategy has been to stifle the debate on nuclear power, with the hope that public opinion will revert to its usual indifference over the coming years. This approach is not unprecedented. Historically, the Japanese Government has effectively used communication strategies to influence public perceptions about energy policy issues and align them with policy objectives (Valentine, Sovacool, and Matsuura 2011). Instead of adjusting policies in response to opposition, the state and industry groups have opted to initiate expensive campaigns aiming at public acceptance (Sovacool and Valentine 2012). The desecuritizing actor was playing on this card, treating the issue as détente in a way – by attempting to turn this existential environmental threat into a challenge (Wæver, 1995: 60). TEPCO's 30-year plan was there, with every little thing predicted and analyzed, with no margin for error. All radionuclides were to be removed from water by using the state-of-the-art decontamination system. All but one element: tritium. This should be perceived as a challenge, not an existential threat. Therefore, on with the dumping process.

Wæver suggested three possible ways to desecuritize an issue (1995, 2000):

1) Avoid talking about issues in terms of security,

2) Keep responses to securitized issues in forms that do not create security dilemmas or other vicious spirals,

3) Move issues back to the normal politics.

In the section to follow, the desecuritizing issue and other concepts of desecuritization will be examined according to Wæver's principles:

Case	Security Issue	Desecuritizing Actor	Audience	How to desecuritize			Success/ Failure
				Not to talk about issues in terms of security	*Avoid responses that could create security dilemmas or other vicious spirals*	*Move issues back to the normal politics*	
Decision to release radioactive water	Jeopardizing people's health	Japanese Government	Citizens of Japan/ citizens of the world	√	√	√	Success

Table 2 - The desecuritization process of the 3/11

Table 2 indicates that all of the three options were utilized together in this desecuritization process.

When the Japanese PM announced that nuclear wastewater was to be released in phases starting in two years' time, with this speech act he basically argued that there are no objective threats arising from this plan. This was the beginning of desecuritization process. A state of panic ensued as a reaction to this announcement, which indicated the possibility of unsuccessful outcome of this process, since initially the public did not approve shifting the matter back into the regular politics. The TEPCO officials, as relevant actors in this event, explained that the storage tanks were nearly full and, after making consultations with the Government, this option was deemed the least dangerous. While the people of Japan have generally been lethargic in a way as a result of successful campaign of the state and industry groups (as mentioned above), the Forum of Indo-Pacific Countries objected energetically to such a plan, as someone directly affected in terms of health, food safety and trade, as well as

Russia and China, expectedly. Politics prevented Japan's partners from voicing their concerns over polluting the Earth's largest ocean. The fuss of the audience was not of such proportions to prevent the Japanese Government from pursuing their agenda. For desecuritization to fail, at least one of three options for desecuritization that Wæver (2000) provided would have to fail. Has the Government failed to speak issues out of the security realm? Since the plan is now in its fifth phase, the issue is clearly not considered an objective security threat. Has the threat been responded to in a way that evokes security dilemmas and other vicious spirals? Has the issue been moved back to normal politics or has it been resorted to the extraordinary measures?

Aradau (2004) argues: "desecuritization is a normative project which reclaims a notion of democratic politics where the struggle for emancipation is possible" (Aradau, 2004, p. 406). While the audience in the Copenhagen school framework mostly consisted of the general public, it may differ in a non-democratic context. This thesis has analyzed Japan's political system and concluded that it corresponds to a democracy in some areas, while in the other it is more of a soft authoritarian regime. In that regard, it could be more on point to apply Vuori's premise that the elites are the key members of the audience for government to legitimize the emergency measures (2008). The elites have an interest in restoration of nuclear energy production, steady economic indexes and regional stability, which they can expect to get if they align with the Government's positions.

In circumstances as described, it will be a challenge to pursue ethics in analyzing this event. For desecuritization to be just, it requires stability in which actors work together and put restorative measures to undo the effects of securitization (Floyd, 2015). The effects of securitization have waned over the course of years, with some exceptions concerning the zones with restrictive entry status (around 2.4% of the total area of Fukushima Prefecture). After a four-year period of zero nuclear energy production, Japan has restarted 12 units, 10 more units are under review and 5 more that have passed review but have not resumed production. The issue being desecuritized and analyzed in this research has more to do with a general concern with the environment. An unprecedented incident, which caused an initial shock that paralyzed the country and implanted fear of radiation in every conscious and conscientious person, has given way to phase two – the liquid radioactive consequences of poor engineering, preventive measures and preparedness. Apart from the question why were the Japanese authorities desecuritizing the ecological well-being by proposing the release of

contaminated water, another question arises - how come that announcing this plan was not responded to by an act of reactionary securitization by any actor with sociopolitical capital?

Having exhausted all other theoretical and empirical reasoning, finally, and most importantly, Rita Floyd's criteria for just desecuritization will be used in the analysis of the ethics of Japanese Government's decision to allow TEPCO to be rid of excess water used to cool down reactors which were damaged due to tsunami inflicted power loss. Here are Floyd's principles for deeming a desecuritizing act just:

1. *Desecuritization of just securitization must occur when objective existential threats have been neutralized, whereas desecuritization of unjust securitization must occur immediately.*
2. *Security language and security practice should be terminated in full and with immediate effect.*
3. *Desecuritizing actors should avoid renewed and/or reactionary securitization by building a stable desecuritizing state of affairs.*

Since desecuritization is a political act, and Japan's political ties with the major powers in the region are very complex, the decision to act had to be negotiated with Japan's closest partners first. Having in mind that Japan's logistics is essential to the U.S. in exercising its power in the region, and the levels of water radioactivity are not outrageously high, there was no public condemnation of the decision to release from the American part. The other partners, assumably, followed the American example. The opinions of domestic populace and of the surrounding islands seem not to have been taken into serious consideration in succumbing to TEPCO's requests. When you have loads of polluted water and are running low on storage room, the objective existential threat is the fact that it is the safest option to dispose of it. No level of radioactive water should be released into the ocean, since its accumulation in the seabed and fish leads to higher chances of suffering an illness – the threat had not been neutralized. The language and the practice were indeed terminated, ungroundedly, while it is expected that the desecuritizing actor would not consider renewed securitization, unless forced in case of a new accident.

This case demonstrates that the context in which desecuritization occurs influences its outcome to a great extent. Japanese authorities did not require an audience for this act (the audience at home was manipulated into accepting); the speech act was ceremonial and courteous, while the confidence aura stemming from the geopolitical circumstances made this

desecuritization smooth and one-sided. The opposition consisting of opposition parties, human rights activists and NGOs were powerless to confront the opportunistic bunch.

What this extensive research aimed to accomplish was to bring facts, opinions and perceptions together regarding the contested decision to dump nuclear wastewater into the ecosystem. When the Fukushima disaster struck, those in charge were ill prepared to respond effectively or to provide accurate information to the public. As a result, Japanese families affected by the disaster lost trust in the information given by TEPCO and the Government, growing skeptical of the assurances about their health and safety. (Van Ness, 2017: 349.) While Japan failed to prepare adequately for the environmental crisis that befell it, both in terms of legislation and political will to disturb the "nuclear village"[39], the U.S. as a concerned party with troops on the Japanese soil prompted its ally into a more vigorous response. Securitization had set in, delayed but morally just. All three Floyd's criteria were met, as laid out in the previous chapters. Desecuritization, on the other hand, failed the test. Not only was it unjust, but it will continue to be unjust for decades to come, to the dissatisfaction of a predominant number of people who are and will be directly affected by radioactivity.

For that reason, we recommend the adoption of legislation that would oblige the actors to ask for public approval, in a form of referendum, before measures with such an environmental impact are taken in the future. The population should have a right to participate in radiological-protection policymaking, and since in that way people would participate in decision-making about their lives, this would *de facto* lead to their emancipation (Nunes 2014: 144). A revision of this 30-year wastewater release plan would also be of good use.

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[39] In Japan, the term 'nuclear village' refers to the network of pro-nuclear advocates that includes utility companies, nuclear suppliers, government officials, legislators, financial institutions, media, and academia, as defined by Jeff Kingston (2012: 1). This group formed an insular network of mutual interests focused on promoting nuclear power.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to scrutinize the response to a major environmental crisis in Japan through the ethical lens. Juxtaposed with concepts of securitization and desecuritization theory, it aimed to answer the question of whether the actor's intention behind the (de)securitization of the environment corresponds to Rita Floyd's revised theory, i.e., whether the measures taken in solving this environmental issue were morally justified. The rationale was sought in Japan's status in the Indo-Pacific, arising from the deep and complex relationship with the US and in the alignment with their foreign policy, since balancing between its ally and the ally's rivals in the region leaves little space for independent actions. The Japanese Government called for desecuritization of Fukushima environmental concerns by announcing the plan to release contaminated water into the Pacific. Thus, the fear for individual and collective safety was sent back into the sphere of normal politics. Since the question that this thesis aimed to answer is whether this was an ethical move, the argument for characterizing it as unethical in nature was looked for in series of political decisions arising from corruptness of the system in a country supported by the US, further substantiated by the analysis performed according to Rita Floyd's analytical framework.

The evolution of environmental security as one of the newer security concepts was presented from its emergence in the international arena – from the end of the Cold War, through the 1990s, and its more recent views. Leaning on theoretical analysis of moral justification of putting environmental degradation in a security realm, the thesis engaged in empirical analysis of righteousness of a controversial environmental call. While the theoreticians have been divided on the inclusion of environment as a non-traditional threat in national security agenda, practice has shown that climate change and environmental degradation are finding their place in defense strategies all over the world. Countries have been committed to harmonizing their environmental policies to reduce negative effects of climate change. Paradoxically, Japan, the affected country analyzed in this thesis, had previously increased its nuclear energy production in order to mitigate adverse effects of greenhouse gasses, an obligation arising from the guidelines of the Kyoto Protocol.

An analysis of Japan's historical, political and economic circumstances provided a context that allowed for a better understanding of the motives that drove its officials to decision-making with grave global consequences. Impressive nation-building, entanglement of bureaucracy in domestic politics, as well as bilateral and multilateral initiatives aimed at

finding its place in the international arena all had their part in positioning Japan among rare geopolitical actors with enough leverage to control the Indo-Pacific playfield. In the region where every North Korean missile counts and calls for retaliation, where China engages in extensive military drills in South China Sea each time Taiwan attempts to exercise sovereignty and the U.S. keep their watchful eye on these potential hotbeds all the while exercising their own interests, Japan strives to preserve (and promote) its economic well-being by juggling between conflicting parties. For this reason, it appears puzzling why its authorities decided to handle the water discharge without consulting the public and the radiation affected countries. The matter was handled inconspicuously, nonchalantly even, as if no one would be affected by this decision. Desecuritization was at work, with one criterion deemed unjust, and the remaining two met but for unethical reasons. Why had it come to that? The empirical analysis showed us that formidable risks are sometimes taken in pursuing one's interests.

Since environmental security debates regained substantial attention in political decision-making after the anticlimax caused by 9/11 terrorist attacks, this research is relevant inasmuch it provides synthesized data related to Japan's historical and international circumstances and those in the aftermath of Fukushima nuclear accident. Further, it is supported by analysis of policymakers' actions and given context by portraying overall sentiment among the population.

Analysis of the relevant indicators brings the author to the overall conclusion that Japan handled a global environmental issue poorly – considering it a security threat initially (with delay), and disregarding its long-term consequences 12 years later. The goal of the research was to contribute to and fill the gap in the existing literature on ethics of desecuritization, offering a new perception of performing a desecuritizing act by unanimously deciding to pollute nearly half of the world waters, as well as a gap in the scholarship regarding the causes and consequences of poor environment-security nexus in the case of Japan's 3/11 desecuritization on a global scale, by shedding light on the complex power-driven interplay of economy and politics, their influence on moral compass of decision-makers and societal responses to this major environmental risk.

When it comes to ethics, it is rarely found in the modern world. In politics - doubedly so. The environmental decision-making should not depend on its ability to score political points, but should be given equal terms as any other security threat. In the case of Japanese forfeit to

political gains, the ethics suffered, giving way to all benefits but sacrificing health. Nevertheless, the morality stamp that results from employing Floyd's principles in addressing the ethics of securitization and desecuritization represents a solid tool for assessing morally unclear calls, which, in this case, exposed non-ecological motives for desecuritizing environmental security in Japan.

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