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## **Introduction**

# **Determinants of International Relations in the East Asian Context**

The aim of this monograph is to analyze the evolution of various kinds of determinants of foreign policy in selected East Asian countries. IR scholars are not unanimous regarding the impact of domestic and external factors on foreign policy making. While the supporters of the liberal school perceive the international system as an aggregate of various determinants stemming from internal institutional arrangements in each country (Moravcsik 1997, pp. 516–520), the partisans of realist and neorealist theories tend to perceive each state as a “black box” that acts according to objectively definable national interests (Morgenthau 1960; Waltz 1990, p. 29).

Without denying the salience of international factors, the authors of this book try to provide knowledge on the complex nature of both external and internal determinants influencing foreign policies of East Asian countries. For that reason, equal attention is attributed to international factors, such as contradicting national interests, geopolitical position, or relative economic potential of main powers, and domestic determinants such as societal and institutional transformations in each country or even leadership skills of top decision makers. This approach is similar to the analysis framework proposed by Ryszard Zięba (2005, pp. 17–36) who distinguished four types of determinants of state foreign policy: external objective (such as international law, position of a country in international system or evolution of the nearest international environment), external subjective (such as the international perception of a state and its nation or foreign policy concepts and quality of diplomacy of foreign governments),

internal objective (such as geographic, demographic, economic potentials or sociopolitical system of a given country) and internal subjective (such as foreign policy concepts, quality of diplomacy or attitude of the society towards the international environment in a particular state).

In order to illustrate the complexity of the domestic–international affairs nexus, the authors take advantage of a range of case studies on Japan, China, Taiwan and North Korea. Starting from the most external, the examined determinants of international relations may be divided into external political pressure, economic interdependence, societal factors, internal institutional arrangements and personal determinants in a given country.

## 1. External Political Pressure

All chapters to some extent touch upon the problem of political pressure exerted by external powers on the foreign policies of the countries in question. For instance, Krzysztof Kozłowski mentions how the People's Republic of China's (PRC) one–China policy has hindered the plans of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) politicians in Taiwan to announce the independence of the island. Cross–strait relations constitute perhaps the best example of how the national interests of one country may constantly constrain diplomatic activities of another government. In the past, China used a plethora of controversial measures to warn Taiwan against declaring independence – from conducting “missile diplomacy” in 1995–1996 to issuing the Anti–Secession Law in 2005. The overwhelming superiority of the PRC's military potential successfully prevented even such critics of the one–China policy as President Chen Shui–bian (2000–2008) from challenging the status quo in this matter.

Interestingly, small countries or middle–sized powers are sometimes limited in their international endeavors not only by the governments that are considered as rivals, but also by close allies. Beata Bochorodycz analyzes the dependence of Japan in the security sphere on the United States (US). Focusing on the special status of American forces in Okinawa, she unveils the unequal nature of the alliance between both countries. In fact, during Cold War the US often used its position as the main guarantor of Japan's security to exert political pressure on the Japanese government, for example by imposing “voluntary” export restrictions on Japanese cars in the 1980s. While the alliance has become more equal since the 1990s, Americans have still been able to influence Japan's for-

eign policy making, as evidenced by Prime Minister Hatoyama's failed attempt at renegotiating the Futenma military base relocation agreement in 2009–2010.

## 2. Economic Interdependence

In an increasingly globalized world, economies of all countries are dependent on the domestic situation of other states. This tendency has been intentionally used by Chinese decision makers to draw Taiwan closer to the PRC. As described by Krzysztof Kozłowski, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) signed in 2010 by the Ma Ying-jeou Administration met with decisive protests from the DPP. The Pan-Green Coalition claimed that reduction of commercial barriers between the PRC and Taiwan would lead to the gradual incorporation of the island into the mainland. Indeed, more and more Taiwanese companies have been investing on the continent, while workers from the PRC have been coming to the island to pursue their professional careers. Analogically, as described by Miloš Procházka, China has used economic cooperation to exert influence on North Korea. By providing food, crude oil and other commodities amounting to 1 billion USD per year, China has been maintaining the North Korean regime that plays a significant role as a buffer against American influences.

Also economic relations between China and the US are underwritten by strong political interests. Przemysław Furgacz emphasizes in his article that the US has been increasingly worried about the rising financial importance of the PRC on the global level. Not only is the role of the yuan steadily strengthening in the world financial system, but also Chinese companies are gradually replacing their American counterparts as the biggest investors in foreign markets. This revolutionary shift in balance of economic power compelled Washington to promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement as a way of preserving influence in the region. China answered with its own initiatives, such as establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Creation of the AIIB is an attempt at becoming more independent from US-controlled world financial institutions. While it remains to be seen which side wins the competition over economic integration in the Asia-Pacific, the astounding pace of China's economic growth will continue constituting a serious challenge to American domination in the region.

### 3. Societal Factors

Both international and economic factors often exert strong influence on the social situation in an independent state. As described by Miloš Procházka, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the North Korean society experienced dramatic changes. Suspension of economic subsidies from Moscow contributed to the disintegration of the Public Distribution System and famine in the 1990s. Erosion of the centralized economic system forced people in provincial regions to rely on themselves, which led to the development of illegal small businesses and local markets. All these factors opened the way for non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) involvement in humanitarian assistance to North Korea, which, in turn, indirectly helps to trigger further evolution of this isolated society.

In return, domestic social conditions may constitute an important factor influencing foreign policy making. Beata Bochorodycz stresses that popular outrage after the rape committed by three American servicemen on a 12-year old Japanese schoolgirl in September 1995 constituted a crucial stimulus that compelled the Japanese government to initiate for the first time in the postwar period a serious dialogue with the US government on the status of US forces in Japan. Under public pressure, both sides eventually agreed to relocate Marine Corps Air Station Futenma from Ginowan City to Henoko Bay. This example indicates that under certain conditions broad civic movements may force governments to undertake difficult decisions in diplomacy.

### 4. Internal Institutional Arrangements

Foreign policy is influenced not only by international, economic or societal circumstances, but also by institutional settings and decision-making patterns characteristic of each country. Beata Bochorodycz underscores that the dispute over the status of American military bases in Japan actually ran along the institutional, not the national lines. Whilst the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US Department of State were strongly against tackling the base problem, the Japanese Defense Agency and the US Department of Defense acknowledged the need for amending the concentration of military bases in Okinawa. It is, among other determinants, due to the popular outrage after the aforementioned rape on a Japanese schoolgirl that eventually the latter camp prevailed.

Marcin Socha, in turn, examines how the opposition from the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as well as business circles represented by the Nippon Keidanren contributed to the Hatoyama government's failure in realizing its ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal.

Karol Żakowski analyzes more comprehensively the factors that limited Japanese statespersons' ability to exert influence on foreign policy making or actively participate in diplomatic activities. Before the central government reform of 2001, Japanese prime ministers were severely constrained in their political initiatives by the existence of strong veto players among bureaucracy and influential backbenchers. The necessity of pleasing the representatives of all ministries in the government and all interest groups in the ruling party often led to the watering down of decisions in foreign affairs. This tendency was most pronounced whenever prime ministers could not count on support from experienced chief cabinet secretaries or foreign ministers, which often happened due to the distribution of governmental portfolios according to seniority rules rather than expertise and policy skills. All these institutional factors rendered Japanese diplomacy passive and unwilling to change the status quo even in a rapidly evolving international environment.

## 5. Personal Determinants

Institutional constraints of foreign policy making, however, may be overcome by influential statespersons. Beata Bochorodycz stresses that thanks to the political will to solve the problem, political resources, managerial skills, experience needed to cooperate with bureaucrats, and ability to take advantage of formal and informal institutions, Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō was one of few politicians capable of successfully negotiating the relocation of Futenma with the US. Karol Żakowski provides even more examples of heads of government, chief cabinet secretaries or ministers of foreign affairs in Japan who were able to exert a strong influence on foreign policy making. It is thanks to connections with the bureaucrats and LDP backbenchers, public support, interministerial coordination abilities, extensive knowledge and expertise in foreign affairs, and, most importantly, coherence of the activities of all main political actors in the government that Japanese statespersons sometimes could overcome institutional constraints and actively shape diplomatic endeavors.

## 6. Conclusion

The case studies presented in this monograph indicate that the international reality cannot be easily reduced to one single dimension. Each IR theory provides only a partial truth on the factors influencing foreign policy making. International relations in East Asia resemble a mosaic of intertwining processes of globalization and regionalization, interests of global and regional powers, local social and economic conditions, national institutional arrangements, and even personal factors. Sometimes a sudden change of one small element in this mosaic suffices to influence the whole system. Instead of providing a simplified interpretation of these processes, the proposed monograph tries to illustrate them in their entire complexity.

## Note on Conventions

Original spelling of Chinese, Japanese and Korean names is preserved in the book – with family names preceding given names. The only exception is made for the Asian authors of English-language titles – in that case the version that appeared in the cited publication is used.

## References

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