The Copenhagen School and Japan in the Late Tokugawa Period 1853-1868

History and International Relations

Abstract

This paper analyses Japan in the late Tokugawa period using the Copenhagen School of security studies as a theoretical framework. The scope of analysis lies strictly within the time period of 1853-1868. The intended nature of the analysis is simple, and mainly aims to understand the late Tokugawa period through the lens of the Copenhagen School. It also aims to contribute to the literature of the subject area, in that it uses an interpretivist international relations theory to analyse the late Tokugawa period in Japan.

The theoretical framework is applied by examining three of the Copenhagen School's core aspects—securitization theory, regional security complex theory, and the broadening of the security agenda into five distinct sectors—and applying each of them in turn. The analysis draws from a range of examples from the given time period, largely focusing on domestic attitudes towards the prospect of modernization and Westernization, and foreign economic and imperial interests towards Japan. The analysis also considers the actions of contemporary actors at various levels of analysis, and analyses them as acts of securitization where suitable.

The analysis finds that the use of the Copenhagen School as a mode of historical enquiry produces a nuanced and structured understanding of various aspects of late Tokugawa Japan. By placing the case study in the context of securitization theory, regional security complex theory, and analysing empirical examples with respect to the five sectors of security, the events of late Tokugawa Japan can be construed as a constructivist network of security dynamics, as opposed to a traditional reading of history in a simple chronological fashion.

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Introduction

The general aim of this research is to take the Copenhagen School of security studies as a theoretical framework, and apply it to Japanese domestic and foreign policy from 1853 to 1868 as a case study. It also aims to contribute to the scholarship of late Tokugawa Japan from an IR perspective. To begin, it should be understood that the synthesis of IR elements with historical ones is somewhat unorthodox, and that relationship between history and international relations has long been a shaky one. Over the course of the Cold War, IR has evolved in such a way that there is now a perceived transatlantic divide—contrasting American scholars who adopt an ahistorical, positivist approach in mainstream IR against British scholars with a relatively historicallyinformed perspective. John Hobson and George Lawson argue that the binary between positivism and post-positivism is a misrepresentation of the underlying issue, that history's relationship with IR remains overlooked and deserves further investigation, and that the disconnect between the two inseparable disciplines is non-binary, and not necessarily an epistemological disagreement.[1] What this means for this paper is merely that we prefer a more historically-informed, interpretivist approach, although it is still valuable to be aware of the positivist versus post-positivist debate.

Security studies as a sub-field of IR has long been concerned with military security and organized violence, having traditionally drawn heavily on classical and neorealist theories as frameworks for analysis. The Copenhagen School is significant insofar that it offers a wider-scope alternative to the narrow military-oriented realist lens through which security issues have conventionally been analysed.[2] Presented in *Security* by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de

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[1] John Hobson and George Lawson, "What is History in International Relations?" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008): 415.

[2] Refers to the 'wide vs narrow' debate as described in – Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 2.

Wilde as a framework for analysis, CS theory can be identified to have three core components: Securitization theory, regional security complex theory (RSCT), and the broadened sectors of security. The first, securitization theory, can be described as a form of politicization, wherein an actor attempts to construe an issue as an existential threat—and if the targeted audience is persuaded of its legitimacy, then the issue is successfully 'securitized'. The second, RSCT, suggests that security issues do not travel well, and hence are subject to geographical constraints—different geographical areas around the world have their own miniature systems of security, within which other IR frameworks may be applied. The third aspect is the broadened scope of security beyond the traditional military focus of security studies, which the Copenhagen School achieves by identifying five sectors of security: Military, political, economic, social, and environmental. Considering the above, CS theory can be described as a general broadening of neorealist thought in security studies with a constructivist flair. This investigation will be conducted in accordance with the three core concepts identified above. Each of these aspects will be examined, using Japanese domestic and foreign policy during the given time period to inform the discussion.

In terms of historical context, the fifteen years from 1853 to 1868 marked the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate of feudal Japan, a period known as the Bakumatsu. When Commodore Matthew Perry and his infamous 'Black Ships' entered Edo Bay in 1853 with the goal of opening Japan to foreign trade and the establishment of foreign settlements, it marked the beginning of the end of the shogunate. Perry's arrival and subsequent demands highlighted the fragile balance between the leadership's unpopular engagement with foreigners, and the simmering xenophobic activism from scholars and the samurai nobility. These tensions had been present in Japanese society for decades, though it has traditionally been discussed as an intellectual affair by scholars and the social elite. Only in the late 1850s did an increasingly aggressive foreign presence catalyze

foreign policy into becoming a public concern.[3] Under the realization that foreign imperial powers were determined to open Japan to international society, the shogunate (also known as the Bakufu) in Edo was forced to confront and reevaluate Japan's isolationist foreign policy. Their policy decisions and their consequences after Perry's first visit, scrutinized within the framework of CS theory, constitutes the bulk of evidence in this paper.

The Theoretical Framework

However, there remains an epistemological conundrum in the way history could be treated in IR research. In their attempt to unravel the convoluted relationship between history and international relations, Hobson and Lawson identify a mode of historical research in IR that they call 'history without historicism', in which "history takes on the role of 'scripture' – as the application of [historical] 'lessons'… can be used to inform current policy and support research hypotheses."[4] One value of taking such a historical approach to IR is that it serves as a flexible tool that "has the virtue of establishing… universal propositions that can be applied across time and place," without having to tweak the theory to fit the context.[5] As far as history's role in IR is concerned, historical sociologists like Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter have advocated for a general approach as described above, resonating with the universalism and predictive approach already taken by neorealists and neoliberals. Hobson and Lawson suggest that if Kiser and Hechter's approach to historical study is legitimate, "then by implication one might label neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism as representing a legitimate mode of historical enquiry."[6] Hence the justification for this paper: That, given the validity of 'history without historicism' in IR research, it is valid to

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[3] William Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (London, Oxford University Press: 1973), 140.
[4] Hobson and Lawson, 423.
[5] Hobson and Lawson, 422.
[6] Hobson and Lawson, 423.

illustrate CS theory as one such 'grand narrative' per Kiser and Hechter. This is the core justification for the application of the Copenhagen School to the historical case, in that we label the Copenhagen School as a 'legitimate mode of historical enquiry' while using Japanese foreign policy 1853-1868 as 'scripture'.

However, there are two primary limitations to this approach of using the Copenhagen School as an overarching narrative for analysis. The first is that it is paradoxical to use a constructivist theory like securitization theory (which is one component of CS theory) as a universalist narrative. If security theory posits that security issues are construed depending on the actors involved and the way information is conveyed, then it is contradictory to suggest that CS theory can be applied in any positivist manner. The same could be said for RSCT, in which a geographical region must be analysed based on its physical and temporal circumstances. The easier option is to accept the Copenhagen School cannot provide any sort of concrete conclusiveness, based on its interpretivist nature. Fortunately, this is a relative non-issue as far as this paper is concerned. The primary aim is to use CS theory in an interpretivist manner, not a normative one.

However, CS theory remains in a difficult position where it wears both a neorealist shoe and a constructivist shoe, while at the same time broadening the agenda of security studies far beyond its traditionally narrow scope. This brings us to the second limitation, that the breadth of some aspects of CS theory is something to be criticized, not praised. While securitization theory provides an interpretivist explanation for the conception of security issues, it runs the risk of incurring what Michael Murphy calls 'securitization creep'.[7] Securitization theory allows for every matter to be construed as a security issue, and if security can extend to everything, then what agenda

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[7] Michael Murphy, "'The continuation of sovereign capture by other means': biopolitical tattooing and the shared logic of the exception and securitization," *Critical Studies on Security* (2018): 10.

is there to speak of in security studies? The Copenhagen School seems to suffer from similar problems of scope creep across the board, especially in the way it diverts the focus of security studies away from military affairs, and into the different sectors outlined in *Security*. However, Copenhagen School scholars are optimistic that broadening the security agenda can spread the confrontational rationality of securitization to a broader range of contexts.[8]

Despite its flaws, there is merit in the employment of CS theory, and it is particularly valuable to use it in the analysis of Japanese foreign policy. The use of East Asian history to engage with IR theory is not without precedent—Shogo Suzuki argues that the history of non-European international relations has long been overlooked or misunderstood, and in his work on the English School, he criticizes that "the metamorphosis within Japan is examined almost exclusively in terms of the adoption of European diplomatic practices and international law, as well as Japan's participation in international conferences."[9] The conventional line of English School thinking in this context is Eurocentric, and normative in its assumptions that European-style cooperative diplomatic norms were simply transmitted abroad (in Suzuki's example, Japan) in the expansion of European International Society, or so Suzuki argues.[10] On the contrary, a truly interpretivist approach must account for contemporary social, political, and economic circumstances. The Copenhagen School in relation to Japanese foreign policy 1853-68 fulfils a similar function, in that it posits the shift from feudalism as motivated by domestic actors and agency, without using European diplomatic norms or the conventional interpretations of the English School as a yardstick.

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[8] Maria Julia Trombetta, "Environmental security and climate change: analysing the discourse," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21, no. 4 (2008): 588.

[9] Shogo Suzuki, "Japan's Socialization into Janus-Faced European Society," *European Journal of International Relations* 11 (2005): 143. [10] Suzuki, 138.

Literature Review

Before piecing CS theory and Japanese foreign policy together, it is also important to be aware of the literature that informs the discussion. Literature can generally be broken down into two main categories. The first is historical literature, like *The Meiji Restoration* and *Select Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy 1853-1868* by Beasley, and *Negotiating with Imperialists* by Michael Auslin, which inform the discussion by providing both primary and secondary evidence for the historical context. In general, they illustrate the socio-political changes of the Bakumatsu as having been driven by external pressure, where the scholarly and samurai classes of Japan became increasingly aware of the threat posed by foreigners to the Japanese nation. This is not to say that change was completely driven by external pressure—in fact, many of the changes were propelled by the sentiments and actions of domestic actors in repulsion against foreign trade and imperialism, as well as desires to securitize against their domestic feudal rivals. These themes are reflected in the way the Bakufu adapted its foreign policy to appease both the lords at home and foreign powers abroad. It was in this era that the Japanese populace began to search for a national identity that transcended clan boundaries, and solutions to protect and preserve their contemporary ways of life from foreign influence.

The second category is theoretical literature, and includes texts like *Security* by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, which provide the theoretical framework for the Copenhagen School. In the same spirit, critical literature from academics like Murphy outlines the limitations of CS theory. Theoretical literature also includes research that examines the History-IR relationship, like Hobson and Lawson's work drawing on historical sociology. Research from these areas are valuable insofar that they provide a comprehensive understanding of the Copenhagen School's strengths and drawbacks. A consensus seems to be that while CS theory is a welcome interpretivist addition to

security studies, it incurs risks of scope creep and rewriting the agenda of the field too broadly. In addition to CS theory, Buzan and Wæver's other works like *Region and Powers* on some of the key themes of the Copenhagen School, including securitization theory and regional security complex theory. This type of supporting literature are particularly valuable for chapters where these sub-themes of the Copenhagen School are the focus.

Structure

Given these philosophical and literary considerations regarding the nature of the Copenhagen School and how it can be utilized, the best approach is likely a simple one, where we treat CS theory as a mode of historical enquiry, and apply it to the historical case. Hence, this paper is structured into three main chapters. The first chapter will examine and evaluate securitization theory, and attempt to apply the concept to case studies with historical context. The second chapter will analyse Bakumatsu Japan through the lens of regional security complex theory, adopting a mode of analysis that mimics the methodology used by Buzan and Wæver in *Regions and Powers*. Finally, to bring together the core themes of securitization and RSCT, domestic and foreign policy will be analysed according to each of the five sectors of security. The methodology used in this chapter mimics how Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde synthesize securitization and regional considerations together with the five sectors in *Security*. The rational for using such a similar approach, is that their demonstrated application of the Copenhagen School in *Security* should be considered a standard of analysis by which this paper attempts to follow.

The Securitization of Threats in Japan

A core aspect of the Copenhagen School is securitization theory, which suggests that subjects can be labelled and promoted as issues of 'security' as part of an observable process. The political structure of late feudal Japan was vastly different from any state apparatus that exists at present, making it difficult to apply a theoretical framework that was devised for the modern era. However, given the applicability of securitization theory to a wide range of issues, it should prove to be a sufficiently appropriate with which to observe subjects being transformed into security concerns. Three examples will form the basis of analysis in this chapter, including contemporary scholar Yoshida Shōin and his influence on the Chōshū domain's leadership, the 1863 'Order to Expel Barbarians' issued by Emperor Komei, and an 1867 letter from anti-Bakufu leaders Saigō Takamori and Ōkubo Toshimichi to the Imperial Court recommending political reform.

To begin, securitization theory needs to be properly defined, as well as its scope and the actors who use it. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde describes 'security' as "the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics."[10] In other words, securitization is a process through which any subject can theoretically be politicized to the point where extraordinary action is justified for its protection. By accepting securitization theory as a valid process through which any issue can not only be politicized, but also to justify extraordinary action in its name (hence, 'above politics'), security issues are no longer exclusive to the military-political sphere. Buzan and Wæver further makes a distinction between 'postmodern' and 'premodern' states, where the latter is defined by poorly developed governmental structures, arguing that 'premodern' and 'weak' states "have many

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[10] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 23.

vulnerabilities, and securitization… move away from the state to substate actors." [11] This is important to keep in mind later, as these characteristics of 'premodernism' and policy being dictated by 'substate actors' are reflected in feudal Japan with surprising accuracy.

However, when 'security' is broadened to such an extent, the identification of security issues becomes more confusing and complex, and contextually analysing security issues becomes more important than ever. The primary limitation of this revised agenda is that we now run the risk of labelling a great many things as 'potential security concerns', regardless if they are successfully or unsuccessfully securitized. Appropriately, *Security* cautions that "there are intellectual and political dangers in simply tacking the word *security* onto an ever-wider range of issues." [12] Nevertheless, it remains a key tenet of the Copenhagen School.

Historical Context

Historically speaking, feudal Japan can be characterized as a 'premodern' state, per Buzan and Wæver's definition, given the relatively underdeveloped governmental structure. As a feudal society, power was relatively decentralized, largely concentrated in the hands of powerful lords called *daimyō*. Each daimyō controlled the military, politics, and economy of their respective domain, including the *samurai*, the warrior class and social elite of feudal Japanese society. However, daimyō were subordinate to the *shōgun*, the military dictator of Japan, and were subject to regulations detailing the limits of their power. The most significant regulation was the system called *sankin-kōtai*, a compulsory requirement for feudal lords to alternate years spent living in his own domain and in the military capital of Edo. [13] In the daimyō's absence, his wife and family

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[11] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24.
[12] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 1.
[13] William Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 17.

remained in Edo. The sankin-kōtai was effectively an instrument for the Bakufu to centralize power over the country, and to dissuade dissent. These mechanisms, combined with an isolationist foreign policy (*sakoku*), allowed for Japan's societal and political structure to remain essentially unchanged until European powers demanded open trade in the mid-nineteenth century.

The rushed conclusion of commercial treaties with Holland, Russia, and the United States in August 1858 sparked a great amount of controversy. The Bakufu's perceived incompetence and disunity in handling foreign policy, and its punishment of the officials who negotiated the treaties, came under public scrutiny. After witnessing European imperialism at work in China, public fears over national preservation and survival emerged. The discussion could not be restricted to a small circle of elites in traditional fashion, for these issues concerned all levels of feudal society. Foreign policy had therefore become a 'public' issue by 1858.[14] Furthermore, dissenting *samurai* and scholars began to grapple with the paradoxical relationship between the 'divine' and theoretically absolute authority of the Emperor, and the dictatorship of the Bakufu in actuality. These antiBakufu and anti-foreigner sentiments were best reflected in the popular slogan '*sonnō-jōi*', "honor the Emperor and expel the barbarian," which would play a key role in later years.

Yoshida Shōin

Given these circumstances, many who felt strongly about these issues sought to make their voices heard. Chōshū samurai and teacher Yoshida Shōin was one of them, differing from his scholarly predecessors that espoused similar ideas, given his unusual intemperateness. Like many contemporary samurai, Yoshida advocated for the adoption of foreign technology. He proposed reforms to turn Japan's defense against foreigners into a national task, and sought a readjustment

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[14] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 140.

of relationship between the Imperial Court, the Shogun, and feudal lords. In Yoshida's own words, "the Shogun, naturally leading all the lords of the realm, must wipe out this disgrace to the nation and bring tranquility to the mind of the emperor."[15] Over time, his beliefs grew more radical, becoming increasingly aggravated by what he perceived as a lack of initiative to solve both domestic and foreign crises. His beliefs culminated in his planned assassination of the shogunate's emissary to Kyoto, the imperial capital, but the plot was discovered, and Yoshida was executed.

When this case is framed as an act of securitization, the process is clear. The securitizing actor was Yoshida Shōin, who perceived the existing regime to be an existential threat to Japan's survival. His teachings were far from unpopular, and garnered him a following both inside Chōshū and out. Therefore, public society was his primary audience. In this fashion, Yoshida justified the necessity of securitizing the country against the Bakufu's 'evil' and self-serving complacency.[16] In contrast with 'legal' reformers like Aizawa Seishisai, he had a great willingness to put his beliefs into effect.[17] Armed with the belief that Japan's survival depended on imperial and Bakufu reforms, and having identified the existing bureaucracy as the primary threat, Yoshida therefore set out to take extraordinary action. His failed assassination of the Bakufu emissary was his way of going beyond politics, and of refusing to play by 'the established rules of the game', per *Security*.[18]

Despite the failed assassination, Yoshida's attempt at securitization was ultimately successful. Many lower-ranking samurai "found his teaching an inspiration and his example a call

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[15] David Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan: Political Thinkers of the Tokugawa Period* (Seattle: Greenwood Press, 1964), 179.

[16] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 150.

[17] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 149.

[18] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 1.

to arms." To them, the removal of foreigners had become a 'sacred mission' that only the Emperor could lead, not the Bakufu, and the Shogun and the lords "must be driven from their supine passivity and put into a position of having to act."[19] In subsequent years, Yoshida's teachings were spread far across Chōshū society. By 1863, the domain had become one of the first to resist the shogunate and its calls for a peaceful expulsion of foreigners, defiantly firing on European shipping in Shimonoseki. While it is difficult to attribute all anti-Bakufu sentiment in Chōshū to Yoshida's example, the fact that his audience is persuaded of his cause is evidence of successful securitization.

Order to Expel Barbarians

The 1863 document that called for the 'withdrawal' of foreigners from Japan was an imperial edict, referred to as the 'Order to Expel Barbarians'. By early 1863, several pressure groups have emerged in the imperial capital, Kyoto. The presence of foreigners in Japan and the ineffectiveness of Bakufu governance had become inseparable matters. Sonnō-jōi extremists backed officially by Chōshū were keen to see foreigners expelled from Japan, as well as a 'restoration' of imperial authority, given the Bakufu's unsatisfactory handling of foreign policy. Even scholars like Sakuma Shōzan and Yokoi Shōnan often argued for Westernization on the basis that it was the only way to expel foreigners.[20] Some feudal lords, including Hitotsubashi Keiki of Tokugawa, argued it was necessary to revise the relationship between Court and Shogun, but without submitting to extremist demands. And even the Emperor, whose position was generally one of non-interference, expressed support for the expulsion of foreigners. Faced with strong

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[19] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 151.
[20] Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck and Arthur Tiedemann, *Sources of Japanese Tradition* 2nd edition, volume 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005): 641.

demands to bring Japan back into seclusion, the Bakufu offered to reexamine Japan's foreign policy, and agreed that "the withdrawal [of foreigners] will be effected without fail."[21]

Unwilling to provoke a clash between the parties, Keiki compromised, and fixed June 25 to be when the Bakufu would begin negotiations with foreigners their exit. However, the official notice sent to the domains was ambiguous on this point, and the document began by referring to their 'expulsion'.[22] Conveniently, sonnō-jōi loyalists interpreted the order to include the use of armed force, and Chōshū cannons began to fire on foreign shipping when the deadline was met.[23] Like with Yoshida Shōin, a process of securitization can be identified. Anti-foreigner groups like the Chōshū extremists and their sympathizers in the Imperial Court had identified foreigners as the 'existential threat' faced by Japan. In this case, the audience that they needed to persuade to act was the Bakufu. One can argue if the foreign 'threat' was an existential threat at all, but that does not matter in this context, because it is a 'self-referential practice'—The threat exists only because it is presented as a threat. [24] As a result of Bakufu concession towards the sonnō-jōi cause, the extremists were given the official acceptance and legitimacy they wanted. As a result of their successful securitization, the pro-imperial loyalists were now sanctioned to take extraordinary action to secure Japan against the foreign threat—in Chōshū's case, with swords and cannon.

Summary

Superficially, securitization theory was applied quite coherently to the historical case of Japanese foreign policy thus far. However, the flexible nature of securitization is also its greatest

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[21] William Beasley, *Select Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy 1853-1868* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 234.

[22] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 195.

[23] Michael Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialists: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 100.

[24] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 24.

shortcoming. By introducing 'security' as a concept that can be applied to practically any subject, it runs the risk of incurring what Michael Murphy calls 'securitization creep'.[25] Is there any significant merit to security studies when every matter can theoretically be constituted as a security issue, and with ever-increasing broadness in ever-greater frequency? This becomes more concerning when securitization is no longer instigated merely by speech acts, but other practices as well. Like in the case of the 'Order to Expel Barbarians', it was far from loyalist preaching that persuaded Keiki from agreeing to open negotiations—rather, it was a combination of pressure from Chōshū sympathizers in the Imperial Court and his own fears of a clash between the various interest groups, risking further disunity between the feudal domains. Another criticism of securitization theory is that it serves little practical purpose without a realistic solution to 'securitization creep'. Instead, it accepts this scope creep as an inevitable consequence and recommends 'desecuritization' as an acceptable remedy. Murphy argues that a better alternative would be to prevent the creep before it gains too much 'momentum', with an audience that "has the agency to reject the securitizing move when it serves as a harbinger of future demands."[26]

At this point, however, the focus is not to critique the Copenhagen School and securitization theory for its limitations. The aim is to demonstrate whether or not securitization theory, as a core component of the Copenhagen School analytical framework, holds up to the test of being applied to a historical case. At this point, it can be concluded that securitization theory holds up quite well, despite its seemingly forced application at times. Perhaps this method of analysis, while not yet on a very strong foundation, can serve as a starting point through which a deeper understanding of

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[25] Michael Murphy, "'The continuation of sovereign capture by other means': biopolitical tattooing and the shared logic of the exception and securitization," *Critical Studies on Security* (2018): 10.
[26] Murphy, 13.

modern historical events can be gained. When interpreting historical events as having happened because the actors have agency, instead of saying that they happened 'just because', events can be more thought-provokingly portrayed as a series of social interactions.

The East Asia Regional Security Complex

Another core aspect of the Copenhagen School is the Regional Security Complex Theory, or RCST for short. As mentioned in the introduction, RSCT is broadly a semi-geographical and semi-constructivist approach in the analysis of security, enabled by the conceptualization of 'regional security complexes' (RSCs) that existing in a new level of analysis between state and system, called the *regional*. It was formulated by Buzan and Wæver with the post-Cold War international system in mind, and is not typically applied to historical, 19th century cases. In their 2003 book *Regions and Powers*, they explore RSCT in finer detail than in previous works. Like securitization theory, RSCT is a framework to be applied to the historical case, and so the aim of this section is to conceptualize and identify a hypothetical RSC in East Asia in the Bakumatsu era.

Buzan and Wæver begin by identifying and defining the boundaries of RSCT. First, they examine the centre-periphery model that leads to unipolar (in terms of global power structure) and territorialized thinking within neorealist schools. They compare that against the multipolar and deterritorialized thinking in the globalist perspective. In between these two extremes, the regionalist perspective is the territorialized but multipolar middle ground, and is what RSCT uses as its foundation.[27] However, it is important to note that even though RSCT is described as a 'territorialized' framework, the territorial boundaries of a RSC is defined not purely by state

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[27] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 11.

sovereignty like in neorealist thought, but through a number of qualitative factors—they are geographical hotspots of securitization and desecuritization, and they are areas where states of different levels of power interact most with their neighbors.[28] In other words, RSCs are nuanced entities grown from social interaction, and are not discrete units that can be easily identified.

Second, as mentioned in the previous section, Buzan and Wæver categorize states into post-modern, modern, and premodern classifications, determined by levels of socio-cultural openness, military and economic strength, and the level of socio-cultural diffusion with its neighbors.[29] Furthermore, they divide modern history into three distinct eras—the modern era (1500-1945), the Cold War era (1945-1989) and the post-Cold War era (1990 onwards), each with characteristically different dynamics in the international system.[30] According to these definitions, feudal Japan would classify as a premodern state given its relatively underdeveloped governmental structure and decentralized political power. It also existed in the modern era, where "there was regional security of a kind, but it was defined much more by global rivalries between the European powers… than by security interdependence among local units."[31] Given that RSCT and the Copenhagen School was devised for analysis of the post-Cold War era, it makes it difficult to analyse a region that existed in the modern (pre-1945) era, but we can adapt RSCT for our purposes, which will be explained in detail. Before that, two key issues need to be addressed.

Distinguishing Regional from Global

One problem with the regionalist perspective is the difficulty in distinguishing the regional from the global. In the context of the East Asia RSC, for instance, where does it begin and where

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[28] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 73.
[29] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 24.
[30] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 14.
[31] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 15.

does it end? The danger of defining geographic boundaries using securitization theory is that one can simply follow the 'chain' of securitizing moves from actor to actor without end. To remedy this, Buzan and Wæver propose that by identifying enough of these 'chains', a pattern of interactions emerge, and locations where these interactions are few are *insulators* that keep RSCs separated.[32] Another issue is polarity—RSCT borrows from neorealism the idea that powers can be classified into different levels: superpowers, great power, and regions of independent, less powerful states. While Buzan and Wæver view the Cold War world as a system with 2 superpowers + 3 great powers + regions, and the post-Cold War era as a '1 + 4 + regions 'system, the international power structure in the 19th century is more difficult to define.[33]

Identifying Power Dynamics

Considering the above, the first step to conceptualizing the hypothetical East Asian RSC from 1853-68 is to identify the active powers in the geographical region at the time. The British Empire was arguably as close to a superpower as any pre-Cold War state could get, given its vast territorial reach and military strength. The United States, Russia, and China were also prominent actors in this time period, and the actions and intentions of these powers all had significant influences on contemporary Japanese foreign policy. There are other notable actors in the region, but even with just these few, some superficial patterns of securitization can already be identified between them. If the following example does not appear particularly convincing, then that is fine, as RSCT offers alternate methodologies for cases where the primary recommended methodology proves unsatisfactory. This explanation is largely meant to fulfil an introductory function.

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[32] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 41.

[33] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 37.

As mentioned in the introduction, Japan faced significant external pressure to open its ports to international trade starting in 1853, with the arrival of U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry. This move by the United States was partly an attempt to extend its influence into a region dominated by the British.[34] For the next four years, the Bakufu delayed the negotiation of a formal treaty, but other imperial powers had already taken note of Commodore Perry's 1853 expedition, prompting their own moves to negotiate with Japan to trade and settle in the country. In early 1857, news of the British victory in the Second Opium War reached Japan, and Japanese policymakers 'were prompted into haste' to act.[35] Hotta Masayoshi, a senior councilor of the Bakufu, wrote to his peers that "if we continue adding to the anger of the foreigners… Japan might suffer the fate of Canton."[36] Given this existential threat, Japan began to draft a commercial treaty, and by October 1858, Japan had concluded treaties with Britain, the Netherlands, Russia, and the United States in a bid to protect the country from armed conquest.[37] The pattern of securitization is clear: British domination of Asian coastlines prompted the United States to expand towards Japan, which in turn drew the attention of Britain and Russia. Subsequent securitization by the British in China to protect the opium trade prompted Japan to respond by drafting the 1858 treaties. Ultimately, Japan became the focus of securitizing moves between Britain, Russia, and the United States.

Here, it is obvious that the dynamics of international relations in this region was driven by imperialist states extending their influence into the region. We must concede that Buzan and Wæver are correct in their observation regarding the era of New Imperialism—that while regional security existed, it was defined much more by global rivalries between great powers rather than

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[34] William Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 88.
[35] Beasley, *The Meiji* Restoration, 102.
[36] William Beasley, *Select Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy 1853-1868* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 130.
[37] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 115.

regional states. While RCST *can* be adapted to analyse pre-Cold War cases, it is only to the extent that patterns of securitization can be identified. The disparities between imperialist and nonimperialist states in this time period, like between Japan and the European powers, are typically too large to make any meaningful regionalist analysis. It was not until regional powers became more powerful in the late 19th century did they begin to securitize against each other, like with the 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa—an unequal treaty that Japan coerced Korea into accepting through gunboat diplomacy in an attempt to forcibly distance Korea from Chinese influence.[38] Based on this, we can surmise that regional security dynamics can only properly exist per RSCT when there is a sufficiently powerful regional power.

The application of the Copenhagen School to Japanese foreign policy is also somewhat paradoxical. The RSCT component provides a framework within which regional security dynamics can be understood. It was not designed as a means of foreign policy analysis, which makes RSC an inherently unsuitable theoretical approach for the empirical case chosen for this paper. These issues are further compounded by the fact that RSCT was ultimately conceptualized for analysing the Cold War and post-Cold War world, in which states are held to different diplomatic and international norms than in the relative anarchy of the 19th century. At this point, it would appear that several wrenches have been thrown into the work, in applying RSCT to Japanese foreign policy in the Bakumatsu era. However, there is still merit in using this approach, as these hindrances can be mitigated, and headway can be made by employing RSCT analysis techniques suggested by Buzan and Wæver.

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[38] Michael Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialists: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 197. [40] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 51.

Descriptive RSCT

Our chosen technique in this analysis is called 'Descriptive RSCT', which is "a framework organizing empirical studies of regional security. The theory specifies what to look for at four levels of analysis and how to interrelate these."[40] Briefly explained, the four aspects to look for are: First, domestically within the states of the region. Second, inter-state relations. Third, the region's interaction with neighboring regions. And fourth, the role of global powers in the region. These levels constitute the 'security constellation'.[39]

Buzan and Wæver write, "RSCT asserts that the regional level will always be operative, and sometimes dominant. It does *not* say that the regional level *must* always be dominant."[40] For cases where the presence of great powers are exceptionally strong, like in mid-19th century East Asia, they recommend a slightly modified but more complex approach. "Intense spillover may well bind together what would otherwise be separate RSCs into *supercomplexes*," requiring the need for a fourth level of analysis: 'superregional', to replace the weak 'regional' dynamic in the main three levels (domestic, regional, global).[41] For this method of analysis, Buzan and Wæver recommend analysing the 'superregion' as we would a typical RSC.

However, they also note that in some areas, "great power interests transcend mere penetration, and come to dominate a region so heavily that the local pattern of security relations virtually ceases to operate."[42] This is called *overlay*, and under these conditions, a region does not qualify as an RSC—but it is difficult to distinguish an overlaid region from a heavily-penetrated

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[39] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 51.
[40] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 52.
[41] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 60.
[42] Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 61.

one, and in an absence of RSC, there is nothing to analyse. Hence, for the sake of analysis, we ignore overlay and conceptualize a heavily-penetrated 'East Asia' super-RSC that extends across two smaller RSCs: Northeast Asia, where Japan interacts diplomatically with Russia, China, and to a smaller extent, Korea—and Southeast Asia, where Japan meets the British Empire in the form of their colonial holdings in Canton.

Analysing the East Asia RSC

At the domestic and microregional level, many East Asian countries became the target of European and American imperialism. States like China, Korea, and Japan had traditionally preferred an isolationist foreign policy, but were subject to increased foreign interference. The turning point for Japan was, as previously mentioned, the Perry expedition that arrived in 1853. The visit was swiftly followed by trade treaties in 1858—actions which were widely viewed in Japan as diplomatic failures, due to the Bakufu's inability to preserve the traditional Japanese way of life. Violence towards foreigners and the establishment, like Yoshida Shōin's 1858 assassination attempt on a Bakufu envoy, became increasingly characteristic of contemporary Japanese society.[43] In neighboring China, armed resistance was commonplace, where the Second Opium War broke out in Canton in 1856, and temporarily ended with the Western allied victory in 1858. The British presence in Southeast Asia was a result of imperialist expansion, and having built up trade in Malaysia and China, was eager to trade with Japan following the Canton conflict.[44]

On the regional—or rather, superregional level—the dynamic was largely characterized again by European imperialist interests. In the Northeast, Japanese relations warmed with Russia

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[43] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 172.
[44] Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 76.
[47] Auslin, 37.

as they came to agreements on extraterritoriality in 1855, and a commercial treaty in October 1858.[47] A similar trade agreement was also concluded with the British. During this time, Japan and China had minimal contact, due to mutual, coinciding policies of isolationism. However, Japan saw Chinese subjugation under imperial powers as a lesson to be learned, and as mentioned in previous sections, their view of China under colonial rule was a driving factor behind the Bakufu's decision to negotiate treaties with imperialist powers in the late 1850s. Relations between colonizing states like Britain and Russia were characterized more by their interactions outside of the East Asia region—like the Great Game over Afghanistan—than within.

On the interregional level, East Asia in the 1850s and 60s was heavily characterized by the penetration of great power interests. Few sovereign states were able to exist independently and defend their own interests. The Philippines, for instance, was a Spanish colony. Canton and Malaysia were British holdings, and by 1860, Russia controlled large parts of Manchuria. French involvement was also significant in Southeast Asian kingdoms including Vietnam and Cambodia in the 1860s. Most significantly regarding Japan was the American involvement in the opening of the country to trade from across the Pacific. The Perry expedition in 1853 and the tentative diplomatic agreement made in 1854, and the formal trade negotiations in 1857-58 were all indicative of interregional activity.[45]

Finally, on the global level, much of the 19th century international system was characterized by overlay from great imperialist powers, and where there was no imperialist influence, much of the world was not structured into any RSC.[46] East Asia was not an exception,

[45] Egerton Norman, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State* (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), 40.
[46] Buzan and Wæver, 65.

but it was thanks to the highly-flexible nature of RSCT that we could take the liberty of defining it as a superregional security complex, instead of writing it off as unstructured territory overlaid by imperial powers. However, defining 19th century East Asia in this manner was somewhat of a stretch, and while it shows that RSCT can be applied to a wide range of empirical cases, it is more appropriate to use it to analyse the Cold War and post-Cold War regions that it was intended for.

Summary

RSCT is a highly flexible framework with various core aspects that can be molded to the analyst's requirements and interpretations—like much of the Copenhagen School thus far. Different sizes and levels of security complexes and levels of analysis can be freely utilized depending on the subject of investigation, and other security regions can be brought into the picture where necessary. For example, for an East Asian regional dynamic that would typically be seen as overlaid by great power influence, we considered the existence of a discrete East Asian RSC instead, for the sake of analysis. This chapter has demonstrated that it is indeed possible to depict Japan as part of such an RSC in the time period 1853-1868, which fulfils the RSCT component of the Copenhagen School, but it also shows that RSCT is generally an unsuitable tool for looking into the inner machinations of a state, such as with regards to foreign policy. Only when our RSC was examined on the domestic level did Japanese social dynamics and foreign policy become applicable to the discussion at all. However, the fruitlessness of this chapter is not the fault of the theoretical framework—they were conceptualized for use in a Cold War and post-Cold War world. Trying to use RSCT to analyse East Asia in the 1850s and 60s is like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole, for even though it may work, there is limited merit in doing so. Despite this, this chapter

is still able to inform the larger discussion, as we only needed to find the extent to which RSCT

was applicable in our case study—the answer being limited, but possible.

Broadening the Japanese Security Agenda

 While Buzan and Wæver had written extensively about securitization theory and regional security complex theory, the Copenhagen School was synthesized as a combination of several concepts, including these two. In addition to linking existing theoretical frameworks together, CS theory is also characterized by how it broadens the security studies agenda beyond the traditional military (strategic) sector, expanding on security to include environmental, economic, societal, and political security as well. Together, these are known as the five sectors of security. This chapter will largely examine how the sectors were characterized in Japan 1853-1868. To tie together the broadening of the security agenda into the Copenhagen School, we will also touch on the effects of securitization and RCST that may be found in these sectors. This methodology mimics the one employed by Buzan and Wæver in *Security*, where each chapter has "a common structure: each asks what the security agenda is within the sector, what types of actors are distinctive to the sector," and examines the security dynamics within each sector in relation to different levels of analysis.[47] In addition, we should also consider how these sectors were perceived and addressed by contemporary policymakers, as well as any influence that each of these sectors may have had on Japanese foreign policy in the given time period.

The Military Sector

 The military sector has long been the focus of traditional security studies. In modern states, the state is typically the referent object of security, and the securitizing actors are typically its ruling elite. However, this is not always the case, and feudal Japan was one such exception. Before the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese political system was characterized by a decentralized

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[47] , 19.

government, where the feudal lords of the numerous clans around Japan held much of the country's aggregate military power. In the period 1853-1868, a state military had not yet been established, and the military government did not possess a monopoly on the use of force. Instead, the shogunate maintained its power and status by coercing its subordinate lords into political submission through policies like the sankin-kōtai. In this period, the most prominent securitizing actors in the military sector were the daimyō of the various feudal domains, for even the Shogun had no significant military force of his own, and required the support of the lords for any military action. An example reflecting this power structure would be the Second Chōshū Expedition, a punitive military action by the Bakufu against the Chōshū domain in 1866 (following an earlier expedition in 1864), which was a major move to securitize against a domestic (or 'microregional') threat. Bakufu military forces were "a coalition of vassals' armies, as had always been the case."[48] In the Bakufu armies, newer and modern military elements were fielded with antiquated ones and contributed to a lack of overall military effectiveness against the more powerful feudal domains. In contrast, Chōshū forces and its allies did not need to rely on a patchwork coalition.

The referent objects are less straightforward to identify, as they differed depending on the securitizing actor and the historical context. In the Second Chōshū Expedition, for example, the Bakufu's intention was to launch a punitive military campaign against Chōshū and its allies in order to safeguard its waning political power over Japan. The expedition was also largely in response to the Kinmon incident, a rebellion in Kyoto against the Bakufu by Chōshū-backed sonnō-jōi extremists. However, Chōshū forces did not meet the Bakufu in battle solely for reasons

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[48] Marius Jansen, "The Meiji Restoration," in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*, ed. Marius Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 187.
   Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*

of self-defense. Only two years prior in 1864, a civil war was fought within the domain between its conservative government and an armed uprising of sonnō-jōi radicals.[49] The latter emerged victorious, and for the new sonnō-jōi leadership in Chōshū, the Bakufu expedition of 1886 was an opportunity to weaken the Tokugawa shogunate. Indeed, the Bakufu's defeat cost them political prestige that they never managed to recover from.[53] Hence for Chōshū, the referent object was not only their own political power, but also all of Japan, to the extent that they believed the shogunate was not Japan's rightful government by the 1860s. On a regional scale, the threats (and referent objects of security) that Japan faced are more obvious—most, if not all active parties in Japan in the given time period had an interest in securing Japan against the influence of outside imperial powers like Britain, Russia, and the United States. This was examined in more detail in the previous sections of this paper. However, security dynamics on the local level (such as those involving domestic rebellions and social unrest) have shown to be the dominant level (rather than the regional), given the absence of a strong central government.

Overall, the military sector in Bakumatsu-era Japan was characterized by a weak central leadership that relied on the armies of the feudal domains as the primary actors. The Tokugawa's leadership of the country was characterized more by political prestige rather than real military power. While referent objects of security include foreign threats from imperial powers, many of the actors were eager to securitize against domestic threats as well. This is also in line with Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's conclusions regarding the military sector, that "in regions dominated by

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[49] Albert Craig, "The Restoration Movement in Choshu," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 18, no. 2 (1959): 195. [53] Jansen, 187.

weak or failed states, real prospects exist that the local level will become dominant, with securitization forming microregions."[50]

[50] , 70.
Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*

The Economic Sector

While the feudal Japanese understanding of economics in the mid-19th century was primitive compared to our modern-day understanding, it still played a key role in securitization in the region. After all, one of the most significant debates of the time period concerned the degree to which opening the country's economy was acceptable, and what foreign policy should be adopted in addressing the demands of imperial powers hungry for trade. In other words, even in the 1850s and 1860s, economic liberalization (and its political implications) was already construed as a security issue for daimyō, policymakers, and the Bakufu in general.

Given the widespread presence of corporations, intergovernmental organizations, and state representatives in a modern economic setting, there a range of securitizing actors can easily be identified. However, the feudal Japanese economy was relatively primitive, and much less nuanced compared to a modern system. Under the Tokugawa shogunate, political and military power was directly tied to economic performance, as a feudal domain's income was measured by how much rice it could produce (measured in *koku*).[51], and this production determined the domain's ranking and status amongst to its peers. Even farmers' taxes were levied in rice, and samurai received stipends paid in rice.[52] As such, the economy of Tokugawa Japan was characteristically agrarian, and for the daimyō of the feudal domains, the securitization of their domain's economy tied directly into 'the capability for state military mobilization'.[53] The

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[51] A measure of volume. 1 koku = approximately 180 litres = approximately 150 kg of rice.

[52] Ulrike Schaede, "Forwards and Futures in Tokugawa-period Japan: A new perspective on the Dōjima rice market," *Journal of Banking and Finance* 13 (1989): 490.

[53] , 98.
 Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*

importance of the mercantilist economy in relation to military capability is one of the most significant, if not the most significant security dynamic on the domestic/microregional scale.

However, economic tensions also existed on the regional scale between the Bakufu (the representative government of Japan) and expanding imperial powers like Britain, Russia, and the United States that sought the opening of trade. The prevalent view in Japan at the time regarding the opening of the country was that it would threaten the existing way of life, and liberalizing the country's trade policies was seen as generally undesirable. Policymakers were also aware that "if the Bakufu refused to agree to trade, the Western powers could use it as a casus belli."[54] Given these difficulties, the Bakufu acted under both domestic and regional pressure to negotiate a treaty that would satisfy foreign demands. In addition, they needed to be careful that trade would not lead to "the loss of Bakufu territorial control, either to the foreigners or to hostile outer domains" like Satsuma and Chōshū, both traditional rivals to the ruling Tokugawa clan.[55] This was the thought process that led the Bakufu to sign the 1858 Ansei Treaties.

In this sense, the economic sector had basically become a medium of negotiations through which key issues from other sectors could be securitized. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde write that "the question of whether the motive for securitization lies primarily in the economic sector or in other sectors is as yet unanswered," and in the context of Bakumatsu Japan, it appears to be the latter.[56] The Bakufu's primary goals were not necessarily to preserve any elements within the economic sector, but instead to securitize against social unrest, political challenges from their rivals in other domains, and from being militarily subjugated by foreign powers should they find

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[54] Auslin, 32.

[55] Auslin, 32.

[56] , 103.
   Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*

Japanese concessions unsatisfactory. The dynamics of security lie firmly in the economic sector, while some of the more significant referent objects to be securitized include the Bakufu's political primacy (measured to an extent by agricultural productivity), and territorial control.

The Environmental Sector

 Environmental security is an increasingly prominent theme in modern security studies, but for a 19th century feudal society, it was a relative non-issue. As mentioned above, the feudal Japanese economy was highly agrarian, with societal and political hierarchies being heavily based on rice production. So, while there was a general interest in preserving the land and the environment to maintain a high level of agricultural output, there seemed no conscious enactment of policy that explicitly addressed the securitization of any referent object in the environment sector. In other words, there was not yet a consciousness on the system level that the global environment could be harmed by excessive industrial and agricultural activity, hence there was no environmental securitization as we would interpret it through the Copenhagen School.

The Societal Sector

 When examining the motivators behind changes in Japanese domestic and foreign policy during the Bakumatsu era, it is perhaps the societal ones that are most significant. Society is ultimately organized according to identity, and for many Japanese scholars, samurai, and officials of the time, a significant driver behind the willingness to act was when they felt their group identity was threatened.[57] At first, this seems paradoxical, to the extent that Japan lacked a national identity for much of its history. Its inhabitants typically identified as belonging to a clan or a domain as part

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[57] , 119.
  Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*

of a larger feudal system, rather than against nations from outside Japan, and these domains were typically more concerned about their domestic rivals rather than regional ones. This much is clear from looking at cases like the Chōshū expeditions and the Kinmon incident, in which the Bakufu and other domains (such as Satsuma and Aizu) sought to pacify their domestic enemies. It

Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*

was not until the early 19th century that scholars like Aizawa Seishisai introduced nationalistic ideas into Japanese society. By the 1850s and 1860s, these ideas—especially sonnō-jōi—had evolved into political slogans and popular movements, and a sense of national identity and discontent against the Bakufu began to take precedent over historical feudal rivalries.

 In 1850s and 1860s Japan, security in the societal sector existed largely at two levels: microregional and regional. Societal security dynamics at the regional level required that the Japanese have a national identity or purpose, and by the early 1860s, the dominant national purpose was to remove foreigners from the country. The Emperor Komei's 1863 'Order to Expel Barbarians' was the manifestation of the popular sonnō-jōi into official policy, and also an example of the securitization of the state as a referent object. In issuing this imperial edict, it also marked the first time that the Emperor displayed any substantial capacity to create national policy, demonstrating his significance as a securitizing actor in a system where the Imperial Court would typically not interfere in the Bakufu's governance. Therefore, the societal security agenda in 1860s Japan on the regional level was one where the exclusion of foreigners was deemed necessary in order to preserve existing notions of Japanese identity.

However, while a sense of national purpose and identity had grown rapidly in significance in the 1860s, feelings of identity and loyalty towards one's feudal domain sometimes took precedent over national policy. This is more significant at the microregional level and differed from domain to domain. This is reflected in the Kantō insurrection, an eruption of civil unrest in the lands of the Mito clan in 1864, driven by sonnō-jōi insurgents eager to expel foreigners. The Bakufu ordered local domains to suppress the insurgency, and while most did, some were reluctant. In Utsunomiya and Tsuchiura, there was some hesitation was due to the high levels of sympathy for sonnō-jōi principles among their vassals. Acting against the 'stated national purpose'

of expelling foreigners would severely threaten intra-clan unity.[58] In these domains, they were unable to act as their sense of national purpose far dominated their local identity, yet there was still an interest in preserving the societal unity of the domain. In others, such as Takasaki, they were "unwilling, given Mito's size, proximity, and place in national affairs, to take any action that could be construed as anti-Mito."[59] Domains such as these were also reluctant to act, as they felt it necessary to preserve their own domain's status and prestige within the feudal system, which to them was more important than any national purpose. To some extent, this sentiment applied also to Utsunomiya and Tsuchiura.

As such, the referent objects to be securitized in the societal sector are oftentimes society itself, differing mainly depending on the level of analysis. In short, acts of securitization in the societal sector generally regarded the safeguarding of identity. For the Emperor Komei and sonnōjōi activists, the referent object on the regional level was the Japanese nation, however ambiguous a sense of national identity may have been in 1863. On a microregional level, securitization was about preserving the identity of the domain and the clan. Despite their contrasting interests, domains like Utsunomiya, Tsuchiura, and Takasaki have in common (as well as their leaders), is that they were all reluctant to participate on the regional level given the risk that their societal security could not be safeguarded on the microregional level. The securitizing actors of these security dynamics are also quite straightforward to identify, as they are typically the political elite at different levels of analysis—the Bakufu councilors and the Emperor at the regional level, and the daimyō of the feudal domains at the microregional level.

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[58] Conrad Totman, "Fudai Daimyo and the Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 3 (1975): 585.
[59] Totman, 585.

The Political Sector

According to Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, "political security is about the organizational stability of social order(s). The heart of the political sector is made up of threats to state sovereignty." [60] More precisely, they define political security as being about threats to the legitimacy of political units, which can broadly be categorized into threats to internal legitimacy and threats to external recognition. [61] In other words, the referent object of political security often is (or involve) the legitimacy of a given political unit, such as the state. Regarding feudal Japan, there are a couple of points to keep in mind: First, that it can be considered a weak state, where governmental authority is typically more contested than in strong states, due to 'a lack of firmly established stateness'. [62] Second, that in a premodern state, the government interacted with superior and inferior entities like lords, vassals, and great imperial powers on a formal basis, in contrast to a modern state system where states are typically recognized as either being equal or unequal, recognized or unrecognized. [67] As such, the political sector of Bakumatsu-era Japan was actually markedly more complicated than in a modern state, given that the securitizing actors can be any formal political entity, including the Shogun, the Court, the many daimyō, et cetera.

When evaluating internal political legitimacy in Japan during the Bakumatsu, the subject of discussion would logically be the Bakufu, as the most significant political dynamic in this time period was the Bakufu's decline and the subsequent restoration of political power to the Imperial Court. Over that time period, the military government's prestige and influence declined severely,

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[60] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 140.

[61] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 144.

[62] Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 4. [67] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 145.

and were overthrown in 1868. The most significant examples of challenges to the Bakufu's internal legitimacy include events like the Kinmon incident; the 'misinterpretation' of the Order to Expel Barbarians; the activism of Yoshida Shōin; the Chōshū expeditions, and more. All of these incidents reflect a declining willingness among daimyō and their vassals for continued acquiescence towards Bakufu governance.

However, the Bakufu was not able to successfully securitize against many of the threats that it faced in the political sector. The Kinmon incident of 1863, for example, was an attempted coup led by Chōshū to seize control of the Emperor and restore his political authority. While the coup itself was unsuccessful, subsequent Bakufu attempts to keep Chōshū in check largely failed— the First Chōshū expedition in 1864 was inconclusive, and the Second Chōshū expedition in 1866 saw the defeat of the Bakufu coalition. From a chronological perspective, the internal legitimacy of the Bakufu was first challenged by popular resistance from activists like Yoshida Shōin, followed by small-scale rebellious violence like the Kinmon incident and the Order to Expel Barbarians—and finally armed revolt and military defeat in the Second Chōshū expedition and the 1868 Boshin War, which resulted in the end of the shogunate and the restoration of the Imperial Court to supreme political authority.

During the Bakumatsu, while internal challenges to political authority were many, there was an abundance of external threats as well. The foreign imperial threat was significant to the extent that they contributed to the popularity of the sonnō-jōi movement, and that they also posed a direct threat to Japan's territoriality and sovereignty in general. For example, Commodore Perry's expeditions to Japan are classic examples of gunboat diplomacy, which is arguably a form of political coercion. The demands of Britain, Russia, the Netherlands, and the United States to open Japan to trade and to establish a geographical area for the settlement of foreigners threatened the

Bakufu's and the feudal lords' control over their territory. The 1858 Ansei treaties were the direct manifestation of Japan's inability to negotiate with Western powers as equals. Ultimately, Bakufu attempts at securitization proved inadequate, and domains like Chōshū, as evidenced by the events of 1863, would rather take securitization into their own hands in a zealous attempt to securitize against the aforementioned external threats. The political sector of Bakumatsu-era Japan, therefore, was rife with activity from a multitude of actors engaging in security dynamics against a range of threats and vulnerabilities, both internal and external.

Summary

 In general, the broadened, five-sector agenda of security studies can be applied to Bakumatsu-era Japan without much issue. This broadened scope is particularly valuable in the way that it provides a framework within which analysts can categorize the different aspects of a case study into separate sectors, to analyse them according to their respective sector. For example, the construal of the agrarian economy as a referent object in the economic sector allowed us to identify the threat posed by foreign powers, to the extent that their attempts to modernize the economy would allow the influx of foreign goods and settlers, thereby weakening the traditional system.

 However, it is also painfully obvious that some parts of the Copenhagen School were not meant to be applied to pre-Cold War case studies. For instance, the environmental sector as conceptualized in *Security* explores in much detail contemporary issues of pollution, ecological collapse, and other existential threats that could threaten humanity itself.[63] Yet, none of these issues were a security concern to any actor in of any state in the mid-19th century. Given the

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[63] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security*, 76.

agrarian nature of the feudal Japanese economy, there were understandable concerns regarding the environment, they were motivated more by economic factors rather than ecological ones.

Conclusions

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the core aim of this paper is to apply the Copenhagen School of security studies to the events and policies of late Tokugawa Japan from 1853-1868. This is to provide an alternate perspective on the topic by using an IR theoretical framework as a means of historical enquiry. Each of the three chapters were dedicated to a core aspect of the Copenhagen School, examining first the application of securitization theory with regards to the Bakumatsu, then the application of regional security complex theory, and then finally providing an overview of security dyamics through the framework of the five sectors.

As a core theme of the Copenhagen School, securitization theory was straightforward enough to utilize with regards to the case study. The most significant value of the application of securitization theory was that it provided an interpretivist framework for examining the interactions between historical entities. For example, instead of understanding Yoshida Shōin as merely an activist whose patriotism led him to attempt assassination, securitization theory suggests that there is a perceived threat (the Bakufu) and a securitizing actor to act on that threat (Yoshida Shōin), as well as a referent object (sonnō-jōi), and an audience (Yoshida's followers and other loyalists), which all come together to create a security dynamic at the microregional level. This method of historical enquiry provides a more nuanced and structured understanding of events, as opposed to a typical chronological explanation that has no clear theoretical framework.

As another core aspect of the Copenhagen School, regional security complex theory proved valuable insofar that it allowed us to categorize contemporary security dynamics into different

levels of analysis. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde suggest that out of the three (or four) levels of analysis, the regional level is the most significant. However, the regional security dynamics in our case study were rather weak, due to our RSC of choice being heavily penetrated by great imperial powers. As a result, in our empirical case, many of the more significant dynamics actually existed on the domestic and microregional level rather than on the regional or system level. Therefore, strictly applying the theoretical and methodological framework provided in *Security* is not necessarily ideal, and in the spirit of the Copenhagen School's key theorists, I recommend that the analyst may alter the scope of analysis to focus a little bit more, or a little bit less, on certain aspects of the provided framework depending on the empirical case at hand.

Finally, we examined the contemporary security agenda in five sectors per *Security*. The five sectors are essentially an expanded scope for security studies, in which we can apply our observations, especially those regarding the security and regional dynamics of empirical examples. This is valuable and also significant as part of the Copenhagen School in that it also has the function of tying the theoretical framework together. Securitization theory and RSCT are both sophisticated concepts, but the five sectors of security are the medium through which these concepts can be applied analytically as part of the full theoretical framework. In all sectors except environmental, there was sufficient evidence in the empirical case for some measure of analysis. Different aspects of the case study can be construed as belonging to a different sector, and further analysis can then be focused on each individual aspect, with respect to the sector that it belongs to.

Ultimately, the Copenhagen School has shown to be a highly flexible analytical tool, one that provided an alternate perspective for the analysis of the Bakumatsu, despite that it wasn't very well-suited for the task. However, the complicated nature of the framework makes it difficult to

grasp, and its sheer breadth leads one to wonder where it draws its boundaries for analysis—there is much to be critiqued about the Copenhagen School, but that falls outside the scope of this paper.

(11,135 words)

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