

# Pacifism and Antimilitarism in Japan: Introducing a novel dataset

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## Abstract

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## 1 Introduction

This dataset would also be highly valuable for my own research as I am interested in political attitudes toward the military and the state in a comparative fashion. More precisely, I am interested about how historical legacies – such as wars, colonialism, and state and nation building strategies – interact with contemporary challenges in shaping citizen’s attitudes toward certain issue, using East and Southeast Asia as case studies. I define issue here broadly, as states are currently undergoing a lot of challenges.

For this project, I want to limit myself to the attitudes toward the military. There have been a rise in international issues for the last decade. In East Asia, more precisely, the nuclearization of North Korea and the growing assertiveness of China in both the South China Sea and East China Sea have lead to a weakening in the regional balance of power. My goal is to understand how people react to these changes. I also want to capture the heterogeneity of these attitudes and the factors that lead to different views and perspectives given the regional security environment. For this, and as it will be presented in the coming paragraphs, understanding the interaction between the population with both the local and the U.S. military will be theoretically and empirically important.

This dataset seeks to introduce information about U.S. military bases in East asian countries. A growing body of literature has been interested about the role and the effect U.S. military bases and locations play on the host countries, especially how it shapes citizen’s attitudes. For example, Jakobsen and Jakobsen 2019 seeked to understand how U.S. military deployments in allied countries lead to a growing sentiment of “free-riding” among the host country over a certain threshold. Furthermore, Allen et al. 2020 found that increased contact with U.S. military troops and the economic benefits generating from hosting these bases has a positive effect on attitudes.

However, these findings are also challenged by empirical evidences that go against these previous claims. Hikotani, Horiuchi, and Tago (2023) challenge the argument from Allen and al. by highlighting that their argument greatly overlook the disproportionate concentration of U.S. troops in some areas. Using the case of Okinawa in Japan, they find that the people in this prefecture are more likely to have contact with U.S. personnel and troops, and yet they hold more *negative* views toward them. Horiuchi and Tago (2023) also found clear evidences

of this “Not-In-My-Backyard” attitudes in Japan against the U.S. military. Japanese do value the alliance, but do not want the deployment of these arms in their vicinity. These findings of negative views toward U.S. military base go beyond the case of Japan, as movements global movements known as “No Bases” have surge in South Korea, Italy, and Puerto Rico (Vine 2019).

Yet, no dataset has been created yet to help us understading popular views of the U.S. military, and how does it differs with the interaction with local military. Furthermore, among the previous design some are also survey experieiment (e.g., Horiuchi and Tago (2023)), while other are historical account of the evolution of the protest movements (e.g., Vine (2019)) or how these movements failed to achieve their goal (e.g., (Kim 2017)). While this is not a negative thing per se, we still lack a comprehensive dataset widely available that would allow more finegrained and contemporary analyses of this phenomenom.

For this semester, I will collect data about both the U.S. and Japan’s military facilities located in Japan. I want the dataset to provide measures as fine grained as possible, so it becomes easier and more robust to study empirically the interaction between the local citizens and the different military forces.

## 2 Literature Review

## 3 Data and Methods

The objective of this paper is to introduce a dataset that contains information about U.S. military bases abroad and local military bases. The goal for the semester will be to create a dataset containing informations about US military bases and JSDF bases. The main goal of the dataset is to introduce a multidimensionnal overview of the different military facilities in Japan, for both the U.S. and Japan. I say multidimensionnal because there’s a great heterogeneity across all facilities.

This can be disaggregated on two levels. The first one concerns the *absolute* measurement of the bases themselves. For example, they vary in terms of size, the number of working personel, and the type of forces it hosts. Hence, several indicators can be used to disaggregate the bases, and compare them on many individual scales. The second one concerns the *relative* measurement of the bases. As the size of the base varies, so does the size of the vicinity where they are located. Hence, they do not occup the space in the same way. Furthermore, the prefecture and the city where they are located also vary in size. accounting for these variation is important as the previous studies do not necessarily agree on whether the contact with the military personel increase or not positive attitudes.

Finally, previous studies focused exclusively on U.S. military, and almost not on Japan’s facilities. While Horiuchi and Tago (2023) did include Japan operated facilities in their experimental design it does not capture the real preferences of citizens living near these bases. Hence, we lack this knowledge for now, as previous studies failed to account for the description of this relationship in the context of living close to Japan’s military facilities.

Each row of the dataset will be one base. As an illustration, please see the tentative codebook in the [appendix](#). Several indicators will be employed to measure both the absolute and relative size of each facility, while also categorizing them based on the type of forces they

host and who operate it.

To validate this novel dataset, and especially on how it can captures heterogeneity in attitudes toward the military and defense issues, we will use data from an original survey fielded in April 2025 in Japan with Rakuten Insight. A national representative sample based on age, gender, and location was collected (n=1,733). In this survey, four questions were asked about Japan’s security. The questions and their respective scale can be find in the Table 1.

Table 1: Questions about Japan’s security

Questions	Scale
The government should spend more in the military and defense.	Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree
Japan should have the capacity to preemptively attack ennemy missile bases.	Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree
Some have been discussing to amend the Article 9 of the constitution to newly stipulate the existence of the Self-Defense Forces, while keeping paragraphs 1 and 2 unchanged. Do you agree with these amendments to Article 9? Are you against it?	Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree
Japan’s military power should be further strengthened	Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree

Furthemore, as many of these questions were taken from the Todai-Asahi survey it would be possible to merge some of these dataset together and track the evolution trough time, which could help dissantangle many interacting factors and alternative explanations.

## References

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# A Appendix

Insert preliminary codebook.