Peaceful or Remilitarizing?
A Discourse Analysis of National Identity in Japanese Civics Textbooks from an International Relations Perspective

Master’s Thesis in Japan Studies
Spring 2016
Supervisor: Linus Hagström
Author: Erik Isaksson
Abstract

Textbooks used in Japanese schools have long been a controversial issue. This has been the case partly because of a fear that narratives about Japan’s past that whitewash its wartime crimes may enable a remilitarization of the country. Plenty of scholarship has been devoted to the examination of Japanese history textbooks; textbooks teaching civics have not received as much academic scrutiny. While common historical memory is important for common identities, these narratives exist in civics textbooks as well. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, not just history, but also civics education has been the focus of debate in Japan, making it as important a research area as history education. While the field is not completely new, most studies done on civics textbooks have focused on the curriculum itself rather than on the national identities or discourses that they produce and reproduce. Furthermore, those that have focused on identities have tended to use quantitative analysis and stopped short of discussing what the discovered identity constructions mean for Japan’s international relations. In this study, using discourse analysis I aim to understand how Japanese identity has been constructed in civics textbooks used in Japanese junior high schools that were released in 1990, and in 2012 respectively. Furthermore, my theoretical framework being a version of International Relations (IR) constructivism, one premise that this study is based on is that certain identity constructions and discourses both enable and constrain action by the state. I identify the dominant discourses being advanced in the corpus by looking at how Japanese “self” is portrayed in relation to external “others.” I show that a temporal other that the self is differentiated from – prewar Japan – figures prominently in textbooks both in 1990 and 2012 and argue that this “temporal othering” has aided in socializing Japanese students into what can be termed a “peace identity.” I further argue that this provides greater understanding of the strong opposition to the government’s efforts toward a new interpretation of the Japanese constitution, and remilitarization policies in general. Parallel to the temporal othering is a trend in newer textbooks toward a discourse that seeks to produce continuity between prewar and postwar Japan which makes the discursive picture look perhaps more fragmented that it has before.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.................................................................................................................. 1  
   1.1 Aim.......................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.2 Background and contextualization......................................................................... 2  
   1.3 Literature review....................................................................................................... 5  
      1.3.1 Conceptions of national identity.................................................................... 6  
      1.3.2 History textbooks............................................................................................. 8  
      1.3.3 Civics textbooks............................................................................................... 11  

2. Methodology................................................................................................................ 14  
   2.1 Theoretical framework............................................................................................. 14  
   2.2 Method..................................................................................................................... 18  
   2.3 Material.................................................................................................................... 23  

3. Othering and construction of the self...................................................................... 25  
   3.1 Mainstream textbooks............................................................................................. 26  
      3.1.1 Temporal othering of prewar Japan................................................................. 26  
      3.1.1.1 Narratives on the constitution.................................................................... 26  
      3.1.1.2 Narratives on human rights......................................................................... 31  
      3.1.1.3 Narratives on Asian countries.................................................................... 33  
      3.1.2 Spatial others – sparse but present................................................................. 38  
      3.1.2.1 Asian countries as others............................................................................ 38  
      3.1.2.2 The US and the USSR as others................................................................. 40  
   3.2 Revisionist textbooks............................................................................................... 44  
      3.2.1.2 General features of the Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha textbooks.......................... 45  
      3.2.2.2 Fellowship with the temporal other............................................................. 47  
      3.2.3 Spatial others – more pronounced................................................................. 50  

4. Conclusions................................................................................................................ 55  
   4.1 Implications and discussion.................................................................................... 55  
   4.2 Limitations and further research........................................................................... 62  

Bibliography.................................................................................................................... 65
Conventions

Romanization of Japanese in this thesis is done using the revised Hepburn system. Personal names are in all instances written according to Western conventions, with the given name first and family name second. References are given using the Chicago Manual of Style’s notes and bibliography system’s abridged version (available here http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html), which incorporates footnotes with complete information regarding authors, publisher, date of publication etc. the first time a reference appears and an abbreviated version in subsequent appearances. In footnotes and bibliography, titles in languages other than English are given translated into English in parenthesis after the original title. Exceptions are the textbooks used for empirical analysis; their titles are given in English only in the bibliography. Deviations from the referencing system include newspaper articles accessed on the internet which are written in the “website” style of the above system, as in many instances no author of the articles be identified. Shorter, direct quotes are written directly in the text, while quotes that become longer than three rows when rendered in the text are partitioned and in italics. Punctuation and commas are written inside quotation marks while colons, semicolons and hyphens are written outside of quotation marks, in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style. When deemed appropriate for reasons of clarity, Japanese terms are given italicized in parenthesis after its corresponding English term, or in a footnote when potential discrepancies resulting in translation have to be explained. The full names of ministries, organizations and the like are given the first time they are mentioned, with an acronym in parenthesis. In subsequent appearances, only the acronym is used.
1. Introduction

1.1 Aim

On August 31, 2015, before the security laws that provide the legal framework for Japan exercising collective self-defense passed the Upper House, the largest demonstration since the anti-nuclear protests of 2012 amassed in front of the Japanese National Diet. The protestors were opposed to what they perceived as the remilitarization of Japan by conservative Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, and supported retaining the interpretation of Japan’s war-renouncing article 9 of its constitution saying that Japan does not have the right to exercise collective self-defense. The demonstration was buoyed by strong public opinion – that has even been characterized as “overwhelming” – against the new laws, and was one of many in the summer of 2015. How can this strong opposition be understood? The recent scholarship on Japanese national identity observes and predicts a changing view of what Japan is in relation to national external others, and with that change, a remilitarization of Japan. However, the strong demonstrations and negative public opinion do not confirm this “remilitarizing” identity. If we see public opinion – for the purposes of this study defined as opposition to or support of government policies as manifested in demonstrations, opinion polls and the like – as important to national identity, that Japan would be moving toward remilitarization at the same time as the national identity is conceived of as peaceful by public opinion, becomes paradoxical. In Japan, as in most countries, everyone go through compulsory


education and thus school, through its role in socializing students into particular ideas about society, might be helpful in solving this puzzle. In this study, I aim to provide an understanding of how Japanese national identity has been constructed in Japanese junior high school civics textbooks published in 1990 and 2012 – and explore how that discourse relates to the widespread opposition to the current Japanese government's national security policies.

1.2 Background and contextualization

Since 1903, textbooks used in Japanese schools are all subject to an authorization procedure handled by the government ministry that now goes under the name Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).\(^5\) After World War II (WWII) and to this day, Japanese school textbooks have been a contentious issue with the former victims of Japanese aggression arguing that they construct a biased and incorrect account of pre- and wartime Japan.\(^6\) This can be construed as emanating from a fear that school socialization into a certain view of what Japan is, and has been historically, can enable and constrain certain policies, such as remilitarization.\(^7\) Simply put, in this study I explore how Japanese national identity is spoken of in textbooks – I look at what discourses appear. The premise of this study is that national identity is constructed by discourse – or several discourses – that permeates society and constructs it. Anothert way of putting this is that it matters how we speak of things; without speaking of something or someone as a threat, that someone or something cannot be understood as a threat. Discourse can be defined as “the capacity of meaning-making resources to constitute social reality, forms of knowledge and identity within specific social contexts and power relations.”\(^8\) Discourse is identifiable in all facets of society – also school. Through education, discourse socializes students into certain ideas about what the nation is. These ideas, through their being internalized by individuals, have the power to influence what national security policies become conceivable and

---


inconceivable – even possible and impossible. I see demonstrations as potential manifestations of identities and textbooks as providing revealing insights into national identities internalized by individuals throughout society.

While Japanese history textbooks have been the subject of much research, civics textbooks used in Japanese schools – the goals of civics being, according to MEXT, to cultivate respect for individuals and human rights; deepen understanding of the meaning of democracy and the sovereign rights of states while nourishing a love of one’s country; and teach abilities to grasp issues of societal importance – have received less academic scrutiny. In the words of Sven Saaler, the role of education in producing a strong national identity is important, and textbooks and education have been given as major sources for “information on the war” in public opinion polls among Japanese people. As Klaus Vollmer argues, identity-formation is something that takes place beyond just history textbooks. Attempts by nationalist groups to shape the attitudes of young Japanese – notable is Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho o tsukuru kai’s (Japan Society for History Textbook Reform, hereafter shortened as Tsukuru kai) civics textbook Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho (New Civics Textbooks) – show how civics education is also an area being contested in identity construction, and an area that academia should involve itself in. The knowledge gained by studying identity constructions in civics textbooks may or may not turn out to be different knowledge compared to that gained by studying history textbooks, but the goals of the subject as introduced above easily seem connected to notions of what the self is, and what others are – it is not possible to cultivate a love of country without having an idea of what that country is. Studies by Vollmer and Ryōko Tsuneyoshi in particular have examined identity constructions in Japanese civics textbooks, employing a relational view of identity construction – the self’s existence is contingent upon the existence of an

9 For an overview of the link between discourse and foreign policy, see Jack Holland, “Foreign Policy and Political Possibility,” European Journal of International Relations 19 no. 1 (2011): 49-68.


other that the self is not. In addition to these works, there have been studies on citizenship education in civics textbooks by Chiho Mori and Ian Davies and values promoted in civics textbooks and curriculum guidelines by Kazuko Otsu. These studies all make important contributions – which I discuss in the next section – and are commendable for their focus on civics textbooks when history ones can be said to be “in vogue.” They tend not to discuss, however, the implications certain constructions of Japanese national identity can have for Japan’s international relations. That is, in other words, a novel field and the one to which I seek to make a contribution.

In constructivist International Relations (IR) scholarship – a theoretical approach to IR that considers reality as socially constructed and not just “out there” – identities are seen as both constraining and enabling certain courses of action. In this study I employ discourse analysis and a version of constructivism known as relational constructivism. This will be done in order to explore how Japanese national identity has been discursively constructed in relation to difference in civics textbooks released in 1990 and 2012 respectively. The basis of the relational constructivism that I will employ is that identities are constructed in relation to difference or “otherness” – a self cannot exist without an other.

The constructivism that I use understands the process by which identities become internalized by people, and thus important, as socialization. The school, an institution of which both history and civics education are part, is an agent of socialization. Socialization is understood here as a process that “aims to develop a self-concept, enable self-regulation, empower achievement, teach

---


18 Hagström and Gustafsson, “Japan and identity change,” 2.

19 Hagström and Hanssen, “War is peace,” 270.

appropriate social roles and implement developmental skills.”

That schools offer unique socialization experiences has been acknowledged for a long time, at least since the start of public schooling in the United States. According to Kathryn R. Wentzel and Lisa Looney, public schools in the US were originally instituted to educate children into becoming “healthy, moral and economically productive citizens.”

In the Japanese context, Saburō Ienaga argues that schools were powerful instruments for maintaining the prewar Japanese “warfare state” through their instilling of military ideals in children. On the significance of school textbooks in socializing individuals, Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi argue that “education is the most effective way to produce a national narrative” and through it, the state has the power to reinforce certain ideologies.

To a constructivist who sees discourses and the identities they construct as central to state action, this puts the finger on why textbooks are an interesting material to study at all – they are part of an institution of society that is vital to constructing and reconstructing these discourses. In short, in this study I make three theoretical assumptions, all interconnected: 1) discourses construct identities, 2) these identities are constructed relationally and 3) individuals are subjected to them and internalize them through socialization, partly in school. Going by these assumptions, I will examine how Japanese identity has been constructed in civics textbooks and answer the following overarching question: What are the dominant discourses on Japanese national identity that are constructed and reconstructed in the textbooks, and how are they constructed? Specifically I seek to answer the following question: how can we understand the recent demonstrations that have been directed against the Japanese government’s remilitarization policies, especially taking into consideration the argument that Japanese identity is changing in a way that is conducive to the changes that the government is advocating?

1.3 Literature review

In this section I will introduce previous research on Japanese national identity and on textbooks used in Japanese schools. I do this presentation to position my study in relation to the scholarship that I seek to make a contribution to, namely identity studies on Japan in the field of IR and studies

21 Berns, Child, Family, School, Community, 39.
on Japanese textbooks. The section starts with discussing the national identity scholarship, and divides the textbook scholarship into one subsection on history textbooks, and one subsection on civics textbooks.

1.3.1 Conceptions of national identity

IR scholarship on Japan began focusing explicitly on identities in the 1990s. This identity scholarship started with researchers that have later been labeled norm constructivists. Peter Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara’s 1993 book *Japan’s National Security: Structures, Norms and Policy Responses in a Changing World* is representative of this scholarship. Katzenstein and Okawara examine “the organizational structures and norms that shape Japan’s policy of external security” in order to gauge “the character of the Japanese state” among other related concepts. Theo Farrell terms the norm constructivist approach culturalism, a school that has its roots in the desire to understand “the peculiar military character of America’s enemies” in WWII and the Cold War. For context, early culturalist work on Japan is represented by Ruth Benedict’s influential *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*. Based on her study of Japan’s national character commissioned by the US government shortly before the end of the Second World War (WWII), cultural anthropologist Benedict provides an essentialist view of what Japanese culture is, identifying duties of reciprocity as its core. Farrell situates Katzenstein’s scholarship within a “newer culturalist work” that examines “strategic culture” and “organizational culture.” As Linus Hagström and Karl Gustafsson argue, rationalist scholarship on Japan’s international relations often employs ideas about “groupness” and “identification” even while contending that national identity does not matter. The rationalist scholarship simply changes the terminology, and an important contribution of the norm constructivists was their clarifying that identity is a factor

26 See for example Hagström and Gustafsson, “Japan and identity change.”
that makes a difference in international politics. The existence of, as Felix Berenskoetter has put it, “references to collective identity and efforts to mobilize nationalist sentiments” all over the world seems as good a reason as any to take national identity seriously in the study of IR.

For a norm constructivist discussion of Japanese identity closer in time than Katzenstein and Okawara, Andrew Oros believes that norm constructivism gives the best explanation for why current Prime Minister Abe does not pursue even more forcefully policies like constitutional revision. A “security identity of domestic antimilitarism” – constructed by domestic politics – is seen as having affected security practice through its institutionalization and influence on policy rhetoric and public opinion. In later years, the culturalist or norm constructivist approach has been challenged by relational constructivism. In utilizing conceptions of identity that are non-essentializing and focused on demarcation – applied early by sociologists such as George Herbert Mead – the scholarship based in relational constructivism has argued that identity is constructed in relation to numerous others – a self cannot exist without an other. Relational constructivists such as Shōgo Suzuki argue that a key factor in the construction of a self is social interaction with others; the self cannot be known a priori and it is only when it interacts with others that identity can be constructed. This can be contrasted with an IR realist approach, which sees the identity of the state defined before any interaction – it is an essence and given. Taku Tamaki examines images in Japan of an Asia that is “out there.” He shows how Asia has constituted both a threat and an opportunity throughout Japan’s modern history, through the construction of it as an entity separate from Japan. Hagström and Gustafsson summarize the critique of the norm constructivist framework by pointing out its disregard of the idea that a domestic or national domain is

33 In Mind, Self and Society, edited and published after his death, Mead argues in a self-differentiated-from-others manner that the self “is what he is in so far as he is a member of this community, and the raw materials out of which this particular individual is born would not be a self but for his relationship to others in the community of which he is a part.” George H. Mead, Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 200.
34 For an overview of relational constructivism, see Hagström and Gustafsson, “Japan and identity change.”
impossible without a relation to a foreign or international one.\(^{38}\) As The relational constructivist theory is where I base my study I will elaborate on it in the section on theory.

### 1.3.2 History textbooks

In discussing the glorification of war in Japanese education, Saburō Ienaga explains how militaristic ideals were present in all textbooks used when he was in school during the relatively liberal 1920s. He gives examples of history, ethics, Japanese language textbooks and even books used to sing in class that had clear pro-military content. One example from an ethics textbook is “‘he was hit by enemy fire and died a glorious death.’”\(^{39}\) Ienaga spent many years challenging what is now MEXT in the courts over its unwillingness to allow his original textbooks to pass the screening process and has written extensively on the history of Japanese aggression and the textbooks problem. He shows how education has become “promilitary” in Japan, public opinion towards the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) has changed to view the organization more positively and reverence of the Emperor is on the rise.\(^{40}\) Ako Inuzuka examines Tsukuru kai’s history textbook and “attempt[s] to get a better understanding of the collective memory of the Asia-Pacific War” as it is discursively portrayed in it.\(^{41}\) Her results are similar to Ienaga’s: she sees the collective war memory supported by Tsukuru kai’s textbook as “yet another facet in the rise of militarism and nationalism in contemporary Japan,”\(^{42}\) and concludes that MEXT attempts to “soften” historical atrocities by Japan and portray the nation in a more positive light,\(^{43}\) and that textbooks such as the Tsukuru kai one enjoy comparatively lax screenings at MEXT.\(^{44}\) Inuzuka makes an interesting point by linking the MEXT screening process to Jacques Ellul’s term “sociological propaganda,” defined in relation to “blunt and traditional[ly] agitational” political propaganda as “a more subtle, imperceptible form of manipulation.” In quoting Ellul, Inuzuka introduces sociological propaganda in the following way: “‘[t]hrough the medium of economic and political structures a

---


38 Hagström and Gustafsson, ”Japan and identity change,” 5.


40 Ibid., 133-134.


42 Ibid., 144.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 146.
certain ideology is established, which leads to the active participation of the masses and the adaptation of individuals.“She argues that in democratic societies this propaganda can be a more viable form than overt political such, where outright censorship is seldom justified.\textsuperscript{45} Substituting the word “ideology” with “discourse,” Ellul’s idea can be seen as similar to one that sees discourses as enabling and constraining individuals (and states), with perhaps a difference in that a discourse would be constructive of also the economic and political structures. Interesting points aside, Inuzuka’s study is somewhat limited in its focus on just one textbook that at the time reached an abysmally small percentage of students in Japan – 0.4%.\textsuperscript{46}

Christopher Barnard employs a linguistic model of analysis called systemic-functional grammar to look at depictions of the Rape of Nanjing, the WWII attacks by Germany and Japan on Poland and the US/UK respectively, and the surrenders of Germany and Japan in the war.\textsuperscript{47} Barnard argues that there are two ideologies that he calls the ideology of irresponsibility and the ideology of face-protection that are given room to exist through the vague depictions in the textbooks he examines.\textsuperscript{48} The ideology-enabling is primarily handled by use of passive voice, making a perpetrator grammatically invisible (“XXX Chinese were killed” etc.); ambiguous statements about the presence of Japanese in Nanjing; and not a single textbook explicitly stating that Japan attacked another country – used by Barnard as meaning “state” – in 1941 (instead Japan is portrayed simply as having attacked Pearl Harbor).\textsuperscript{49} In Alexander Bukh’s words, Barnard’s book is the “most forceful” critique of Japanese history textbooks.\textsuperscript{50}

Bukh himself compares history textbooks from the 1980s and 2000s and finds that narratives of the victimhood of the Japanese people figure more prominently than narratives of the victimization of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 145.
\item \textsuperscript{46} “Tsukuru kai kyōkasho saitakuritsu 1.67% 17 nendohi 4 bai kyō” (Tsukuru kai textbook adoption rate 1.67% compared with [Heisei academic] year 17, four-time increase) Sankei shinbun, accessed May, 15, 2016, http://webs.sankei.co.jp/search/page.do?mode=1&paperNo=1&publishDate=20090904&newsId=20090904100004094&keyword=%20%E2%80%9A%C2%B5%E2%80%9A%C2%A2%E2%80%94%C3%B0%C5%Bd
\item \textsuperscript{47} Barnard, \textit{Language, Ideology and Japanese History Textbooks}, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 168.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 154-155.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Bukh, “Japan’s History Textbooks Debate,” 686.
\end{itemize}
Asian peoples by Japan. He also makes the argument that a change in how the Battle for Okinawa is portrayed in the newer textbooks challenges the notion of a homogeneous Japan. In the textbooks from the 1980s, the battle received scant attention, while in the ones from the 2000s, it is dealt with under separate sub-chapters. Bukh argues that if one takes the position that Japanese common victimhood has been an important part of the construction of the Japanese nation in the textbooks, the portrayal of Okinawan victimhood as something distinct challenges this monolithic Japanese identity.

While the scope and focus is different, for perspective on the width of ideas in the scholarship on Japanese history textbooks, Daniel Sneider contrasts strongly with Barnard. Sneider uses results from Stanford University’s Divided Memories and Reconcilliation project that looked at the most used textbooks in schools in the US, China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan and finds that Japanese textbooks are “least likely” to “stir patriotic passions.” Sneider found that the major history textbooks “do not celebrate war, […] stress the importance of the military, […] tell no tales of battlefield heroism.” Sneider contrasts this with the examined Chinese textbook, which features stronger nationalist narratives. Sneider’s study is comparative between countries and partly reaches an inherently comparative conclusion: Japanese textbooks do not promote a nationalist narrative to the same extent as Chinese. His conclusion is that “the dominant narrative in Japan […] is that of a disastrous military adventure that should never be repeated,” rather than the revisionist narrative espoused by Tsukuru kai. As he argues himself, this is somewhat counterintuitive if one goes by the writings of authors such as Barnard or Inuzuka, who see a remilitarizing discourse that is strong in textbooks. Sneider’s explicit avoidance of analyzing textbooks by revisionist groups, however, can be argued as contributing to a less-than-full picture of narratives on the war in Japanese textbooks.

To end the discussion of the scholarship on history textbooks, Yoshiko Nozaki gives an informative overview of the textbooks debate in Japan from the end of the war to the beginning of the new

51 Ibid., 702.
52 Ibid., 699.
54 Ibid., 46-48.
55 Ibid., 41.
56 Ibid., 38.
millennium. She concludes that the controversy over history textbooks can be viewed as part of “a larger struggle over Japan’s national identity and security policy.” This is the view that my study adopts as one of its premises: national identity constructions in Japanese textbooks – in this case textbooks teaching civics – socialize the students into certain ideas about what the nation is and what kind of security policies they regard as acceptable for the state, which represents the nation.

1.3.3 Civics textbooks

Japanese civics textbooks have generally not received as much academic scrutiny as Japanese history textbooks. Chiho Mori and Ian Davies examine all civics textbooks in use from 2012, focusing on the citizenship education element. Mori and Davies challenge the notion that education in civics textbooks in Japan is overwhelmingly based on rote learning and that it deemphasizes critical thinking. They argue that there is evidence of more dynamic approaches to citizenship education – promoting participation in society – than had been shown by previous studies. While national identity is not the authors’ main interest, toward the end of their study they frame the status of Japanese citizenship education as reflective of a larger struggle over national identity in Japan, implicitly acknowledging its importance also to an education study. On this topic, they find that the conservative publishers Jiyūsha (publisher of Tsukuru kai’s textbook) and Ikuhōsha dedicate many pages to areas that can be seen as key to national identity construction: national flag, national anthem and national territory. Kazuko Otsu examines the different values emphasized in the curriculum guidelines and one civics textbook from the major publisher Tōkyō shoseki. In the guidelines, Otsu finds that values related to civic life and democracy are given slightly more emphasis in the textbooks than is prescribed by the curriculum guidelines called the Course of Study in terms of pages, while those pertaining to social cohesion and self-cultivation are deemphasized; there are fewer pages percentage-wise than there are related objectives percentage-wise in the Course of Study. On the other hand, pages devoted to “economic life” take up a lot more room than prescribed in the Course of Study and constitute the biggest theme in the

58 Mori and Davies, “Citizenship education in civics textbooks,” 172.
59 Ibid., 166.
textbook. Otsu’s study provides interesting figures on content in the Tōkyō shoseki textbook, but not much more. The study is quantitative and the conclusions involve little discussion of what the results mean.

Ryōko Tsuneyoshi’s examination of the portrayal of foreigners in Japanese social studies textbooks is of greater relevance to this study. It is similar to Otsu’s study in its usage of quantitative methods, but its focus is on identity. Tsuneyoshi uses a relational epistemology looking at Japanese identity constructed in relation to foreigners – “otherness.” She concludes from her examination of the textbooks that there is a certain awareness of diversity in Japanese society, more so than one can assume when hearing accusations against Japan about it advancing a monocultural image of itself. If only in the sense that Tsuneyoshi’s study is based on a relational theory of knowledge, my study can be seen as operating in her tradition. However, she also uses a model of analysis which focuses on gathering a large amount of data from the corpus. This data is then divided into thematical categories such as “Foreigners as transient visitors” and “Coexisting with nature,” presumably to get an overview of how often certain messages appear. Tsuneyoshi’s study is valuable as it identifies a discourse seeing Japan as pluralistic (but monoethnic) and finds that the idea of what a foreigner is changes from one narrative to the other. The aim of this study, however, is to problematize what kind of socialization constructions of Japanese identity in civics textbooks have enabled and constrained, bearing in mind that this socialization has effects throughout society and can aid in the production of certain public opinion. Tsuneyoshi’s perspective does not look at what is actually being said but relies on the categorized, quantitative data being able to account for changes in the discourse.

Klaus Vollmer also uses a relational perspective in analyzing Japanese civics textbooks in junior high school and civics and ethics textbooks in high school. As Vollmer instructs, civics in junior high school is included in social studies (shakaika) while high school civics (kōmin) is differently structured and divided further into classes using separate textbooks called “Contemporary society” (Gendai shakai) – the high school “civics” Vollmer looks at – “Ethics” (Rinri), and “Politics

61 Ibid., 60.
62 In Japanese junior high schools, “Social Studies” (Shakaika) is divided into “Historical field” (Rekishiteki bunya), “Civics field” (Kōmin teki bunya), and “Geographic field” (Chiriteki bunya).
64 Ibid., 36.
65 Ibid., 39-40.
and economy” (Seiji keizai). Vollmer discovers that narratives about Japan are often physically partitioned from narratives about “others,” and a tendency toward cultural relativism in this strict separation of content. Furthermore, he finds similarities with the controversial Nihonjinron views on Japaneseness – a narrative that emphasizes Japan’s uniqueness. Vollmer finds distinctly different narratives on human rights in the Tsukuru kai volume and the “mainstream discourse” narrative. In coming to this conclusion, he devotes quite a lot of effort to Tsukuru kai’s civics textbook. While controversial, as Mori and Davies point out, this textbook has in fact not been widely adopted by schools. In this study, I interest myself not only with what I call the “revisionist discourse,” but also with the more mainstream textbooks by Tōkyō shoseki, Kyōiku shuppan, Nihon bunkyō shuppan, Teikoku shoin and Shimizu shoin, of which the first three, as Vollmer himself mentions, are used by about 75 percent of junior high schools students. In the mainstream textbooks’ narrative on human rights, Vollmer finds a universalist view of their development throughout history and an idea that Japan was a latecomer and had to “wait” for human rights. This view is presented through a focus on European Enlightenment figures such as John Locke, Jean-Jaques Rosseau and Montesquieu. Vollmer argues that self and other are ascribed positions of progressiveness and backwardness, with the other – the West – as progressive and the self – Japan, or rather Japan’s past – as backwards. While Vollmer’s study provides valuable insights into how structuring of content and ideas about Japan construct self and others, his results with regard to civics textbooks other than Tsukuru kai’s textbook are actually limited to the discussion of human rights. As he makes clear himself, his study is preliminary, and I believe a study that looks at how Japan is portrayed in the parts of the textbooks that deal more directly with politics, the constitution and Japan’s role on the international stage would complement Vollmer’s findings both with regard to the revisionist discourse and the mainstream discourse, which is what I do.

In sum, the scholarship on Japanese textbooks focuses the most on identities and their meaning when it is looking at history textbooks. Examples of these studies are Ienaga and Bukh, introduced

66 Vollmer, “The construction of ‘self’ and Western and Asian ‘others’,” 64, 72.
67 Ibid., 79-81.
68 Mori and Davies, ”Citizenship education in civics textbooks,” 155.
70 Ibid., 79.
71 Ibid.
above. When it comes to civics textbooks, the focus is often on what type of knowledge is being conveyed to children, with not as strong a focus on questions of national identity. These can be represented by Mori and Davies’ and Otsu’s studies. There has also been a tendency to rely on quantitative methods in studies of civics textbooks, an example of that is Tsuneyoshi’s study. By contrast, my study is not a survey of the curriculum itself or how knowledge is transmitted. It is a qualitative study focusing on how national identity has been constructed by discourse in civics textbooks and how a grasp of how this has been done can be used to understand the opposition to remilitarization that has been manifested in protests against the government’s national security agenda. Because of this aim, the study is probably best positioned as being in the tradition of Ienaga and attempting to build on Vollmer’s work.

2. Methodology

2.1 Theoretical framework

As mentioned above, in this study I apply a constructivist approach that at its core takes seriously the notion that identities are important in international politics. There are many views of what constructivism is, or what it should be: it has been characterized as the “middle ground” between poststructuralist and rationalist approaches, as having its roots in normative international critical theory, and as being a wholly modernist enterprise that follows the scientific model of falsification of theories against evidence, while taking a critical stance on the possibility of separating the subject from the object. For this reason, I see fit to say a word on the assumptions upon which I carry out my constructivist study. The most fundamental assumption that I go by is that all things can be meaningful, and my initial motivation for doing this research was that I wanted to explore the meaning of the civics textbooks. Meaning is not inherent in things; we make the meaning. Ludwig von Wittgenstein wrote of aspect seeing – basically seeing things from different perspectives – a concept that Johan Asplund took to heart to argue that the most fundamental question in sociological studies – and, I dare add, social science in general – is “what does it mean?” Asplund’s central thesis is that in order to carry out positivist investigations of


verification, we must have established a way of seeing the phenomenon in question; the seeing of it always comes first.\textsuperscript{75} What I provide in this study is a way of seeing civics textbooks used in Japanese junior high schools and an interpretation of what they mean. Asplund’s aspect seeing, meaning-making or hermeneutic view of social science is the one that I embrace and the view that grounds the IR constructivism that I employ in this study. Asplund’s question could also be rendered as “how does it mean?” This can be said to better further the aim of this study: to explore how Japanese national identity has been constructed in civics textbooks. The “how” could be seen as focusing more on the process than the result, and this might be better fitting a research question that seeks to answer how Japanese identity has been constructed.

Neither Wittgenstein nor Asplund operated or operate in the field of IR, so to return to the question of where I stand in the debate on IR constructivism, I see the purposes of this study as served by an endorsement of the scholarship that views identities as important to state policy and has applied the study of them to East Asian international relations.\textsuperscript{76} As for epistemological and ontological assumptions, I place this study in an ontologically realist and epistemologically idealist framework. The world “out there” exists independently of human cognition – but our knowledge of that world and its meaning is cognitively constructed.\textsuperscript{77} In IR, these ideas can be represented by Adler’s middle ground “modernist constructivism”\textsuperscript{78} a research program he has articulated as the view that “the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human cognition and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world.”\textsuperscript{79} To textbooks and international politics an epistemological idealism primarily has bearing on how I view the empirical material: through discourses it constructs identities that are internalized by students. That the ontology is realist affects how the results of my textbook study are interpreted: the discourses construct our understanding and the meanings we attribute to the material world, which in turn can then shape the actions of actors in international politics.

\textsuperscript{75} Johan Asplund, \textit{Om undran inför samhället} (Wondering about society) (Lund: Argos, 1970), 127-128.
\textsuperscript{79} Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground,” 322.
As mentioned above, the fact that identities and norms become internalized through socialization in school is another core theoretical premise of my study. Eleanor E. Maccoby introduces socialization of children as referring to “processes whereby naïve individuals are taught the skills, behavior patterns, values and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up.” Maccoby further states that socialization goes on throughout an individual’s whole life, in different forms, school being one of these.\textsuperscript{80} Wentzel and Looney cast the socialization experience at school as highly overlapping with those provided by families, but with certain experiences such as coordination of personal goals and abilities with others in a group being particular to its kind of socialization. Furthermore, and of importance to this study, school is seen as a place where children’s future roles as “citizens and workers” are hammered out.\textsuperscript{81} Roberta M. Berns gives socialization’s goals as partly being to teach appropriate social roles.\textsuperscript{82} In the context of identity construction in school textbooks, a social role could be a role that accepts certain identities as common sense. In this study I make the following assumptions with regards to socialization: I presume that education and textbooks are important in the socialization of children. Furthermore, I see socialization through textbooks as one process by which children internalize identities. The internalization of identities through discourses reproduced in textbooks can be seen as what A. Morrison and D. McIntyre call “political socialization,” which they define as “a process by which political systems maintain themselves against breakdown or radical change.”\textsuperscript{83} As mentioned in the introduction, the idea that education is one of the prime means of national identity production\textsuperscript{84} through its all-encompassing dissemination in national society can be seen as another way of expressing the importance of socialization in school. Seen in this way, the assumption that this type of socialization can be a vehicle by which certain identity discourses grow or become weaker seems very likely.

A relational constructivist take on identity construction holds that national identities are constructed and reconstructed in relation to difference. In the words of Christine Han, bringing to


\textsuperscript{81} Wentzel and Looney, “Socialization in School Settings,” 382.

\textsuperscript{82} Berns, \textit{Child, Family, School, Community}, 39.


\textsuperscript{84} Nozaki and Inokuchi, “Japanese Education, Nationalism and Ienaga Saburo’s Textbook Lawsuits,” 97.
light the alien nature of the other allows “society to define itself in terms of the civic virtues that it wishes its people to acquire.”85 Within the theoretical tradition of constructivism, this stands in contrast to the norm constructivist interpretation which, put in a simplified way, holds that identities are constructed domestically by norms and rules.86 A norm constructivist approach might be to look at domestic politics and culture in each of the countries for traces of identity construction. However, if one sees identity as constituted by an inscription of boundaries that differentiate “self” from “other”87 and as an expressly “relational” concept,88 only looking at domestically produced norms will not be able to explain identity constructions. Thomas Diez has made the argument that the othering of Europe’s past constitutes a central part of the European Union’s identity, and furthermore that this temporal othering is less antagonistic than spatial othering of states.89 In a similar vein, Hagström and Hanssen have shown how othering of Japan’s past was more prominent in Diet debates in the 1970s than in the 2010s.90 When I explore temporal othering, these are the main works that I build my case on.

Another question on which the relational constructivists opposed the norm constructivists pertains to the extent or reasons for change in Japanese identity. Here, the relational constructivists argue that the norm constructivists rely excessively on material factors in explaining identity change, not taking into account that the meaning of these material factors are discursively constructed. I concur that viewing culture – like Katzenstein to a large extent did – as an independent variable fails to see that culture can also change. The framework seems to miss a whole level of analysis, one that goes deeper than organizational or strategic culture. The relational constructivists I endorse also offer a critique of other relational accounts of identity91 which they see as relying too much on

85 Christine Han, “Wartime Enemy or ‘Asian’ Model? An examination of the role of Japan in history textbooks in Hong Kong and Singapore,” China Perspectives, no 4 (2013): 44.
86 As expressed by Hagström and Hanssen, “War is peace,” 270. A norm constructivist perspective on international politics other than Katzenstein and Berger is Yūki Abe, “Konsutorakutivizumu ni okeru ‘kihan no shōtotsu.’ Bosunia naisen ni taisuru doitsu no taiō o jirei ni,” (Clash of norms in constructivism. A case study of Germany’s answer to the Bosnian civil war) Kokusai seiji (International politics) no. 172 (2012).
89 Diez, “Europe’s others,” 320-321.
90 Hagström and Hanssen, “War is peace,” 283.
ontological assumptions of the resilience or fluidity of identity. Contrary to this, Hagström and Gustafsson’s view is that empirical analysis is needed to answer the question of whether identity is resilient or fluid.\textsuperscript{92} That is precisely what I do in exploring how Japanese national identity has been constructed in civics textbooks. In this way, my study is firmly rooted in the theoretical strand of relational constructivism, as epitomized by Hagström and Gustafsson, Suzuki and Tamaki, while I strive to present an argument that can provide an understanding for why antimilitarist opposition is as strong as can be observed at rallies outside the National Diet.

The theory of relational constructivism further problematizes the identities that norm constructivism in a sense takes for granted by not looking outside of the borders of the self and assuming that the roots of an identity can be found within the self. The theory provides the basis for thinking about identity as something that cannot be constructed without an other to produce difference with. To summarize the theory section, the theoretical assumptions made are that identities are constructed in relation to difference by discourse and that textbooks act as a socializer through which school children internalize these identities.

\subsection*{2.2 Method}

The method of analysis in this study is discourse analysis. A lot of the discourse analysis done today relates in some way to Michel Foucault whose approach centered around the constitutive relationship between power and meaning, or power and knowledge. According to Foucault, meaning is created from positions of power and claimed as truths from those positions. Social change occurs through changes in how power is wielded, rather than when oppressive power disappears; in the view of Foucault, knowledge cannot be articulated without power.\textsuperscript{93} In this study, I will not be drawing explicitly on Foucault to a very large extent, but I see these premises as fitting my view of what discourse does in the context of textbooks in Japan, and as a good point of departure: discourse constructs knowledge of the self – Japan – through institutionalization and by way of the higher echelons of bureaucratic and political power in Japan, the state and in this case MEXT.

Iver B. Neumann has argued that the traditional way of understanding method – method as being a way to describe a social phenomenon from an external position – is not applicable for a discourse

\textsuperscript{92} Hagström and Gustafsson, “Japan and identity change,” 16.
\textsuperscript{93} Chouliaraki, “Discourse Analysis,” 675, 680
The problem that arises is one of objectivity and subjectivity; how objective the researcher can be. As I describe below, I categorize my findings as different types of “others.” Paraphrasing James Babb, a researcher of political problems has to constantly ask him or herself whether his or her concepts and categories seem to work well and produce a good understanding only because they work in relation to existing preconceptions. On the other hand, one might ask: as opposed to what? Do we not have preconceptions about everything; are not preconceptions the premises for which we are able to do any kind of research inquiry at all? According to Jennifer Milliken, citing Jim George, a common research interest of discourse analysts is to “illustrate how textual and social processes are intrinsically connected and to describe, in specific contexts, the implication of this connection for the way we think and act in the contemporary world.” The point of discourse analysis is, in other words, to unmask preconceptions; to illuminate the very premises and give us a chance to question them. I will return to this problem of reflexivity, which is what I have tried to account for above, when discussing my categories of “others.”

Discourse analysis is, as it has been put by Marianne W. Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, not simply a method or a theory but “a complete package.” While this section in which I discuss my discourse analysis is called “Method,” this should in no way be taken as a rejection of the “complete package” view, but instead be seen as an effort to show how theory and method in discourse analysis are inseparable. Iver B. Neumann writes that discourse analysis differs from many other methods in the social sciences in that it problematizes certain parts of reality that other modes of analysis do not. On the one hand, such analyses may allow one to say something specific about a certain part of reality. On the other hand, one is forced to reify reality to say that specific something. Constructivist scholars in IR have talked about a difference between their approach and IR realist approaches as being one of discrepancy in the “level of analysis.” I believe that this is a view that can be used to illustrate one difference between discourse analysis and more

98 Neumann, Mening, materialitet, makt, 14.
“traditional” or “scientific” methods of drawing hypotheses from theories and trying them against empirical evidence. Why this view is applicable becomes very obvious when one considers that a discourse analysis could hardly be conducted without an epistemology that sees knowledge of the social world as constructed. This constructed nature can be seen as the core commonality of different discourse analyses. Thus, consequently the relationship between discourse analysis and constructivism (or constructionism, or social constructionism) is one in which the former presupposes the latter. It is possible to, as Babb, strike a more conciliatory tone and say that the most “sophisticated forms” of discourse analysis presupposes constructivism, but at least in following Foucault who revealed the constructed natures of institutions like the prison, one would be hard-pressed to argue that discourse analysis could be done without a notion of social construction. Discourses construct national identities, and constructivism is the theory of knowledge grounding the analysis of the discourses.

Iver B. Neumann defines discourse as a system for the creation of statements and practices that through institutionalization appear more or less normal. In this study, I see the discourses that I explore as becoming institutionalized when they are disseminated – the dissemination of the discourses themselves constitutes the institutionalization. What I propose, in line with Hagström and Gustafsson’s argument, and constructivist IR scholars of a slightly different persuasion such as Berenskoetter, is that certain identity constructions enable and constrain certain public opinion and policies through socialization. The degree to which policies become enabled or constrained is connected to the extent that the discourses are considered normal, or in the words of Milliken, “common sense.” Hagström’s explanation of the relational concept of identity and of why identities are important informs us of the same idea: the “normal” is differentiated directly in relation to the “abnormal.” Ideas about normality and abnormality become engrained and this controls what is conceivable and inconceivable. Discourses, then, are as hegemonic as they are considered normal.

102 Berenskoetter, “Parameters of a National Biography,” 263.
While my corpus is rather large, the analysis of the empirical data is of a qualitative nature. For economical reasons, I decided to look at not all chapters and sections of my corpus, but those related to modern society, the Constitution of Japan and human rights and Japan in international society. This leaves passages on economics and some on domestic politics and public administration. I made this choice after a preliminary examination of the data that yielded more potential self-other dichotomizations in the former passages than in the latter. In the examination of the data, I use Peter Hall’s framework for conducting discourse analysis of national identities. Hall’s framework is divided in two levels, the first level being description of the discourse, and the second being its explanation. Hall’s explanation of the discourse revolves around proving its institutionalization. As I explain above, in my study I see discourses as institutionalized when they are disseminated. If certain discourses are discernible in the textbooks, they have already gone through being written down by authors, passing MEXT screening, being published and adopted by local Boards of Education. Finally, through socialization they are disseminated in society and in that sense institutionalized. Another way of putting it is that the existence of the discourse equals the institutionalization of it. In this sense, I do Hall’s two steps of analysis concurrently. Put in the context of the previous scholarship, with this framework I am able to do a deeper analysis than Tsuneyoshi’s, which was reminiscent of a quantitative analysis, and also examine implications of socialized identities to an extent that Vollmer did not.

In using Hall’s framework to describe the discourse, the goal is to identify what the discourse makes possible and impossible to say, what is preserved or said repeatedly and what themes there are that return again and again. I attempt to identify sentences where Japan is directly or indirectly contrasted with another country or larger region, as well as sentences where Japan’s past emerges as a contrast to the Japan of today. To show how Japan has been differentiated relationally and identify others, I use four categories: spatial other; temporal other; antagonistic other; and fellow other. Spatial and temporal others are what the names suggest: others that are identified spatially and temporally. An example of a spatial other is China, and a temporal other would be the self’s – Japan’s – past. Antagonistic others are those in relation to which clear difference with the self is produced; a traditional other. A fellow other, on the other hand, is an other with which

105 Peter Hall, “Diskursanalys av nationell identitet” (Discourse analysis of national identity) in Identitetsstudier i praktiken (Identity studies in practice) eds. Bo Petersson and Alexa Robertson, (Liber: Malmö, 2003), 127.
106 Ibid., 123.
the self tries to connect; an other whose virtuous qualities the self wants in itself. After a preliminary study of my corpus I decided on these categories, some of which appear in previous scholarship, and some of which I incorporated myself. “Fellow other” makes an appearance in Suzuki’s article about othering in Sino-Japanese relations. Suzuki writes that

*during the height of the Sino-Soviet split, Japan was at times portrayed as a fellow victim of Soviet ‘hegemonism (baqianzhu yi)’ by Beijing, and in a sense became a ‘fellow Other’ which the Chinese state utilized to confirm its identity as a principled opponent to Soviet ‘social imperialism’*107

As for “temporal other,” Diez states that the “otherings between geographically defined political entities tend to be more exclusive and antagonistic against out-groups than otherings with a predominantly temporal dimension.”108 His quote summarizes quite well the relationship between the othering categories that I employ: antagonistic and spatial are on the “negative” end of the spectrum, with the potential of instigating conflict with an out-group, and fellow and temporal are on the “positive” side, as othering methods that are less likely to produce such conflicts.

To further define the method, my discourse analysis can be seen as what Babb has called “functional discourse analysis.”109 This type of discourse analysis uses “a predetermined set of categories and concepts [...] note[s] that certain types of beliefs seem to correlate with other beliefs and specific sets of political behaviour” and is a matter of finding discourse “that is consistent with the predetermined categories which are theoretically assumed to exist.”110 Babb contrasts the functional approach with critical discourse analysis, which he presents as more normative, focusing more on revealing oppressing and controlling power relations. Babb states that in critical discourse analysis “more important [than in functional discourse analysis] is a critical frame of mind for looking at how political and power relations are expressed and reinforced in subtle and unexpected ways.”111 As argued by Adam Jarowski and Nikolas Coupland, however, discourse analysis “in all but its blandest forms, such as when it remains at the level of language description” is critical. Goals that can be dubbed critical and that are shared by those of Babb’s functional discourse analysis and the critical approach are “questioning of objectivity, normality and

---

108 Diez, “Europe’s others,” 320.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
factuality.” On bias in research, Babb argues that “openness and willingness to see alternatives and modify your approach to a problem is crucial [...] if this is done explicitly, consistently and systematically in research, then the problem of bias can be partially addressed.” By this standard, my process exonerates me from the harshest accusations of bias, as the categories that I employ were not predetermined before I looked into the material. My original approach did not include the categories of temporal, spatial, fellow or antagonistic othering – it was after I had realized that my original aim did not move the study forward that I started using those categories; it was then that I modified my approach. On the other hand, from knowledge not being objective follows that there will always be bias, and one might not be able to completely circumvent this problem.

To end this section, a word on the structure of the analysis. Structurally, I separate the analysis of the textbooks into one section called “Mainstream textbooks” – which are Tōkyō shoseki, Ōsaka shoseki, Shimizu shoin, Teikoku shoin, Nihon bunkyō shuppan, Chūkyō shuppan, Nihon shoseki, and Gakkō tosho – from one that I call “Revisionist textbooks” which are the newer publishers – Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha. The terms “Mainstream” and “Revisionist” I find appropriate because of the longer history of the publishers I call mainstream and the explicit mission of those that I call revisionist to, in the words of Tsukuru kai, change “textbooks that until now have painted an unjustly bad image of Japan.”

2.3 Material

Japanese textbooks are screened by MEXT every four years. The empirical data in this study consists of junior high school civics textbooks that were screened in 1986 and 2011, and were released for use in schools in 1990 and 2012. Throughout this paper, I will refer to the corpus using the years of publishing. The publishing houses represented in the 1990 textbooks are the following: Nihon shoseki; Tōkyō shoseki; Ōsaka shoseki; Chūkyō shuppan; Gakkō tosho; Kyōiku shuppan; and Shimizu shoin. The 2012 publishers are Tōkyō shoseki; Kyōiku shuppan; Shimizu shoin;

113 Babb, Empirical Political Analysis, 357.
Nihon bunkyō shuppan; Teikoku shoin; Ikuhōsha; and Jiyūsha. To account for the difference in publishers that appear in the two years, Chūkyō shuppan and Ōsaka shoseki's operations were taken over by Nihon bunkyō shuppan in the 1990s and 2000s respectively.¹¹⁶ Nihon shoseki was bankrupted in 2004¹¹⁷ and Gakkō tosho is still operational, but not represented among publishers that passed screening in 2011. Ikuhōsha and Jiyūsha are widely regarded as furthering a conservative, revisionist or according to some authors, neonationalist discourse.¹¹⁸ They are written by the right-wing groups Tsukuru kai (published by Jiyūsha), and the Society for Textbook Improvement (Kyōkasho kaizen no kai, hereafter called Kaizen no kai, published by Ikuhōsha), a breakout group from the former, and were first published in the early 2000s. The discourses disseminated by the Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha textbooks have indeed already been extensively studied,¹¹⁹ and while the amount of students subjected to it has gone up, the readership is still comparatively small – when new textbooks were chosen in 2015 for the 2016 academic year and four years onward, Kaizen no kai reached about 6% of students,¹²⁰ while Tsukuru kai fell dramatically from 4% the last time around to being adopted by only nine private schools in the country.¹²¹ To show share-of-the-market relationship between the revisionist textbooks and the mainstream textbooks, Illustration 1 below displays the adoption numbers by district for each of the 2012 publishers, as given by Mori and Davies.¹²² While I premise my argument on discourses being institutionalized when disseminated, a difference in degree of dissemination – which is what

¹¹⁶ “Shachō messēji,” (Message from the president), Nihon bunkyō shuppan website, accessed May 18, 2016, https://www.nichibun-g.co.jp/company/message/.

¹¹⁷ Koide, "Critical New Stage."


¹¹⁹ See for example ibid; and Vollmer, “The construction of ‘self’ and Western and Asian ‘others’.”


¹²² Mori and Davies, “Citizenship Education in Civics Textbooks,” 156.
the illustration shows – is of interest when determining the meaning of discourses with different content.

![Illustration 1: Market share of 2012 publishers as percentages of adoption districts](image)

For the reasons above – Ikuhōsha and Jiyūsha’s adoption numbers being low, them already having received much scrutiny – I did consider focusing exclusively on the more established textbooks. However, after a preliminary analysis I decided to include the revisionist textbooks to provide a more holistic image of national identity constructions disseminated in Japanese schools. Partly, this decision also had to do with Shimizu shoin’s similarly low numbers, which according to the above logic would have eliminated that textbook as well. Considering the ruling Liberal Democratic Party’s (LDP) enthusiastic support for the Ikuhōsha history and civics textbooks, as well as their usage having increased over the years, their small readership should not make us dismiss them as unimportant or discourage further research on them.

### 3. Othering and construction of the self

In this section I will provide the analysis of my empirical material, dividing it into two larger sections: Mainstream textbooks and Revisionist textbooks. Crucially, the two sections discuss the mainstream and revisionist textbooks separately and not the discourses separately. There are elements of the revisionist discourse in the mainstream textbooks, and of the mainstream discourse in the revisionist textbooks and this is acknowledged as I move along in identifying self and other.

---

3.1 Mainstream textbooks

The mainstream textbooks consist of seven 1990 textbooks and five 2012 textbooks. These are all the textbooks included in my analysis, excluding those by two publishers in 2012: Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha. I call these the mainstream textbooks as they are all publishing houses with a long history, all founded in or before the 1950s. They are the ones that the groups behind the new publishers Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha explicitly oppose when they state that they wish to change "textbooks that until now have painted an unjustly bad image of Japan." As mentioned in a previous section, putting these two types of textbooks in separate categories carries the risk of predetermining the results of the study by limiting its scope to one that favours that particular categorization. The strength of this approach is that it allows for a clear contrast between the older and newer publishers. I first present and discuss a tendency to produce difference between Japan and its past – temporal othering – in narratives of the constitution, human rights and Japan’s Asian neighbours. After this, I bring up spatial othering of Japan’s Asian neighbours, and the US and the USSR/Russia.

3.1.1 Temporal othering of prewar Japan

3.1.1.1 Narratives on the constitution

As the section title suggests, the primary tendency with regard to identity constructions in the mainstream textbooks is that of difference production with Japan’s past. The peaceful and democratic self emerges prominently when the postwar constitution is discussed. This can be exemplified by the following quote from Nihon shoseki (1990): “respect for fundamental human rights; sovereignty of the people; and pacifism are the three core principles of the Constitution of Japan.” Similar wording can be found in all textbooks in 1990. In the words of Ōsaka shoseki (1990) “The Constitution of Japan recognizes the preciousness of human (life), guarantees fundamental human rights that people have, and makes these the core principles of the nation.”

Kyōiku shuppan (2012) talks in the same way as Nihon shoseki (1990) about its three core

principles being “respect for fundamental human rights,” “sovereignty of the people” and “pacifism,” along with the other 2012 editions that all identify these three themes as the constitution’s core principles. This way to write about the constitution is indeed prescribed by the Course of Study that relates to civics education. The Course of Study is issued by MEXT and specifies framework for curricula, each subject’s aim and scope and at which grade the subject in question is taught. The current Course of Study and the one that held sway over the 2012 textbooks has been in effect since 2008. It states that Civics should “deepen the understanding that the Constitution of Japan holds respect for fundamental human rights; sovereignty of the people; and pacifism as its fundamental principles.” Of course, that these portrayals of the constitution are mandated by the Course of Study does not mean that they are of no significance. On the contrary, the portrayals are very much the products of and reproducing a discourse – they do not exist in a vacuum. Discourse-wise, what can be said about this wording existing in the Course of Study is that it is a type of knowledge that official Japan – the government and MEXT – wants to impart in its people. Perhaps this will is only there because official Japan is bound to that will by a framework or way of talking about things – a discourse – that in its current form obliges it to do so. Nevertheless, a discourse of peace is in this way also visible in the Course of Study. While a digression from my focus on textbooks, I believe this simple observation can be used to argue that Japanese national identity as it is constructed in school is not giving up being peaceful as quickly as has been prophesized.

That the Japanese constitution and especially its pacifist article 9 have been instrumental to the cultivation of an antimilitarist culture has been a central thesis in the norm constructivist scholarship. This scholarship has seen the antimilitarism embodied by the Constitution of Japan as fairly stable and static and as a domestic source of a “peace identity” in Japan. A focus on domestically produced norms – through, for example, narratives in the Constitution – has been the

130 Otsu, “Civics Education in Japan,” 56.
131 “Genkō gakushū shidō yōryō – ikiru chikara.”
focal point of critique aimed at norm constructivists, from relational constructivists. However, using a relational constructivist lens, and assuming that discussion of the peaceful ideals of the Constitution of Japan are the product of an identity discourse, an embodiment of peace in the Constitution of Japan – indicating that Japan is peaceful – must be seen as the result of a production of the self that involves differentiation with others. For this reason, the constitution narratives are undoubtedly of interest to a relational constructivist as well. The question becomes who the other is in Constitution of Japan narratives. The answer: Japan of the past.

What can be empirically observed is that, throughout the mainstream 1990 and 2012 corpus, the ideals that modern Japan is said to stand for are consistently the ideals of the Constitution of Japan. The construction of the self as democratic can be exemplified relationally in the following quote from 1990: “Under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, the Emperor was the sovereign and the people were granted suffrage and other rights by him. However, under the Constitution of Japan, sovereignty is with the people and the status of the Emperor is based on ‘the will of the people of Japan.’” Teikoku shoin (2012) writes that “in the Constitution of Japan the sovereignty of the people was established, and thus the status of the Emperor, who was the sovereign under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, changed greatly.” Teikoku shoin’s general narrative on Japan’s past is somewhat subdued, with not very many mentions of the Meiji Constitution overall. It is, however, equally strong in its emphasis on the peacefulness and democratic ideals of the Japan of today. These quotes constitute a temporal othering of Japan’s past.

As expressed in Shimizu shoin (1990) after introducing “respect for human beings” and “democratic politics:” “In our country of today, the Constitution of Japan makes this way to think about politics clear and establishes the fundamental structure for its realization.” This tendency is also observable in 2012: Teikoku shoin (2012) casts the promulgation of the Constitution of Japan as having “changed Japan’s very way of being” – clarifying a strong bond between the constitution and the country. That is not the only relationship this sentence establishes: The other

133 As mentioned, Oros, “International and domestic challenges to Japan’s postwar security identity” is representative of this idea. The general idea can be traced back to Katzenstein and Okawara, Japan’s National Security and Berger, “From Sword to Chrysanthemum.”
134 Hagström and Gustafsson, “Japan and identity change,” 5.
135 Chitoshi Tatsuno et al., Chūgakkō shakai Kōmin (Tokyo: Gakkō tosho, 1990), 56.
137 Tanimoto et al., Shakaika, 35.
that this self – the Constitution of Japan or modern Japan – is juxtaposed with is the Constitution of the Empire of Japan or prewar Japan, pointing to the prevalence of temporal othering – particularly in the latter case in which this juxtaposition is explicit. There are structural differences in the ways this other emerges in the narratives: in some textbooks the prewar constitution is discussed under the same subheadings as the new constitution, \(^{138}\) and in others it is dealt with under separate subheadings.\(^{139}\) What is common in all textbooks is the temporal, antagonistic othering of Japan's past.

All textbooks mention that the prewar constitution did not secure inalienable human rights and generally have somewhat critical narratives,\(^{140}\) though not wholly critical. There are instances when the Meiji constitution is related to the contemporary Prussian one\(^{141}\) – implicitly calling it a product of its time – and where the invasion of China is mentioned as something that was caused by military leaders who sought to relieve Japan of its economic problems and something that politicians were simply too weak to stop. On the other hand, on the very same page Japan is narrated as having victimized many Asian peoples.\(^{142}\) Kyōiku shuppan (1990) constructs Japan, Italy and Germany as countries that had to be restrained, but that the League of Nations was unable restrain so even when they went as far as leaving it.\(^{143}\) This could of course be seen as othering of international society and its failures, but the fact that Japan is included as a country that had to be restrained – essentially as a revisionist, rogue state – can be seen as standing out the most, at least if one assumes – drawing from ontological security theory – that the self wants to have a positive identity, or at least one through which selves are able to “secure their sense of Self through time.”\(^{144}\) A viable solution to this paradox and one that seems to fit with what I have observed so far, is that the Japan that appears in this quote is in fact a temporal other that strengthens the contemporary self’s peaceful identity.

\(^{138}\) See Kikuchi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 24-25; Itō et al., Chūgakusei no shakaika 8-10; Kaji et al., Nihon no shakai, 13-14.

\(^{139}\) See Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 36; Takayanagi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 30-31; Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 15-16; Nakamura et al., Shinchūgakkō, 28; Tanimoto et al., Shakaika, 40; Shigeo Kōno et al., Chūgaku shakai Kōmin, (Tokyo: Kyōiku shuppan, 1990), 18-19.

\(^{140}\) For example, ibid., 19; Kaji et al., Nihon no shakai, 14; Takayanagi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 28-29.

\(^{141}\) See Kōno et al., Chūgaku shakai, 18; Tatsuno et al., Chūgakkō shakai, 48.

\(^{142}\) Ibid., 48-49.

\(^{143}\) Kōno et al., Chūgaku shakai, 204.

On the whole, the peacefulness and democratic ideals in narratives of the constitution is present both in 1990 and 2012. In some cases, the other is not explicated. Chūkyō shuppan (1990), in talking about “contemporary politics and the sovereignty of the people” contrasts democracy, which is cast as based on that “all humans have to be respected” and that “the people are given the ability to rule themselves” with dictatorship, which is presented as “all politics are based on one individual or a small group of individuals’ thinking, and the sovereignty of the people is not recognized.” On the same spread, it is stated “that Japan’s politics stand on the principle of democracy is evident,” while no dictatorship is identified. In others, it is more clear: “the Constitution of Japan was created by amending the Constitution of the Empire of Japan. However, it is clear about modern democratic principles like the sovereignty of the people and fundamental human rights[... ] it was a completely new constitution.” “However” in this quote is easily – and most accurately – taken as a means by which “now” is contrasted with “then” and as temporal, antagonistic othering. Tōkyō shoseki (2012) has the constitution described as being one that “renounces the prewar Emperor sovereignty and employs the sovereignty of the people, while strengthening human rights considerably. It bases itself in deep reflection on the war and prewar militarism that sacrificed so many people, renounces war and aspires strongly for peace.” Nihon bunkyō shuppan (2012) has a fairly strong narrative on the Meiji Constitution, saying that “in our country, under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, freedom of religion was restricted and people who criticized the government or the political system were arrested, among other things. Therefore the Constitution of Japan protects freedom of thought and conscience.” These quotes can all be said to represent antagonistic, temporal othering of Japan’s past.

145 Itō et al., Chūgaku sei no shakaika, 37.
146 Ibid., 36.
147 Kikuchi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 24.
148 Gomi et al., Atarashii shakai, 37.
149 Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 48.
3.1.1.2 Narratives on human rights

Human rights narratives in the textbooks are difficult to separate from those on the constitution, as the textbooks generally see them as coming directly from the constitution, which in turn had inherited them from a history of human rights development primarily in the West. Gakkō tosho (1990) can provide an example of a constitution and rights narrative that constructs a temporal, antagonistic other:

*It can be said that the Constitution of Japan was established after reflection on how individuals were sacrificed to reach objectives of war. Under totalitarian thought, individuals’ freedoms and happiness, and even irreplaceable lives have to be sacrificed for the good of the whole. In wartime Japan this kind of thought was emphasized and the people were made to sacrifice a lot.*

As mentioned above, while it generally takes some effort to identify explicit others in the corpus, the above quote is as clear as any about who is othered, and in effect, what qualities the self possesses. To explicate, wartime Japan is the other, it was totalitarian and sacrificed its own people, while the self is represented by the postwar constitution, which is not the above. On the same spread as the above quote, Gakkō tosho (1990) even has a subsection called “old and new constitution and human rights.” In this subsection, a clear juxtaposition is created between the two constitutions. In the description of the older one, it is mentioned that it too guaranteed rights within the limits of the law, but that the Maintenance of Public Order Act of 1925 (*Chian iji hō*) greatly restricted these. The newer constitution is described as having wanted to protect against that kind of situation by giving the Supreme Court the power to declare laws unconstitutional if they infringe upon human rights.

Narratives on human rights are generally lengthy and often feature the Japan-based French cartoonist Georges Bigot’s famous illustration of a Japanese police officer in front of kneeling Japanese with gags. On these same pages it happens that the history of the previous constitution is not mentioned – narratives on it exist somewhere in all of the mainstream textbooks, however.

Tōkyō shoseki’s different editions have similar wording on rights: in 1990, it is stated that “The Constitution of the Empire of Japan established ‘the rights and duties of the [Emperor’s] subjects’

150 Tatsuno et al., *Chūgakkō shakai*, 78.
151 Ibid., 79.
152 For example Ibid., 84; Kikuchi et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 36; Takayanagi et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 19.
as human rights. Because those human rights were allowed ‘within the limits of the law,’ they
could be restricted by legislation." In 2012, the textbook says “human rights were ‘rights of [his]
subjects’ granted by the Emperor, and could be restricted by law. It happened too that anti-
government criticism and free speech were suppressed.” These two quotes are fairly similar, but
there is a notable difference in how the Maintenance of Public Order Act is dealt with: in 1990 it
takes up half of a page, saying that

[its] objective was to restrict communist party activities, but in reality one could be arrested only by being
suspected of saying things that could be seen as benefiting communism[...] Those who no matter what held
to their beliefs were taken to prison, subjected to torture, and because of that some lost their lives. 156

By contrast, Tōkyō shoseki (2012) spends a grand total of zero characters on the Maintenance of
(2012) have narratives on this law; the only textbook in 2012 to bring it up is Kyōiku shuppan,
stating that it “was established in 1925, and severely restricted thought and expression” 157 and that
“criticism and mobilization against those in power was deemed against the Security Police Act
and the Maintenance of Public Order Act, and [people] were sometimes arrested and
imprisoned.” 158 When the two years are compared, one finds that there is certainly more activity in
the 1990 textbooks than in the 2012 ones; four out of seven take up the law. In addition to the
above quoted Tōkyō shoseki, the ones that do in the main text body are Nihon shoseki (1990) and
Ōsaka shoseki (1990), the former stating that “laws made to protect the Imperial sovereignty
‘national polity’ like the Maintenance of Public Order Act (1925), were created and freedoms of
expression, assembly and association – vital to the development of democracy – were restricted.” 159
The latter calls the law one that “greatly infringed upon freedoms of expression and association.” 160
Chūkyō shuppan (1990) has the law in a caption to a picture, saying that it “Repressed socialist
thought and activities.” 161

154 Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 13-14
155 Gomi et al., Atarashii shakai, 35.
156 Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 16.
157 Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 36.
158 Ibid., 41.
159 Takayanagi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 29.
160 Tatsuno et al., Chūgakkō shakai, 79.
161 Itō et al., Chūgakusei no shakaika, 10.
In sum, what can be observed in narratives on the constitution and human rights in 1990 and 2012 is a continuity in how the self is identified with peacefulness and democracy, while the explicit emphasis on the temporal other weakens slightly in the latter year. This is manifested in the lesser focus on, for example, the Maintenance of Public Order Act and a disappearance of explicated others in general, while the narrative on the peaceful and democratic self is still there. If one is inclined toward the norm constructivist or culturalist approach, the following argument might be tempting: the weak emphasis on a clear other in the 2012 texts on the constitution and human rights is a sign that these narratives reflect norms and identities that do not need demarcation to exist – they are produced domestically. Teikoku shoin (2012) stating that the Constitution “changed Japan’s very way of being”\textsuperscript{162} can indeed be interpreted as providing support for this view – the constitution came into force and changed Japan. However, that Japan changed at all must presuppose the existence of something that it changed from, even if the constitution is constructed as the “cause” of this change. The empirically observed construction of a peaceful self in both years, along with the prevalence of an undemocratic and warring temporal other (which does weaken in 2012, but still exists), provides ground to argue the relational constructivist take on Japanese national identity as constructed in constitution narratives.

3.1.1.3 Narratives on Asian countries

In the previous section, temporal othering of Japan’s past in narratives of the constitution was identified as constructing a peaceful and democratic self. Passages where China and Asia are brought up also tend to be fruitful areas for temporal othering of Japan’s past. In Nihon shoseki (1990), “ill feelings” among “Asian neighbors” are acknowledged regarding “Japan of the past.”\textsuperscript{163} That this acknowledgment exists suggests a level of antagonism on the part of the authors – who are, of course, part of the larger discourse – toward this Japan of the past; if not, it would not have had to be there. The following quote from Ōsaka shoseki (1990) establishes Japan’s past as an other in relation to China: “With China, to whom (Japan) caused much harm in the war, normal diplomatic relations were restored in 1972, and through the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and China of 1978, friendly relations became all the more expected.”\textsuperscript{164} In most 1990 textbooks, China primarily emerges when Japanese diplomatic history in the Cold

\textsuperscript{162} Tanimoto et al., \textit{Shakaika}, 35.
\textsuperscript{163} Takayanagi et al., \textit{Chūgaku shakai}, 125.
\textsuperscript{164} Kikuchi et al., \textit{Chūgaku shakai}, 206.
War is discussed. These narratives are generally undramatic and simply state the year of Japan’s restoration of ties with the country.\textsuperscript{165} A “fellowship” could be said to emerge from the quote above through the expressed hope that relations will be friendly, while wartime Japan as a temporal other is also present, as the passage mentions Japan’s wartime conduct in negative language. The quote is in the larger context of Japan’s recent international relations and not in one that talks of its wartime history. Thus, the argument could be made that the authors did not need to add “to whom (Japan) caused much harm in the war.” Yet still, it is there and constructs a Japanese identity that is repentant about its past wrongdoings toward China.

A possible explanation for the subclause’s inclusion that does not ascribe it to a conviction of Japan’s culpability among textbook authors or MEXT bureaucrats (and seeks to find an answer on a more shallow level than a discursive such) could be the so called “neighboring countries clause.” This clause was inserted into the guidelines for textbook examination after the international incident that was caused in the early 1980s when MEXT examiners wanted history textbook authors to change “invasion” (\textit{shinryaku}) of Manchuria into “advancement” (\textit{shinshatsu}) into Manchuria.\textsuperscript{166} The clause stipulates that authors should take into account “international understanding” and “international cooperation” when dealing with historical facts relating to Japan’s Asian neighbors.\textsuperscript{167} Even if this clause is the cause of the inclusion, however, the effect of the inclusion is the same: construction of a Japan that recognizes having caused harm to China in WWII. This construction socializes the young reader into believing that Japan caused damage to China, and since it is situated where it is in the text – right before “normal diplomatic relations where restored in 1972” – it also gives the impression that the obstacle to such diplomatic relations was Japan’s having caused harm to China. The antagonist in this case is clearly Japan’s past, making it one of temporal othering of the self. More examples of this temporal othering include Gakkō tosho’s (1990) “After 1941, Japan was nearly fighting with the whole world and sacrificed

\begin{footnotes}
\item[165] Itō et al., \textit{Chūgakusei no shakaika}, 194; Takayanagi et al., \textit{Chūgaku Shakai}, 124; Kikuchi et al., \textit{Chūgaku Shakai}, 206.
\item[166] Bukh “Japan’s History Textbooks Debate,” 689.
\item[167] “Gimu kyōiku shogakkō kyōkayō tosho kentei kijun,” (Standards for screening of textbooks for use in schools) MEXT, accessed November 2, 2015, \url{http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/kyoukasho/1260042.htm}.
\end{footnotes}
many Asian peoples”\textsuperscript{168} and Tōkyō shoseki (2012) “and Japan caused great harm to other countries in the war, and was also harmed itself.”\textsuperscript{169}

In Ōsaka shoseki (1990) prewar Japan is constructed as having “tried to strengthen its influence in international politics mainly through military force,” while postwar Japan “in contrast, through economic activities, is enlarging its international role.”\textsuperscript{170} The context in which the sentence is framed, under the same heading as “Japan that lost the war,” and “China, to which (Japan) caused much harm in the war”\textsuperscript{171} appear, leads the reader to think that the Japan of today – the economic power – is the example to strive for, while the Japan of the past – the military power – is the opposite. This is another, quite clear example of othering of Japan’s past in the context of its China relations. Yet another is Nihon shoseki (1990) which also brings up Japan’s past as an other on the pages that speak of Japan’s international role. The textbook states that “we must not forget the damage to Asian countries and the Allies caused by Japan’s aggression. In addition to its colony in Korea, Japan ruled in China and Southeast Asia and attacked many areas of the pacific and stole the lives of many people.”\textsuperscript{172} The same textbook declares that the Constitution of Japan “is permeated by the ideal of pacifism.”\textsuperscript{173} Again, the other that emerges is Japan’s past and the discourse constructs a self that is sorry, and not what it was in the past. There are many other examples of a general nature from both the 1990 and 2012 textbooks: Kyōiku shuppan (2012) hides an implicit other in saying that “there was a time when it was a bad thing in society to wish to be happy;”\textsuperscript{174} Nihon shoseki (1990) narrates “Germany, Italy and Japan” as countries where “fascist dictatorships and militarist governments were born [and] created confrontation with neighboring countries,”\textsuperscript{175} and Gakkō tosho (1990) explains how the constitution’s renunciation of war comes from the people’s “strong determination not to repeat war,”\textsuperscript{176} and that “Japan had to pay reparations to Asian countries, to whom it caused harm.”\textsuperscript{177}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{168} Tatsuno et al., \textit{Chūgakkō shakai}, 49.
\bibitem{169} Gomi et al., \textit{Atarashii shakai}, 39.
\bibitem{170} Kikuchi et al., \textit{Chūgaku shakai}, 207.
\bibitem{171} Ibid., 206
\bibitem{172} Takayanagi et al., \textit{Chūgaku shakai}, 118.
\bibitem{173} Ibid., 119.
\bibitem{174} Kōno et al. \textit{Chūgaku shakai}, 33.
\bibitem{175} Takayanagi et al., \textit{Chūgaku shakai}, 108.
\bibitem{176} Tatsuno et al., \textit{Chūgakkō shakai}, 94.
\bibitem{177} Ibid., 188.
\end{thebibliography}
Othering of Japan’s past as it relates to China experiences a change from 1990 to 2012 in that “China” is more seldom mentioned explicitly. In talking about “the horrors of war,” Shimizu shoin (2012) mentions that “in World War II, Japan killed and harmed many people from other countries and caused enormous damage.” In Kyōiku shuppan (2012) the closest one gets to a mention of China or Asia in this context is where Japan is said to have “reflected on [how it] caused the Pacific War and stole the lives of people inside and outside the country.” Teikoku shoin (2012) does not have passages that mention China when talking about Japan being remorseful or reflecting on the war, settling with “upon reflection on the Second World War, [we] chose pacifism.” The tendency not to mention Asia or China is not constant, however. In Nihon bunkyō shuppan (2012) it is stated that “in the Japanese-Chinese War and the Second World War, Japan invaded Asia and pacific regions and dealt great damage to other countries,” and Tōkyō shoseki (2012) states forcefully under “Relationship with neighbouring countries” that Japan “must not forget how it conducted colonial rule and caused great damage through war – [in other words] made East Asia and Southeast Asia suffer.” There are curious, related passages in the 1990 corpus as well. Ōsaka shoseki, for example, explains that one of Japan’s challenges internationally is to deepen the friendship with Asian countries. This is made complicated by, it is stated, their history of having been under European colonial rule. One would easily think that such a discussion is where Japan’s own history of making its relationship with Asian countries difficult would appear. It does not, however. The fact that these passages make appearances in 1990 lends credence to an argument that the difference between the mainstream textbooks in the two years in terms of national identity construction is not that great after all.

Christopher Barnard found in his study of history textbooks around the turn of the millennium that there was not a single mention of Japan attacking a country in 1941 in any of the textbooks; instead they opted simply for “Pearl Harbor.” According to Barnard, this system of language encoding all pointing in the same direction is not without meaning, and what it means is that there

178 Nakamura et al., Shinchūgakkō, 86.
179 Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 64.
180 Tanimoto et al., Shakaika, 35.
181 Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 70. Tatsuno et al., Chūgakkō shakai, 49 has a similar construction.
182 Gomi et al., Atarashii shakai, 171.
183 Kikuchi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 220-221.
is an ideology of irresponsibility at work that seeks to absolve Japan from guilt.\(^{184}\) The empirically observable disappearance of China or Asia from narratives where Japan’s past is othered can be seen in a similar light – as indicative of unwillingness to admit that Japan victimized Asian countries. It can also be said, however, that the construction of a peaceful Japan does not change that much as the past is actually still othered as an example of what the Japan of today is not. What we have in 2012 is a continued temporal othering of Japan’s past, with a less clear picture of whether or not China and Asia emerge as fellow others, as they do to a larger extent in 1990.

In many contexts where othering of Japan’s past is prominent, the damage that the Japan of the past caused is constructed as having been focused on the Japanese people. As mentioned, that victimhood has been emphasized more than victimization is an argument that exists in previous scholarship on textbooks in Japan.\(^{185}\) Examples of this in the mainstream textbooks are instances in which Japan is qualified as “Japan which had become a ruin” in passages discussing the promulgation of the new constitution,\(^{186}\) and, in fact, most cases in which the Meiji Constitution, and by extension prewar Japan, is othered. With historical revisionism on the rise in Japan since the late 1990s,\(^{187}\) one is tempted to think that a focus on victimhood over victimization is a later-year tendency. This is not the case however; both the 1990 textbooks and 2012 ones reproduce this victimhood discourse. In 1990, this can be exemplified by Ōsaka shoseki stating that the Meiji Constitution considered the people the Emperor’s subjects, and freedoms to be subject to restriction if the state deemed it necessary.\(^{188}\) The victimhood discourse is also visible in narratives where Japan is described as the “only country to have been the victim of nuclear bombing.”\(^{189}\) That Japan is constructed as a victim, however, does not have to be seen in a negative light; one that steals attention from the countries that Japan victimized. It could conceivably also be seen as simply an appeal to rid the world of nuclear weapons, done by pointing at their destructive power. These different viewpoints aside, the point is that continuity is a defining feature with regard to the “Japan-as-victim” discourse.

---


\(^{185}\) Bukh, "Japan’s History Textbooks Debate."

\(^{186}\) Kikuchi et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 25.


\(^{188}\) Kikuchi et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 26.

\(^{189}\) Examples are Kaji et al., *Nihon no shakai*, 96; Tatsuno et al., *Chūgakkō shakai*, 210; and Kikuchi et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 29.
To summarize this discussion on temporal othering relating to Asian countries, the picture is similar to that of constitution and rights narratives; the construction of the self is fairly similar in both 1990 and 2012, while the others are less explicated in the later year. While this is the case, there are quite clear instances where Japan’s past is othered in 2012 as well, Kyōiku shuppan’s (2012) “there was a time when it was a bad thing in society to wish to be happy”\(^{190}\) is one of the the most explicit ways to other implicitly appearing in the 2012 mainstream textbooks.

3.1.2 Spatial others – sparse but present

3.1.2.1 Asian countries as others

The previous scholarship on Japanese identity has found that China is an object of securitization,\(^{191}\) that its victimhood in the war is discursively subordinated to Japanese victimhood,\(^{192}\) and that it is an entity that is increasingly othered across the political spectrum in Japan.\(^{193}\) This makes China a particularly interesting external other to try to identify in my corpus. If China is prominently othered, that would suggest the existence of a discourse – constitute a discourse – that produces difference between China and Japan. In fact, China does not appear very much in neither the 1990 nor the 2012 mainstream textbooks. To start with 1990, when it does appear, the narrative is generally positive. As mentioned previously, China can be seen as appearing in the form a “fellow” other to the Japanese self. I use fellow other largely in the same way as Suzuki did in his study of China’s othering of Japan. According to this definition, a fellow other is an other that the self seeks to identify itself with, rather than distance itself from; a non-antagonistic othering.\(^{194}\) Often when China appears as a fellow other, prewar Japan appears as a temporal such. A very positive view of China is expressed in Tōkyō shoseki (1990): “While being a socialist state, lately [it] has avoided being trapped within [the ideology’s] old system [of governance] and is aiming for a flexible, new type of nation building.”\(^{195}\) While one could argue that this is an othering of socialism, it is undoubtedly a positive characterization of China. More examples from 1990 include Gakkō tosho’s (1990) characterization of the Japan-China relationship as positive (in contrast to the Japan-North

\(^{190}\) Kōno et al. *Chūgaku shakai*, 33.

\(^{191}\) Hagström and Hanssen, ”War is peace.”

\(^{192}\) Bukh, ”Japan’s History Textbooks Debate.”

\(^{193}\) Suzuki, ”The rise of the Chinese ’other.’”


\(^{195}\) Kawata et al., *Atarashii shakai*, 236.
Korea relationship, which is presented as not good), 196 Ōsaka shoseki (1990) saying that the Japan-
China trade relationship is important for the region;197 and Nihon shoseki (1990) writing that “after
the US established relations with China, Japan – after declaring its reflection on the horrors of the
war – also did so. Since then good relations have continued, and in 1978 the Japanese foreign
minister went to China and concluded a peace treaty.” 198 Arguing that a statement saying that the
two countries’ trade relationship is important is evidence of an effort to establish an amicable
“fellowship of self and other” might seem overly optimistic. On the other hand, if this appearance
is one of the very few that the country in question makes in the textbook in question, which is true
for the above Ōsaka shoseki construction, it should be seen as one of the most important variables
that has bearing on the picture of the country being discussed in that particular material
(textbook). And in any case, the statement saying that the Japan-China trade relationship is
important is certainly not antagonistic.

While the changes are not major, the Chinese other emerges slightly differently in the 2012
mainstream textbooks. In two textbooks, its political system as a one-party state is brought up in
one sentence or two within information boxes that cover about a fourth of a page. In these
sentences the system is pointed out as being one in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has
control over all important state functions and one that puts limitations on human rights. 199 These
boxes only figure in two textbooks and apart from them, explicit mentions of China are sparse in
2012. The two passages that do exist can indeed be seen as constituting antagonistic, spatial
othering. The narratives on China’s politics are isolated and marginal; hence one can argue that
they are not part of a dominant othering discourse that is anti-China. Nevertheless, China’s
political system is not talked about at all in this way in 1990; a change is discernible. This change
can be seen as in line with what has been observed by Hagström and Hanssen, for example, when
they explored Diet debates in the 1970s and 2009-2012: that China is increasingly othered in the
political discourse. 200 The fact that this othering is marginal in the corpus that this study deals with,
however, seems to suggest that in the discourse disseminated by mainstream civics textbooks,

---

196 Itō et al., Chūgakusei no shakaika, 214.
197 Kikuchi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 194.
198 Takayanagi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 124.
199 Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 191; Tanimoto et al., Shakaika chūgakusei, 102.
200 Hagström and Hanssen, “War is peace.”
Japan is not moving away from non-antagonistic temporal othering very fast and, even when it is, does not engage eagerly in othering of spatial neighbours.

3.1.2.2 The US and the USSR as others

As a spatial other, in both 1990 and 2012, the US features more prominently than China, which again, is not explicitly mentioned very much in either years, and especially not in 2012. In 1990, the US and the USSR figure as spatial others that strengthen the Japanese self’s peacefulness primarily in narratives that relate to the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The US and USSR often appear as “great powers” (taikoku) in the narrative, as in Nihon shoseki’s (1990) “With both great powers – the US and the USSR – as central actors, research and tests aimed at increasing the efficiency of nuclear weapons were continued and also hydrogen bombs and neutron bombs were developed.” \(^{201}\) Taken out of context this does not have to be antagonistic othering, but with the strong tendency to construct the self as peaceful, “the only victim of nuclear bombing”\(^{202}\) and the opposition in the textbooks to the idea of nuclear deterrence,\(^{203}\) advancement in nuclear technology cannot be seen as something that the self views positively. The Cold War confrontation between the US and the USSR, in at least one instance presented as one between capitalism and socialism,\(^{204}\) is another, to nuclear proliferation close narrative, in which the US and the USSR are othered. The confrontation is constructed as having brought “great tension to East Asia,”\(^{205}\) and having constituted a situation where war was a possibility on several occasions.\(^{206}\) In Nihon shoseki (1990), a clear dichotomy is established between the nuclear-equipped “great power” others and the victimized and peaceful self. Visually, a subsection named “The danger of nuclear war” is followed by one named “Japan’s peace movement” in which the Bikini atoll accident’s effect on a Japanese boat is brought up together with a shorter presentation of Japan’s peace movement.\(^{207}\) Ōsaka shoseki has a subsection called “The stumbles of the superpowers” in which it talks about the

---

201 Takayanagi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 126.
202 For example, Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 43; Itō et al., Chūgaku no shakaika, 213; and Kaji et al., Nihon no shakai, 114.
203 Itō et al., Chūgaku no shakaika, 211; Kōno et al., Chūgaku shakai, 218; Tatsuno et al., Chūgakkō shakai, 209.
204 Kaji et al., Nihon no shakai, 106.
205 Ibid, 110.
206 Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 210.
207 Takayanagi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 126-127.
invasions of Afghanistan and Vietnam by the USSR and the US as evidence that military power is as powerless as it has ever been.\textsuperscript{208}

The othering of great power confrontation is not as present in the 2012 textbooks, which generally do not discuss historical events extensively in their chapters that deal with international society. For example, in Tōkyō shoseki (1990), historical events in the Cold War are dealt with over four pages\textsuperscript{209} while historical accounts of the same era are very limited in Tōkyō shoseki’s (2012). In fact, the only historical accounts from 1945-1990 in that textbook are about the formation of ASEAN in 1967\textsuperscript{210} and one sentence about the United Nations charter and the birth of the UN.\textsuperscript{211} Given the time gap, the lack of discussion of the Cold War might not be a strange thing. Inevitably, however, a change in narratives produced entails a change in ideas students are subjected to through socialization. The question then becomes how the US and Russia are discursively portrayed in place of the narrative that emphasizes their historical confrontation.

To start with Russia, it is not afforded much space at all in 2012. It appears in discussions on military disarmament and nuclear weapons,\textsuperscript{212} as well as in narratives on the Northern Territories/Southern Kuriles territorial dispute, which I will elaborate on below.\textsuperscript{213} Russia makes two different kinds of appearances in nuclear weapons narratives in 2012: it appears in charts that show how many nuclear warheads countries have and in discussions of disarmament treaties.\textsuperscript{214} As in 1990, nuclear weapons are not viewed as something positive in 2012, hence Russia appearing on charts that show amounts of nuclear warheads in possession can be considered antagonistic othering. When Russia (and the USSR) is touched upon in discussions of treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), however, the narrative is undramatic and factual (as the warhead charts also are) in stating its participation along with the US and other countries.\textsuperscript{215} The

\textsuperscript{208} Kikuchi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 191.
\textsuperscript{209} Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 210-213.
\textsuperscript{210} Gomi et al., Atarashii shakai, 155.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., 152.
\textsuperscript{212} For example Nakamura et al., Shinchūgakkō, 163.
\textsuperscript{213} For example Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 183; Tanimoto et al., 173; and Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 195.
\textsuperscript{214} See Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 202; Gomi et al., Atarashii shakai, 171; and Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 199.
\textsuperscript{215} Nakamura et al., Shichūgakkō, 163-163; Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 202; Tanimoto et al., Shakaika, 176-177.
participation in disarmament talks makes Russia a fellow other to a Japan that in Tōkyō shoseki’s account of its “diplomatic pillars” has “kept fighting to rid the world of nuclear weapons.”

The USSR in the earlier books and Russia in the later appear as others in the context of the territorial dispute known as the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kuriles in Russia. In the 1990 corpus, this is the only other that is created in the context of territorial disputes, as no textbooks bring up the disputes with the Koreas or Chinas. All 1990 textbooks deal very briefly with the dispute. Visually the information is sometimes put into a box partitioned from the main text body, and sometimes it is primarily put in a footnote. In terms of what is actually said, Ōsaka shoseki (1990) separates its information into footnote and text body, stating in the text body that “because the problem of the Northern Territories is not yet resolved, no peace treaty exists with the Soviet Union.” In 2012, the friendliest narrative on the territorial dispute with Russia appears in Teikoku shoin, which states in a passage separated from the main body of text that the USSR occupied the islands after the war and that Japan is asking for a resolution to the problem and a peace treaty between the two countries. Nihon bunkyō shuppan (2012) is rather balanced in presenting both states’ claims and stating that “repatriation negotiations continue” instead of reproducing the Japanese government’s position of “strongly demanding” the islands’ return. This stands in contrast to Tōkyō shoseki (2012) and Kyōiku shuppan (2012) in particular, the former calling the occupation illegal and the latter being the only mainstream textbook that has an extra section on the dispute stating that it is “important to strongly demand the return of the Northern Territories.” In this way, there is a quantitative difference on territorial disputes – more are brought up (Senkaku/Diaoyu; Takeshima/Dokto) – and a qualitative one that makes the 2012 textbooks more forceful in protesting other countries’ arguments.

When it comes to Japanese national identity as it relates to the US, the US-Japan Security Treaty is probably one of the first things that spring to mind. This treaty obliges the US to defend Japan in

216 Gomi et al., *Atarashii shakai*, 170
217 Kawata et al., *Atarashii shakai*, 237.
218 Kikuchi et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 207.
219 Ibid.
220 Tanimoto et al., *Shakaika*, 173.
221 Satō et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 183.
222 Gomi et al., *Atarashii shakai*, 151.
223 Nakamura et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 201.
the case it is attacked – making it a factor that is not easily ignored in Japan’s international relations – and allows the stationing of US troops in Japan, a focal point for controversy since the treaty’s inception. In neither of the two years is the treaty discussed extensively, however. In 1990, Shimizu shoin has it as a fact of life, mentioning the year of inception and an outline similar to the one I have above. 224 Gakkō tosho (1990) states that through the treaty, Japan is in a close relationship with the US. 225 Kyōiku shuppan (1990) mentions that “Some are worried that this type of treaty will draw Japan into war. And there is debate as to whether it is fitting for a people like the Japanese who wish for peace.” 226 This particular sentence is a clear example of the construction of the self as peaceful. As for 2012, the treaty receives very brief treatment from Kyōiku shuppan (2012) in particular. Its first appearance is where the textbook defines a “treaty,” saying that “there are bilateral treaties like the US-Japan Security Treaty” without elaborating further. 227 Aside from that mention, the treaty is brought up toward the end of the book, presented as something that Japan tied in order to guarantee its security. 228 Neither Tōkyō shoseki deals with negative opinion toward the treaty, even though it has a whole page dedicated to postwar Japanese politics. On this page, the US is constructed as having lent its protective power to Japan so that the country could achieve high growth in the 1960s and 1970s – a fellow other, no doubt. 229 The remaining textbooks have fairly similar narratives that do not explore the existence of views that are opposed to the security treaty. 230

To summarize, one can say that antagonistic othering of the USSR and Russia is slightly stronger in 2012 than in 1990 through the greater prevalence of antagonistic territory narratives. As for the US, antagonistic othering as it relates to the security treaty is generally muted in 2012, and more prevalent in 1990. This is the opposite situation from what is the case with China, which is more antagonistically othered in 2012 than in 1990. Put in different words, with respect to the US it can be said that textbook authors are more positive to the self’s alliance partner than they used to be. This is in line with the Cabinet Office’s annual poll on feelings toward the US, which in 2012 has

224 Kaji et al., *Nihon no shakai*, 110.
225 Tatsuno et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 95.
226 Kōno et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 49.
227 Nakamura et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 195.
228 Ibid., 200.
229 Gomi et al., *Atarashii shakai*, 103.
230 Satō et al., *Chūgaku shakai*, 197; Tanimoto et al., 184-185.
84.2% of respondents answering that they “feel affinity” compared with 74.1% in 1990. This is a modest but notable increase – which is perhaps how the development toward a positive discourse on the US and the security treaty in the 2012 corpus can be described as well. In the same poll’s question on China, the result is stunning: 52.3% “feel affinity” in 1990 falls to 14.8% in 2012. While a “stunning” change is certainly not discernible in the mainstream corpus, in general terms, a drop in regard to China in the discourse is shown by my study as well.

### 3.2 Revisionist textbooks

The textbooks I choose to call “revisionist” are those published by Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha in 2012. My characterization of these textbooks as revisionist is based on what their authors Tsukuru kai and its breakout group Kaizen no kai define as their aims. In the case of the former, it is to change what they see as “textbooks that until now have painted an unjustly bad image of Japan.” The latter Kaizen no kai was formed when the previous Abe government revised the Fundamental Law of Education to include objectives to foster “love for the nation” and other values applauded by conservatives in Japan. In its founding statement, it says of the old 1947 Fundamental Law of Education that it lacked “the nurturing of love for one’s nation and morals, an emphasis on a communal spirit, [and did not] pass on the valued traditions of our ancestors […] [it lacked] what is indispensible to education in every country.” Further it says that its aim is to

> produce and support the spread of textbooks that are in accordance with the spirit of the [new] Fundamental Law of Education, liberate children from unproductive ideology about the war and turn on in their hearts the pure and bright light filled with energetic hope that has been passed down in our country since ages past.

---


233 “Gaikō ni kansuru yoron chōsa no gaiyō.” (Summary of opinion poll regarding foreign relations) (1990)

234 “Gaikō ni kansuru yoron chōsa no gaiyō.” (Summary of opinion poll regarding foreign relations) (2012)

235 “Tsukuru kai to wa,” (What is Tsukuru kai?)


237 Kaizen no kai, “Kyōkasho kaizen no kai ga hossoku” (Textbook Improvement Society is launched) [Kaizen no kai blog](http://kyoukashokaizen.blog114.fc2.com/blog-entry-1.html), August 1, 2007.
In this way, I am not defining the textbooks as revisionist because they effectively produce a revisionist discourse, but because of their explicit aim to do so. Tsukuru kai explicitly turns against the mainstream textbooks of the past, while Kaizen no kai does the same in relation to the law that had been in place since the end of the war.

3.2.1.2 General features of the Jiyyūsha and Ikuhōsha textbooks

Ikuhōsha has a sentence in a subchapter that discusses “The Nation and I” which seems to capture its overarching view of the concept of self. It states that “there is some common thing [that works] as an axis of “us-consciousness” in every national people. This consciousness is what binds diverse people into one national people and it plays an important role.”\(^{238}\) Aside narratives that are built on a clear self-other dichotomy, there are ways of dealing with certain themes in the Jiyyūsha and Ikuhōsha textbooks that differentiate them from the rest of the 2012 corpus. How the Emperor is presented is one of these and the differences are both quantitative and qualitative. Jiyyūsha’s chapter on the constitution starts with two pages that discuss “The role of the Emperor and the sovereignty of the people” after which two pages about “The Emperor’s work” follow.\(^{239}\) In this narrative, the Emperor’s actions are presented using a very high level of honorific speech (sonkeigo) that is not used at all in the mainstream textbooks. Ikuhōsha does not have the extra section on the work of the Emperor, but two pages titled “The sovereignty of the people and the Emperor.”\(^{240}\) The chapter on the constitution in Ikuhōsha starts very differently from the narratives in the mainstream textbooks. It takes off on a discipline-oriented note, devoting the first two pages to “The law and our lives,” emphasizing the importance of laws and that people protect them. “At times, in order to protect everyone’s freedom and security, individually we have to endure certain restrictions on freedom”\(^{241}\) is a quote from these pages which is instructive on the larger importance that the book tends to ascribe to group cohesion over individual rights. Other examples include the suggestion that a purported dilution of “human connections” on the neighborhood and local levels has its origin in the “increasing tendency to emphasize the life and livelihood of individuals over the local community;”\(^{242}\) a passage saying that “if one thinks that the

---


\(^{240}\) Kawakami et al., *Atarashii minna no kōmin*, 42-43.

\(^{241}\) Ibid., 38.

\(^{242}\) Ibid., 30.
family is simply a group of individuals and that the individual should be prioritized over the family, its sense of unity will be at threat;”243 and another stating that “the tendency of late to try and read new rights out of the constitution is criticized by some as lowering the value of the constitution’s explicated rights and merely being an effort justify ones own desires, and attain profit for oneself.”244 The first three subsections of this chapter are called “Why laws are needed;” Politics based on the law;” and “The spirit of upholding the law.” This is very different from the mainstream textbooks, which start the same type of chapter with the Constitution of Japan or human rights narratives.245

Another characteristic is a tendency to ascribe great importance to the nation, the nation state, and a “national consciousness.” Ikuhōsha states that even though the world is globalized, the role of the nation state and its sense of unity is still important. In this narrative the importance of respecting national symbols like flags and anthems is emphasized and it is said that the respect for such symbols equals respect for other countries. On a separate page dedicated exclusively to “Consciousness and stance toward anthems and flags” the textbook argues that the “weak feelings of respect for the national anthem and flag indicates weak feelings of respect for other countries symbols” and that “because of this, there are young Japanese who unknowingly behave rudely when visiting other countries.246 Jiyūsha equally emphasizes the importance of flags and anthems, saying that love and respect for those symbols equals that for one’s country. Here too, is a special section over an entire spread called “Let’s try to think about national flags and national anthems,” which says, similar to Ikuhōsha, that “what Japanese abroad have to think about is to show respect to other countries’ flags and anthems[…] In many countries, one learns these kinds of international manners from infant age.”247

Unlike the mainstream textbooks, both Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha have a whole spread each dedicated to a subchapter called “The problem regarding revision of the Constitution of Japan” and “Constitutional revision.” In Jiyūsha, whether or not to amend the constitution to recognize what the textbook calls the right to have “self-defense war potential” (jieisenryoku0) is given the most

243 Ibid., 55.
244 Ibid., 64.
245 Mainstream examples: Kawata et al., Atarashii shakai, 12-13; Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 38-39; Gomi et al., Atarashii shakai, 34-35.
246 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin., 158-160.
247 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 145-147.
space among several issues that are brought up. The wording is peculiar, as the debate has commonly revolved around whether or not to recognize what is called the right to “collective self-defense” (shūdanteki jieiken). Jiyūsha replaces this with “self-defense war potential,” saying that international law allows it, but the Constitution of Japan prohibits it. Ikuhōsha, on the other hand, employs the same language as the mainstream textbooks, presenting the debate as one between those who support allowing “collective self-defense” and those who are opposed to allowing it. Ikuhōsha gives room to the opinion that the SDF are unconstitutional, but only after stating in no unequivocal terms that “the self-defense forces are indispensable to the defense of Japan, and in times of natural disasters their relief activities are greatly appreciated by the people.”

The existence of long narratives that portray contentious political issues in certain books, and the lack of lengthy such in others, is a difference that should be regarded as meaningful. When the differences are not only quantitative, but qualitative as well – as in the case of “Collective self-defense” being replaced by “Self-defense war potential,” and the SDF are presented as “indispensable” – attention is definitely warranted. The ideas that these narratives come from can be connected to political forces in Japan that wish to the constitution revised, most notably of course the ruling LDP, and they are good indications of a revisionism that seeks to nudge Japan away from an identity that sees not having a proactive military as a virtue in itself.

3.2.2.2 Fellowship with the temporal other

As in the mainstream textbooks, Japan’s past emerges in Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha as well. There is a crucial difference, however, which can be summarized thus: contrary to the mainstream textbooks, the other Japan that emerges in Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha is a fellow other to the Japan of today. There is considerable effort made in both textbooks to establish a link between pre-1945 and post-1945 Japan when it comes to the country’s constitution and politics. An example of how this fellowship in time is established is Ikuhōsha’s “[after the war] the allies strove to revive and strengthen Japan’s democratic tendencies” (implying a fellowship between prewar and postwar Japanese democracy); yet other clear examples are found on the pages in Jiyūsha where the Meiji

248 Ibid, 54-55.
249 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin, 50.
250 Ibid., 49.
251 Ibid., 40-41.
Constitution is discussed. Unlike the mainstream textbooks in both years, in Jiyūsha there is little critical language on the Meiji constitution and its poor record on human rights. Different from this narrative, the historical account of the US occupation contains a critical passage on censorship as well as purging of politicians who participated in the war effort. Adjacent to this narrative, the textbook has a special section called “Constitutionalism and the Japanese political culture that made it easy to accept.” This section poses the question why Japan became the first state in Asia based on constitutionalism. It argues that Japan’s history of the Emperor stepping back in favor of a Shōgun and long period of peace and stability before the Meiji Restoration, and a tradition of avoiding conflict and peacefully resolving issues through dialogue, contributed to this. This type of identification takes place in Ikuhōsha as well: of the Meiji constitution, in the main text body the process leading up to its promulgation is presented, after which is stated that “this constitution, which was the first, full-fledged modern constitution in Asia, was strongly praised both inside and outside the country.” The only criticism appears in a footnote saying that “going into the Shōwa period, when the international environment changed the military sensed an impending crisis and used the constitution’s defects to intervene in politics.”

Of the Emperor, the textbook paints a picture of continuity in a separate information box called “Japan’s history, culture and Emperor,” saying that the Imperial family is “deeply connected to Japan’s birth and its history,” and, most interestingly, the Emperor is described as often in history having given political power to a shogunate, and under the Meiji constitution, only engaging in direct political action seldomly. This can be seen as connecting the current Emperor institution to the one that was by saying that neither of them really had a lot of power. A telling sign of Ikuhōsha’s view on the past – closely related to the “ideology of irresponsibility” identified in previous scholarship – is that anything close to the in both years of the mainstream textbooks very

252 See Kōno et al., Chūgaku shakai, 19; Nakamura et al., Chūgaku shakai, 36; and Nakamura et al., Shinchūgakkō, 28.
253 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 46-47.
254 Ibid., 50-51.
255 Ibid., 48-49.
256 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin, 40.
257 Ibid.
258 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin, 43.
common construction “based in reflection on the war, Japan decided to adopt pacifism”\(^{259}\) is one single sentence stating that “based on the allied powers’ reflection on the horrors of the First World War, they established the League of Nations.”\(^{260}\) In Ikuhōsha’s world, Japan itself does not reflect much at all. One can surmise that is has been calculated that such an activity would go against its stated goal of making children “proud of Japan.”

Human rights in Ikuhōsha are dealt with in a way that structurally separates “human rights in the West” from “human rights in Japan,” a tendency that Vollmer has also observed.\(^{261}\) Of “human rights in Japan” is written that “also in Japan, when the Constitution of the Empire of Japan was promulgated, the tradition of looking after the people – called ōmitakara (imperial subjects) – was combined with new rights thinking from the West and efforts to incorporate these into the constitution were made.”\(^{262}\) As Vollmer argues, in this partition of the narratives one can indeed get a cultural relativist impression; one that seeks to emphasize that human rights thought and its implementation has always been contingent on domestic cultures. Inherent in this idea is a related one of continuity in culture, and, by extension in this case, continuity between what Japan is, and what Japan was. Jiyūsha does not have the same partitioning of narratives as Ikuhōsha, but is strong in its emphasis that rights can infringe on others’ rights and need to be used carefully.\(^{263}\)

Other examples that revolve around the Emperor state that “the Emperor under the Constitution of Japan also executes a role based on Japanese political traditions”\(^{264}\) and “the reason why the people accepted so genuinely the constitution’s article 1\(^{265}\) as a natural thing was, without a doubt, their consideration of the Emperor and the role he has played in a long historical context and their thinking that he was perfectly appropriate as the symbol of Japan and the Japanese people.”\(^{266}\) On Jiyūsha’s spread dedicated exclusively to the “work of the Emperor” it is stated that the Emperor’s

259 For example, see Satō et al., Chūgaku shakai, 41; Nakamura et al., Shinchūgakkō, 86; Kikuchi et al., Chūgaku shakai, 29.
260 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin, 164.
261 Vollmer, “The construction of ‘self’ and Western and Asian ‘others’,” 79.
262 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin, 45.
263 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 63.
264 Ibid., 58.
266 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 59.
praying for the Japanese people is “actually a sincere wish that successive Emperors have carried with them and something that can be called a tradition of the Imperial House.” To this study, whether or not Ikuhōsha and Jiyūsha’s analyses and presentation of what Japan is and was are correct matters less; what is interesting is what consequences adoption of this kind of representations can lead to. In the context of antimilitarist opposition to national security legislation, these discourses reaching more students than they currently do could be anticipated to affect a change toward opinion that does not value as strongly a peaceful identity that is based on the self not being what it used to be.

3.2.3 Spatial others – more pronounced

Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha both display a tendency to establish Japan in relation to spatial others to a larger extent than the mainstream textbooks. There are instances in which China is constructed as a threat to Japan’s national security in a way that does not exist in the mainstream textbooks. One very relevant instance is when Jiyūsha explains the following:

Around our country, there are strong military nations that have become latent threats. Since the end of Cold War, new threats like North Korea’s abductions and missile program, China’s military buildup, and international terrorism etc have appeared, and the role of defensive power has increased.  

Further, Jiyūsha also has a narrative on the Tiananmen square protests, writing that the Chinese government used force and killed many people. These two quotes are easily considered antagonistic othering, and again, disregarding the question of validity – few deny the brutality of the Chinese government at Tiananmen – what is interesting to note is that these narratives surface in the newer publishers’ textbooks, but do not exist to the same extent in the mainstream ones.

Ikuhōsha has in its narrative on human rights a picture of Chinese author Liu Xiaobo under which it says that after criticising the CCP’s one-party dictatorial system, he was imprisoned for 11 years and was unable to collect his Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. A few pages on, China appears again in a picture of a Tibetan independence demonstration with signs saying “Chinese lie – Tibetans die.” Tibet and China appear again two pages later over half a page that discusses “human

---

267 Ibid., 61.
268 Ibid., 161.
269 Ibid., 155.
270 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin, 58.
271 Ibid., 67.
rights problems in the world.” China is presented in this narrative as being heavily criticized worldwide for its human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet, and as having the blood of many Uigurs and Tibetans on their hands.272

Another country appears as an other next to the picture of Liu Xiabo in Ikuhōsha – North Korea. Excerpts from newspapers bringing up the abduction issue are featured and in the caption is stated that “North Korea penetrating into Japan and kidnapping Japanese is a grave violation of Japan’s national sovereignty and human rights.”273 The abduction issue returns later in the book under a special section titled “When sovereignty is violated.” Here, Megumi Yokota’s disappearance, later admitted as having been the result of kidnapping by North Korean agents, is detailed in a heart-wrenching way: “Megumi yelled for mom while being taken away[…] her nails had almost fallen off from struggling when she arrived in North Korea.” (How exactly it became known what she said while being taken away and what her nails looked like when she arrived in North Korea, is not detailed.) On the next page, a map of Japan shows the locations of all kidnappings the Japanese government recognizes.274 Jiyūsha also has one whole special spread on the issue which describes how some estimate hundreds of abductees, speculates about North Korea’s objectives, and explains that “we have to strongly compel North Korea to return all the victims.”275 Other appearances of China or the Koreas’ include constructions of nuclear capabilities as “increasing [regional] tensions;”276 and a juxtaposition of photos of South Korean soldiers on the one hand with a caption saying “training for new recruits in South Korea, which forces [upon its people] a conscription army system,” and SDF personnel on the other, under which the caption says “training for newly enlisted SDF personnel, [a force] based on voluntary enlistment.”277 Further examples include Ikuhōsha discussing the challenges of Japanese security policy while bluntly portraying North Korea as a country with which “tensions are high” that has fired missiles in the direction of Japan, abducted Japanese and broken United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.278 On the same page, China is constructed as “consistently strengthening its military”

272 Ibid., 69.
273 Ibid., 67.
274 Ibid., 172-173.
275 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 162-163.
276 Ibid., 167.
277 Ibid., 73.
278 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin., 169.
and of late “behaving in ways that worry East Asia[n actors] and international society, including Japan.”

An area in which one can guess that Japan’s neighbors will appear as others is the passages in Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha that talk about their territorial disputes. This is indeed the case: in Ikuhōsha, these issues are discussed over an entire page featuring an illustrative map. All the disputes are first of all stated to be “Japanese inherent territory” (Nihon kōyū no ryōdo). The Northern Territories/Southern Kuriles are captioned as having been “occupied by the USSR after the war,” and the USSR is said to have “forcibly expelled all Japanese.” The Senkaku/Diaoyu islands are introduced as only becoming contested by China when it started seeming as though oil could be refined in the area, and it is stated that China has no sufficient grounds for its claim. Lastly, there is not much variation in the case of Takeshima/Dokto, which the textbooks states is “illegally occupied without grounding in international law” by South Korea. All of these constructions in the textbooks are direct quotes from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) website. They are largely repeated in the main text body below the map, which states that the territories are all inherently Japanese both in a historic and legal sense. Jiyūsha deals with territorial issues similarly: in the very back of the book, it has a whole spread with a map of Japan entitled “our country’s territory,” in which all three disputes are brought up as “Japan’s inherent territory” and illegally occupied by South Korea and Russia, and claimed by China. Inside the actual book, a special section over two pages exists in addition to the initial presentation which states the same argument regarding Japan’s inherent territory as the map in the end of the book, and adds that China conducts many unlawful fishing activities in the Senkaku/Diaoyu area. The two-page special section contains passages saying that Russia and South Korea attacked Japanese boats that have entered the Northern territories/Southern Kuriles and Takeshima/Dokto, and one that repeats that Chinese fishing boats conduct unlawful activities in the Senkaku/Diaoyu waters. Senkaku/Diaoyu is brought up again in Ikuhōsha’s spread on “When sovereignty is violated,” this

279 Ibid.
280 Ibid., 157.
281 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, spread in the very end of the book.
282 Ibid., 145.
283 Ibid., 148-149.
time in the form of a mock newspaper article reporting on the collision between a Chinese trawler and a Maritime SDF vessel in 2010, close to the Senkakus/Diaoyu.284

Finally, China also appears as an other in contexts where Japanese culture is discussed. The very first case of othering of China and Korea in Jiyūsha’s introductory chapter takes place in a historic discussion where it is stated that Japan “brought in the advanced cultures of China and Korea while developing a sophisticated, unique culture of its own. In the 20th century [Japan] became the most advanced culturally developed nation in Asia.”285 This development is further presented as having been aided by a “national character” that respects peace and diligence. Where “culture” is discussed in Jiyūsha, in the case of Japan it is seldom mentioned without the qualifiers “advanced” or “developed” (susunda or hatten shita). The other against which difference is being produced is not explicated to any greater extent than in the sentence mentioning Asia above.286 An example is Ikuhōsha stating that “at an early time Japanese culture became independent from Chinese culture and [Japan] constructed a culture that was different both from China and the West,”287 here establishing the West as an additional other. Further, the Japanese people’s “national character’s high [level]” (kokuminsei no takasa) is exemplified by the fact that there are many old Japanese poems written not just by Emperors or the nobility, but by regular folk as well.288 The difference with the mainstream textbooks lies in the characterization of Japanese culture as unique – something that in the revisionist textbooks is done in a subtle way by first acknowledging cultural influences from other countries and implicitly the constructed nature of culture. In the mainstream textbooks, the cultural narratives tend to stop after saying that Japan has had many influences from other countries.289 A threat from globalization – stemming from increased influence of “culture of advanced countries” – to what is described as “culture and traditions that countries have spent many years building,” appears in Jiyūsha.290 Here, culture is presented as something that is not static, as a negative change is prophesized, but perhaps as something that should be static, as the change is framed as a threat. On these pages in Jiyūsha, the virtues of the state as a

284 Kawakami et al., Atarashii minna no kōmin 173.
285 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 3.
286 Ibid.
287 Kawakami et al., 9.
288 Ibid.
289 An example is Itō et al., Chūgakusei no shakaiika, 220.
290 Sugihara et al., Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho, 5.
primary unit in international life are also touched on: this is presented to be the protection of the “losers” in the era of globalization. Early on in its textbook, Ikuhōsha comments on how there is no culture that is better than the other, and that Japan has become a multicultural society. A telling example of the static view of culture described above is the following sentence: “Because of the amount of information about different cultures flowing into the country, there is the fear that we will lose sight of Japanese culture’s uniqueness and splendor.”291 This kind of characterization of Japanese culture does not exist in the mainstream textbooks. In this way, spatial others are established to construct a self with an advanced, unique culture in a way that is different from the mainstream discourse. A blatant example of the revisionist discourse’s desire to produce this self are Ikuhōsha’s introductory pages which take the thesis of Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* as evidence of Japan’s uniqueness.292

The US emerges as an other in national security contexts. In these cases, it can be seen as a fellow other to the self. Ikuhōsha states that the peace that Japan has enjoyed since the war can be explained by its reliance on US deterrence, and the existence of the SDF. The textbooks state unequivocally about the security treaty that it contributes to peace in East Asia.293 Jiyūsha also establishes the security treaty as the “core” of Japan’s national security.294 Different from how the mainstream textbooks deal with the security treaty and the US is that in Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha, no negative opinion on the treaty is presented. The first “point” of Jiyūsha’s summary of its spread on the SDF and security treaty is telling: Japan’s “fundamental defense depends on the Japan-US Security Treaty.”295 The same textbook later states, when discussing nuclear deterrence, that “in the case of our country, we have continuously advanced international cooperation while establishing the Japan-US Security Treaty [and through this] have guaranteed security.”296 That the US-Japan Security Treaty has been controversial among the Japanese public was clearly evident in the 1960 protests that opposed its renewal. That its existence is constructed as natural can be seen as furthering a conservative agenda that wants increased military cooperation – or at least that wants the treaty to remain the way it has been until this point.

291 Kawakami et al., *Atarashii minna no kōmin*, 12.
292 Ibid., 5.
293 Ibid., 168.
294 Sugihara et al., *Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho*, 165.
295 Ibid.
296 Ibid., 180.
Moving toward the conclusion of this study, what can be said about others in the revisionist textbooks is that they are generally more spatial and antagonistic. A trend toward a discourse that seeks to establish a bond between Japan of the past and Japan of the present is one of the most prevalent tendencies – a tendency that stands in stark contrast to the dominant one in the mainstream textbooks – to produce difference with Japan of the past.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Implications and discussion

The aim of this study was to identify national self and others as they emerge in Japanese civics textbooks used by students in third grade of junior high school. The background against which I conducted the analysis was that of substantial protests against the Japanese government’s efforts to allow for the use of collective self-defense – something that the protestors considered tantamount to militarization. I have shown how the self that emerges in the textbooks in 2012 bears many similarities to the self that is constructed in the 1990 textbooks. The prevailing trend is that of temporal othering of Japan’s prewar and wartime past. While there is slightly more spatial, antagonistic othering in 2012, the dominant discourse at work in both 1990 and 2012 can be said to be one of a peaceful and democratic self. I qualify this argument of consistency in the discourse by acknowledging the existence of a new factor in the 2012 textbooks, that did not exist in the 1990 textbooks. This is what I have termed the “revisionist” textbooks. In these books, the primary trend with regard to self and other is a move away from temporal othering to what can be called temporal identification, or in the words of Suzuki, the establishment of fellow others.297 As David Campbell puts it, a discourse analyst inquires into different interpretations of the world and the political consequences of a certain interpretation or representation being widely adopted.298 In the case of my study and civics textbooks, the interpretation of Japan, the self, that has been widely adopted is that of a nation that was ravaged by a war imposed on itself and Asia by a militaristic elite with little regard for the Japanese people. A construction and reconstruction of this idea is consistent in civics textbooks in 1990 and 2012 and provides a framework of understanding of public outcry against what many proponents of this interpretation believe to be remilitarization.

297 Suzuki, “The importance of ‘othering’,” 43.
This is a seemingly simple conclusion and it is in fact the answer to my research problem. Below, I will try to preempt some criticism that this argument might be susceptible to, after which I will discuss implications.

The skeptic might be inclined to criticize this argument as implausible given what can be seen as a conservative or nationalist political and bureaucratic culture in Japan\(^{299}\) – one that would not be appreciative of a discourse that produces difference with Japan’s past – and the manifestation of this culture in a MEXT that has the final say on textbook publication. Such a counterargument would, however, have to disregard either the empirical findings of this study, or its theoretical premises. The former way of going about this criticism could be done by a sympathetic researcher operating in the same theoretical tradition – the relational constructivists that I discussed earlier spring to mind. The strongest empirically informed counterargument – as I see it – is that which points out how the corpus of this study does not indicate a singular trend with regard to discourses. Put in vernacular language: While things are changing, they are not changing as fast as some think. This is an argument that very much values the findings of the relational constructivists but seeks to add some caution to their thesis. It is an argument along the lines of Linus Hagström and Jon Williamsson, who have argued that the changes in foreign security policy that Japan went through from 1989 to 2008 did not warrant the outcries among Japan watchers about “the crumbling away of pacifism” and “remilitarization.”\(^{300}\)

To give a specific example of passages in my study that I see as prone to criticism on this front are those that bring up the increased reliance on spatial others in the mainstream 2012 textbooks, while arguing that the primary trend is one of temporal othering of Japan's past. I will partly repeat myself, but my principal assertion is that spatial othering is an occurrence that has increased but is marginal and cannot be seen as the permeating discursive force in the 2012 corpus. The fact that this marginal spatial othering exists lends credence to the main relational constructivist argument that Japan is in fact changing; Japan as it emerges in junior high school civics textbooks is moving away from what has been seen by

---

299 For ideas on Japan as conservative or nationalist, either in an essentialist sense or discursively constructed such, see Lully Miura, “Media mura wa minshuteki ni tōsei sareru beki ka? Takaichi sōmushō no hōsōhō hatsugen mondai,” (Should the media ‘village’ be democratically regulated? Minister of Internal Affairs Takaichi’s gaffe) *Yamaneko Nikki*, February 16, 2016, [http://lullymiura.hatenadiary.jp/entry/2016/02/16/021154](http://lullymiura.hatenadiary.jp/entry/2016/02/16/021154) and Harumi Befu, “Symbols of nationalism and *Nihonjinron,*” in *Ideology and Practice in Modern Japan*, eds. Roger Goodman and Kirsten Refsing (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) 44-43.

norm constructivists – to an excessive extent and with an essentialism not far from IR realists – as a resilient peace identity. It lends credence, but seeks to make the relational constructivist scholarship richer by stating that the construction of a pacifist identity is not disappearing quite that fast.

A criticism of the study’s theoretical premises would be done primarily by researchers outside the constructivist and/or discourse analytical field. In critiquing critical theorists, leading realist John Mearsheimer offers a summary of the neorealist position (albeit in a context in which he claims that critical theorists in a sense agree with him): objective factors are causes of change and discourses are simply reflections of objective events. 301 “Factors of change” according to the theoretical framework of my study must be seen as identity discourses manifested in textbooks. As it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss neorealist critiques of constructivism and/or discourse analysis, I will leave it at saying that in a sense the two families of theories speak different languages and a researcher from one tradition will be at pains to convince one from the other of the virtues of his or her own approach. In the case of this study, the discrepancy can be explained by differing epistemological assumptions – realist epistemology in the case of neorealists and idealist epistemology in the case of the constructivism that I employ. Erik Ringmar articulated the problem of a theoretical divide by saying that “what we need is not more empirical ‘facts’, but above all a consensus on a conceptual framework through which an empirical investigation can be carried out.” 302 A difference in the level of analysis has also been pointed out 303 and this is perhaps a very good indicator of how far apart the two theoretical strands are.

As I have discussed in the theory section, the theoretical debate is very much alive within the constructivist family. Norm constructivism constitutes the central opposing theory on epistemologically “friendly” territory. As I have gone through, the difference lies in how the frameworks see identities and interests constructed – externally through othering, or internally through “cultures” and norms. Different from rationalist- and materialist-informed theories, these two theories have good grounds for mutual understanding. The charge against my thesis from a norm constructivist perspective might be that what I have observed empirically in fact confirms their theory to a larger extent than it does the relational constructivist theory. Norm constructivists

have generally predicted a more static Japanese identity than those examining Japan using a relational lens. My study presents an argument that is somewhat different from that which the relational constructivists have put forward and it is for this reason that I can foresee theoretical criticism from norm constructivists. My counterargument would be that my interpretation of the relational constructivist scholarship does not qualify its value on whether it predicts change or not; the theory’s merits lies in its acknowledgement of demarcation and differentiation as the drivers of not just discursive change but also stasis. As Hagström and Gustafsson have argued, change and stasis can only be observed using empirical analysis, and my empirical analysis – pointing to a continuity that is not often acknowledged in recent scholarship – was done using a relational framework, in a sense confirming its ability to identify both stasis and change.

As I have tried to make clear throughout this study, the discourse analysis that I have employed – and discourse analysis in general – partly focuses on the merits of actually raising an issue – and more importantly, who benefits politically from the issue being raised. What are, then, the thinkable implications of a Japan constructed as peaceful consistently, but with a change in how this is done (which others are selected and how they are othered)? In other words, who are the benefactors of the way the discourse is constructed? I have identified one implication – the answer to my research problem. I risk sounding repetitive, but a peaceful and democratic self is consistently constructed in both years, and this self is something that students in junior high school are subjected to as part of compulsory education. That this self exists provides an understanding for the strong opposition against the current government’s national security policies. There are slightly more antagonistic others in the 2012 corpus, but the primary constructor of Japan’s peaceful and democratic identity is still what Japan used to be. The caveat is that there are revisionist textbooks on the rise.

As I explained in the introduction, however, the readership of these two textbooks is not large. Their so far marginal reach lends credence to the argument that their discourses are not the mainstream discourse, and do not hold the sway that the discourse of peace and democracy does. This is not to say that they are not of importance, however. The fact of the matter is that while these textbooks do not reach the majority of students, they reach more than they used to. If

304 Hagström and Gustafsson, “Japan and identity change,” 16.
305 “28 nen do chūgaku kyōkasho Ikuhōsha, shea nobasu kōmin 1.4 bai, rekishi 1.6 bai,” ([Heisei school year] 28 Junior high school textbook from Ikuhōsha increases its share by [a factor of] 1.4 for the civics textbook, 1.6 for the history textbook)
discourses in textbooks can be seen as reflective – or in constructivist terms, constructive – of knowledge about society, an increase in a revisionist discourse has meaning as well. A Japan that has become more conservative and right-wing in recent years – a proposition that this thesis could partly be seen as contesting – could be the result as well as the constructor of this phenomenon. An increase in spatial othering is in line with previous scholarship that has observed a deterioration in relations between Japan and its neighbours and an increased othering in Japan of the latter, and a greater antagonistic othering of these neighbours can indeed be used by proponents of constitutional revision in order to beef up Japan’s defense, by pointing at the othered entity and emphasizing what a great threat it has become. This can already be seen as happening in Japanese political discourse, and again, it has in the scholarship on Japan’s national security.\(^\text{306}\)

This increased spatial and antagonistic othering along with the effort to establish Japan’s past as a fellow other has developed parallel to the continuing temporal othering of Japan’s past, and a good indicator of which of these two discourse will gain hegemony could be how Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha’s readership numbers develop. They currently have a small readership, but this could change in the future. If it does, that would be in line with the argument that the generally accepted idea of what is Japanese is changing, perhaps to accommodate a remilitarization. At the time of writing, the 2012 versions are no longer the most recently published civics textbooks. In 2015, the Ikuhōsha textbook was selected by more local Boards of Education – which hold the power to select textbooks for use in primary and junior high schools – than the last time textbooks were screened and selected in 2011. Ikuhōsha’s civics textbook is now used by around 6% of students in Japan.\(^\text{307}\)

If more and more students are subjected to a discourse that seeks to instill patriotic ideals and, most importantly, constructs a militarist past as something that was not too different from the now, along with spatial others that are on the self’s doorstep, that could certainly be seen as being conducive to Japan moving closer to remilitarization. In this way, the antagonistic, spatial othering discourse has the potential of creating a very material security dilemma in which Japan remilitarizes, China answers by strengthening its military, Japan answers again in a vicious, self-reproducing circle. Meanings about each others’ material capabilities – and indeed, each other – as


\(^\text{307}\) “28 nen do chūgaku kyōkasho Ikuhōsha, shea nobasu kōmin 1.4 bai, rekishi 1.6 bai,” ([Heisei school year] 28 Junior high school textbook from Ikuhōsha increases its share by [a factor of] 1.4 for the civics textbook, 1.6 for the history textbook)
threatening are the drivers of such a development. These meanings are constructed through discourses in school, among other places. Had a discourse that constructed other countries and their capabilities as threatening been dominant, public opinion ought to have been more conducive to remilitarization than I suggested to be the case in the introduction to this thesis. My argument being that the dominant discourse still constructs Japan as peaceful and democratic, with little overt antagonistic othering, one should perhaps not worry that much about a potential security dilemma like the above. The existence of strong opposition through protests to defense policies that are by no means unlawful in an international context – the right to collective self defense is of course recognized by the UN charter – suggests a peaceful conception of the self, undergirded by a resilient discourse that is indeed observable in civics textbooks.

How does the argument that Japanese national identity as it is constructed in civics textbooks is not changing that fast, relate to the previous scholarship that has observed the opposite tendency, then? Was Ienaga wrong in observing that history education had become promilitary? Was Barnard not right in his assessment that Japan is unwilling to own up to its crimes during the war? I did not set out to negate the findings of the previous scholarship, and that is not what my results have effectively done either. The argument is not completely novel for that matter; Mori and Davies and also Vollmer discussed how the revisionist discourse might weaken in the future, and how values in civics textbooks are emphasizing both traditional values and diversity. This could be seen as a minority view, however, and what I have unearthed empirically is that things are not moving as fast as a lot of previous research has suggested. I am in agreement, however, that as it stands now, Japanese national identity constructed in textbooks is in certain ways moving toward acceptance of remilitarization; that tendency is corroborated by my findings related to antagonistic othering in mainstream and particularly revisionist textbooks. This trend is somewhat negated, however, by the strong antagonistic othering of the past in the mainstream textbooks. The discursive productivity of othering of the past, either through a fellowship or antagonistically, can be theorized by looking at China’s responses to Japanese revisionist textbooks. Drawing on recognition theory, Gustafsson has argued that China’s patriotic education has denied

308 Ienaga, “The Glorification of War in Japanese History Textbooks.”
310 Vollmer, “The Construction of 'self' and Western and Asian 'others,'” 63.
311 Mori and Davies, “Citizenship Education in Civics Textbooks,” 172.
Japan’s identity as peaceful.\(^{312}\) It is conceivable that if— as recognition theorists have argued— states will go to war over misrecognition of their own identity,\(^ {313}\) states would also feel threatened by a former enemy’s construction of its own questionable past as not too different from its present. This is, admittedly, a digression from the argument that identities socialized in school impacts what is possible and impossible, as this sort of threat perception has to do with policymakers’ direct interpretation of a discourse being disseminated, but it is a possible implication of the establishment of temporal, fellow others.

A consideration regarding the continued construction of a Japan that is peaceful and democratic that has to be made, is that which Hagström and Hanssen articulated: “a national identity defined by a normative commitment to peace is not necessarily an antidote to remilitarisation and war.” In stipulating that a peace identity based on othering “can enable antagonism and violence towards the excluded (non-peaceful) outside in the same way as any other identity discourse,”\(^ {314}\) Hagström and Hanssen argued specifically that “peace” has become constructed as something that Japan has to defend as the years passed, and this made it compatible with remilitarization, the means by which peace would be defended. One could argue that an increased agonistic, spatial othering together with a tendency to construct the self as peaceful reflects the same findings as Hagström and Hanssen identified. However, while this othering is present, as I have made clear, it is not very strong in the corpus. The fact remains that a temporal othering of Japan’s past is the primary tendency in the mainstream textbooks. This does not negate the revisionist element that the increased spatial othering is part of, but it does prevail in the struggle over discursive hegemony.

To sum up, there are wildly differing conceivable implications in this discursively inconsistent corpus. Walking the discussion back a step to the question of which discourse is achieving and will achieve hegemony in Japanese textbooks, it could be argued that the results of this study suggest that we are moving toward a more fragmented picture than before, with no real hegemony whatsoever. Japan has been characterized by observers as being a country that is “struggling” over how to define itself.\(^ {315}\) Perhaps this tendency is simply growing even stronger, and perhaps researchers will be at an even greater loss in the future as to the definition of self in Japan. In such


\(^{313}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{314}\) Hagström and Hanssen, “War is peace,” 1-2.

\(^{315}\) For example Mori and Davies, “Citizenship education in civics textbooks,” 172.
an environment, whether a security dilemma that sees Japan and potential adversaries building up their military arsenals will materialize becomes more difficult to foresee. Strong protests and opposed public opinion are factors that could be seen as making revisionist policies more difficult to enact, while wide support for such policies in the Japanese political establishment make them more likely to succeed. When discourse, which constructs these different ways of thinking about politics, is similarly fragmented, that the identity of the national Japanese self slowly becoming more fluid seems plausible.

On a final note, in 2016, new textbooks are being used in Japanese junior high schools. This time around a new group called the Society for Participatory History Textbook (Kodomo to isshoni manabu rekishi kyōkasho no kai, shortened as Manabu kai and published by Manabisha) and its history textbook has passed screening at MEXT and been selected by a small numbers of schools. This textbook has been criticized by the conservative Sankei shinbun newspaper for bringing up the “comfort women” issue, not devoting enough space to the North Korean abduction problem, and has been derided in the Japanese conservative blogosphere. Needless to say, it represents the diametrical opposition to the Sankei- and LDP-backed Ikuhōsha. The addition of this publisher to the history textbooks picture arguably blurs the ambiguous trend even more, but it is likely to strengthen – however marginally, given its adoption numbers being low – an identity based on othering of Japan’s militarist past, and, likely being reflective of a resilient discourse of peace and democracy, perhaps further an understanding of opposition to remilitarization policies, if that opposition continues for many years.

4.2 Limitations and further research

In this final section, I bring up limitations of this study and make suggestions for further research. The first possible limitation is the prevalence of what can be called implicit others – others that are not mentioned explicitly in the discourses. One could see this type of other as present when a textbook states “this is what Japan is” without making any explicit contrast. If one would argue


317 For example, Anonymous author, “Nankō mo hannichi kyōkasho Manabisha saitakukō ichiran (9 gatsu 16 nichī genzai,)” (Elite school also [chooses] anti-Japanese textbook List [of schools that have] adopted Manabisha (September 16)) Project Justice blog, 16 September, 2016, http://blog.goo.ne.jp/project-justice/e/16eb14330833a79f129a724cd9fcdf9.
that this indicates the non-existence of an other, that would either be saying that the passages in question are not identity discourses, or that the self can be created and sustained without an other. Ringmar introduced the “narrative concept of the self” as a way of defining the ontological status of the state. Starting with “rock-bottom” metaphors – the only language by which we can describe something – we then tell stories about these metaphors, and this is the way by which the self and the state come into existence. 318 Berenskoetter built on this to offer a “biographical narrative” that could provide a community with an identity “from the inside.” The biographical narrative “provides communities with a sense of being in the world by situating them in an experienced space and an envisioned space.” 319 A theoretical framework based on these narrative-oriented approaches that do no require the existence of an other for the self’s existence might also have been a fruitful way of going about the study of my corpus; particularly Berenskoetter’s focus on the experienced space might have worked well with the passages in the textbooks that discuss just that and which I categorized into temporal antagonistic other and temporal fellow other. Applying these frameworks to a study of textbooks might in this way yield knowledge that a self-other dichotomizing approach could not.

Second, focusing on certain chapters in the corpus and leaving out others, as I have done, is potentially limiting. However, the primary and perhaps only danger with this way of going about discourse analysis, as I see it, is that there is a risk that one misses a different discourse or a markedly different way of expressing things within the already identified discourse. Of course, this is important; if the researcher misses something crucial, he or she runs the risk of lifting up a discourse that is not at all very prominent. If this is the danger, then how to avoid it becomes the question. I have argued that the most interesting with respect passages to Japanese national identity construction are those focusing on modern society, the constitution and human rights, and Japan’s relations with the world. The only larger section that I have continuously omitted is the sort that discusses economics. This was done after a preliminary analysis looking for potential others – temporal and spatial – and not much interesting material was found. I have confidence that a different discourse would not have emerged had I added these sections to the analysis, but I do acknowledge that for the most “holistic” analysis of Japanese national identity in the textbooks – holism being the value I strove for when adding the revisionist textbooks – the corpus in its

319 Berenskoetter, “Parameters of a National Biography.”
entirety would have presented the strongest case. For economical reasons I could not explore
everything and I hope further research would give an even more complete picture.

Third, the problem of agency versus structure is not something I have dealt deeply with in this
study. The primary issue in regard to my thesis is to what extent the socializing structure of
education and civics textbooks “determine” students’ perception of the identity of their nation. I
have not used the word “determine” to discuss the implications of socialization, but I have
premised my study on one of its effect being that discourses disseminated by textbooks take part
in constructing constraints and possibilities for political action. It is possible that this premise is
dead wrong and that students reject discourses “imposed” on them by schools. Perhaps – maybe
even likely so – the answer is somewhere in between the extremes of structural determinism and
absolute freedom of agency. Socialization in school matters, if only because of the attention that has
been given to the study of textbooks in Japan and elsewhere.

Fourth and in conclusion, what this study does not do is to empirically account for the most recent
developments in civics textbooks in Japan. In academic year 2016, new textbooks are published
and used in Japanese junior high schools.320 In the case of history textbooks, Manabisha has
published a new textbook that, from looking at a sample page from their website, is open about the
horrors of war and produces difference with Japan’s past.321 As mentioned, Ikuhōsha’s textbooks’
respective shares of the market having gone up slightly along with Manabisha’s entering the arena
reflects a mixed discursive development in textbooks in Japan. This can be seen as supporting my
thesis that a stasis in the construction of the self as peaceful and democratic is occurring at the same
time as a revisionist discourse that promotes different types of others. Nevertheless, further
research on the newly released textbooks should be engaged to identify a discourse that is
constantly subject to change.

320 “Chūgakkō yō kyōkasho mokuroku,”(Directory of textbooks for use in junior high school) MEXT,
dfile/2015/07/15/1357046_2.pdf.
321 “Gashi, gyokusai, tokkōtai,” (Death from starvation, honorable defeat, special attack [kamikaze] units)
Bibliography


Kaizen no kai blog. [http://kyoukashokaizen.blog114.fc2.com/blog-entry-1.html](http://kyoukashokaizen.blog114.fc2.com/blog-entry-1.html).


Yamaneko nikki blog (Wildcat diary). http://lullymiura.hatenadiary.jp/entry/2016/02/16/021154.


Oros, Andrew L. “International and domestic challenges to Japan’s postwar security identity: ‘norm


Project Justice blog, [http://blog.goo.ne.jp/project-justice/e/16eb14330833a79f129a724cd9fcdff9](http://blog.goo.ne.jp/project-justice/e/16eb14330833a79f129a724cd9fcdff9).


Sankei shinbun. “Tsukuru kai kyōkasho saitakuritsu 1.67% 17 nendohi 4 bai kyō” (Tsukuru kai textbook adoption rate 1.67% compared with [Heisei academic] year 17, four-time increase). Accessed 15 May, 2016. [http://webs.sankei.co.jp/search/page.do?mode=1&paperNo=1&publishDate=20090904&newsId=200909041000004094&keyword=%20%E2%80%9A%C2%B5%E2%80%9A%C2%A2%E2%80%94%C3%B0%C5%Bdj
%E2%80%B9%C2%B3%E2%80%B0%C3%88%20%E2%80%98%E2%80%9A%C3%B0%E2%80%9A
%C3%82%E2%80%9A%C2%AD%E2%80%9A%C3%A9%E2%80%B0%C3%AF](http://webs.sankei.co.jp/search/page.do?mode=1&paperNo=1&publishDate=20090904&newsId=200909041000004094&keyword=%20%E2%80%9A%C2%B5%E2%80%9A%C2%A2%E2%80%94%C3%B0%C5%Bdj
%E2%80%B9%C2%B3%E2%80%B0%C3%88%20%E2%80%98%E2%80%9A%C3%B0%E2%80%9A
%C3%82%E2%80%9A%C2%AD%E2%80%9A%C3%A9%E2%80%B0%C3%AF).


Textbooks


