

FOREIGN POLICY OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

**“SHINZO ABE LEADERSHIP STYLE ANALYSIS OF JAPAN FOREIGN POLICY
TOWARD THE RISE OF CHINA IN 2014-2017”**

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A. Background

In the context of Japan's relations with China, relations between the two countries cannot always be seen smooth. This is due to Japan's behavior in World War II which seemed aggressive, China also had to break diplomatic relations with Japan, and began to emerge historical problems between the two countries such as the case of Yasukuni Shrine and Comfort Women (Dent, 2010).

Japan's relationship with China has a characteristic known as cold politics, hot economics (*seirei keinetsu*), which means Japan is increasing its economic interdependence with China. Still, in a political context, Japan is trying to achieve stable conditions with China due to historical conflicts without affecting the terms of economic cooperation between the two countries (Kang, 2007; Dent, 2010).

The rise of China can be seen through the rapid development of China's economy after changing the direction of China's policy to be more open, or we can call it an open-door system. It can be seen that China's economic growth, which has been developing rapidly since 1978, has succeeded in becoming the second-largest economy in the world, surpassing Japan, making China a relevant country in East Asia (Leng & Aoyama, 2018). The effect of the rise of China is causing regional instability in East Asia; therefore, several countries in East Asia have changed their approach towards China to overcome this situation. (Arase, 2016).

Although there is a condition of the rise of China that is likely to bring China as the regional leader of East Asia, Japan does not seem to show interest in leading East Asia against China or in other words Japan did not challenge China or try to dominate East Asia (Kang, 2007). In the post-cold war era, Japan adopted a 'hedging' foreign policy towards China, namely that Japan did not do balancing and bandwagoning, meaning that Japan continued to engage in economic engagement with China and also relied on U.S. military strength. for defense matters (Koga, 2016).

Before the occurrence of Japan's central government reforms in 2001, Japanese prime ministers were rarely involved in China policy or diplomatic relations except for Tanaka Kakeui (1972) (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018). This has changed since Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro (2001) determined to seriously normalize diplomatic relations with China even though the effort had begun in 1972. (Dent, 2010).

The Shinzo Abe administration in the 2006-2007 period showed the continuation of Junichiro's desire for normalization of bilateral relations with China, which was shown at Abe's arrival in Beijing in 2006, which was referred to as the "ice-

breaking" relationship between Japan and China (Dent, 2010). Although in Abe administration, several things constrain Japan-China relations, Abe remains focused on doing rapprochement with China.

This essay will focus on the implications of the rise of China on Japanese foreign policy towards China in the third of Shinzo Abe's administration (2014-2017). The argument contained in this essay is the rise of China made Japan further strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, and the effort was still carried out according to his goal during his first term in 2005. The analysis in this essay will use an individual level of analysis approach that focuses on the concept of leadership style by Margaret G. Hermann (2001).

B. Analysis

The rise of China is a phenomenon in international politics, where China has experienced a significant increase in the economic sector and political influence in the global system. This started when China carried out economic and political reforms in 1978, which became a significant influence on China's economies in the region and the world (Kang, 2007). With the emergence of China as a major player in East Asia, the countries of this region have a different approach in responding to the condition of China.

Japan's relations with China had been interrupted after the second world war, and this was due to Japan's behavior in the East Asian countries said to be territorial expansionism so that there was an anti-Japanese movement in China and other East Asian countries in 1945. In 1952, Japan Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru was pressured by the U.S. to immediately establish official diplomatic relations with China because the U.S. has its national interest in East Asia. The pressure generated by the Japanese alliance led Japan to normalize diplomatic relations in 1972. However, before the 2001 central government reform, despite efforts to improve diplomatic relations between the two countries, the relationships between the two countries were not always smooth (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018).

Until 2020, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has forth terms of office; the first is the period 2006-2007, the second term is 2012-2014, the third term is 2014-2017, and the fourth is 2017-present. Abe showed his aim to seriously improve Japan's relations with

China during his first term, where he visited Beijing two weeks after officially becoming prime minister in 2006. The visit was known as 'ice-breaking' (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018). It began to improve Japan-China relations, which were getting worse in the Koizumi era (Dent, 2010). The third term for Abe started with the meeting with Xi Jinping, president of China. The meeting discussed the cooperation of the two countries to strengthen relations between the two countries that are being hit by the South China Sea conflict problem and maintain regional stability (Perlez, 2014).

The characteristics of Japanese foreign policy are that it can be understood as power struggles between the three actors, namely, the Kantei (prime minister), MOFA officials, and ruling party backbenchers. Central government reforms that occurred in 2001 made the prime minister have more influence in creating policy (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018). For this reason, this essay will focus on analyzing Abe's leadership style in rapprochement with China affecting Japan's foreign policy toward China in the context of the rise of China.

Based on Hermann (2001), four leadership styles are crusader, strategic, pragmatic, and opportunistic. Crusader type will challenge the constraint and closed to information, which means they will do any action according to their views. The strategic type will responses the challenge to restraint and open to knowledge; also, they will find all information to help them to achieve their goals. Pragmatic kind of leaders will respect the constraint and closed to information. And the last one, opportunistic type is the opposite of crusader, which they will respect constraint and open to information; they will not risk their own country by ignoring other countries that affect their land. Two things change the motivation of leaders in making decisions, namely political constraint and behavior toward information. Two types of motivational leadership styles types have been clarified. *Crusader* leaders have expansionism or evangelism. Expansionism means the leader is focused on solving the problem of expanding power and influence; meanwhile, an evangelist is a relationship focus type that concentrates on persuading the others. *Strategic* leaders have incremental or charismatic motivation. Incremental is focused on problem-solving and avoiding constraints that limiting the leader, meanwhile charismatic is concentrate on doing their agenda with involving others. *The pragmatic* type has directive or consultative motivation. Directive means the leader wants to focus on their view to solving the problem; meanwhile, an advisory is focused on what other countries need or what

happens in their countries. The last type of leader, *opportunist*, have reactive or accommodative motivation. Reactive is focus on what might be done when the problem occurs by considering the opinions of other actors, meanwhile accommodative focus on overcoming differences with other actors (Hermann, 2001).

Based on the explanation earlier, it can be seen Hermann has three things that affect the motivation of leaders in making decisions that are political constraint, openness to information, and motivation behind the actions.

To analyze what is Shinzo Abe leadership style regarding Japan's rapprochement with China toward the rise of China, three things must be examined. (1) How Shinzo Abe react toward Japan-China relationship constraint? (2) How Shinzo Abe behave toward incoming information about the Japan-China relationship? (3) What is Shinzo Abe's motivation for rapprochement with China even there is the rise of China?

Since the end of the second world war, relations between Japan and China have been rather poor due to historical problems between the two countries. They are exacerbated by China's claims to several areas of Japanese waters in the East China Sea. During Abe's first term in 2006, two weeks after entering into office, Abe made a diplomatic visit to Beijing to develop Japanese relations with China and maintain regional stability. Japan and China agreed to establish relationships between the two countries to the next step. In mid-2007, the prime ministers of China and Abe met to issue a joint join press statement containing the statement of relations between Japan and China is a mutually beneficial relationship (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018). This shows that although China appears to dominate the East Asian economy, Japan has no intention to challenge China (Kang, 2007). Analyzing Abe's goals in the first period of his leadership is essential to be represented in this analysis for comparison with goals in the next leadership period in 2014.

Abe's behavior toward China at the beginning of his leadership in 2014 is not much different from what he did in the first period in government; Abe held a small meeting with Xi Jinping at the 2014 APEC Summit aimed at improving bilateral relations and reaffirming that Japan and China have mutually beneficial relationships based on common strategic interests. It is related to Abe's words in 2014 is his hope to

improve Japan's relations with China has not changed since 2006 (Kihara & Wee, 2014). This shows the Abe approach in dealing with constraints is respect to constraints.

In the context of openness to information, this can be seen from Abe's openness to the willingness of other parties to conduct rapprochement with China. The rapprochement with China, which was the aim of Abe, was carried out due to international and domestic conditions and pressure from the MoFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). MoFA greatly influenced Abe to establish good relations with China (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018). This shows Abe considering the will of the MoFA and can be considered open to new information.

The last variable of leadership style analysis is the motivation behind actions. Since the end of the Cold War era, Japan's foreign policy strategy towards China is often called 'hedging.' Hedging is a third strategic choice that when a country approaches "balancing-bandwagoning" in the context of the balance of power theory. In Japan's foreign policy towards China, Japan does not fully carry out balancing in the context of the rise of China to prevent China from becoming a hegemon and does not fully side with China to create as much profit as possible from China's domination. With this ambiguity, Japan is doing hedging toward China (Koga, 2016).

Japan's hedging behavior was aimed at Abe when he visited various countries until 2014, which was shown to strengthen bilateral relations between states and Japan's efforts to find partners to hedge with China (Panda, 2014). This can be seen as Japan's move to counter China's significant influence in the region. Abe action can be interpreted as a focus on the current situation and consider the possible way to tackle the problem. It means Abe is a kind of leader who pursues his goal of establishing a relationship with other things.

The implication of Abe's foreign policy toward China in his third term can be seen in the improvement in China-Japan relations since 2014. This is shown by China's positive response to Abe's offer to hold a summit to discuss the crisis management mechanism for territorial disputes (Leng & Aoyama, 2018).

C. Conclusion

It can be concluded that this essay analyzes analyzing Shinzo Abe's leadership style in the 2014-2017 term of office in rapprochement with China in the context of the rise of China. The argument in this essay is that Abe's leadership style influences Japan's foreign policy approach to China, as seen in Japan's efforts to improve bilateral relations between the two countries.

The results of Shinzo Abe's leadership style analysis show that Abe shows behavior that is respect to the constraint. The constraint, in this case, is the rise of China. Abe shows his actions that continue his efforts as in the previous term, which is consistent with continuing to work on improving bilateral relations with China. Meanwhile, in the openness to information context, Abe is open to information because he is listening to the suggestion of the MoFA on his proposal to continue trying to make peace with China, and the fact that Abe decided to make it his goal in becoming a prime minister (Zakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018). Based on Hermann, if the decision-maker is respect to constraint and open to information, it means that he is an 'opportunistic' type of leader (Hermann, 2001).

The motivation behind Abe's foreign policy toward China can be seen in Japan's hedging policy. Abe made diplomatic trips to many countries to strengthen Japan's diplomatic relations with other countries. However, it can also be seen as Japan's efforts to find partners in hedging policy toward China. Japan did this over the growing power of China in the East Asia region, which caused Japan to take a step in countering the problem. This shows that Abe is focused on achieving his foreign policy goals. Thus, Abe has a 'reactive' type of leader type (Hermann, 2001).

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